

USA Niagara board: Aquarium of Niagara preferred developer for key downtown parcel

Aquarium reveals plans for expanded exhibit space and inclusive playground

The USA Niagara Development Corp. (USAN) board of directors met Monday and named the Aquarium of Niagara (AON) as the preferred developer of a key parcel of land in downtown Niagara Falls.

Officials said, "The project will redevelop a multi-lot property, located at 535-579 Second St., to include up to 31,000-square-feet of programmable space and provide important visitor amenities that serve a full range of needs and interests, creating a robust cultural and educational hub for tourists and residents alike."

"This project supports Gov. Kathy Hochul's strategy to forge a new path forward for Niagara Falls by making targeted investments that will help draw tourists and transform the community."

USAN President Anthony Vilaro said, "The redevelopment of this property – just one block from

Aquarium of Niagara renderings courtesy of USA Niagara Development Corp.

Niagara Falls State Park and the Niagara River Gorge – represents a unique opportunity to capitalize upon the continued revitalization of an iconic destination. This project will elevate the status of the Aquarium, which is already a resident and visitor favorite, and further add to the abundant tourism opportunities in Niagara Falls."

Aquarium of Niagara President and CEO Gary Siddall said, "This planned project leverages our momentum and builds upon the Aquarium's recent growth. The Aquarium is committed to creating new opportunities for visitors to connect to the natural world through quality, enriching experiences that encourage curiosity and inspire delight. This redevelop-



ment project will position the Aquarium as a true quality-of-life asset for our community and a must-do destination for anyone visiting Niagara Falls."

A press release noted, "The Aquarium of Niagara's proposal includes a phased expansion, the first of which envisions an interactive exhibit space that will house rotating exhibitions, a robust event

area, food service and concessions, as well as retail offerings. The proposed development will also feature a fully inclusive playground, introducing a recreational component that encourages outdoor play for families of all ages and abilities.

"The project follows more than \$15 million in recent capital and exhibit improvements at the Aquari-

um of Niagara. The expanded footprint would double the Aquarium's current campus and complement programming at the Aquarium's main building, community plaza, and the forthcoming Great Lakes 360 project expected to be complete next spring.

"The expansion is estimated to cost \$18 million for both phases."

SEE AQUARIUM, continued on Page 3

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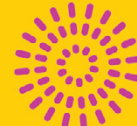
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