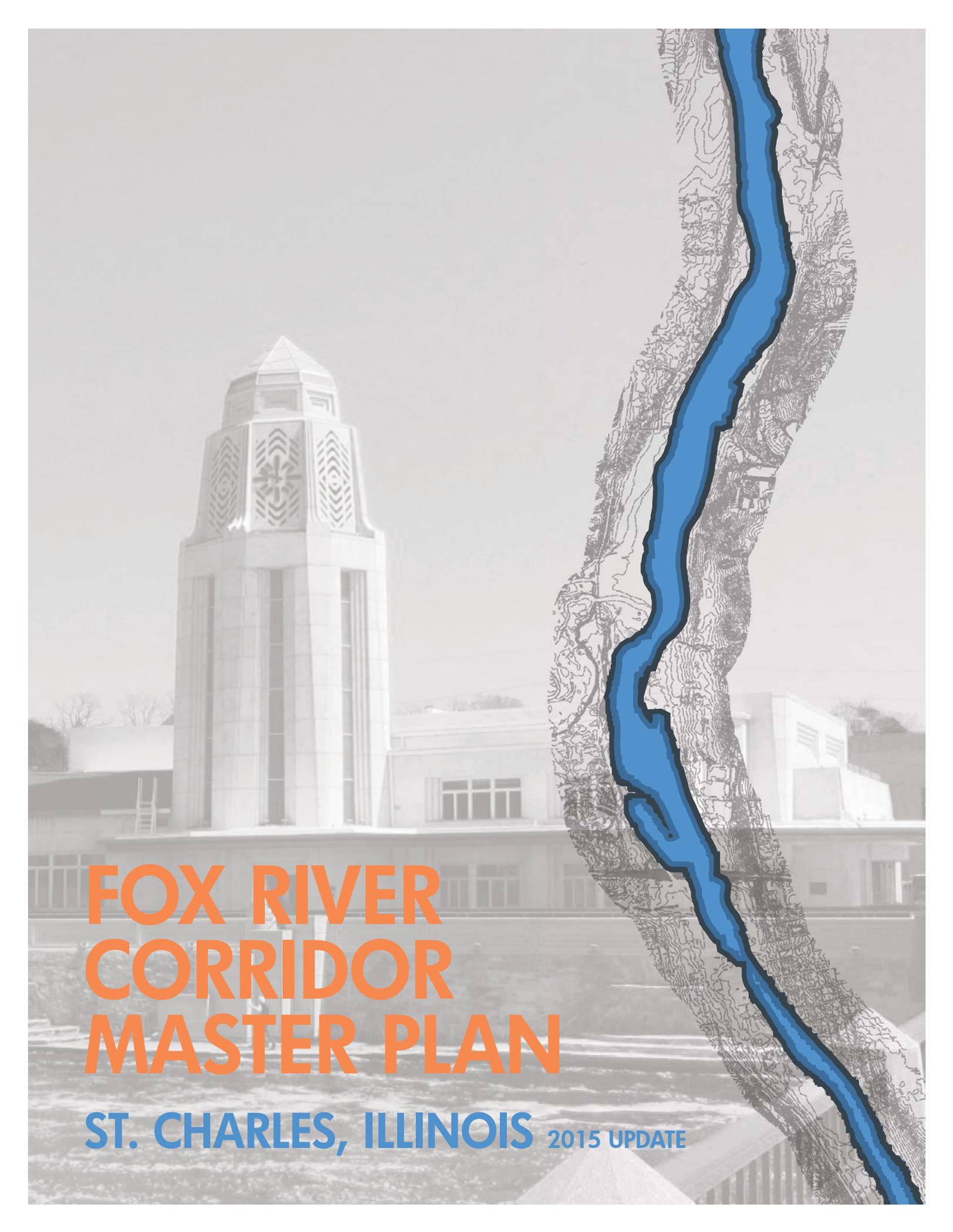


		AGENDA ITEM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY					
		Title:	Review and Recommendation for the Fox River Corridor Master Plan 2015 Amendment (Active River Task Force)				
		Presenters:	Rick Hitchcock, Hitchcock Design Group (Consultant) John Rabchuk, Active River Task Force (Active River Task Force)				
<i>Please check appropriate box:</i>							
	Government Operations		Government Services				
X	Planning & Development (9/14/2015)		City Council				
Estimated Cost:		Budgeted:	YES	NO	X		
If NO, please explain how item will be funded:							
Executive Summary:							
Background:							
<p>In February of 2014, the Government Services Committee received a request from the St. Charles River Corridor Foundation to be part of a conceptual study entitled the “Active River Project”. The envisioned project was a collaborative effort to evaluate new concepts focused on increased utilization of the Fox River for recreation and active lifestyle purposes. The City Council subsequently approved a motion of support for the Active River Project. The attached plan serves as an amendment to the existing 2002 River Corridor Master plan that is intended as a guide and not a binding document.</p> <p>The following is a brief summary of the events that have occurred since the initial motion of support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The St. Charles Park District, Kane County Forest Preserve, the City of St. Charles, the River Corridor Foundation, and St. Charles residents formed a task force and began regular meetings to advance the project. • The Task Force secured a \$46,250.00 Kane County Riverboat Fund grant as partial funding for an update of the 2002 Fox River Corridor Mater Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The scope of the proposed amendment was to analyze the ability to leverage the Fox River to the greatest extent possible. • In September of 2014 the City Council approved an additional \$20,000 to support the plan amendment. • The St. Charles Park District and River Corridor Foundation also contributed \$20,000 each for this effort. • In June of 2015 the City entered into an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) with the St. Charles Park District and the Forest Preserve District of Kane Count to award Hitchcock Design Group to the contract to update the plan. 							
Current Status:							
<p>Since the approval of the IGA, the Task Force has worked with Hitchcock to complete the plan amendment. Over the past several months Hitchcock has analyzed the feasibility of increasing recreational and active lifestyle enhancements to the river. The Active River Task Force has spent the last several weeks evaluating drafts of the amended plan. While staff is still in the process of reviewing the final draft of the plan, the Active River Task Force is beginning the process of presenting the findings to the partner organizations that approved the original IGA.</p> <p>Hitchcock is presenting their findings and soliciting comments from the Planning & Development Committee. Please note that there are implementation action items and a timeline included in the plan for the Committee’s consideration. The Active River Task Force is seeking a recommendation to approve the 2015 Amendment to the Fox River Corridor Master Plan.</p>							
Attachments: <i>(please list)</i>							
DRAFT Fox River Corridor Master Plan Amendment, dated 9/2/2015							
Recommendation / Suggested Action <i>(briefly explain):</i>							
<p>Based on the Information Discussed at the 9/14/2015 meeting, the Planning & Development Committee has the following options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recommend approval of the 2015 Amendment to the Fox River Corridor Master Plan as presented. 2. Recommend approval of the 2015 Amendment to the Fox River Corridor Master Plan conditional upon resolution of any City staff comments. 3. Ask the Task Force to present a revised plan at a future meeting if there are any substantive outstanding comments. 							
<i>For office use only:</i>		<i>Agenda Item Number: 3C</i>					



