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AN AQUATIC PARK AS A STRATEGY FOR WATERFRONT DEVELOPEMENT

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Abstract

This paper identifies the importance of Aquatic parks as a strategy for the development of waterfront areas and the questions to address to ensure a successful waterfront development. The development of the areas at the waterfront has major importance enabling an appropriate insertion of human activities and agglomerations in an increasingly threatened and deteriorating environment. For cities located along a major waterfront - whether that's a lake, river, or ocean figuring out how to best utilize that space without harming the environment can be a challenge. Many of the most popular activities, such as boating, can be highly polluting, and overdevelopment near the shore can cause problems with erosion, runoff, and contamination. Still, used correctly, waterfront property can be a key part of urban recreation space without contributing to these problems. However, in some cases, the implementation of these waterfront projects is driven more by investment needs than by community and environmental needs, with developers neither taking part nor contributing to the government goals of sustaining water and riversas assets for the country. Aquatic Park provides an opportunity for the development of economic growth within the waterfront area. However, the nature of sustainability assessment practice for aquatic Parks tends to be more focused on social and environmental aspects. Therefore, the aims of this paper are to investigate the relevant economic and sustainability assessment of Aquatic Parks.

Keywords: Aquatic Parks, waterfront development, waterfront, Strategy, sustainabilit

Introduction

"A waterfront is a significant resource and a challenging opportunity for a city; a chance to be an escape valve for the pressure cooker of crowded city life, a chance to be a breathing edge of city living" (Moore, 1971).

In general, a waterfront is the zone of interaction between urban developments and the water and a waterfront area is considered as a unique and irreplaceable resource where it is the interface between land, water, air, sun and productive plants (Wrenn, 1983). Moreover, Zhang (2002) characterized the waterfront as a place integrating land with water and having a natural attraction to people. In fact, the seashore and riverfront are the most attractive water features for human settlement and, in most countries, the land in front of water is developed earlier than the inland areas.

Waterfront development refers to any development in front of water and a water body; a river, lake, ocean, bay, creek or canal (Breen & Rigby, 1994, p. 10). In the development area, (Breen & Rigby (1996, 1994) considered that a waterfront development may not necessarily need to be directly fronting water but may only need to look attached to the water. They believe that commanding a view of water can still be considered as a waterfront property.

These waterfronts have the potential to become the cultural and heritage hubs of the city that lie on the banks or shores of the waterfront as well as attract people from the city and also tourists. Over recent decades, waterfront development and redevelopment has evolved and taken on its own identity in areas such as historic preservation and recreation.

A aquatic park or waterpark is an amusement park that features water play areas, such as water slides, splash pads, spraygrounds (water playgrounds), lazy rivers, wave pools, or other recreational bathing, swimming, and barefooting environments.

The development of the waterfronts using aquatic park can be used by the city to help reach a demanding, and much higher standard of design and quality of amenities in our surroundings. Therefore, it becomes important not only to make use of these underutilized areas but also to improve the central business district (CBD) and tax base by developing it as a significant space. The water itself offers the naturalness of open space, views, and a unique microclimate, which act as catalyst to activate the recreational potential. The riverfront's proximity to the CBD helps to increase the value of city's most profitable land.

Literature review

Waterfront development has been greeted as a panacea for newer urban evolution in

post-industrial cities for the last 40 years (Pages & Daamen, 2020). This was noticed even at the beginning of this phenomenon, during the early transition from the industrial phase of urbanization in the late twentieth century (Mikicich, 1990). Many cities have found a new ground for such development among the former industrial

complexes and docklands, ideally located along their inner waterfronts (Sieber, 1991). In recent years, this type

of urban project has become a new "normality" for tracing the future of contemporary cities at the global level (Hersh, B.et all, 2012)

