

A World's Fair for 2009/10/11 etc.

WHAT:

Really cool bikes and boats for rent, and a new vision of our common transportation future

WHERE:

Meadow Lake at Flushing Meadow/ Corona Park, Queens, N.Y., site of the 1939 & 1964 World's Fairs

WHEN:

Over the next 3 years, hopefully much longer, maybe permanently

WHO:

Designer/Builders of non-traditional, electric-assist and other human-powered bikes, trikes and boats from 191 other countries, 49 other States, 61 other counties and 59 NYC Community Boards, 360 in all
And companies who are making these vehicles available to the public
Advanced design, all-weather, all-terrain, multi-passenger etc. wheelchair makers
A selection of local establishments capable of supplying high quality, low cost ethnic food to a cart
An Insurance, Airline and Shipping company

HOW:

By contacting all the relevant parties and inviting comment and involvement
By earning enough from current operations to make this a self-supporting enterprise
By giving participants the opportunity to gain the funds necessary to finance their involvement
By applying for grants through a non-profit entity

WHY:

New laws and technological advances have made real breakthroughs in lightweight transportation possible today. What is needed is a high profile prestigious event, that will motivate designers, builders and allied companies from all over the world to bring their new ideas forward, and into the real world, as quickly as possible. Bridging the gap between the common bicycle and the luxury SUV is long overdue. From asthma rates and obesity to brownouts, traffic jams and melting icecaps, the severity of the economic and health damage we are causing, by maintaining our present levels and patterns of energy use, increases daily.

We know that bicycles, artisanship and stress on shared resources are common features in the lives of people from every corner of the world, including this one. Using our combined ingenuity, creativity and experience, we can begin to re-shape how we get ourselves, and our goods, around. If we are successful here, we may help inspire others to apply themselves to working together, to expand access to other needed improvements in our lives. Meanwhile, if introducing these new possibilities to

the public primarily involves sharing pleasurable experiences, there can hardly be a better way to reach your goals.

LightWheels is currently operating the concession to rent bikes and boats and sell snacks at the Queens New York, Flushing Meadow/Corona Park, 93 acre "Meadow Lake",

We are using this operation as the basis of a park-wide, traditional, creative and futuristic bike exhibition, demonstration and public participation program. We want to sow the seeds of a new **World's Fair**, to operate continuously from September 2008 to September 2011, and beyond.

This starts with the fun part, the "rides", by making available colorful, usable, creative, existing and futuristic varieties of electric-assisted and human powered transportation, for the young, the old and everybody in-between.

Consistent with the Parks departments own recent "Strategic Plan", we are seeking to involve the existing resources in the park, the Hall of Science, the Wildlife Center, the Art Museum, Skating Rink, Zoo, Botanical Garden, Sports Stadiums etc. in a sustained program to use the popularity of these small and slow-moving, new, strange and wonderful vehicles, to increase both overall Park use and ease of movement, to become a new form of public transit.

A version of this system can become a permanent part of this and other parks' infrastructure, attractiveness, and service to the communities which surround them. The benefits of the system evolving here may expand to public spaces throughout New York City.

This effort can be structured as a private enterprise, with a public purpose, and return to the original supporters, both investors and participants, (along with many other rewards), substantial profits. This can be done without allowing this effort to become a profit-oriented, bottom-line based event. In order to keep the profit motive from overwhelming all other factors, limits will be put on the portion of proceeds which may be used to repay investors. One suggestion is that at least the same amount must be used to finance free use of these facilities by those for whom it would represent a substantial hardship to pay for them.

Artists and craftspeople, from both the surrounding neighborhoods and the 191 other countries from which they hail, (all of which use bikes far more than we do), the other 49 States, New York's other 61 Counties, and 59 local Community Boards can become participants by submitting designs and vehicles from each jurisdiction, determined through "peer review", to be put into use here.

We can further encourage these developments by expediting access to travel, hospitality and other needed support to visiting designers and builders, by soliciting help, especially from those who hail from their home towns, to help enable the broadest involvement possible.

