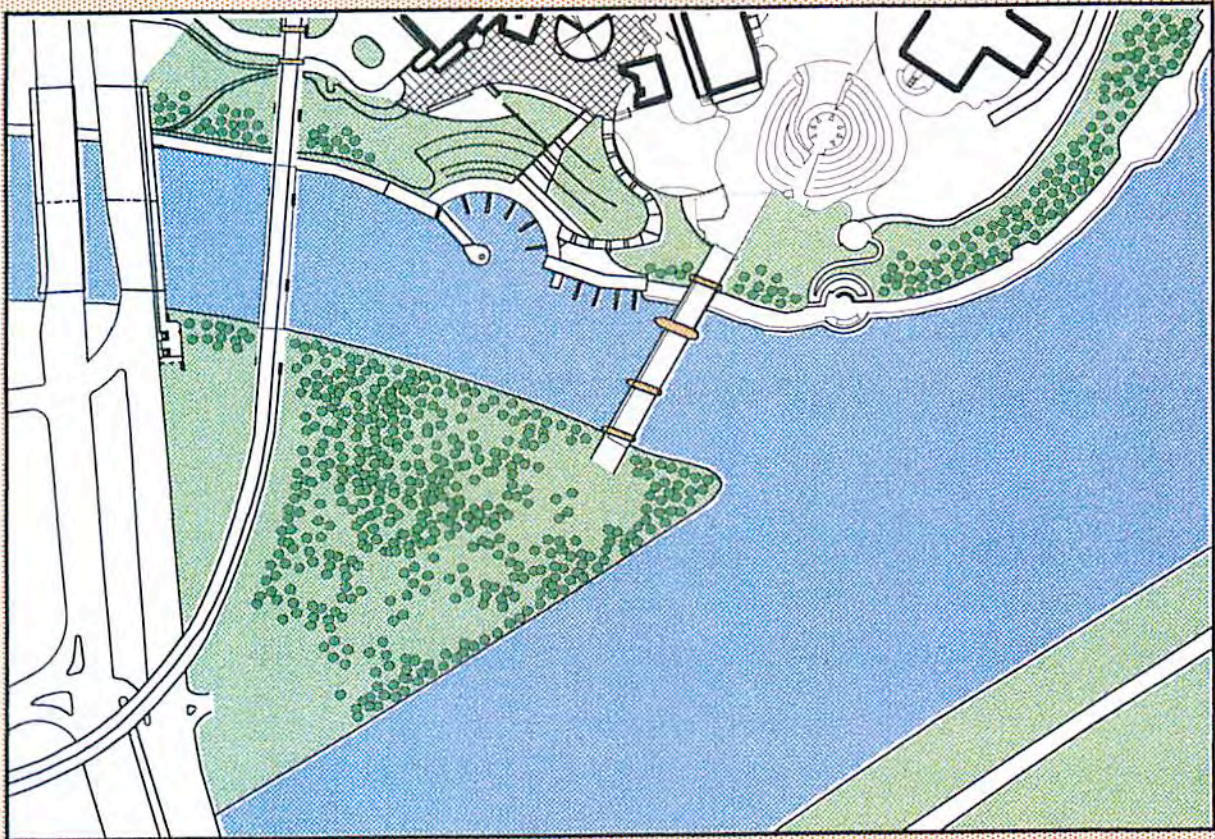


SOUTH POINT VISION DOCUMENT

May 1997



The Forks Aboriginal Planning Committee

I) NATURAL HISTORY INTERPRETATION

The natural environment of The Forks prior to European settlement was exceedingly rich and varied. It consisted of forest vegetation along the rivers, surrounded by a vast expanse of grassland. The first of the First Nations initial occupation of The Forks took place around 6500 B.C. when glacial Lake Agassiz gradually receded to the north. The reconstruction of Archaic period habitation at The Forks was made possible by the study of the artifacts found there. Although no pre-contact (period before European contact) agricultural artifacts have been found at The Forks, stratigraphic observations suggest the possibility of Aboriginal horticulture at the site. Plant domestication and hoe agriculture were practiced for hundreds of years by Aboriginal people before the arrival of fur traders and Selkirk settlers. Ethnic diversity can be identified through stylistic variation in pottery. Pottery and other artifacts found depict the earlier Black Duck occupations - 750 A.D. and the Rainy River culture, ca 1350 A.D. Traditional Aboriginal values were beginning to be recognized such as the wisdom of the elders and living in harmony with the Earth and its life forms. Other Aboriginal cultures soon emerged on the scene such as the Dakota (Assiniboine), Cree, Anishnabe (Ojibway) and then the Metis. For thousands of years, cross-country travel in The Forks district was accomplished on foot or canoe with material possessions being transported by backpacking and the use of the dog as a beast of burden. The horse was introduced into The Forks area in the late 1700's and the Red River Cart was a product of the early 1800's.

