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**Navy Pier Inc. Board Selects James Corner Field Operations
to Lead Pierscape Design Project**

Selection caps international competition drawing 52 entries from across the globe

CHICAGO—The Navy Pier Inc. (NPI) Board today announced that design firm James Corner Field Operations (JCFO) has been selected to help reimagine Navy Pier’s public spaces, an effort designated as “*Pierscape*.” The decision was made at a special public meeting of the NPI board, confirming the recommendation by the Board’s Strategic Planning Committee.

Corner and his team were among the five finalists in Navy Pier’s search for a Pierscape design team that began six-months ago with 52 submissions from around the globe to redesign the Pier’s public spaces.

“Public spaces do not only help define a city – they are the heart and soul of a city. We have a remarkable opportunity to make Navy Pier one of those unique public spaces,” said Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel. “Having an internationally renowned design firm like James Corner Field Operations working with one of our city’s greatest icons demonstrates that Chicago has the energy and vision to continue to lead on the world stage.”

The *Pierscape* portion of the *Centennial Vision* plan calls for reimagining the Pier’s public spaces including Gateway Park at the west entrance of the Pier, Crystal Garden, Pier Park, East End Park, the South Dock as well as the smaller public spaces that dot the length of the Pier. This work will include enhancements to the Pier’s landscaping and streetscape along with the addition of water features, public art and lighting.

“More families visit Navy Pier every year than any other site in Illinois, and, for many, it is one of their first impressions of our state,” Governor Pat Quinn said. “We have a responsibility to make Navy Pier a modern, appealing and sustainable attraction that takes advantage of one of our state’s most valuable natural resources - Lake Michigan. When they visit, they should see a vision that highlights the best Illinois has to offer and the best yet to come.”

The next step in the process will be for Navy Pier and JCFO to begin putting more definition around the project. The Board emphasized that JCFO’s vision will inform and guide the *Pierscape* redesign, but were quick to point out that the final design will reflect other factors including practicality, functionality, collaboration with the NPI board, and available capital.

“This was not an easy decision. But we are confident that by selecting James Corner and his team, we have selected the design team who best represents the goals set forth in the *Centennial Vision* and will transform Navy Pier into a truly unique destination,” said Sarah Garvey, chair of the NPI board.

Garvey went on to praise all the design teams for their efforts. “While we selected only one team, we are thrilled with what all of the teams added to the process. Each of the five finalists demonstrated a superior command of their field and a level of creativity and imagination that will, undoubtedly, contribute to transforming Navy Pier into a world-class venue. We are grateful for their time, effort and dedication to this project.”

While there are many factors that went into the Board’s decision, Garvey highlighted a few elements in JCFO’s presentation that stood out among board members:

- an interesting and appropriate balance between creativity and practicality;
- a thorough understanding of the complexity of Navy Pier;
- relevant experience with several successful high profile, large-scale and complex projects; and
- a strong sense of flexibility and collaboration.

Environmental sustainability, a theme highlighted in all the competing teams concepts, is also critical to the mission and will be a key factor in JCFO’s ultimate design.

James Corner Field Operations, led by Founder James Corner, is an award-winning landscape architecture and urban design firm that has gained international recognition for projects including New York City’s Highline, where the firm turned a 1.45-mile stretch of an abandoned railway viaduct into a public park. The project spanned six years and was completed in two separate stages. Now, it draws millions of visitors each year and has become a prominent gathering place for New Yorkers and tourists alike. It has also been credited for attracting in billions of dollars in private investment that led to an influx of economic activity including jobs, restaurants and retail.

The Board also cited JCFO’s ongoing work on the Seattle Central Waterfront, Santa Monica Civic Center Parks, and its recent selection to design Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London as further evidence of the firm’s ability to transform large public spaces into civic centerpieces for major urban cities.

“We asked our finalists to think creatively and they delivered,” said Marilyn Gardner, president & CEO of Navy Pier. “The purpose of the exercise was to present a framework for the future of the Pier. And, that framework can now lead us in a number of design directions. Initial concepts are rarely, if ever, the end product themselves. But this process will ensure that the Pier is transformed into a truly wonderful public space that appeals to a more diverse audience than it has been.”

In addition to a team of advisors who provided input since the process began (*names listed below*), the Board gathered public feedback in a number of ways. Public outreach efforts included public presentations by each of the design teams at the Museum of Contemporary Art; an exhibit at the Chicago Architecture Foundation; displays at 15 satellite locations across the city and on site at Navy Pier; and a dedicated web site: www.navypiervision.com. Social media channels also played a big role in getting the word out to the public.

“The public’s response to the design concepts confirms our enthusiasm and excitement about the Pier’s potential. People care about the Pier and the redesign effort. That’s been demonstrated by the high-level of participation and interest to date and that feedback factored into the Board’s selection,” said Gardner.

Another key element moving forward will be assessing capital needs. The NPI board is in the early stages of developing a fundraising plan to help bolster the current budget for redevelopment. The plan is expected to provide marquee opportunities for private sector donors to make lasting contributions to the redevelopment of this Chicago icon.

“This is our State’s top tourist attraction. Millions of Chicagoans and tourists visit this site annually and as Pierscape evolves, that number will grow. A project of this prestige, magnitude and visibility is rare, and we hope that people will want to participate in a significant way that enhances Chicago’s civic and cultural infrastructure,” concluded Gardner.

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Background on the Pierscape and The Centennial Vision

The *Pierscape* redevelopment project is an important component of the *Centennial Vision*, which seeks to make Navy Pier a truly iconic and world-class destination as it approaches its 100th anniversary in 2016. The plan aims to broaden the Pier’s success as Illinois’ most popular tourist destination by maintaining its family appeal while drawing more adults and year-round visitors with more dining and entertainment options.

The *Pierscape* portion of this plan includes redesigning the Pier’s public spaces including Gateway Park at the west entrance of the Pier, Crystal Garden, Pier Park, East End Park, the South Dock as well as the smaller public spaces that do the length of the Pier. This work will include enhancements to the Pier’s landscaping and streetscape along with the addition of water features, public art and lighting. JCFO design concepts can be viewed on www.navypiervision.com.

Advisory Team to NPI Board

Elva Rubio, principal and regional design leader, Gensler

Joe Caprile, senior vice president, Jones Lang LaSalle

Greg Cameron, chief operating officer, WTTW-TV

John Syvertsen, senior principal, Cannon Design

Lee Bey, executive director, Chicago Central Area Committee

James Corner Field Operations

James Corner Field Operations is a leading-edge landscape architecture and urban design practice based in New York City. The work of JCFO has been recognized as the recipient of the 2010 National Design Award, by the New York City Arts Commission Award for Excellence in Design; the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award for Design; the Daimler- Chrysler Award for Design Innovation; the Architectural League of New York Design Award; and other professional design awards and prizes. For more information on James Corner Field Operations, go to www.fieldoperations.net.

The JCFO Team

Terry Guen Design Associates
nArchitects
Leo Villareal
L'Observatoire International
Ed Marszewski
Fluidity
Patrick Blanc
John Greenlee & Associates
Chris Wangro
Billings Jackson
Buro Happold
Primera
HR&A Advisors
ETM Associates
Bruce Mau Design
d'Escoto, Inc.

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