The Changing Port City: Sustainable Waterfront Revitalisation

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Abstract Harbour communities on both sides of the Atlantic are undergoing dramatic change. These changes are being brought about as a result of trade agreements, environmental factors, marketing trends and consumer preferences, among other factors. At the same time, these ports are fragile. They are old, full of history and culture, have dated infrastructure systems and must struggle to meet new transport and production technologies. The thesis of this paper is that harbour communities must have a strong, planned sense of direction if they are to remain economically and culturally important. This direction must be guided by a long-term comprehensive plan which addresses how water-dependent, water-related and other activities can be functionally and aesthetically integrated. It must also relate to the question of how harbours are controlled and planned. This transatlantic study evaluates ports and waterfront revitalisation with a particular emphasis on long-term economic and cultural sustainability. It identifies connections and tensions in port–city relationships, differences in government responses between North America and Europe, key factors that are important in the revitalisation of these important, yet fragile, places. These factors include aspects of land use — compatibility and sustainability; marketing and promotion; regulatory environment — physical and environmental conditions, and notions of trade and international competition.

Keywords: waterfronts, revitalisation, port development, downtowns, partnerships

INTRODUCTION

The past two decades have seen the dramatic ongoing transformation of downtown waterfronts in both North America and Europe as a result of myriad issues, including environmental, economic, social and political factors. In an environmental context, the transformation has been spurred by the need to limit fishing so as not to deplete stocks and by concern over effluent flowing without treatment into the ocean. From an economic perspective, these special places are centres of conflict, as fishing advocates tangle with recreational boaters, private businesses take issue with walking recreationalists, machine shops worry about losing their spaces to yuppies looking for...
artistic loft spaces, and freighters move away from the old ports to more modern facilities. In a social sense, waterfront neighbourhoods, once the homes of the immigrant, the union worker and the common labourer, have now been discovered by the middle and upper classes, with gentrification increasing as a consequence. Politically, the conflicts centre on who controls the waterfront: the city, the port authority or both?

This paper explores how these transformations are playing out on the ground in a series of cities across the northeast: Portland (Maine), Portsmouth (New Hampshire), Gloucester, Boston, New Bedford and Fall River (Massachusetts), Providence and Quonset Point (Rhode Island), and Stonington and Bridgeport (Connecticut). The authors have also drawn on their observations in Europe, with particular emphasis on Viana do Castelo, Aveiro and Figueira da Foz (Portugal), HafenCity (Germany), and Londonderry and Belfast (Northern Ireland), which are also endeavouring to transform themselves into 21st-century port communities.

The paper is divided into two key parts. The first part is a review of the connections and tensions in port–city relations. The second part discusses the principles which research has revealed to have particular relevance in planning for the 21st-century port community.

**CONNECTIONS AND TENSIONS IN PORT–CITY RELATIONS**

Across Europe and the USA, a major transformation is under way in the relationship of ports to their host cities. In many cases, these changes have created significant tensions between those who are responsible for administering the ports and local government. The port authorities tend to look inward, with little regard for the city as a whole, while the cities too frequently consider the ports to be areas to be revitalised without concern for maritime use.

**New necessities**
The split between port and city governance is a recent phenomenon. For centuries, cities and ports viewed their futures as inextricably intertwined. Would Venice or Genoa have grown to prominence without healthy ties between the port and the remainder of the community? Would Vigo (Spain), Londonderry (Northern Ireland) or Nantes (France) have had an economic reason to exist if the port and city had not operated cooperatively? Today, however, this relationship has deteriorated as ports in many parts of the world have ceased to be as critical to the local economy and as technology has required the creation of port districts that are not directly tied to the city proper.

In many cities, including Hamburg (Germany), Aveiro (Portugal) and Adelaide (Australia), the need to handle larger and larger ships effectively has required new infrastructure, which in turn has caused many ports to become economic entities in their own right, separate from the hosting city. Meanwhile, the older harbours are being transformed into upscale neighbourhoods catering to people who enjoy the ambience of these culturally, architecturally and historically unique areas. In some cases, this shift has occurred with little thought for the long-term ramifications.

The unique character of ports is increasingly placing them under public scrutiny. They are recognised as too valuable to be allowed to develop without public input and protection. The results of this are fourfold. First, port development projects take an extraordinarily long time, owing to the need for extensive environmental, land use, preservation and investment reviews. Second, there is constant public demand for public use of the port area. Recent changes in Philadelphia, Savannah (Georgia) and Portsmouth (New Hampshire) reflect this attitude. Third, given a choice between open space or a portside condominium, on the one hand, and a fish-processing facility on the other, communities are likely to choose the former.
Figure 1: Terminal Burchardkai, Hamburg, is the oldest and largest container terminal in Germany. It plans to double its capacity in the near future.