In many cities in the world, waterfront areas began as commercial centres, transportation hubs and manufacturing centres, as a central focus for them. However, due to complex and multiple problems such as technology change, the historic preservation movement, increased environmental awareness and urban renewal, a dramatic change in waterfront areas was brought about and they became large spaces of unused property in the past thirty years or so (Breen & Rigby, 1994, p. 10). After decades of remaining abandoned, in the 1960s, massive waterfront redevelopment began and consequently initiated the world-wide era of waterfront revitalisation (Ryckbost, 2005). Urban waterfront redevelopment bloomed in the 1970s, accelerated in the 1980s (Breen & Rigby, 1994) and will continue in the future. Clearly, interest in promoting waterfront redevelopment in many countries was caused by environmental protection, shoreline access, water quality, historic preservation, tourism and economic development, as well as the growing potential of the waterfront for recreational, commercial and residential uses (Krausse, 1995). Moreover, festival and water sports are perhaps the most visible public-oriented activities that have played a key role in the rediscovery of waterfronts. Many problems concerning waterfronts can be traced back to their historical development. As waterfronts developed in the tide of commercialism, they seem to have lost their civic qualities. Court squares, parks, plazas and other public areas, once used as places for public assembly, exhibiting purposes, passing the time of the day, and meeting and conversing with friends and acquaintances, have gradually given way to parking lots and expansion of commercial activities. These areas that made each city distinctive expressed the character of the community as a whole. Traditionally waterfront development and growth has been disjointed and incremental, characterized by a web of loosely related decisions and actions by dozens of political jurisdictions and hundreds of entrepreneurs".

Waterfronts which had once been the center of urban life lost its predominance. However, in the recent years there is a definite direction in which a new role for waterfronts is emerging. A totally new direction is underway to bring back life into these abandoned riverfronts. This can be summed up simply by saying, it was a plan to take them (riverfronts) away from industry and give them back to people.

Architectural history of aqua parks

Water parks have grown in popularity since their introduction in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The United States has the largest and most concentrated water park market, with over 1,000 water parks and dozens of new parks opening each year. Major organizations are the IAAPA (International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions) and WWA (World Waterpark Association), which is the industry trade association. Water parks which emerge from spas tend to more closely resemble mountain resorts, as they become year-round destinations. For example, Splash Universe Water Park Resort is themed to match the community in which it is located. The theme is intended to enhance the community's destination appeal. Therefore, the amusement and leisure-time industry is becoming more concentrated, as winter sports are becoming common themes in summertime water recreation. A process of concentration can be observed in the hybrid versions of theme, amusement-, and water parks. Some water parks are more spa-oriented. For example, Schwaben Quellen has no water slides; it has instead many saunas, steam rooms, "adventure showers", and relaxation-oriented water play areas. (Wikipedia.) In the 2000s, an effort was made to reduce long waiting lines by introducing conveyor belts to lift passengers or use water jets. An unusual feature at a water park is ice skating. Deep River Water Park in north western Indiana features ice skating, made possible by cooling pipes installed under their massive plaza. Generally

speaking, Water Park was introduced in the 1940s and it was firstly getting popular in North America, mostly in America and Canada. With the develop of globalization, more and more country builds their first Water Park and people around the world start to get used to visiting this thrilling place in summer days. Waterparks are one of the fastest growing entertainment categories, and the US has over 1,000 with more opening their doors each summer. Although the first individual water slides

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and wet rides opened in the 1940s, the first waterpark only opened in the 1960s. The introduction world's first indoor waterpark was built in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada in 1985. The water park industry is diverse and growing. Municipally owned water parks are among the fastest growing segment of the market. Approximately 69% of outdoor water parks are privately owned, while 31% are municipally owned. As of 2009, there were 330 outdoor water parks and more than 130 indoor water parks located throughout the United States. Texas has the third highest number of outdoor water parks in the United States. From 2005 to 2009, attendance at the largest North American water parks increased by about 11%, compared with less than 3% at large theme parks. Water parks continue to offer increasing consumer appeal for a number of reasons. These include increased disposable incomes, less desire to swim in natural bodies of water, and the appeal of "thrill" rides to younger citizens.