In the winter, the frozen rivers provided sheltered unobstructed level thoroughfares for the snowshoe equipped traveller. Animal meat from the winter chase was transported by means of hand drawn toboggans. During the 19th century, Aboriginal people navigated the rivers in birch bark canoes. Early dwellings of First Nations were teepees covered with animal hides (mainly bison). Aboriginal people later constructed fortifications of their own at The Forks. The Forks area where the rivers met was a natural meeting place.

The convergence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers at The Forks provided a metaphor for the emergence of the Metis nation itself. Just as the waters of the two separate stream come together and mingle at the confluence of the two rivers, so too did the cultural heritage and blood lines of First Nations and European peoples conjoin in this locality to produce the Metis Nation of Western Canada. The Metis were involved with many kinds of employment, played an active political role, and made up a major segment of the early farming community.

Programming and development at South Point will reenact this history by recreating various aboriginal settlements dating back to post-glacial times when the first settlements appeared to the fur trade era.

The Forks had a series of historically important fortifications and fur trade posts between 1738 and 1880. During the fur trade era, brigades of canoes, York boats, and Red River Carts provided transportation in networks in every direction. Soon after, transportation turned to the railway and The Forks site was altered dramatically with construction of railway activities. The Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railways established their marshalling yards between 1908 and 1911. These yards were known as the "East Yards" and were located north of the Steam Plant building. The East Yards were the central marshalling yards for various railways for more than 60 years.

The Low Line bridge was built in 1888 by the Grand Trunk Pacific and Manitoba Railway. The bridge's counterweight raised the bridge to allow vessels to sail up the Assiniboine River. It provided access to the East Yards for trains leaving the Main Line tracks. Today, the low line bridge is no longer in use and will be refurbished as a pedestrian bridge representing and replicating the railway era.

II) THE VISION QUEST

One of the challenges The Forks Aboriginal Planning Committee faced was creating one vision to represent a collective of different Aboriginal groups. A series of visioning workshops were held and provided each member of the committee an opportunity to express their ideas for South Point and the Low Line Bridge while an Aboriginal artist recorded the ideas graphically. Being able to visualize ideas helped committee members effectively communicate and eventually come to consensus.

This planning process is known as "co-design" and involves the community in the design of their environments by using graphic visualization as part of a consultation process. The benefits of co-design in this situation was that it allowed the aboriginal community full participation and control over the process and the results.

III) COMPLETING THE CIRCLE

The Vision

The Forks Aboriginal Planning Committee, with a membership from the major Aboriginal cultures of Manitoba, have worked collectively and cooperatively sharing each others ideas, dreams, and concerns about the development of The Fork's South Point site and Low Line Bridge.

The elders tell us that South Point was always a place to meet and do business, and its present day theme should be based on this.

South Point will be established as a place to meet and experience the traditions of all aboriginal groups. It will be a place for people to visit, learn, and participate in various cultural activities during different settings and seasons. The theme will be a 'time tunnel', where one would experience the transition from present to past when travelling from The Forks to South Point. South Point will provide visitors with an experience of past Aboriginal life by depicting particular tribal groups during different time periods, settings, and seasons. These activities would be scheduled to take place in time for the 1999 Pan Am Games.

Economic sustainability as well as environmental preservation would be recognized in a wide array of opened and strategically structured buildings, venues and planned activities developed by business stakeholders and other entrepreneurs.

With the assistance of an Aboriginal artist to record the vision with drawings, the vision was soon realized by this unique group of people from different cultures, although being just one - Aboriginal. The opportunity to form a partnership that would determine the future development of South Point and the Low Line Bridge area was met head on. The results were overwhelmingly constructive and positive which proves it can be done. People from diversely different cultures together have a vision for the world to see.

IV) THE CHALLENGE

The waterways have brought together cultures from the north, south, east, and west for thousands of years. Through migration of First Nations tribes and the Metis, the original Forks changed hands many times as a seasonal living area, important to all but possessed by none. It is in this spirit that the built and natural environment at South Point will accommodate all activities and continue to evolve. Offering a unique experience that will introduce visitors to Aboriginal cultures at South Point and enhance the meeting place theme of The Forks was truly a challenge.

The long term plans for future development will be set aside in order to work on short term development plans targeted for completion prior to the 1999 Pan Am Games.

Visitors will be able to experience the past traditional history of the Aboriginal cultures by observing and participating in planned activities. Visitors will be able to take something home that will remind them of their time spent on South Point. Both visitors, tourists, and users of the South Point site will experience the history of Aboriginal cultures and will possibly be present in the making of history.