FOX RIVER CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN

ST. CHARLES, ILLINOIS 2015 UPDATE

Acknowledgements

Sponsor Agencies

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Project Team

Hitchcock Design Group – Planning, Landscape Architecture
 Market & Feasibility Advisors – Market Economics
 Wills Burke Kelsey Associates – Civil/Water Resource Engineering
 S2O Design and Engineering – Active River Engineering

Support for this project has been provided by the Kane County Board, through its Office of Community Reinvestment, with funds from the Grand Victoria Riverboat Casino.



Market & Feasibility Advisors



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 Chris Lauzen - County Chair



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Executive Summary

Dear Community Leaders:

From the time that St. Charles was first settled, the Fox River has been one of its most important assets. Today, thanks to the vision of past leaders who recognized the importance of the river, St. Charles prospers and enjoys a sparkling regional reputation. The future of the Fox River and riverfront in St. Charles is extraordinary. Actively nurtured, the river corridor will feature a compelling package of natural and man-made assets that will define the community's environmental, cultural and economic prosperity for decades to come.

Building on a tradition of visionary planning, the 2002 River Corridor Master Plan illustrated the community's concept of a signature riverwalk along both sides of the river that would attract visitors, connect parks and neighborhoods to downtown, and stimulate downtown investment. The plan also recommended design guidelines and described an incremental implementation process. Spearheaded by the St. Charles River Corridor Foundation, the City of St. Charles and the St. Charles Park District have completed some key projects including the riverwalk between Prairie and Illinois Streets along the west bank of the river, named in honor of the late Bob Leonard, the 2002 Downtown St. Charles Partnership River Corridor Committee co-chairman. However, many of the master planned projects remain unrealized.

In 2015, led by the Active River Task Force of the River Corridor Foundation, the City of St. Charles, the St. Charles Park District and the Forest Preserve District of Kane County sponsored this master plan update. Consistent with the 2002 master planning process, the consultant team analyzed the multitude of existing resources and intriguing market conditions, and gathered valuable input from residents and dozens of civic, jurisdictional, business and special interest organizations. In addition, the team gave extra attention to the multi-dimensional characteristics of the river. This 2015 update describes the Exceptional Opportunity, Active River Strategy and Incremental Implementation Process that will enable the community to realize its goal to **“create a lively riverfront environment that is the centerpiece of the community.”**

Exceptional Opportunity

Clearly, St. Charles is not the only town in the region with a downtown river. Every Fox River Valley town was settled along the river, and many other towns in the region have rivers flowing through their downtown. Some towns have begun to reverse decades of riverfront neglect caused by industrialization and cyclical flooding issues in order to leverage their riverfronts as recreational and cultural assets. Regionally, downtown Naperville has built its brand, in part, on the success of its riverwalk, and Chicago recently opened the first phase of its \$43 million Riverwalk. Nationally, countless communities have turned to their rivers to reinvigorate their downtowns. Four example communities are referenced in this plan. What, then, sets St. Charles apart from the crowd? As summarized in the Opportunity Analysis, the Fox River Corridor in St. Charles has an exceptional combination of desirable resources, attractive markets and market trends, and engaged stakeholders; all of which set the stage for success.

Almost four miles long, the St. Charles reach of the Fox River is uncommonly scenic, with much of the shoreline, particularly north and south of downtown, in public ownership and attractively improved for recreation. The impounded pool upstream of the dam is a beautiful and treasured asset for rowing and motorboat enthusiasts, and the Fox River Trail is an enormously successful regional bike trail that draws thousands to the vicinity. In addition to iconic commercial properties like the Baker Hotel, the 2013 Comprehensive Plan identified many properties, small and large, that could be redeveloped to take advantage of the river and riverfront improvements.

The local market is affluent and aging, with many more single adult and empty-nester households forecasted. Nationally and regionally those populations, along with the younger adults, are often seeking active urban and suburban lifestyles that support walking, cycling, canoeing, kayaking and rowing activities. St. Charles' domination of the local hotel market makes for an especially intriguing opportunity on the riverfront.