Figure 2: Large shipping containers need more space (Hamburg, Germany).
or salt pile, on the other, the public will choose the former. The experience of Providence (Rhode Island), described below, shows this. Fourth, the public is in no mood to see public assets used to fund private development activities on waterfronts. So, for example, one could expect to see protests if a proposed change required the removal of a park for a new ‘roll-on, roll-off’ facility. Because there is little clarity on the long-term future of ports, any proposed change is subject to great scrutiny. 5

Differences between the United States and Europe
The pressures on and responses to port revitalisation in the USA and Europe differ significantly in several ways. First, Europeans view harbour planning in the context of the European Union and national policies, while Americans see it as a local issue. Second, in Europe, there is far less of a tradition of citizen participation and a greater reliance on the decision-making capabilities of politicians and professional administrators. 6 Third, European planners tend to be far more committed to waterfronts as places where maritime uses should predominate. For Europeans, waterfronts are places where salt is piled, fish processed, warehouses filled and the like. Americans, on the other hand, tend to view ports as outmoded economic areas that are ripe for urban regeneration of any type that the market demands. 7

The Port of Providence, Rhode Island, demonstrates this saliently: its two maritime uses, the offloading of salt and a tugboat repair yard, are slated to be phased out and replaced, as they lost the battle to upscale housing, artist lofts and studios, and open space. The city voted for change rather than the need for gritty businesses on their waterfront. This tension between port uses and more generalised use is essentially a tension between the local network and the global infrastructure. The needs of the latter tend to change constantly, while the former is entrenched. When change meets entrenchment, it makes for difficult planning. In considering location and activity, planners must recognise that the ‘place’ of the port should be respected. 8

Waterfront revitalisation
For too long, waterfronts have been isolated from strategies for the overall regeneration of the city. 4 This needs to end. Planners must recognise the importance and uniqueness of the port, but they must also relate it to the community as a whole. 9

Most of the decline in port cities stems from the sense of separation between the port and the city proper, the vacant space found in the port due to displacement, shifting markets and changing technologies. And yet, these ports still have great value and are deserving of new investment. Efforts must be made to link the docklands with the downtown, and that connection should be kept in mind when considering new initiatives, whether the attraction of cruise liners, ferries and coastal freight ships or the use of green technologies to facilitate a cleaner harbour and a more tourism-friendly environment. None of these projects will get off the ground without the backing of public–private partnerships, which will not be created unless the revitalisation tasks are undertaken in tandem with a comprehensive look at the community. 10

One strategy that has been adopted is to associate port activities with a cluster of activities centred upon financial services. It is increasingly common to find banking, insurance underwriting, commodity futures and trading services associated with seaborne commerce. 11 When such clusters develop, they stimulate spin-off uses, including luxury housing and upscale retail and service activities. 12

While the motivation behind most waterfront redevelopment is economic, projects at ports often do not create enough
jobs to employ all the workers who lost their jobs when the waterfront’s port functions ceased. One study concludes that waterfront projects are probably no more effective in job creation for low-income people than mixed-use urban redevelopment in any other part of the inner city. The jobs which renewed urban waterfronts generate generally fall into two categories: office jobs, which create the usual demand for bars, restaurants, convenience retail and service professionals (the neighbourhood services desired by the new waterfront residents); and maritime jobs associated with sailing schools, heritage centres and maritime museums. These new jobs mark a departure from the waterfront’s working-class heritage and create an overall urban ambience of play, choice and festival, not work and compulsion.

Paradoxically, the rejected working heritage is often a selling point for the affluent waterfront lifestyle. This heritage marketing is common in tourism schemes in many central-city revitalisation efforts, waterfront or not. Other features of heritage marketing include heritage festivals, re-enactments, and parks and museums which celebrate the city’s heritage. Some maritime-focused examples include Boston’s Navy Yard, Montreal’s Old Port and New York State’s urban cultural parks programme, which has located 13 of its 14 installations on water fronts.