V) THE BRIDGE

Historically, this current concrete and iron railway bridge replaced the wooden truss bridge in 1901. Immigrants from Europe and the east were brought in on this track in the 1800's.

Today, this bridge is no longer in service and is in the process of being designated an historic structure. The South Point bridge will be refurbished as a pedestrian bridge connecting the history of Aboriginal cultures at South Point to The Forks of today. There will be a Metis presence on the bridge because it symbolizes the bridging of cultures, connecting the Europeans on one side and the First Nations people on the other side. It will have open vendors on it during the summer months. There would be a continuance of the cycling path crossing the bridge as well as benches built for people to relax and take in the sights and sounds between The Forks and South Point.

Future development may include actual rail cars stretched across the bridge to accommodate vendors, an information centre, galleries, restaurants, and memorabilia of South Point. The rail cars will also act as shelter for those wishing to cross the bridge and escape the environmental weather changes.

The bridge's counterweight will portray works of Aboriginal artists to emphasize the entrance to the pedestrian bridge and also indicate the beginning of the 'time tunnel' and journey through Aboriginal culture. The art could depict the meeting of the rivers, the meeting of people, a place for business and trade, and Metis and First Nations symbols. Any of these or other ideas will be welcomed as possible themes for a design competition open to all aboriginal youth artists.

VI) LEISURE & RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Historically, The Forks area was a place where people from different cultures came to do business. They also brought with them stories and ideas, and shared how each would entertain themselves by holding different events, contests of endurance, dancing, sporting events and the like.

Not much has changed in how things were once done back then as to how they are done now. Events can now take place under roof cover and it is no longer necessary to move the furniture outside in order to hold a good old time fiddling and jigging foot stomping ho-down.

Both summer and winter activities will take place at the South Point site, on the South Point Bridge, and on the waterways.

Throughout all seasons, the following activities may take place at South Point. Many of the listed activities that would normally take place outdoors in the summer, would be held indoors during the winter months:

- **Special tourist events:**
 - ◊ Walking tours
 - ◊ Canoe tours
 - ◊ York Boat Tours
 - ◊ Water Taxis
 - ◊ Biking
 - ◊ Tour packages: South Point can be the starting point of a 2-3 week tour of Aboriginal cultural events to take place. The package would include travel to points of interest such as sweat lodges, overnight camping in teepee villages, etc.

- **Entertainment:**
 - ◊ Contests of endurance
 - ◊ Traditional games
 - ◊ One act plays and reenactments of historical significance
 - ◊ Story telling
 - ◊ Dog sled racing and rides
 - ◊ Toboggan
 - ◊ Trophy ice fishing

- **Traditional dancing:**
 - ◊ Pow Wows
 - ◊ Red River Jigs
 - ◊ Square Dancing

- **Cultural teaching and education:**
 - ◊ Language classes of Aboriginal peoples
 - ◊ The making of traditional clothes and blankets
 - ◊ Traditional cooking
 - ◊ Birch bark canoe building
 - ◊ Teepee building
 - ◊ Hide tanning and smoking
 - ◊ Wood carving
 - ◊ Art classes
 - ◊ Aboriginal horticulture

Many of these activities can be held in conjunction with other events such as the Festival du Voyageur, Folklarama, Pan Am Games, and Canada Day. Many of the activities and events may also be organized through partnerships with outside sponsorship and other partnerships throughout the year.

VII) BUSINESS, ENTREPRENEURIAL, & TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

The South Point site and Bridge can support space for many business opportunities to occur. While some opportunities are seasonal, most businesses will be housed in various building structures enabling all season presence:

- Outdoor Vendors
 - ◊ Food
 - ◊ Paintings
 - ◊ Jewellery
 - ◊ Wood Carvings
 - ◊ Souvenirs
- Indoor Restaurant
- Metis trading post and meeting place
- Aboriginal Meeting Place
 - ◊ Rental space
 - ◊ Offices
 - ◊ Meetings
 - ◊ Plays
 - ◊ Reenactments
 - ◊ Pow wows
 - ◊ Teaching
 - ◊ Training
- Marina
- Rentals
 - ◊ Canoes
 - ◊ York Boats
 - ◊ Ice fishing huts
 - ◊ Fishing seminars
 - ◊ Ice fishing derby
 - ◊ Bait shop
- Tours and touring packages
- Pictorial souvenirs of people dressed in character
- Videos and books

VIII) MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The management and financial planning of South Point is driven by a set of principles that will guide the partners which are:

Public Access

Travel routes for pedestrians and cyclists will be designed in a manner that recognizes South Point as an important destination. Through the establishment of appropriate signage, points of interest, interpretive activities en route, and facilities for leisure activities, visitors will be welcomed to linger and appreciate the natural and built environment of South Point. The site will be accessible to all sectors of society, including the disabled, children and older adults.