Municipalities have often found that providing citizens with a mix of activities and experiences that cannot be found in the traditional "public pool" results in increased attendance and revenue. For example, the attendance at Brownwood Texas' aquatic facilities increased from approximately 2,200 to over 15,000 upon completion of the Camp Bowie Family Aquatic Centre. Water parks which emerge from spas tend to more closely resemble mountain resorts, as they become year-round destinations. For example, Splash Universe Water Park Resort is themed to match the community in which it is located. The theme is intended to enhance the community's destination appeal. Therefore, the amusement and leisure-time industry is becoming more concentrated, as winter sports are becoming common themes in summertime water recreation.

Indoor Water Park A modern indoor water park and first indoor water parks are Tikibad [nl] at Duinrell (The Netherlands, 1984), Nautiland located at Haguenau (France, 1984), the Aqua Mundo at Center Parc De Eemhof located at Zeewolde (The Netherlands, 1980) and Alpamare (Pfäffikon) [de] (Switerland, 1977). In 1986 World Waterpark was open in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada at the West Edmonton Mall. It is in 2016 the largest indoor water park in North America. Tropical Islands Resort (Germany), with an area of 66,000 m2 (710,418 sq ft), is in 2016 the largest indoor water park in the world. With five indoor water parks, Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin is supposed to be recognized as the "Water Park Capital of the World". It showcases several of America's largest indoor and outdoor water parks, such as Noah's Ark Water Park. Indoor water parks in Wisconsin Dells debuted in 1994 after the Polynesian Resort Hotel built the first one in the U.S. Success in extending the tourist season and turning water park resorts into vacation destinations has resulted in tremendous industry growth. Usually, resort hotels featuring massive indoor water parks have been reserved for overnight guests. Companies like Great Wolf Resorts/Great Wolf Lodge and Kalahari Resorts have branched out from their origin in Wisconsin Dells to open new locations around the country. Mt. Olympus Theme and Water Park (formerly Family Land) is another huge water park in the Dells. The largest indoor water park in the UK is Sandcastle Water Park in Blackpool, England, which opened in 1986. There are many water parks in southern Europe where the climate suits a long season. For example, in Portugal's Algarve, there are three main parks: Aqualand, Aquashow, and Slide n' Splash. The growth of indoor water parks have encouraged leisure centers across the world to begin implementing features of waterparks into their facilities, including slides and lazy rivers, and also boost economic growth no matter the weather or season. Water play areas are similar to water parks and include urban beaches, splash pads, and smaller

collections of water slides in many hotels and public swimming pools. For example, the Chelsea Hotel in Toronto features a four-story water slide called the Corkscrew. The waterpark industry

is growing at an astonishing pace in developed or developing countries as facilities are constantly being built.

Water front development

Designing waterfronts is not a simple process of making pictures showing how the waterfront should look twenty years from now, but it is an attempt to make the future better than the present (Roberts & Greed, 2001) in terms of social, economic and environmental aspects. Water is a defining force that fundamentally shapes the character of each place it touches. It's a feature to be celebrated and honored. Urban waterfronts, like the cities help define, dynamic places. Waterfronts are often the most valuable resource of a city. Also cities seek a waterfront zone that is a place of public enjoyment, ample visual and public access to both the water and the land. These waterfronts have the potential to become the cultural and heritage hubs of the city that lie on the banks or shores of the waterfront as well as attract people from the city and also tourists. Over recent few decades, waterfront development and redevelopment has evolved and taken on its own identity in areas such as historic preservation and recreation. Creating minimum avenues for recreation and green open spaces. Also today many waterfronts are a staple of modernism, city beautification and helps in tourism.