The question of whether to place affordable housing on waterfronts is quite complex. On the one hand, there is typically very little opposition from long-entrenched neighbourhoods. On the other, there is the fact, alluded to earlier, that the waterfronts of many major cities are becoming the homes of the upwardly mobile, complete with all the shops and services required by the affluent (Figure 3). But for the sake of a vibrant

![Figure 3: Waterfront housing at Hafencity (Hamburg, Germany)](image-url)
waterfront, efforts should be made to make affordable housing available. People with modest incomes have just as much a right to live on the harbour’s edge as anyone else, and their presence enlivens the area: waterfronts that are home to a diverse population with a wide range of incomes have an extreme sense of pulsating energy about them. As far as waterfronts are concerned, variety brings spice.

**Waterfronts and downtowns**

The working waterfront of old was typically the heart of industrial and fishing communities. As a result, the commercial centres of these towns developed next to them. Today, the downtown areas in these towns still can be found within a few blocks of the waterfront.

Over time, many of these waterfronts have ceased to be ‘working waterfronts’ (see Figure 4). No longer are the shores lined with mills, warehouses and processing plants waiting for goods from distant shores. Rather, in many communities, abandoned buildings litter the edges of oceans, rivers and lakes. Where fishing and logging and warehousing along the waterfront once supported the local economy, now advances in technology, automation and transport seem to have diminished the economic advantage offered by waterfront access in most communities.¹⁵

Large cities throughout America have discovered, however, that waterfront areas can be unique assets in the revitalisation of downtown districts. Baltimore, Boston and San Francisco are great examples of cities that have capitalised upon their waterfront areas to provide unique shopping districts that attract millions of tourists annually. Smaller communities face an even greater pressure for change, and they may reap a similar benefit by focusing on the downtown–waterfront relationship.

Smaller communities, such as Stonington, Connecticut, and Block Island, Rhode Island, typically have volunteer government, minimum waterfront controls, weak waterfront management, and the attitude that the marketplace is the best arbiter of how their waterfronts and adjacent downtowns should be revitalised. They also must bear the burden of handling disputes between, for example, fishermen and recreational boaters (who has priority?), land use decisions (primacy for waterfront-dependent uses?) and environmental problems (smell, waste disposal). These smaller ports are in great need of assistance owing to limited resources. What follows are some guiding principles which may help communities that are struggling to nurture and enhance these special areas.

**PRINCIPLES FOR PLANNING FOR THE 21ST-CENTURY PORT COMMUNITY**

If they adhere to certain basic planning principles, port communities can be thriving, vibrant participants in the 21st century. These principles include awareness of national and international trends, an emphasis on history and culture, careful master planning, adoption of urban design guidelines and zoning regulations, complementary mixed uses and preservation of a working waterfront, a visual and physical connection between the waterfront and the downtown area, integration into the public transport system, effective traffic management, environmental cleanliness, marketing and promotion, and public–private partnerships.

**Awareness of national and international trends**

There is no other industry where international policies and treaties have as quick an impact upon the economic health of companies as they do on fishing. The ports of Gloucester and New Bedford, Massachusetts, were devastated by fishing treaties concerning Georges Banks, and row
Figure 4: Old industrial facility at the water’s edge in Hamburg, Germany
on row of long-haul fishing vessels now await the scrap heap in Viana do Castelo, Portugal, the victims of treaties governing fishing practices in the North Atlantic.

Changes in technology are bringing new vessels and styles of shipping to waterfronts, and communities must be prepared for them. There are more catamarans, and there is a rise in interest in cabotage (coastal shipping), short-haul ferry operations and the tour boat industry. Local planning must anticipate these new activities and types of vessels.

The fall of the Soviet Union led to a decline in the need for naval vessels and in the maintenance of defence facilities. As a consequence, there is excess shipbuilding capacity. Naval shipyards and ports have tremendous potential, either integrated into adjacent port facilities or as new public ports in their own right.

**Emphasis on history and culture**

Many waterfront communities are rich in history and culture. Many have historic forts and castles directly on the waterfront. Lighthouses, maritime museums and trading ports all add to the charm and attraction of the waterfront. These historic and cultural structures draw tourists and also offer educational opportunities. The maintenance and management of these elements are important to waterfront planning and marketing. The presence of ‘tall ships’ (Boston, Baltimore), active aquariums (Boston, Baltimore), colourful boats (Aveiro’s salt boats and *barcos moliceiros* or seaweed boats), and great structures (Danbury’s ‘spice town’ and Viana do Castelo’s fortress — see Figure 5) all enhance the port cities in which they are found.