Access to the site will be provided by the bridge connecting South Point and the general Forks areas. The bridge will provide visitors with a special summer and winter promenade to South Point. South Point will have accessibility from Main Street as a passenger drop-off for bus tours and will be accessible by the rivers both summer and winter.

All Season Programming

Year round activities will be planned with attention to other seasonal activities taking place along the rivers. For example, summer activities at South Point can be scheduled to happen in conjunction with other activities at designated points along the river in and around Winnipeg as well as connecting outside of Winnipeg like Lower Fort Garry, Manitoba Boat clubs, fishing derbies, etc. Activities can overlap into the spring and fall seasons.

Winter activities can be planned to take place in conjunction with other winter festivities like the Festival du Voyageur which is already well known nationally and included in many bus tours. The winter season should be highlighted as an important time to attract tourists and for Winnipeg to host some major winter activities like an Annual Fishing derby, which would be billed as one of Canada's largest.

Both summer and winter activities at South Point can be organized through partnerships with other connecting points of interest along the river, thereby enhancing Winnipeg's attraction to the tourism market.

Partnerships

The formation of partnerships with private and public sector investors, the three levels of government, and organizations along the river will be important factors to

the economic development strategy. Other outside partnership alliances will develop and evolve throughout the planning and development of South Point and the Bridge area. The forming of an Aboriginal Community Corporation will be developed to attract private and public sector investment. Leadership will come from the Aboriginal Community. Three levels of government will be active partners and will provide assistance and advice when needed and when appropriate.

Community partnerships will include but not be limited to the following:

- Aboriginal Council Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
- Indigenous Women's Collective
- Metis Women of Manitoba
- Manitoba Metis Federation
- Manitoba Association of Native Languages
- Canadian Heritage
- Manitoba Government
- The City of Winnipeg
- The Pan Am Games Committee
- The Forks North Portage Partnership
- Manitoba Forestry Association
- Festival du Voyageur
- The Forks Heritage Advisory Committee
- The Rivers West

Sustainability

Development at South Point and the South Point Bridge will be part of a long term tourism and sustainable development strategy with all the planning components based on sustainable development criteria. Financial stability will be the underlying basis for any programming, development and management functions. Each new initiative will require a business plan that will meet the criteria of sustainable development and fit in with the overall development plan of South Point as well as abide by The Forks Heritage Interpretive Plan.