The boat rental facility that is a part of this concession can be used as a way to launch a waterborne version of this event, including traditional waterborne vehicles crafted by indigenous peoples

All one million K-PhD students and teachers who are part of our school system today can be hands-on participants in this event. This is a serious effort which is nevertheless intended to be thoroughly enjoyable. It is dedicated to marshaling the resources needed to enable us to transform and vastly upgrade our access to clean, quiet, human-scale-vehicles, while also demonstrating how these ingenious devices can form a new element of our vital public transit system.

World's Fairs highlight cultural diversity and technology and are supposed to be fun too. This plan is a dramatic and constructive response to impending drastic climate change. Working to encourage innovation and accelerating the healing process of the planet is now job number one.

Since this is a three-year program, initially, to save time and complexity, mostly conventional vehicles can be used with a healthy number of recumbent trikes etc.. By the time year two arrives, there should be a majority of vehicles that qualify as unique or exotic.

Thanks to the internet, there can be an infinite number of worthy vehicles catalogued, described, shown in action and even made available for purchase where appropriate. Assembling this resource will begin by culling the best examples from existing databases.

We are seeking the cooperation of some of the airlines which continuously buzz this park, in order to be able to offer deeply discounted or free transport for both these vehicles and their creators. An insurance company too might like to associate themselves with such life-supporting activity.

A variety of boats, from radio controlled to wind-propelled, scale models or full sized, can look and work beautifully on these quiet waters. We are cooperating fully with our neighbors, The American Small Craft Association (TASCA), Row New York, and the Hong Kong dragon boats in expanding opportunities to learn to use watercraft safely and enjoyably. We are interested in displaying and using the latest in environmentally responsible, human and electric powered boats, for the enjoyment of parks users. Classic rowboats, canoes, kayaks, and paddleboats are still available, but will soon be augmented by some higher-tech, exotic and uniquely configured craft.

This lake can be utilized to exhibit artworks, some in the form of boats, others launched for fun or art's sake. Odd bikes and other radically different land-based vehicles, being made available for parks users, will themselves seem to many to be mobile sculptures, and rightfully so. It doesn't hurt that many of them are also serious statements about the nature of our universe and our ability to impact important issues by using creative approaches.

Once we have provided appropriate assurances to park officials in regards maintenance issues, we hope the sale and rental of kites might also become a part of this enterprise, including contests and displays. An airborne element would complete the picture and allow for another highly visual demonstration of the benefits of quiet, colorful, creative and social activity, to bring life to the park.

Ways can be found to engage nearby public transportation, with lightweight, low speed, people and park friendly vehicles, available at convenient locations to help users to easily and inexpensively take that last long step from the Willets Point Station or the Mets' parking lot, to the skating rink or Botanical Garden. Synergies should help draw new park users and customers from far beyond the usual places, to help make all of these recreational facilities as well as the park as a whole and its many varied attractions increasingly popular destinations, for many residents and tourists alike.

Since a large number of free rides will be given, many volunteers will also be involved in the operation. At least one quarter of all employees must be drawn from neighborhoods that are no more than a five-minute walk or bike-ride from the borders of the Flushing Meadow/ Corona Park.

This effort will be greeted positively by the current political leadership, since it will affirm New York's identity as a "world city" with a deepening commitment to the environment. Every attempt is being made here to be fully inclusive and positive. One concern is a competing corporate-driven attempt to

do a more profit-oriented, less participatory version of this concept, especially if this first stage turns out to be a rousing success.

There is a broad range of new human-scale, clean and affordable transport modalities on the way. Ironically, some of these urgently needed design “advances”, such as multi-passenger “sociable” bikes, existed in abundance 100 years ago. What is significant is the ongoing legislation by the NYS legislature to classify electric-assist vehicles as bikes, enabling us to take a fresh look at a host of previously abandoned or discarded ideas, that can be as colorful and fun as they are useful.

Everybody needs green spaces, exercise and safe, non-destructive and affordable ways to get around. Many different groups will be happy to help in this process, from the wheelchair community to environmentalists, and a bicycling population that includes practically everyone from everywhere. Activity will be more transparent and participatory than usual. The city itself, of course, has final control over virtually every aspect of such events as these.