As can be expected, diverse Fox River Corridor stakeholders often have conflicting interests, but everyone seems to agree on the importance of the river and the need to manage it with great care. What, if anything, to do with the dam seems to be the topic that crystallizes the recreation vs. preservation, activation vs. restoration, and even old vs. new differences among those who love the river and their community. This debate is particularly important to the Fox River Study Group (FRSG), which includes representatives from state regulatory agencies, the City of St. Charles and other Fox River communities. The FRSG was formed to develop data-supported water quality recommendations for the Fox River, focusing primarily on discharge from sewage treatment plants, in lieu of an IEPA mandated phosphorous Total Maximum Daily Load requirement. The FRSG has studied the potential benefits of dam removal as one option to improve water quality of the Fox River. Dam removal proponents argue that the IDNR has indicated a willingness to contribute as much as \$2.5 million to remove the dam and that a complete removal of the dam will improve water quality and supplement the need for sewage treatment plant modifications. By comparison, dam retention advocates suggest that the current upstream pool is a priceless community asset and cannot be altered.

Given the abundant opportunities and daunting challenges, how can St. Charles best capitalize on its remarkable assets and attractive markets to distinguish itself in the Fox River Valley and achieve the community's heartfelt goal to be the centerpiece?

Active River Strategy

The City of St. Charles, the St. Charles Park District, the Forest Preserve District of Kane County, business owners, property owners and all other partners who love this important river corridor need to embrace a long-term, multi-dimensional strategy to complete a package of seasonal and year-round river-centric attractions and complementary destinations; complete the river, riverwalk and trail connections; embellish the natural, cultural and recreational assets, refine and align brand communications; and act systematically and incrementally to gain and sustain momentum.

Each one of these five strategic dimensions supports and builds on existing assets, past achievements and important recommendations from the 2002 master plan. For instance, this 2015 Fox River Corridor Master Plan reinforces the need to complete a barrier-free, signature riverwalk and to improve and extend the Fox River and Great Western Trails. Both the riverwalk and trail improvements advance four strategic dimensions, simultaneously, as brand-defining magnet attractions, valuable connections and cultural/recreational assets.

Another brand-defining attraction, the spectacular multi-dimensional “River Park” featured in this 2015 update extends from Main Street to the railroad trestle along both sides of the river. River Park includes an expansive riverwalk, barrier-free trail extensions, a nature-based children’s play environment, naturalized shorelines, exciting pedestrian bridges, and a paddling course – all made possible by a major dam modification that is conceived to maintain the slow-moving, flat-water surface of the upstream impoundment that is ideal for rowing and power boating while creating a narrower, more natural, stepped river channel that allows wildlife passage and accommodates canoeists, kayakers and other river enthusiasts of all skill levels. In fact, River Park creates a connection between downtown and Pottawatomie Park and also creates an unmatched catalyst for the substantial redevelopment of relatively large tracts both east and west of the river.

Closely related ecological and infrastructure improvements at Boy Scout Island will improve water quality, wildlife habitat and boat launching while creating a distinctive water garden opportunity. Grade-separated and safer at-grade crossings will improve pedestrian and cyclist access to and along the riverfront, and dozens of smaller scale projects will embellish the natural, cultural and recreational features that will strengthen and define the St. Charles riverfront brand. In addition, all of the river and riverfront amenities will help attract much-needed smaller-scale residential, office and restaurant infill development. They will also promote private sector investment in seasonal recreation activities such as camping, cycling, boating, climbing and ropes courses.

This Active River Strategy will elevate St. Charles’ brand from good to great. When fully realized, the St. Charles river corridor will boast a package of extraordinary natural, cultural and recreational attractions, complimentary commercial and residential destinations, and vital connections that will appeal to an active and growing regional population. Other river towns may have some of these amenities, but St. Charles can have the most. Along the way, the river corridor partners – and the City of St. Charles, in particular, should craft a coordinated brand platform and communications around the river and the complete riverfront package.

The last dimension of the Active River Strategy, gaining and sustaining momentum, may be the most daunting. Like the 2002 plan, this update comes on the heels of a severe recession, and is compounded by unprecedented financial problems at the State of Illinois. Nonetheless, the long-term benefits are clear and compelling, the public is enthusiastic, and the process, when subdivided into small components, is manageable.

Incremental Implementation Process

Led by the City of St. Charles, the river corridor partners should all adopt this plan and commit to incremental implementation of the Active River Strategy by systematically executing a series of correlated policy, capital and operational improvements. The City and its river corridor partners should, initially, concentrate on key public policies that will set the stage for future work, vigorously promote the strategy to all stakeholders, and coordinate public and private sector capital improvements-in-progress to align with the updated master plan.

Policy Improvements

- Vigorously advocate the Active River Strategy with the FRSG to promote consideration of ecological, water quality and habitat improvements to supplement and offset conventional treatment plant improvements in their upcoming Fox River Improvement Plan that supports the “River Park” concept in this plan.
- Select river corridor improvements, including the Phase I study of the dam modification, for the 2016 and the 3 year Capital Improvement Plans (approx. \$4.1M).
- Seek funding through state and federal sources to complete the Phase I study of the dam modification. Confirm local match requirements.
- Assign someone to research grant funding and produce periodic memoranda to be shared and compared with other corridor partners. Identify the best opportunities and partnerships, and apply for/facilitate grant awards.
- Complete the Police Facility Study and determine the availability of this important site for redevelopment.

Capital Improvements

- Align the Piano Factory Bridge rehabilitation, temporary city hall/police station bulkhead wall rehabilitation, and Fox River Trail sign improvement projects-in-process with the Active River Strategy.
- Align the First Street redevelopment project-in-process with the Active River Strategy.
- Commence the Preliminary Design/Engineering study of the dam modification (approx. \$1M).
- Complete the Preliminary Design/Engineering of the Riverside Drive Riverwalk (approx. \$50K).
- Complete the Preliminary Design/Engineering of selected shoreline improvements and Leonard Memorial Walkway pedestrian amenities and enhancements (approx. \$25K).



Operational improvements

- Synchronize the 2016 City, Park District and County operational plans with other river corridor partners to prioritize the Active River Strategy.
- Continue to actively communicate and promote the Active River Strategy with all jurisdictional, organizational, commercial and residential stakeholders.