IX) MAKING IT HAPPEN

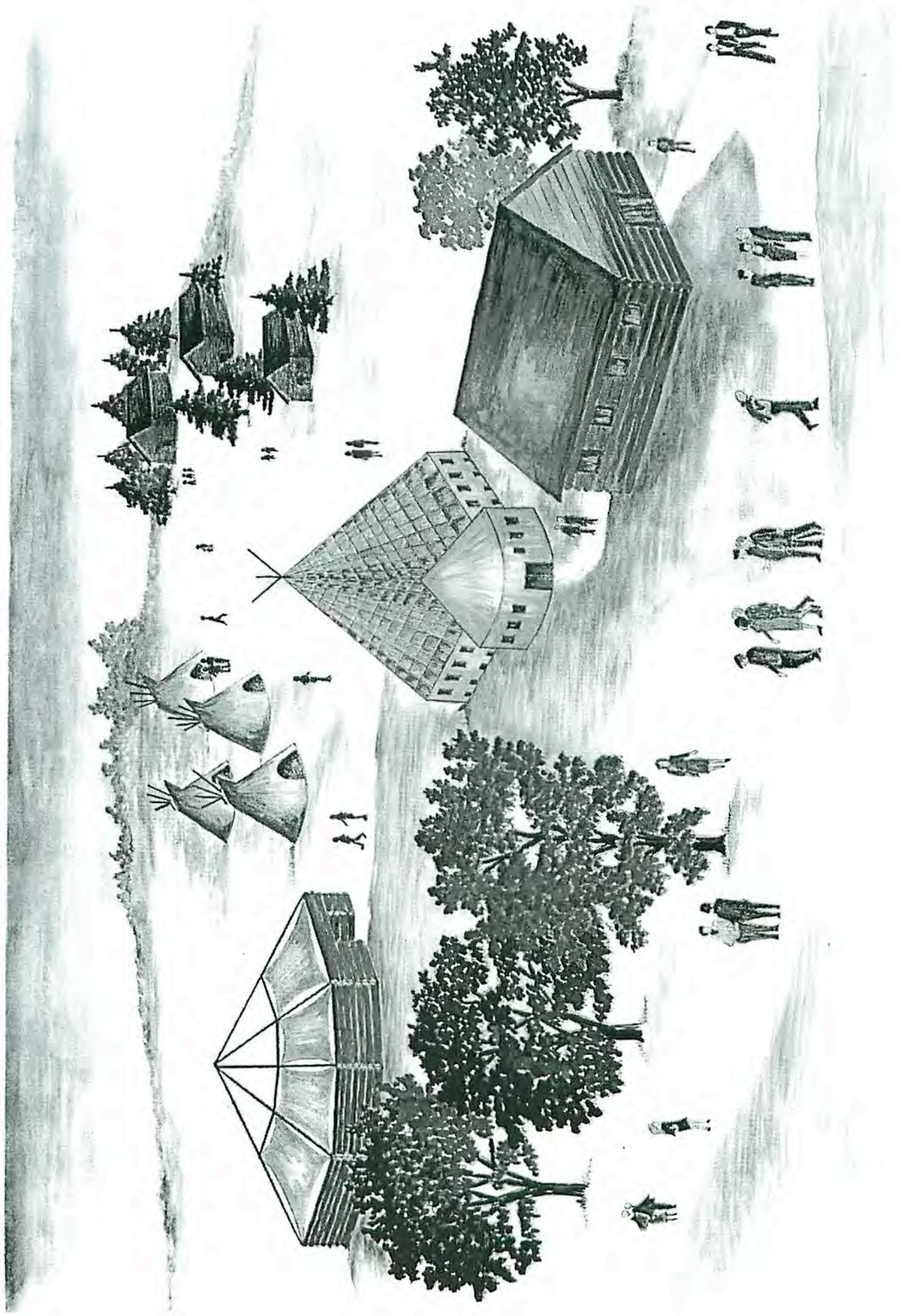
The South Point and South Point Bridge area can create the same level of excitement and community support as other tourist attractions formed in