Criteria for a sustainable urban development at the waterfront

The basic precondition for the successful development of a city's waterfront is the protection of the environment. On the one hand the natural ecosystem has to be preserved and on the other, its present status has to be enhanced. Especially such areas, which were used for industry offer potentials to enhance this status today (Giovinazzi & Moretti, 2010). The protection of the environment can also be supported by the minimizing of future energy consumption and recycling of resources. Also the new waterfront has to be understood as an integral part of a city's urban structure. The waterfront cannot be a competitor of the city, but it has to complete the urban structure and the other way around. At the same time, it is necessary to unite the existing urban heritage and new development (Hussein, 2014).

Therefore, the conservation of the Genius Loci, the historic spirit of a certain space, and the currency of the industrial appearance are important for sustainable development (Giovinazzi & Moretti, 2010). By settling diverse usages at the waterfront different types of users will be attracted (Giovinazzo & Giovinazzi, 2008). The district, which has to be developed, should offer a multiplicity of cultural, social and commercial facilities as well as a diversity of living concepts. This balanced form of mixing utilizations has to be implemented in the scale of the whole new district and translated to the single floor plans of the buildings.

In the end, the public space is also important for the sustainable development of the waterfront district. Parks, green areas, squares und promenades have to be designed qualitatively and have to be accessible for the inhabitants and visitors at any time. In order to configure attractive public spaces, it is important to conserve old and add new axes of view between the existing city and the water through the new district (Hussein, 2014).

Additional to these guidelines of urban design, a lot of strategic specifications

have to be followed in order to develop the waterfront sustainably. Priority is given to the including of the city's society in the planning process. Citizens need to be kept informed from the beginning and especially involved in discussions, so that a real active citizenship can be implemented and the city can benefit from the development of the waterfront socially (Giovinazzi & Moretti, 2010).

Furthermore, waterfront projects require a long-term implementation. They often represent a challenge for more than one generation. Stakeholders of these projects – among others: the city council, investors, developer, entrepreneurs are responsible to support the realization of the projects regardless of the general economic situation over time (Gauzin-müller, 2002). Nevertheless, masterplans have to offer flexibility in order to relate to shortterm changes, like a change in the demand for housing (Giovinazzi & Moretti, 2010).

Waterpark Industry

According to the World Waterpark Association (WWA), waterparks "come in a multitude of shapes and sizes, from small aquatic centers that have a few waterparks features such as; a



waterslide or leisure river- to city-owned facilities that rival some of today's major parks, as well as indoor waterpark hotel/resorts" (WWA, n.d., para.1). However, in a benchmark report conducted by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) (2015), they defined a waterpark as a facility with "at least four of the attractions considered essential to a waterpark which include: "toddlers'/children's play area, tube slide, lazy river, body flume, wave pool, tipping bucket play area, speed slide, family raft slide, mat racer slide, spray ground, still-water lagoon pool, action river, water coaster or a surfing simulator". Whereas, Sangree (2015, para. 3) defines waterparks the following way: An indoor waterpark resort is a lodging establishment containing an aquatic facility with a minimum of 10,000 square feet of indoor waterpark space inclusive of amenities such as slides, tubes, and a variety of indoor play features. A resort with an outdoor waterpark is a lodging establishment with an outdoor aquatic facility with three or more waterpark elements requiring lifeguards such as slides, lazy river, or wave pools. A standalone indoor waterpark is an aquatic facility that is not attached to lodging establishment with a minimum of 10,000 square feet of indoor waterpark space inclusive of amenities such as slides, tubes, and a variety of indoor water play features. An outdoor waterpark is an outdoor aquatic facility with three or more water slides. It often includes other water elements requiring lifeguards such as lazy rivers, surf simulators, or wave pools. These parks will often offer additional splash features for younger children. Without a set definition of a waterpark, it becomes difficult to examine the true impact waterparks have on local or regional economy. However, waterparks do have an impact on the economy from the standpoint of economic development, sustainability, employment opportunities, and an increase tax base for local and state governments.