**Careful master planning**

In order to maximise a waterfront’s potential, planners must determine what uses and character they want the waterfront to have. Waterfronts must be planned with...
the water as a unifying element. In fact, it is essential that waterfront communities first emphasise water-dependent and water-related uses, such as dinner cruises or whale watching. The waterfront can also host special events, such as religious festivals, a tall-ships regatta or yacht races. Then other uses can be considered. Too often, communities implement popular ‘quick fixes’. For example, Boston recently placed an enormous courthouse on its famed Fan Pier, while both Bridgeport, Connecticut, and Gloucester, Massachusetts, have retail shopping complexes directly on the harbour’s edge.

Waterfronts should be integrated inland as extensively as possible. The daylighting (the opening up of these water bodies for public viewing) of channels, canals, rivers and streams can add value to communities and, perhaps more importantly, can integrate the waterfront more fully into the fabric of the community. Nowhere can this be more vividly noted than in Aveiro, where the canals extend directly into the downtown. More recently, the city of Providence, Rhode Island, one of America’s most revitalised cities, changed the flow pattern of its river to run closer to downtown (three miles from the Atlantic Ocean) and created one of the most vibrant city centres in the nation.

Furthermore, waterfronts that maintain shipping facilities should plan for 24-hour operation. Ports that depend upon tidal flow or are used, by custom, to a shortened operational day will be at a disadvantage. Moreover, the longer a vessel stays in port, the more expensive the cost of operations, so rapid off-loading is a decided asset.

Adoption of urban design guidelines and appropriate zoning regulations
Zoning regulations, architecture and design controls, and site planning regulations are all important to ensure that historical, cultural and aesthetic attributes of the waterfront are preserved as well as to ensure the optimal mix of uses. In some cases, this has worked well (eg Boston, Massachusetts); in other instances, a lack of long-term planning has led to conflict.

Design, colour, lighting and a festive air are all definite draws (see Figure 6). These elements enhance the feeling of security, vitality and bustle. Festivals attract people. Flowers, street banners and canopies all add colour and vibrancy. Lighting and design elements offer security and connectedness.

Urban design controls must call for a stepping down in the height of buildings. Too frequently, the views of waterfronts are blocked by high-rise buildings. Cities should be urged to maintain a low-rise profile along the waterfront and, if necessary, to increase the height only as one moves inland. This concept has been successfully adopted in Boston, where high-rise structures have, on the whole, been kept well back from its working and recreational boating areas.

Waterfronts belong to the public, yet too often access is de facto denied by private interests or the practical everyday work that takes place there. It is important, as a planning principle, that public access be emphasised. This can be done through the development of walking and biking paths as close as possible to the water, for example. Integrating the two potentially conflicting rights of private property owners, on the one hand, and the public’s right of access to the waterfront, on the other, will be no easy task.

Complementary mixed uses and preservation of a working waterfront
Waterfronts must accommodate diverse activities, including fishing, fish processing, recreational boating, boat building and repairs, and tourist activities. These uses are not mutually exclusive. A working waterfront can coexist with a recreational waterfront if it is well planned and managed. In fact, the goal should be for the mixed uses to complement each other. In
Figure 6: Connecting through colour and activity: Beach bars along the River Spree in Berlin, Germany

Figure 7: Mixed uses create movement and interest: Tourist marina with restaurants in Naples, Italy
Portland, Maine, for example, the authorities, using municipal zoning powers, limited recreational boating to certain areas where it would not threaten the fishing industry. In other municipalities, lack of careful planning has led to conflict between fishermen and recreationalists. In the current economic conditions, when conflict exists, it is the fishermen who suffer.

There is a place and need for a working waterfront. Not only does it provide jobs and a tax base for the community, it serves a locational niche for water-related industries and supporting businesses. Furthermore, a safe, well-maintained and managed section of the working waterfront can actually be a draw for tourists curious to learn and observe the workings of various industries, although that curiosity should be satisfied in a way that does not hamper the industries’ actual operations. A shipping fleet ready to go out to sea or returning with fresh catch could be an entertaining and learning experience.

Museums, aquariums and teaching programmes are also a draw for tourists and residents alike; waterfronts have terrific potential to serve as teaching centres. Teaching and research programmes can be highly beneficial to the waterfront-related industries and therefore make a good complementary form of development. A research laboratory for a specialised trade such as aquaculture could make the waterfront a special destination for professional groups as well as students. In the USA, the federally funded Sea Grant programme provides resources that make it possible for American universities to become involved in such activities. For example, faculty from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are currently involved in aquaculture experiments at the waterfront in Quincy, Massachusetts, and Wood’s Hole Oceanographic Institute is actively involved in activities along the waterfront in Falmouth, Massachusetts. In contrast, Viana do Castelo’s fishing institute
appears to be minimally involved in local activities.