and around the city and province.

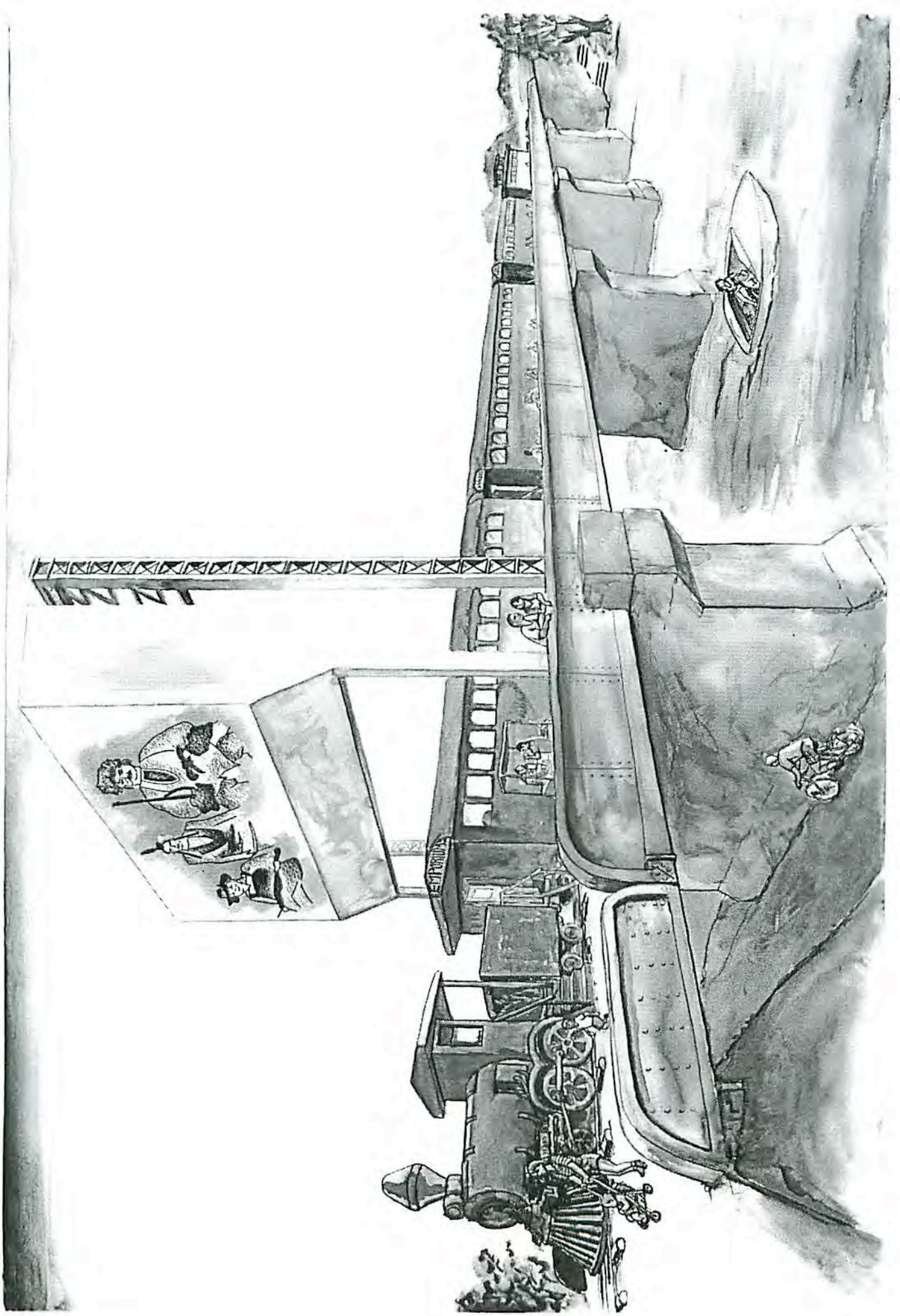
Prerequisites to making it happen are a vision, community leadership, cooperative management, and community and stakeholder ownership.

