GRITTY.
GREEN.
REAL.
The Harbor District Identity
Our Harbor District is a 1,000-acre neighborhood that combines industry with entertainment; global trade with local commerce; freshwater research with freshwater recreation; homes for millennials, for families, for retirees, and for fish and wildlife.

These juxtaposed uses grew up here together as our District evolved from a rice marsh with plentiful fish and game to an economic hub serving industries throughout the state – giving rise to an area of **rust & green**.

Many of Milwaukee’s oldest companies got their start around the Harbor District and shaped its **scrappy personality**. Allen, Bradley, Allis, and Harnischfeger have been followed by generations of entrepreneurs; the District is a microcosm of the **real** hard work that built Milwaukee.

Over centuries, waves of different immigrants have made their way to our shores: the earliest native people were followed by Potawatomi and Ojibwe, French fur traders, Kaszube fishermen, and present day Hispanic and Hmong people. Milwaukee’s LGBT community, artists, and makers have all added layers to our **rich history**.

Today our District is a **surprising mix** of **old & new, high-tech & low-tech**, aging infrastructure and **memorable** venues. People come to taste our food, hear our music, experience our waterfront, and see our public art. They leave our district with stories to tell.

Our 9 miles of waterfront include the confluence of the Milwaukee, Menomonee and Kinnickinnic Rivers, and the **dramatic** vista where they flow into Lake Michigan. Our maritime heritage is visible in our working harbor, but every year more recreational boaters find their way to our waters.

Those who have experienced our Harbor District say, **“it’s the unpolished Milwaukee,” “has unexpected hidden places to explore,” “makes gritty cool”, “is offbeat & edgy”, “once experienced is never forgotten.”**

Our Harbor District never loses sight of the hard work that made us – and knows vision, dedication, and respect for the environment will take us to where we are going next.

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This document is a condensed version of the “Branding and Identity Deployment Guidelines & Plan, dated January 2019” as prepared by Chemistry in Place and American Design.
WHO IS THE HARBOR DISTRICT?

The Harbor District aims to attract people and create memorable places where everyone feels welcome. As people are key to placemaking, understanding visitors, residents, employers and workers who are seeking adventure, education, a change of pace, the open water, jobs and something fresh is imperative.

The following groups were identified as having an interest in the Harbor District and represent populations with a historical connection, current workers and residents, and future audiences that may visit.

- **Residents** of the **Near South Side** and nearby **neighborhoods**
- Milwaukee’s **Latino/Hispanic** community
- **Employers & employees** of Harbor District businesses
- **Large employers**, like Rockwell Automation and Komatsu Mining Corp.
- **Existing industries**, like Wrought Washer and Engel Tool & Forge
- **New industries**, like Foamation and Enlightened Brewery
- **Port Milwaukee** and **marine**-related businesses
- **Recreational water users** (boating community, kayakers, fishermen, etc.)
- **Water research and technology** institutions and companies
- **Visitors** from beyond the Harbor District and Near South Side

As the Harbor District develops and changes, it is important to consider who will benefit from and engage with those changes. Will new places serve some or all of the groups identified above? Do use or design considerations for new developments, public art, or placemaking consider the impact on the people that make the Harbor District unique?
The Harbor District is many things, some of which are complete opposites like “high-tech & low-tech” and “rust & green.” Recognizing these dichotomies helps identify opportunities and opens us to how the District can be true to itself and incorporate contrasting concepts in a distinctive and authentic manner. These seemingly contradictory features of the Harbor District form the basis of the District’s identity, summed up in the three words below.

**GRITTY. GREEN. REAL.**

The following section describes the Harbor District identity within the framework of gritty, green, and real. This brand encompasses the history of the District, its current environment, and the potential for future changes. This identity is meant to inform placemaking efforts throughout the District, including, but not limited to, the examples listed below.
GRITTY.

Gritty is a reference to the past and reflects the prevalent imagery of the District's infrastructure and industrial works. Gritty is bold, heavy duty, rugged, and structural. Gritty materials and construction includes formed reinforced concrete, exposed structural steel, heavy timber, and sheet metal.

Photo credits: 1- Ethan Taxman; 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8 - Eddee Daniel; 4 - Chemistry in Place; 7 - Dan Adams
GREEN.

Green is a reference to the future of the District and responsible public and private stewardship of our natural resources. Green is sustainable energy use, water conservation, and natural habitat. Green is equally promoting neighborhood social wellbeing, economic health, and environmental resiliency. Green is returning the District to its natural beginnings through native plantings and restoring ecological function.
REAL.

Real is a reference to the present state of the District as a working waterfront and authentic, active neighborhood where people live, work, and play. Real is businesses and industries that make things and provide jobs for city residents. Real is accessible to everyone and not “high-brow.” Real is a diversity of people, uses, and experiences. Real are public opportunities to understand, see, experience, and participate in our unique working waterfront.

Photo credits: 1 - Moranda Medina; 2 - Chemistry in Place; 3 and 7 - Dan Adams; 4 - Eddee Daniel; 5 - Will Archer Photography; 6 - Chris Suchocki
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photo by Adam Carr

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