

How to make the harbour side area to the functional and emotional heart of the Inner City waterfront?

by Gunnar Platz, CEO PLANCO Consulting GmbH, JOHANN project coordinator

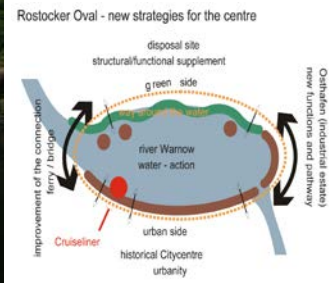
Water always has a magical attraction to people, be it the local population or tourists. This is independent from direct linked activities on the water. Marinas for example are highly frequented from people just walking around, visiting restaurants and just enjoying the maritime atmosphere. The Marina is beside its infrastructural function for boaters a tool to make the waterfront attractive and somehow tangible. This also applies to industrial (city) ports. In many regions it can be observed that real estate developers intend to develop residential and commercial properties in close neighbourhood to industrial commercial port activities.

However, many cities do not make use of the rivers/lakes in their cities. Due to the historical development access to the waterfront is missing or at least not attractive. This results in missed opportunities regarding quality of life for the local population on the one hand and economic development through increased number of visitors on the other hand.

City ports such as Rostock aim at attracting small cruise ships and their passengers to their city ports. This shall initiate attractive waterfront development, development of land side services (welcoming passengers) and infrastructure (cruise terminals as part of urban waterfront), attractive not only for the cruise passengers, but also for local population and other visitors.

But what makes a harbor area attractive? How can the inner city harbor area be developed into a trendy part of the city with economic maritime life and appeal and be inviting for the public?

To achieve this goal, focus should be on development of tourism services, implementation of joint standards for local touristic actors in order to improve service quality and hospitality (e.g. tourist information staff, guides, bus / taxi drivers) as well as implementation of necessary investments (design of cruise terminals and surrounding heritage waterfront sites) within historic inner city ports. A main question is also, how the historic city ports can be revitalized and how traditional maritime functions (flair of heritage waterfronts as combining factor and touristic value attractive for passengers and visitors) can be preserved by reserving waterfront areas and keeping them free from new construction of houses / offices, although there is a growing pressure from construction industry. The challenge is to develop these areas for the benefit of the city population.



Challenging is to find a deal with different requirements and expectations during the season and the off season period and to identify on the one hand separate and on the other hand integrated specific appeals and functionalities between city and waterfront development.

A close and attractive connection between port and city is a prerequisite for this development.