Timely community action is critical because the FRSG's Fox River Improvement Plan is due to be released at the end of 2015. Given the circumstances, if FRSG supports the Active River Strategy, then St. Charles is in a better position to obtain IDNR funding support for a dam modification.

Yes, this is an ambitious vision. However, since St. Charles was first settled, visionary leaders have understood that the Fox River has been, is, and will continue to be central to the success of the community. With the focused support of community members and their leaders, the Fox River corridor in St. Charles will be **"a lively riverfront environment that is the centerpiece of the community."**

Thank you for allowing us to participate in this exciting Active River Strategy.

Sincerely,

Hitchcock Design Group, in association with
Wills Burke Kelsey Associates, Ltd.
S2O Design and Engineering
Market and Feasibility Advisors





Image Credit: Source

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to update the 2002 River Corridor Master Plan with an increased focus on active river recreation, economic development opportunities and ecological improvement initiatives. The plan will provide policy and resource guidance to leaders over the next several years.

Study Area

The Study Area includes the extent of the Fox River within the City of St. Charles municipal boundaries from approximately Red Gate Road on the north to Division Street on the south, including the properties that border the river. Downtown St. Charles is located within the study area and is considered part of the River Corridor project area.

Process

In January of 2015 the Active River Task Force selected the Hitchcock Design Group (HDG) team to complete the master plan update. During the Opportunity Analysis the team examined the existing resources, local and regional marketplace, and stakeholder behaviors and interests. Next, the team explored alternative strategies and established a Preferred Strategy for an integrated, market-supported series of policy, operational, and capital improvements. This report summarizes the recommendations and concludes the Final Master Plan update..



Community Engagement

The team coordinated with the Active River Task Force throughout the duration of the study. The Active River Task Force consists of Park District, City, and Forest Preserve representatives, along with River Corridor Foundation members. The team also maintained a project website, conducted over 35 confidential stakeholder interviews, and facilitated a community workshop and a public open house. The team presented the preliminary recommendations to the River Corridor Foundation, and at a joint meeting of the Park District Board and the City Council during the Alternative Strategies phase. The Final Plan was presented to the Park District Board, City Council, Forest Preserve District Board and the River Corridor Foundation at the conclusion of the Final Master Plan.

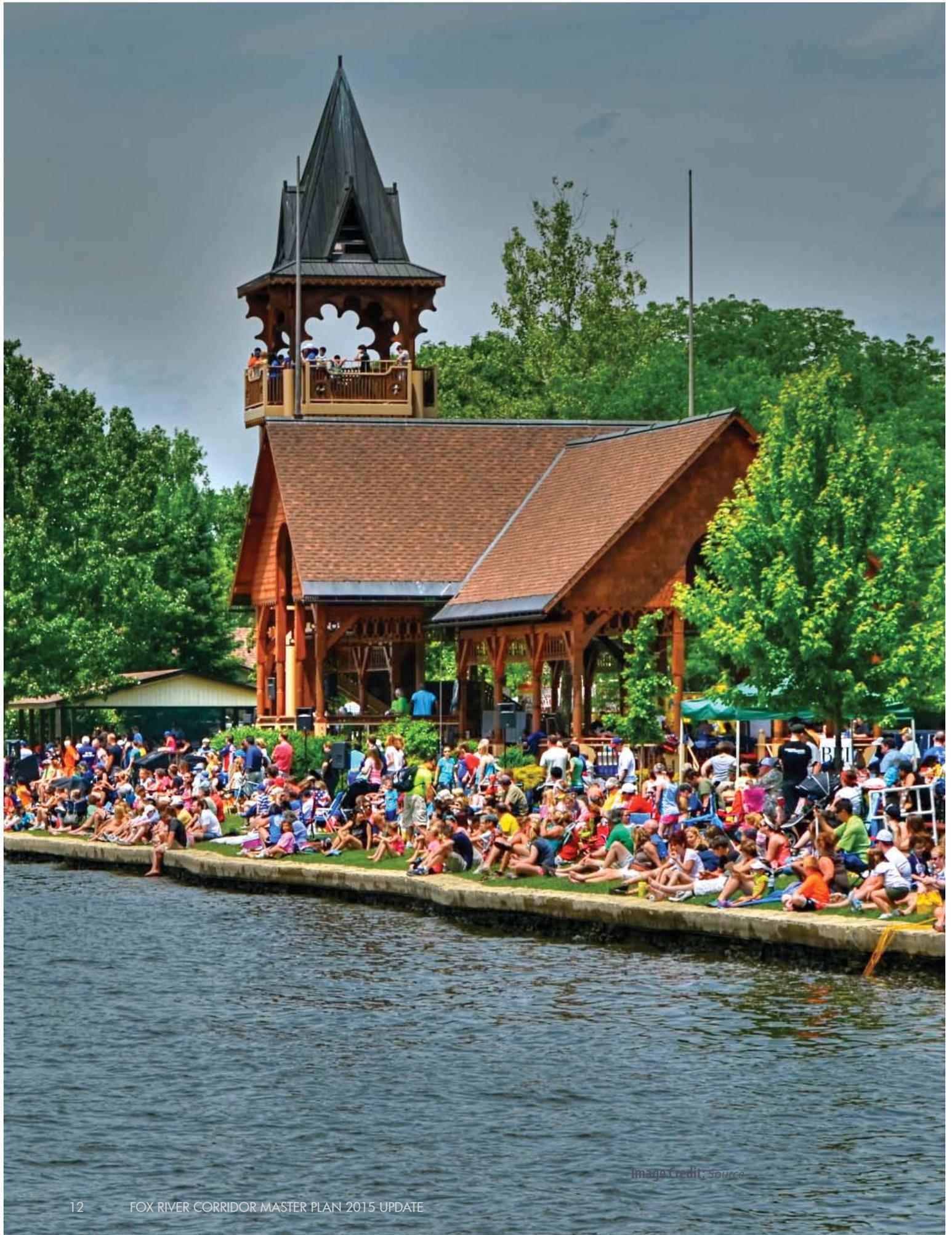


Image Credit: Source

Opportunity Analysis



Context

The City of St. Charles is located 35 miles west of downtown Chicago. Along with Geneva and Batavia to the south, the area is often referred to as the tri-cities and has a reputation as a great place to live, work and play, along with being a shopping, dining and recreational destination. The Fox River Valley on a regional scale is a unique natural, cultural and recreational resource within the Chicago region and beyond. The St. Charles section of the river is particularly scenic, offering many active and passive recreational alternatives. St. Charles has an opportunity to capitalize not only on its own unique attributes, but in coordination with other Fox Valley communities, the region on whole can leverage their resources to improve and prosper.