Tourism Industry

A tourist is person that makes a tour for pleasure or culture, who travels usually for sightseeing and relaxation. The person visits a location other than his own home and this happens usually on holidays. The tourism industry economically is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world. The industry showed continued growth for the fifth consecutive year in 2014 (WTTC, n.d., para. According to the UNTWO (n.d.), "the business volume of tourism equals or even surpasses that of oil exports, food products or automobiles" (para.2). Tourism is also "one of the major players in international commerce and represents, at the same time, one of the main income sources for many developing countries" (UNTWO, nd., para.

Tourism is vital to so many countries across the world because it can impact communities and nations in many ways. The tourism industry continued to see growth in many areas in 2014 which included economically and employment opportunities. For instance, the industry contributed a total of \$7.6 trillion to the global economy, which accounted for 9.8% of the total economy's gross domestic products (GDP) (WTTC, 2015). Also, the industry accounted for 1 out 11 jobs across the world, for a total of 277 million jobs (WTTC, 2015). In 2014, it accounted for approximately 2.1 million new jobs directly and a total of about 6.1 million positions either directly, indirectly, or through induced activity (WTTC, 2015) In Port Harcourt, tourism is as important to the overall economy as it is in other states, and cites across Nigeria.

Waterfront Tourism Waterfront areas with struggling economies are searching for different ways to increase revenue and economic development. Many waterfront communities in Port Harcourt

are struggling because of various economic downfalls that are not solely due to their own demise. Lane (1994) states "the powerful trends of industrialization and urbanization have steadily altered the economic and political positions of rural society" (p. 7). According to Briedenhann and Wickens (2004), "declining economic activity, restructuring of the agricultural sector, dwindling rural industrialization and outmigration of higher educated youth has led to the adoption, in many western nations, of tourism as an alternative development strategy for the economic and social regeneration of rural areas". Tourism is one avenue leaders are turning to promote economic growth to revitalize these waterfront areas, of which some were once flourishing communities. Waterfront communities continue turning to waterfront tourism because it has been "identified as a catalyst to stimulate economic growth, increase the viability of underdeveloped regions, and improve the standard of living" (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004, p. 71). It is easy to understand why community leaders, private and public, are eager to view tourism as a means of economic development. The benefits associated with waterfront tourism consist of increases in employment opportunities, income, and overall economic and population growth. "This kind of development has the potential to dramatically transform a stagnant waterfront community into a thriving community by attracting retirees, entrepreneurs, and young workers, diversifying the economy, and improving the quality of life with a broader array of services" goods and (Reeder & Brown. 2005. para



CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1 Name: SUNWAY LAGOON

Location: Bandar Sunway, Subang Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.

Size of aqua park: 88 Acres built 150ft below ground level

Sunway Lagoon theme park is built of the site of a former tin mine and quarry. On initial opening of this aqua park, its major attractions were its water slides. Presently, the park has grown to offer more activities other than water slides which include dry land activities such as wildlife park, amusement park, extreme park and scream park The sole purpose and objective of this facility is to maximize the use of the water park and to possibly broaden its functionality as a recreational facility for the Selangor community.



Figure 1.0 Sunway lagoon (pinterest.ru)



Figure 2.0 Sunway lagoon (thrillophilia.com)

SWOT analysis of case study 1

Strength

- The facility can easily be accessed by road.
- The facility consists not only of water activities but also provides support facilities (i.e. Hotel accommodation) and other land recreational activities.
- The facility provides a comfortable and relaxing environment for all ages.
- The facility is located in an area that has natural water body (lagoon)

Weakness

- The available water body is not large enough to cater for boating activities
- The area has high risk of flooding as a result of its low land level (150ft below sea level)

Opportunity

- There is ample space for future expansion.
- Accommodation facility is provided.

Treats

- flooding may occur if not properly maintained
- The road network is congested
- The facility is located in an area where there is no water front, only a fairly sized lagoon.