Vehicle designs, in the form of a drawing, a model or something that only the designer/builder rides, it can be practically anything non-hazardous at all. If it may be used by other designer/builders only, in a kind of exchange, one set of requirements and proper waivers and releases will be in effect. If the public is going to be allowed to use the vehicles within a confined space and protected environment, another, more strict set of standards will have to be used. If it will be possible for users to ride it away, to use in the rest of the park, the most stringent requirements will exist. This will need to be negotiated with the eventual insurance company.

This event can be regarded by participants as everything from an interactive website to exchange and expose ideas, for some, to a commercial exposition for others, who are demonstrating products. Certainly, the protection of the public is paramount, so fairgoers would need to sign releases and have risks explained carefully, especially due to the varying stages of development different vehicles are in. Meanwhile, the more flexibility, within the bounds of safety, the better.

Existing and new ethnic festivals will be invited to incorporate this event into their ongoing programs. Storytelling, with or without music, surely seems appropriate. With the Park’s own lake and marina close by, finding the most beautiful and pleasurable ways to catch the wind certainly seems like the most natural thing to do.

There are no electric-assisted boats or other exotic craft presently, but no apparent prohibition on them either. As regards the food being sold, parks’ officials have expressed the willingness or even desire, that the usual hot dogs and chips be upgraded nutritionally, as long as the final product is affordable. The same methodology, hopefully, will apply to our desire to expand into kites, balloons, novel watercraft etc.

A Governing Board for this event is being formed, dedicated to improving everyone’s ability to enjoy their park experiences, by preserving and enhancing its natural beauty, while expanding accessibility to new, healthful, non-intrusive activities.(A second, **Technical Board**, will be formed to assist designers and builders in developing the most advantageous vehicles while minimizing the likelihood of harm.) This board is also responsible for making certain that all parties to this event can contribute their ideas and concerns and participate in the process of addressing them.

The following is a breakdown of expenses and income possibilities, should this turn out to be a very popular event. Under ideal conditions, this typically six month concession could be open and running for ten months a year, especially since the development and use of weather-protecting cycles, (the key current disadvantage of lightest-weight vehicles like bikes) is also a major goal here. To be conservative this economic rundown assumes only 180 days clement enough to operate at full tilt. Likewise, it assumes an eight-hour day, when a sixteen hour operation, between 7 am and 11 pm, is allowed under this contract so that capacity is more than 50% higher than what is shown here. None of these incomplete calculations include additional profits available from the operation of a food, beverage and ice cream business, which is included in this concession, or the online element.

Gross Receipts

Expenses

200 vehicles in use,
 X \$5-\$10/Person/Hr
 X 2 people/boat 1/bike (or more)
 X 8 Hours/Day
 X 180 Days/Year (25 weekends)

Purchase 200 boats & bikes \$200,000
 Renovations, legal an PR \$150,000
 Rent and utilities \$ 90,000
 Insurance \$ 90,000
 Help [10@\\$15/Hr](#) 10@\$25/Hr \$550,000

Total is \$3,240,000

Total is \$1,080,000

not including vehicle, food & drink sales

Using these assumptions, this project would show a profit even if it generated only one third of the projected receipts.

If this opportunity is maximized, there could be 200 boats, twice the projected fleet, or more. The Central Park lake has 100 boats and is less than ¼ the size of Meadow lake’s 93 acres. The number of bikes could be five times the number projected without congesting this park and those others nearby, all part of the planned “Emerald Necklace” of five of Queens’ nearly-adjacent parks. There are a host of other money-generating activities permitted, from sale of food and hats and T-shirts to rentals of many park-friendly aids to the public’s enjoyment, from model boats to Frisbees, to kites. The amount of profit generated here could be very large and is only limited by the self-imposed proviso that one-half be used to provide free services.

This is a business venture with a relatively modest downside risk and the potential for those becoming involved at this early stage to benefit very substantially if it is completely successful. At the worst, it should be lots of fun, and for a good cause.

Collectible artwork, reproducible on clothing, posters, etc., can be created and sold too. Grants are being applied for relative to the non-profit elements of this event as well. This concession can be the model for a more expansive and utilitarian version of a park vending facility, with budget-conscious healthier foods and fully-accessible environmentally and socially-beneficial recreational pleasures emphasized.