Resources

Natural Resources

The 3.8 mile section of the Fox River within St. Charles is especially scenic and offers a variety of recreational opportunities due to the 18 acre upstream pool created by the dam and the 7 miles of unobstructed river until the next dam north located in South Elgin. Due to its popularity, the balance of multiple uses within the river can be a challenge at times.

The floodplain and floodway extend beyond the banks of the river in some locations and can be a source of periodic flooding and inconvenience. This impacts potential development/redevelopment sites and will require further study and permitting as specific site improvements are considered.

There are a number of preserved natural areas along the river through St. Charles including Forest Preserve, Park District, and City owned properties. On the whole, environmental quality is considered to be improving in the area and continues to be the focus of many regulatory and special interest groups, along with the community in general.

Water quality is of particular concern within the Fox Valley region. The general perception is that water quality has improved over the past several years, but current high phosphorus levels lead to algal blooms and low dissolved oxygen levels. The Fox River Study Group (FRSG) was formed to study the river relative to wastewater treatment plant discharge and to establish regulations based on water sampling and models. Representatives from local communities, including the City of St. Charles, make up the FRSG and are developing recommendations to improve water quality. The resulting Fox River Implementation Plan (FRIP) will include guidelines to improve water quality in lieu of mandated discharge levels as determined by the IEPA.



Fox River communities

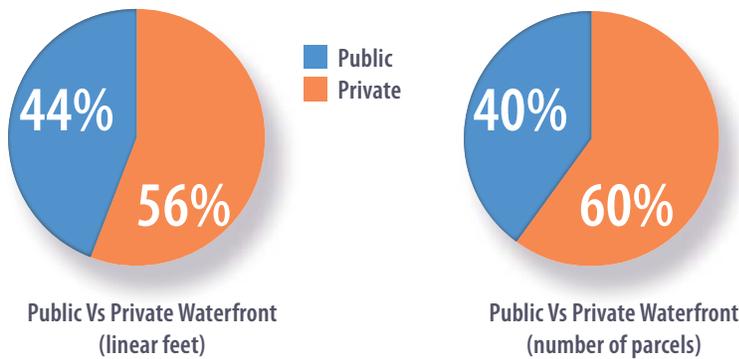
St. Charles Dam

The St. Charles Dam is a subject of considerable recent study and debate. The dam was originally constructed for a grist mill and served an important function for the community. The dam is owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and currently is considered recreational in use, although for many, it serves a meaningful function in that it maintains the upstream pool, considered a priceless cultural and recreational asset for the community. To others the environmental benefits of complete dam removal including improved water quality, wildlife habitat, and safe passage offset the recreational and cultural benefits of maintaining the dam.

Any modification to the dam will be subject to regulatory permitting requirements involving considerable technical study of the hydraulics, water levels, sedimentation, flooding, and navigability of the river.

Property Ownership

One of the most significant challenges to accomplishing public improvements is property ownership and gaining access to the riverfront. Fortunately, 44 percent of the 3.8 miles of the Fox River within the City of St. Charles is publicly controlled. This provides opportunities for public access to the water, along with opportunities for public uses to be located directly on the river. However, 40 percent of the private property along the river is single family residential, leaving few opportunities for economic development. The downtown area is the exception where there are commercial opportunities along the riverfront.

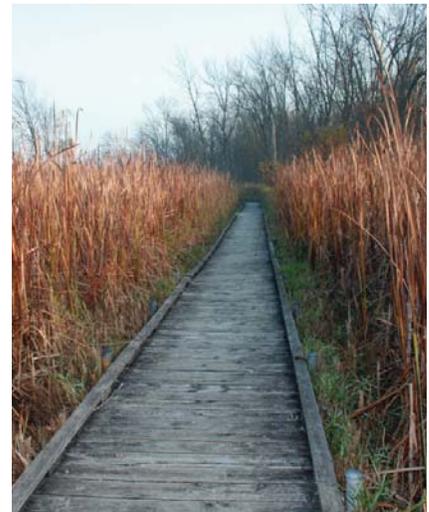


Downtown St. Charles

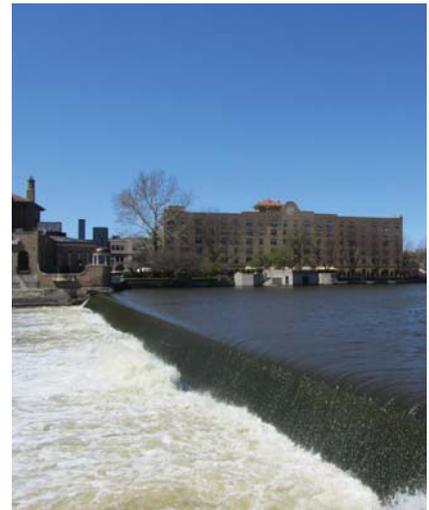
The City of St. Charles was founded along the banks of the Fox River and by the mid 1900's the community became known as a resort town, with tourism being a major component of the City's economy and identity. Today St. Charles is considered a desirable city in which to raise a family and is renowned for its high quality of life and natural beauty. Although growth has occurred both east and west of the downtown, the river has remained the center of the community and continues to influence its reputation as the Pride of the Fox.