When waterfront uses are mixed, it is important to make sure that one use does not negatively affect the others. Salvage operations, scrap ships or dilapidated industrial structures, for example, interfere with tourists’ recreational experience, while curious tourists may hinder the operations of a working waterfront. Regulations clearly need to address possibly conflicting issues.

Tourist activities typically provide extensive local benefit along the waterfront. Specialised shops, restaurants, bars and even hotels and conference facilities spring up to serve tourists, as do amenities such as marinas, boardwalks, parks, bandstands, and swimming and fishing facilities, which local residents can also enjoy. The interplay between tourists and local citizens in Boston’s North End, Viana do Castelo’s Avenida Marginal area, and along Gloucester’s Rogers Street is valuable to both groups. If the waterfront is to serve as a tourist attraction, however, it is important to keep in mind the services and amenities that tourists need, such as well-marked information kiosks, public restrooms, benches and trash receptacles.

**Physical and visual connection between the waterfront and the community centre**

In order to maximise the potential of the waterfront, there must be a well-defined connection between the waterfront and the downtown area. As touristy waterfronts tend to be catalysts for growth in tourism-related activities, the community as a whole can benefit through supporting businesses. Downtown stores, hotels and restaurants can be an integral part of the tourist experience. Wide roads or large paved parking areas that disconnect the rest of the community from the waterfront are disadvantageous, as they hinder tourists from venturing inward from the waterfront.

When direct connections are not possible due to the historic layout of the waterfront and the community, good signage and design elements (such as period streetlights or walkways and bridges) can offer direction and draw people from one area to another (see Figure 9). This connectedness through design elements can be clearly noted throughout New Bedford’s historic whaling district and Portsmouth’s Strawberry Banke.

Planners should also define the nature of the local market, as business activities on the waterfront could be of concern to downtown businesses. When the downtown area or retail business centre is adjacent to the waterfront, there is little distinction between waterfront and downtown. When the waterfront is separated from the downtown, however, there is the potential for competition. In Boston’s case, waterfront revitalisation has helped to shift the market centre of the city toward the water’s edge. Given the development of malls in Portuguese cities, one would expect that markets will be shifting quite rapidly in the coming years, which could be a planner’s nightmare. Specialisation is clearly a requirement.

**Integration of the waterfront into key transport systems**

Poor access to rail systems or major roads will impinge upon a waterfront’s ability to meet its optimal potential. For example, if a waterfront’s location requires that goods be off-loaded onto trucks for a short journey to a rail station, where they are then loaded onto rail facilities, this adds to the cost of the goods. Similarly, if trucks must pass through crowded streets, if there are outdated cranes or no roll-off, roll-on capabilities, then the waterfront will be at a disadvantage. Such was the case at Rhode Island’s Quonset Point before the establishment of a system which enabled the double stacking of rail containers and before the transformation of a local town street into an arterial highway.
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Figure 9: Improving visual connections (Berlin, Germany)

Figure 10: Port and city relations (Hafencity Hamburg, Germany)
Effective traffic management
Unplanned traffic circulation can be chaotic for both vehicles and pedestrians. Some separation of vehicle traffic from pedestrians and controlled traffic management is necessary, regardless of the use at the waterfront. This becomes more imperative if there are mixed uses. Adequate parking and some mix of well-defined walkways, bike paths and jogging trails need to be established. Traffic-calming strategies and specific time limits for service vehicles are also beneficial.

Environmental cleanliness
Fish processing produces a lot of organic waste material, which attracts vermin and the risk of health problems. While waterfronts are becoming more cognisant of this issue, there is still extensive work to be done. Moreover, great care must be taken to ensure that sewer and/or combined sewer/storm water outflows are treated. Too frequently (for example, in New Bedford and along the Tagus River in Portugal), the lack of treatment has resulted in problems.

