

# ARCH 384 - Competition Elective

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The Chicago Northerly Island Nature Center Competition is a large scale site redevelopment planning project that majorly themes upon landscaping while redeveloping an aviaational complex space into a public educational park. Coincidentally, this project was very similar to that of the studio final project this Fall term as students in Andrew Levitt's design studio were given the task to redevelop a large piece of historical aviaational space into a public park space connecting to the urban city. As a student from this class, this early exposure aided my way through the final project as I was able to further develop ideas that were used for the competition, but into greater depths of research.

Initial designs of the competition were mainly inspired by the Andrew Levitt's studio project one presentations as Ted Teng Zhen Ruo presented thoroughly on the issues for the remediation of the Fresh Kills Landfill project competition in New York City. Both the precedant project and the competition at hand were fairly similar as to creating a dynamic space for the public, allowing a transformative experience for the people as the site design and construction evolves over a period of approximately thirty years where a phasing strategy is produced to synchronize a three ten year program given at a thirty year time span.

Aside from the phasing strategies, the ideas of intertwining ecosystems were also one of the considerations when designing the programs along the site. Like Fresh Kills, a wide variety of ecosystems and diverse wild life species are found on the site with a special criteria for a wide variety of migrating and local bird population. Through the redevelopment of both sites, the population of these species including the Canadian Geese, Mallards, Black Ducks, Blue Winged Teal, Wood Duck, Virginia Rail, Common Moorhen, Spotted Sandpiper, Fish Crow, Marsh Wren, Swamp Sparrow, etc. will receive a cleaner and much less contaminated site to live in. Therefore, the overall organization was intended to provide a dynamic cultivation on the site of new ecologies over a period in time. With this wide variety of ecosystems





and the vast amount of land, both Fresh Kills and the Chicago Northerly Island provides a high potential for a wide range of activities -- a cultural and social reserve for nature, wildlife, and the public, an active recreation center, and creative education spaces for the environment and history of this spectacular site.



Upon the understanding of the organizational strategies to the site, the initial response to the site was the infrastructure of public access and circulatory routes. Due to the large scale for the site, vehicular and public pedestrian circulation is a key problem that requires in depth analysis. Solving this required considerations, the research of other sources such as Vancouver's Stanley Park provided interesting ideas of the organization for pedestrians and vehicles circulating along in the site. Having a major ring of circulation along the site of Stanley Park allowed for full and ease for the access to all the programmatic responses in nature and the intertwining of ecosystems. For the scenario provided by the competition, a pedestrian bridge linking the main land of Chicago to the ring of boardwalk along the edge of the Chicago Northerly Islands provided the site with sufficient and efficient access. This bridge similar to the Fresh Kills' design provides significance to both the city and the park as it becomes a gateway interconnecting the natural park to the artificial city. Designing in such manor also provides for a freely gestured circulatory hiking path within the boundaries of the boardwalk. This wide variety of paths and trails allow for extensive circulation and accesses to all areas of the site. While most of these passages are for pedestrians, most paths allow for multiple users such as bikers, hikers, pedestrians,



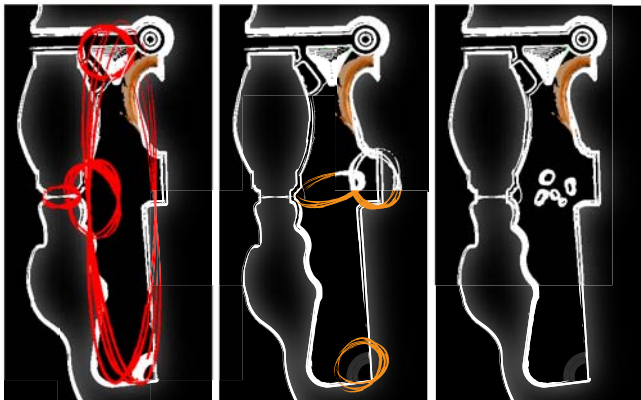
GROWTH OF THE PARK OVER TIME:  
YEARS



GROWTH OF THE PARK OVER TIME:  
20 YEARS



GROWTH OF THE PARK OVER TIME:  
30 YEARS



and vehicles with the vehicular access separated from the pedestrian path with a unique pedestrian crossing that allows for safe pedestrian crossings.

The underground tunnelling accesses from the Nature Research and Training Center to the Aqua Research and Training Center was an idea designed with the inspiration of the natural spaces of caverns and tunnels integrated with the large landscape trench designs by James Turrell. The main cause for this underground move was to provide the public with a new experience for the underground ecosystems, learning the histories of the site and its ecology as one moves through the underground passage linking them from one side of the island to another. In addition to the tunnel, the parking structure is designed under an artificial manmade mound providing the underground experience for people as they arrive to the site as well as maximizing the usage of the provided site area while reducing heat island effects and controlling runoffs to the site.

Finally, due to the complexity and size of the site, a large portion of the design was strategized into many phases provided a certain time frame for the completion of the projects. This phasing strategy was an important asset in both the Fresh Kills and Chicago Northerly Island projects as it provides the dynamic transformation of experiences to the public visitors. By phasing the project, it will also provide the general public with enthusiasm and positive energy towards the final stages of the park as it gradually develops and gets constructed. Since the projects are projected to be public parks, a sense of nature must always be in the mind of the visitors. Therefore, the careful planning and strategizing of the site phasing will provide a natural sense in transformation of the site rather than providing people with the perspective that the park is just an endless artificial construction site. The timing of the constructions of buildings, tunnels, bird observatories, etc. will also have an effect on the environment that the people are exploring through the park. In addition to personal views, phasing the projects will allow for strategic plantings and wildlife growth on the site as some species take a longer time to grow than others. Thus, allowing for the final product to conclude in a synchronized fashion.





Overall, the research and precedents to the project provided a lot of inspiration for the final outcome of the Chicago Northerly Island Nature Center as concepts and ideas from the Fresh Kills and Stanley Island project helped drive some important moves that are presented for the competition. As well, the competition itself provided an earlier understanding of landscaping and site planning as in preparation for the studio island park in the Toronto Island Airport site. The project itself provided numerous valuable insights and introductions on large scale site remediation as well as the importance in natural preservation and environmental outlooks that affect the growth of species in this world of intertwining ecosystems. With the final design for the competition, I believe we've achieved many aspects in integrating human life styles with the different ecosystems underground, on the surface of Earth, as well as the aerial ecosystems interacting with species in flight.



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