Infrastructure and Utilities

Public infrastructure and utilities are considered adequate within the corridor but any significant development would need to consider infrastructure and utility needs. There are utility crossings under the river that also need to be considered with any significant modification project.



Ferson Creek Fen



Dam on the Fox River in St. Charles



First Street Redevelopment on the Fox River



Freedom Walk and Statue of Ekwabets



Union Pacific Railroad Bridge



Red Gate Rd Pedestrian/Bike Bridge

Access and mobility

St. Charles is accessible from major arterial roadways including Illinois Route 64 (Main Street) running east/west, Illinois Route 25 running north/south on the east side of the river, and Illinois Route 31 running north/south on the west side of the river. Kirk Road is the major north/south corridor on the east side of St. Charles and Randall Road is the major north/south corridor on the west side of St. Charles, both are Kane County highways.

St. Charles does not have direct access to interstate highways, but three interstates are located in close proximity; I-90 is located 9 miles to the north, I-88 7.5 miles to the south and I-355 11 miles to the east. St. Charles does not have commuter train access but the Geneva Metra station is located 1.5 miles to the south.

One of the corridor's most important assets is the regional trail system including the Fox River Trail (east and west sides of the river) and The Great Western Trail that heads west from downtown. These trail systems connect to an extensive regional trail system that extends throughout the Fox River valley and beyond. There are opportunities to improve the trail system by connecting gaps, especially through downtown along with adding clear signage, support facilities and amenities throughout.

Currently the St Charles dam prohibits water based users from passing through downtown. Dam modification would allow canoeists, kayakers, and other river users to travel the length of St Charles. Portage and safe passage routes would allow less experienced users to navigate the downtown, while improved docking facilities would allow water based visitors to more easily visit downtown.

Pedestrian and bicycle circulation is adequate but not especially noteworthy. The corridor would benefit from improved pedestrian crossings, traffic calming, and complete streets initiatives to improve the multi-modal experience within the corridor. Where possible, grade separated crossings either under or over roadways are preferred.

The railroad bridge located just north of Main Street is owned by the Union Pacific (UP) railroad and is no longer in service. The Park District, City and Forest Preserve District have approached UP to discuss future control of the bridge and the associated right-of-way. Discussions about purchasing or gaining rights to use the structure for a regional trail connection have been favorable, although funding is not currently available.

Parking is important to any viable development, downtown or corridor. Parking in downtown St. Charles is considered adequate although surface parking lots take up valuable land within the project area, especially along the riverfront. Two parking structures in the downtown provide increased parking per square foot of area and additional parking decks would be a benefit as additional development and programmed uses are added. Shared public and private parking within off-street lots is another way to leverage the limited space available for parking.

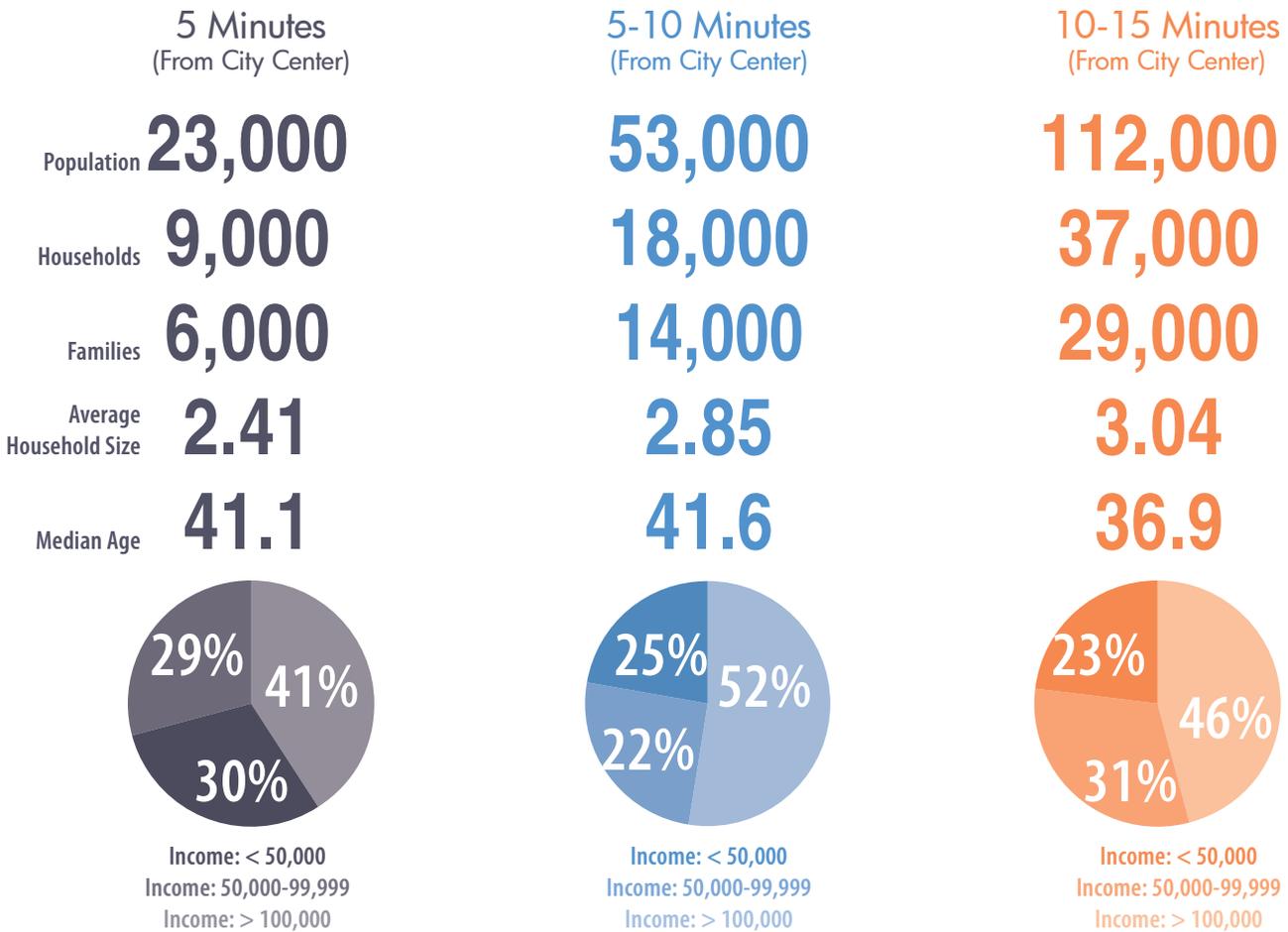
The City of St. Charles has gateway signage at the City limits along with wayfinding signs throughout the downtown. Other community groups and agencies have signage with various messages throughout the corridor. The community as a whole would benefit from a consistent image and messaging throughout the downtown and corridor.