Several steps have been identified to develop South Point and the South Point Bridge:

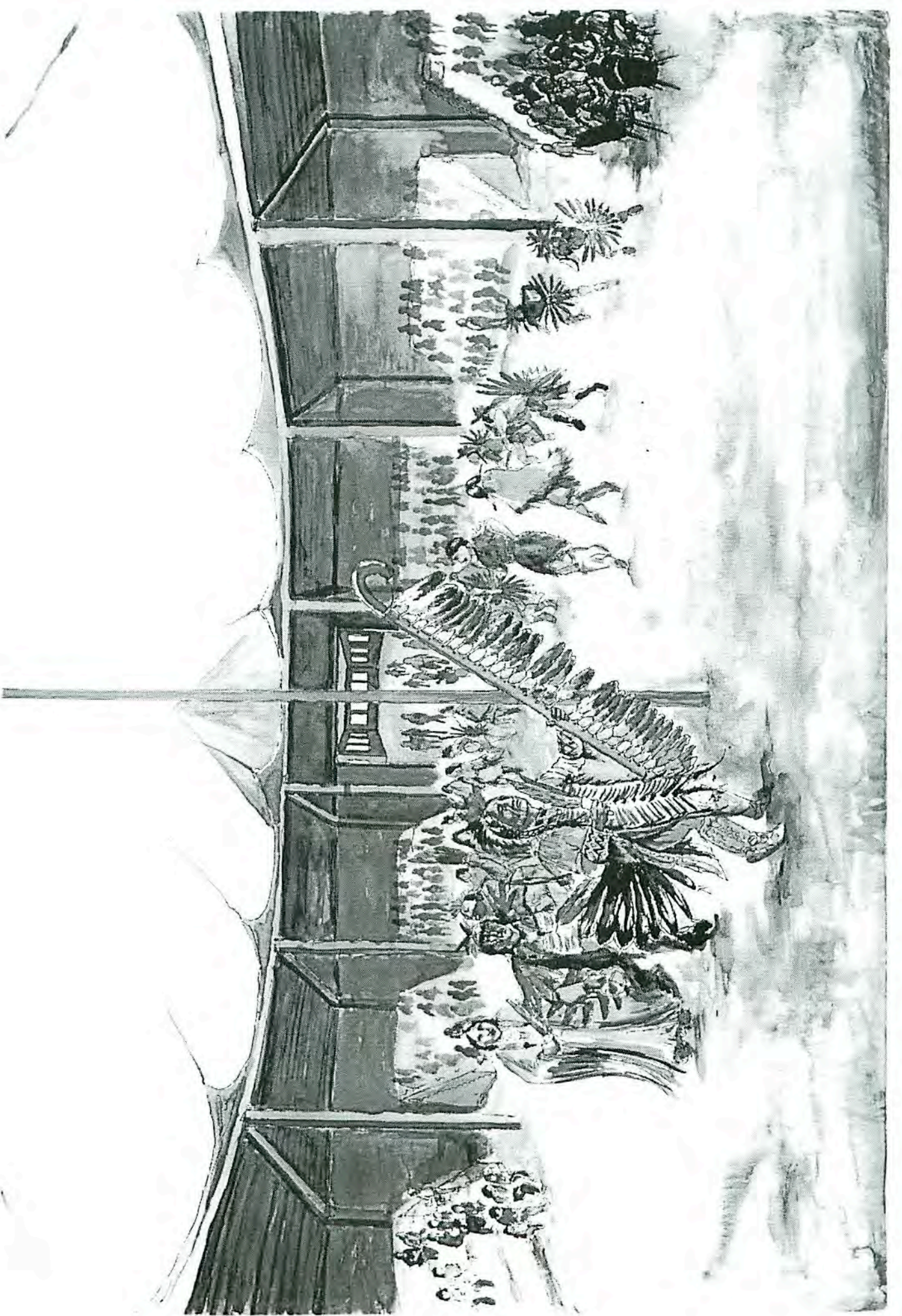
- 1) Presentations of the vision to key stakeholders.
- 2) Follow up discussions with key stakeholders to identify potential areas of support to be considered in the development of a business plan.
- 3) Completion of the Business Plan to include the following components:
 - Site infrastructure development
 - Programming (including Pan Am event)
 - Stage I Development, pre 1999
 - Stage II Development, post 1999
 - Communications Plan
 - Financing strategy (ie. public/private financing options)
- 4) Ensure for Aboriginal presence in the planning and design for the repairs and enhancements to South Point bridge.
- 5) Organize an Aboriginal Festival in partnership with the Pan Am officials as a lead up trial run to the 1999 Pan Am Games.
- 6) Work with Pan Am Games officials to finalize plans for the 1999 Pan Am Games activities at South Point.