Marketing and promotion
Just like any other amenity, the waterfront needs to be marketed and promoted. All aspects of the waterfront need attention. The working waterfront needs to be marketed to water-related industries and support services. The educational aspect of the waterfront needs to be marketed to professional and trade associations as well as to universities and other educational institutions. The recreational aspects need to be marketed and promoted to residents and tourists alike. Overall, the waterfront in its entirety — indeed, the community as a whole — needs to be marketed and promoted as a tourist destination. Depending on the nature of the waterfront, it could be marketed to different target audiences: families, college and university students, business travellers, sports-minded tourists, seniors or people looking for relaxation.

Public–private partnerships
Given a waterfront’s varied functions and clientele, public–private partnerships are in order when it comes to managing the waterfront’s overall activity. There will most likely be a port or waterfront authority that will be in charge of overseeing the day to day running and management. The authority needs to work closely with government officials, however, to ensure coordinated and collaborative efforts. The chamber of commerce and/or the tourism board will play a role in the recreational and tourist aspects of the waterfront’s management. Downtown management organisations, retail business associations, special interest groups and other public-service divisions, such as police, coastguard, fire protection and parking authorities will also play important roles. Coordination and communication between all these entities will be crucial to the successful management of the waterfront.

Twinning: Joint-marketing initiative
Town twinning arrangements, often referred to as ‘sister cities’ in the USA, are a common phenomenon in Europe. Twinning arrangements between cities usually foster historical and cultural attributes between two geographically and politically distinct areas. The choice of twin may be based on all sorts of factors, geographical, cultural, industrial and even on political sentiments of solidarity, such as with Poland in the 1970s, and more recently with China and Cuba.

In 2003, ten outstanding initiatives involving 27 towns received Golden Stars awards at an award ceremony of the European Commission. ‘Town twinning is an excellent example of what citizens can do at a local level to contribute to the greater integration of Europe. It is by
sharing our different experiences that we grow richer both culturally and socially', said Ján Figel, European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism.17

Ports have followed the same initiative; for example, Porto, in Portugal, is twinned with Bristol, in England; The Port of Vancouver is twinned with the Port of Dalian, China’s second largest port; and the Port of Seattle has sister or friendship port relationships with 11 different ports on three continents. In March 2001, an agreement between the Port of London Authority (PLA) and the Port of Algeciras Bay Authority was the first of a series to be established with ports around the world in order to cooperate in various fields related to commercial port development and marine transport. Unlike the traditional ‘twinning’ arrangements between cities and ports, these initiatives were based on a formal commercial footing, with each port working to develop and gain new business for the benefit of the customer and the ports concerned. These would include establishing new markets, joint marketing and promotion, exchange of experience and information in the form of relevant key personnel exchange, and organising seminars or training programmes on all aspects of commercial, marketing and technology issues within their organisations.18 Similar agreements have been made between the PLA and the Port Authority of Thailand. Recently, Russia established twinning arrangements as intermodal routes for inter-Baltic cargo to/from the north European base ports. Port twinning has been established for Karshamn–Klaipeda, Trelleborg–Rostock, Karlskrona–Gdynia and Ystad–Swinousjcie.19

So while many of these twinning relationships have traditionally been strong on culture and weak on commerce, the trend certainly points to more significant collaboration where relationships are built on mutual need and knowledge transfer essential in a global economy.

CONCLUSION
Downtowns are struggling to maintain viability and to compete with suburban commercial centres. As communities seek to revitalise their downtowns, towns with waterfronts find themselves in a unique position to offer something special to citizens and visitors. Finding ways to make the waterfront an essential part of the downtown is a challenge to small communities, but also a great opportunity to build upon their unique culture and history.

It is clear that port communities are undergoing major transformations. In an environmental sense, ports have become much cleaner over the past two decades than they have been in times past and, given increasingly rigorous environmental standards in Europe and the USA, that trend looks set to continue. The new environmental standards are also spurring planners to consider green solutions in port development. The fact that these trends are now beginning to bear fruit is quite exciting.

In terms of the social side of the waterfront, current trends point to increased gentrification. Once gentrification begins, it requires a great deal of effort to increase affordable housing in an area, which means that the waterfront will become less ‘rough and tumble’, less working class and less immigrant. It will increasingly be the home of affluent, well-educated residents who work elsewhere.

The economy of old ports will be less dependent upon fishing and freight as both industries will increasingly move to technologically advanced areas where the infrastructure will enable the speediest off-loading of products. In contrast, old waterfronts will be the home of colourful recreational boats, public walkways and increased retail activities. They will be special places. And the planners? It is clear
that whether they are working at the national, state or provincial, local or port authority level, they will have exciting tasks ahead of them as the transformation continues.

References