Market Profile

Demographics

The City of St. Charles is known as a family oriented community and the majority of residential properties in town are single family homes. Similar to national trends, projections show that the population is aging and in the future many more households will consist of single adults, empty nesters and other non-traditional family types.

Within a 5 minute drive of downtown St. Charles there is a significant affluent population, many of which own their own home. Within a 5-10 minute drive time population and household size increase, while median age, income, and household size remain relatively consistent. Within a 10-15 minute drive from downtown the population increases substantially, while continuing to be affluent.



Visitors

The St. Charles area is a surprisingly successful visitor destination with more than 2,500 hotel rooms. Even if the less fully utilized Q Center and its 1,000 rooms are deducted, St Charles houses as many as 440,000 overnight guests a year assuming a 62% occupancy rate.

440,000
Yearly Overnight Visitors

Active Lifestyle

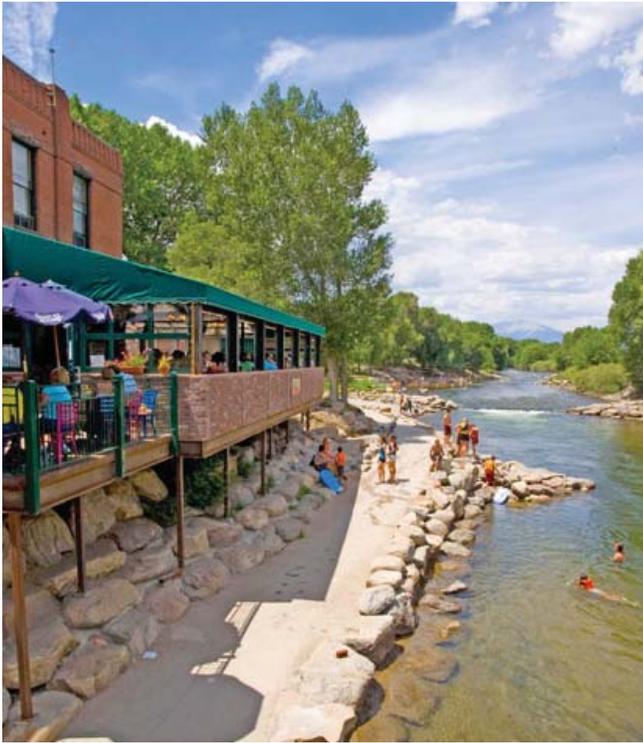
Recently there is a national resurgence in the popularity of walkable, urban areas offering an active lifestyle, not only in major urban areas, but also in suburban communities. People want to live in vibrant, active communities that are easy to get around with lots of things to do. St. Charles has a unique situation with a strong local identity, affluent population, abundant natural resources and amenities that is part of a major metropolitan area.

Nationally, the most popular activity is walking followed closely by jogging and biking. Swimming, fishing, and power boating are also very popular activities, although power boating is declining in popularity while kayaking, canoeing and rowing are increasing in popularity. These trends also appear to be true in St. Charles.

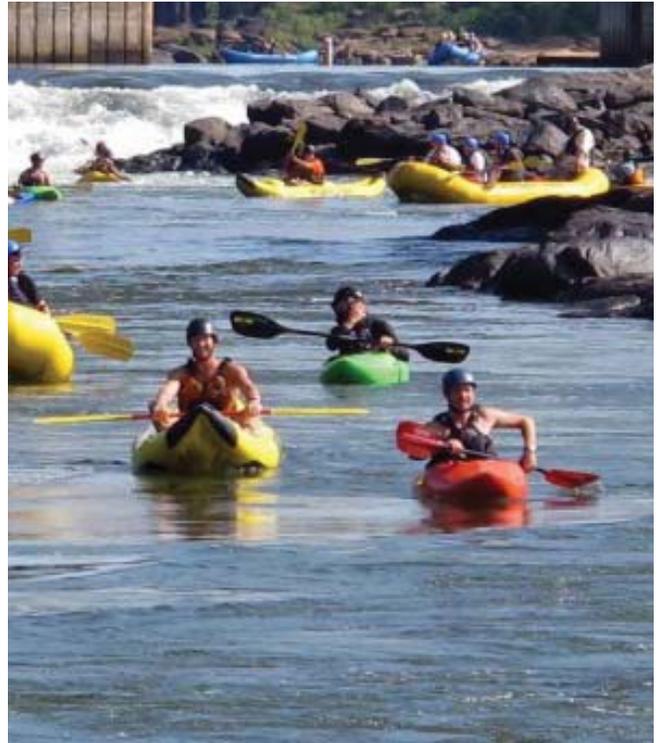
	Yearly Experiences (Locally)	Yearly Participants (Locally)	Popularity Trend (Nationally)
Swimming	753,000	23,000	
Exercise Walking	315,000	54,000	
Freshwater Fishing	235,000	17,000	
Exercise Running	136,000	23,000	
Bicycling	125,000	21,000	
Power Boating	124,000	9,000	
Kayaking	29,000	5,000	
Canoeing	20,000	5,000	
Water Skiing	15,000	2,500	

Conclusion

As St. Charles considers how to activate its riverfront it is apparent that there are great opportunities. Populations in affluent communities like St. Charles engage more often in athletic activities if the opportunity presents itself and is easily accessed. The river offers the ideal venue for activities including walking, bicycling, running and jogging all along the water's edge and kayaking, canoeing, fishing and potentially swimming in the water.



