

# Copley Wolff Design Group

Boston, MA

TITLE Big Cow Country Entry (1 of 2 proposals submitted)  
MATERIALS digital images with text

## WHAT'S A PLACE TO DO

What is the intended program for this place? Assume for a moment that the intent is to bring human activity and interaction to the site. *I'm sure that the birds and wildlife that are there now are quite happy with the site's present form. A good case can be made to let it be, let nature have a place here. Many people would agree with this point. However, if the task was to get people to this place, the question arises as to how can this best be accomplished. How do you make this a vibrant, people place?*

## A CUT SO DEEP

As on many urban edge parcels, this site is physically cut off from the fabric of the city that surrounds it. The water on three sides of the site allows for visual connections and the view to Navy Pier is great. It's not a bad thing to experience a place visually. One can also imagine that ferries, and other forms of water transport, might make for an adventurous connection to the site. Waterborne travel is fun. These, however, are not the ways to bring large numbers of people to the site.

The problem is the roadway. Recognizing this problem is simple. Appreciating its implications may take some doing.

The elevated roadway to the west slices the plot off from adjacent commercial and residential development. This is where the people are. However, this severance has drained all the potential for human life from the site. It will remain void of humankind as long as this separation remains.

The healing of this wound is the key to a solution for this site.

## WHY A COW?

As it is now, not many people think, or maybe even know, about the site. Many people drive by it every day. Many people see it from other points in Chicago, but not many people think about

it. In order for this to change, the site needs to be made part of the mindscape of Chicago. The site needs something to get people's attention. Once people have a stake in the site, they will spend someone's money to deal with the contaminated soils and the other issues on-site.

How about a cow, how about a *really big cow*? That would get people's attention. Imagine the discussion and debate that a fifty-foot cow would generate? Some people may like it and think it was a neat idea. Many would think it was an abomination and would demand that something be done to "fix" the problem. "Get rid of that damn cow and build something nice there." The good people of Chicago would have to weigh in on their new neighbor.

Hopefully, in all this uproar, the citizenry and their officials will take the time to really consider the merits of the site. Hopefully, in these considerations they will recognize the need for urban connections to make the site work. Hopefully, they will make the commitment to reconnect this site to the rest of the city.

If they don't make the commitment to make the connections work, the place will be barren and bare, and not as marvelous as the meadow there now. All the money in all the world won't breathe life into the site. They might build some beautiful park; they might erect some wonderful sculpture, but no one will ever go there. It will remain a space that people drive by, a place to see but not be part of.

It might just make sense to leave the big cow be. Holy cow! Perish the thought!

