

# Master Site Plan

## Introduction

Two years ago, Silver Bay's Board of Trustees commissioned a nationally-known firm (MESA, of Dallas, Texas) to create a Master Site Plan to set a 25-year renewal process in motion. This detailed document was completed and accepted by the Board in August of last year. The following is a summary of the process undertaken, the key areas of focus, and the general recommendations.

## Celebrating the Legacy

The Silver Bay experience is an inspiring and holistic immersion of people, history, and place. From the legendary foresight of Silas Paine to the ongoing legacy of multi-generational families who have participated in the Silver Bay Association over its 100 year history – all have made a lasting contribution to the organization's evolution. The essence of history at Silver Bay is the context within which a tremendous diversity of experiences is enjoyed. The place is steeped in the rich tradition of magnificent Adirondack structures and is a celebration of man's bond with the natural environment.

Silver Bay's timeless atmosphere is a sought-after destination for conferences, family reunions, weddings, relaxation, and recreation. The particular traditions of spiritual services, the arts, cultural events, retreats, and educational programs all play an important role in realizing the mission of Silver Bay and the greater YMCA organization.

## Looking Ahead

In 2009, the Silver Bay Association completed a consolidated vision for the future of the organization. The board and staff partnered in this

common goal – ensuring that the Silver Bay experience and traditions are stronger and even more accessible for the next generations of families and members to enjoy. The vision outlines a comprehensive array of projects to be orchestrated within a strategic framework – working together in a manner that reinforces the marketability, appeal, and viability of this magnificent campus.

## The Planning Vision: A Sustainable Strategy

After an exhaustive phase of site and program assessments, economic studies, visitor surveys, and general analysis, the Board and Master Site Plan Committee steered an innovative planning process facilitated by a planning consultant. The team intensely studied historic, ecological, revenue, and program opportunities through a series of workshops with the board and staff.

Responding to these analyses, the planning team devised a "Venue Strategy" that repositions the concept of campus programs. No longer seen as singular activities, the Venue concept offers a range of related offerings as a series of marketable "experiences." This holistic approach grants a deeper market penetration and broadens the campus appeal to a wider array of visitor groups. Directly relating to the campus legacy and mission, the plan identifies the following venues:

- Conference
- Spiritual Life
- Children's Program
- Team Building
- Environmental Education
- History
- Waterfront
- Family Camp
- Arts
- Sports



## Infrastructure & Support

Each venue is centered on an iconic landmark structure that best expresses the mission of the venue itself. Working with a constellation of over sixty existing buildings, the vision reinforces campus legibility and builds upon the assessments of historical patterns, programs, and natural systems. Many structures are reprogrammed to either their historic use or adapted to a new program that reinforces the venue they serve. The result is an enhanced visitor experience, a cognitive recognition of the venues themselves, and a restoration of many of the historic relationships that had eroded over time.

All initiatives seek to reinforce the long term economic strategy. Some



MESA sketch of the Silver Bay Campus Master Site Plan

low-profit/high mission programs are supported by achieving greater margins in other areas. Careful consideration in the strategy maintains the mission and non-profit status of the organization while seeking a compatible revenue capture that is on par with the region.

Signature elements of the plan include a new state-of-the-art conference center, new affordable lodging, significant dining hall renovations, and a new village of cottages on Oneida Bay. Other important projects include a new nature center, scouting center, and staff housing village. These are but a few of the initiatives outlined in a broad diversity of campus upgrades and renovations.

The plan envisions a healthy environment that is at balance with nature. Architectural gems are not only restored to their original shine and presence, but also populated with rich programming and engaging staff. Families will return often for reunions, and conference attendees will look forward to their annual week or weekend at Silver Bay. An overlay of economic sustainability ensures all aspects of the organization, facilities, and operations are in sync with the plan.

### A Course for Realization

A vision of this magnitude and impact will require dedication and a systemic approach toward implementation. The plan breaks out individual projects for a

phased approach, further identifying a sequence and path toward realization. Working within the venue structure, projects are organized according to their strategic contribution to the broader vision and guiding principals of the plan – responding to their ability to propel Silver Bay to attain a greater regional and national market presence.

Initial efforts being undertaken by the Board include decision-making about priority projects, further review of site issues, and planning for a major capital campaign. As a first step, the Board has commissioned a feasibility study by a seasoned firm, to be undertaken this summer. Look for further updates on Silver Bay's plans this fall!