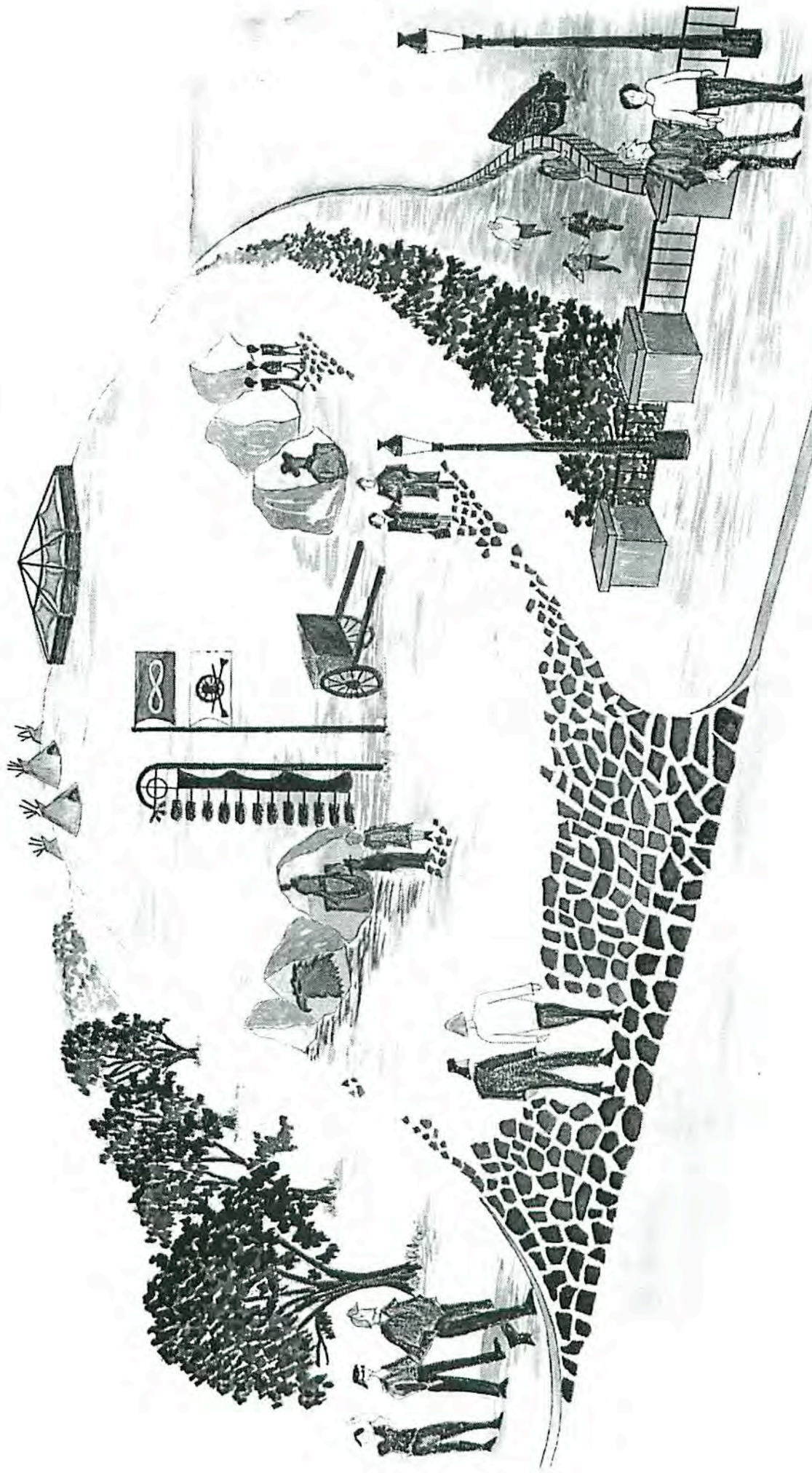
ATTACHMENTS

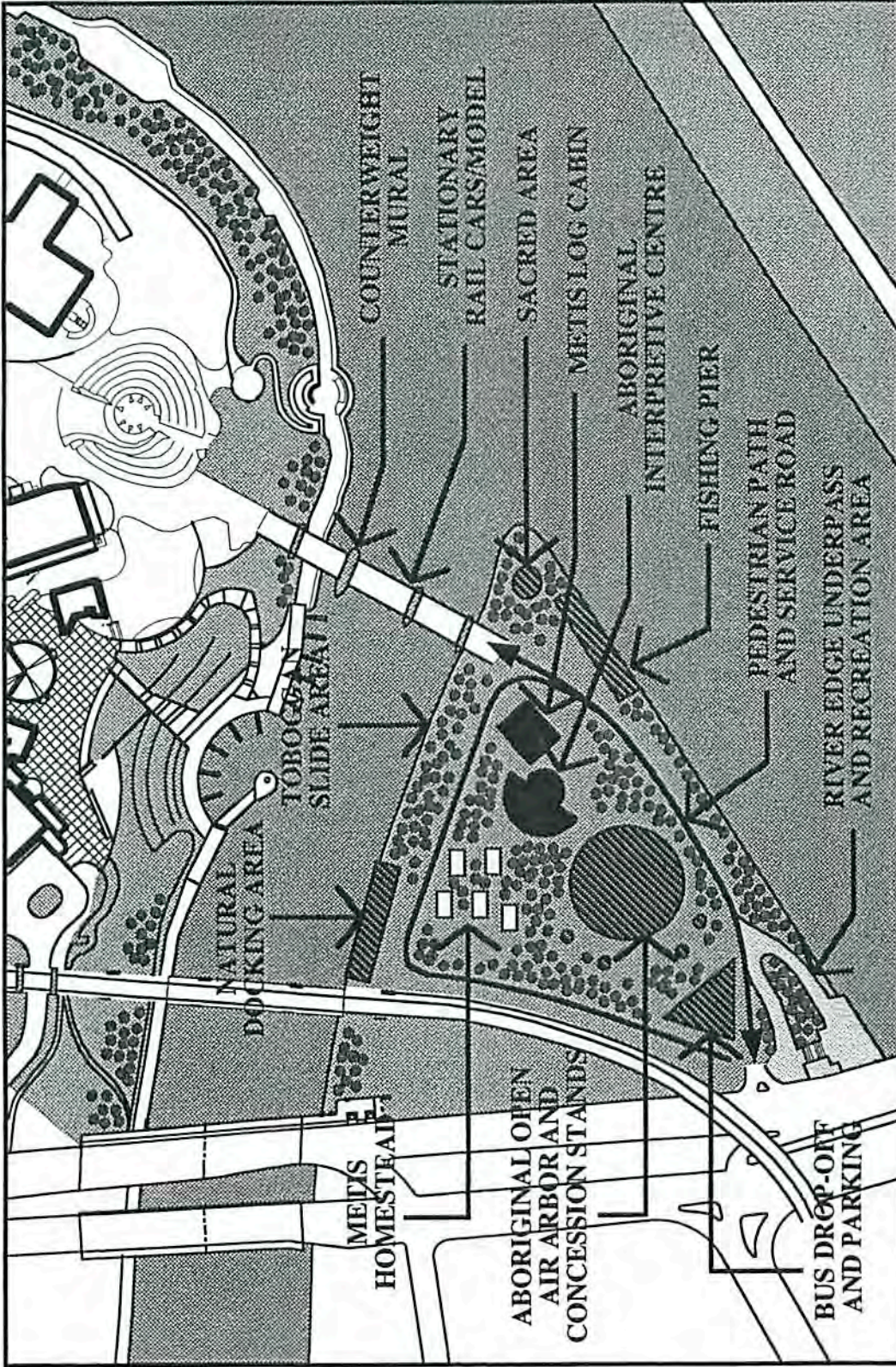












South Point

Development Concept