CASE STUDY 2

THE BEACH PARK, Beach of porto das dunas, aquiraz, Fortaleza, brazil

The Beach Park is an example of an aquatic park created in line with waterfront development. It is one of the leading tourist attractions in the country, and the largest water park in Latin America. As at 2012, it had 843,000 visitors in the Water Park and 1,408,000 in all of Beach Park.



Figure 3.0 Beach park wellness resort (expedia.com)



Figure 4.0 Beach park map (bagagemparadois.com)

The beach complex is composed of

- 1- The beach
- 2- Aquatic Park

The beach park also has;

• Beach park suites resort: located in the beach park, with 182 seaside apartments

• Oceani beach park resort: located along the porto das dunas, with 131 rooms, an event center for up to 300 people, and a restaurant.

• Beach park aqua resort: offers tennis and multipurpose sport courts, a fitness center, kids club, restaurant, pool bar and infinity pool. In addition is an acqualink, an artificial river that transports guests from the comfort of the resort to the water park.

• Beach park wellness resort: has a multipurpose sports court, outdoor playground, three swimming pools, whirlpools, outdoor exercise area, spa, massage rooms, steam and dry saunas, pool bar, hammock area, zen tent, playroom, stella artois themed lobby bar, games room, fitness center, baby & kids and recreation team, 90 seaside rooms. This resort is designed specifically for families. The beach park also has other amenities such as;

- Kids club
- Beach baby
- Sauna
- Surf lessons
- Wet bar
- Heater

- Internet café
- Convenience stores
- Laundry facilities

SWOT analysis of case study 2

Strength

- The strength of this case study is on based on its location
- It comprises of other recreational facilities other than water related activities.

Weakness

Some areas of the site may be prone to flooding due to climate change.

Opportunity

Ample and space for future expansion.

Treats

Flooding if not properly maintained.

CASE STUDY 3

Name: TINAPA RESORT

Location: ADIABO, CALABAR, CROSS RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

Size: 8 acres of park

The resort is planted in a serene environment close to the calabar river, the resort was imitated by then governor, Donald duke with a clear goal of boosting the state's economy and also as a medium of tourism, it was commissioned in 2007 the resort provides the following facilities:

- Tinapa lakeside hotel
- games arcade
- outdoor sports area
- ice hockey area
- retail stores
- a water park area
- 4 emporia's a lazy river
- fisherman's wharf area
- A film studio, bank, open exhibition area2



Figure 5.0 outdoor swimming pool (trip.com)



Figure 6.0 Tinapa resort (googlemaps.com)

SWOT analysis of cast study 3

Strength

It is located in a place open to the growth of tourism

Weakness

- lack of proper maintenance of the facility
- Reduced range of water activities offered considering its potential

Opportunities

- Open to bigger growth and room for future expansion
- Available water front
- It is currently the only one of its kind in the area thus experiences high patronage

Treats

- Mismanagement of the facility by government.
- Lack of security

CASE STUDY DEDUCTIONS AND ITS RELATION TO RESEARCH

Natural water bodies: Presence of natural water bodies not artificial (manmade).

Land size: Availability of adequate land space to carry every facility necessary

Market demand and location: this is based on commuter demand and location of the lot within a community. It should have a high market demand of (450+ commutes/day) where it would serve the maximum number of commuters with minimal out of direction travel.

Potential cost: this considers the presence of existing amenities, even slope, and an existing relationship with land owner and knowledge of any environmental concerns in the proposed area.

Access: it should also be visible and easily entered and exited from a major highway and an existing commuter transit route and also connected to local/smaller streets.

CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to explore the importance of Aqua Parks as a strategy to the development of water fronts. The case studies analysis confirmed that the developer's level of awareness of development, which directly or indirectly relates to the importance of waterfront development. Improvement is required in order to enhance and maintain sustainable waterfront developments in the future.

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