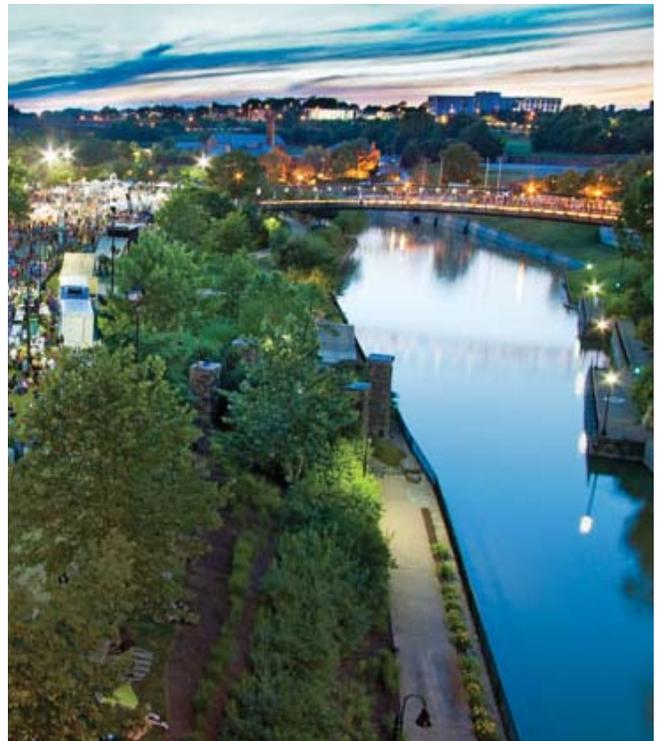
Salida, Colorado



Columbus, Georgia



Greenville, South Carolina



Richmond, Virginia

Comparable Communities

We profiled more than a dozen communities around the US that had successfully completed significant river enhancements, similar to those contemplated in St. Charles. Four were stronger examples than the others: Salida, Colorado; Columbus, Georgia; Greenville, South Carolina and Richmond, Virginia.

Salida, Colorado

A kayaking course has been implemented in the river, as well as a waterplay area similar to the one envisioned for St. Charles. As a result the community has seen an increase in visitation from other parts of Colorado and adjacent redevelopment has turned the river into a community asset.

Columbus, Georgia

Columbus, and its neighboring city Phenix City, Alabama benefitted from the removal of dams on the Chattahoochee River, the addition of a new bridge and improvements to an existing bridge. The river itself has been changed into a recreational environment with rafting, kayaking, canoeing, obstacle courses and waterplay in the river, and new paths for trail sports on the banks.

Greenville, South Carolina

Unlike Columbus, Greenville took out a vehicular bridge and replaced it with a signature pedestrian bridge over natural water falls in the downtown. The city also significantly improved all of the river frontage, saving some historic structures. On the south bank significant new urban development followed, including a new hotel and new commercial and residential development.

Richmond, Virginia

The James River in Richmond already had rapids that attracted kayakers, although the river was badly polluted and lined with industry. As that situation was reversed, the water quality improved as the industry moved away. Subsequently, there has been a considerable amount of development along the river banks and the river itself has been claimed by the local populace for constant use and a series of successful festivals each summer.

* Refer to Appendix for more information, including images and statistics, on these comparable communities.

Stakeholder Interests

The team, along with the Active River Task Force, gathered, evaluated and summarized input from a variety of stakeholders to help formulate strategies for the river corridor improvements.

Although stakeholders agree on many important factors, there are also competing interests for the use of the river and the riverfront properties. Preservationists would like to see riverfront properties remain natural and promote ecological restoration, while others support active recreation and riverfront development. Power boaters are sometimes in conflict with rowers, canoers and fishermen. Water quality proponents are in favor of complete dam removal while paddling enthusiasts support dam modification. The challenge is to balance these competing interests throughout the river corridor.

Downtown St. Charles and the riverfront have traditionally been the center of the community, but resources are now divided between the downtown and riverfront, the east gateway along Kirk Road, and the West gateway along Randall Road. Each area plays an important role in the community but also compete for limited resources.

The consensus is that the river is the most important community asset and should remain a priority for years to come.

There is also a disparity among stakeholders regarding the future of St. Charles and the role the river plays within it. Should St. Charles continue to improve and enhance the river corridor mainly for the benefit of the existing residents and community members, or should St. Charles implement changes to support economic development and an active, more urban lifestyle, that could be attractive to visitors and a younger population?

Regardless of the varied stakeholder interests, the consensus is that the river is the most important community asset and should remain a priority for years to come.

COMPETING INTERESTS?



Goal, Objectives and Standards

The analysis of the Resources, Market and Stakeholder interests concludes with a clearly stated Goal, supporting Objectives, and improvement Standards. The Goal is the long-term desired result for the river corridor, the Objectives are the specific items necessary to achieve the goal, and the Standards are the qualitative criteria to be considered for all proposed improvements.

The Goal, Objectives and Standards form the basis of the Strategy and will be the benchmark for which all improvement recommendations will be judged against.

Goal

“Create a lively riverfront environment that is the centerpiece of the community”

Objectives

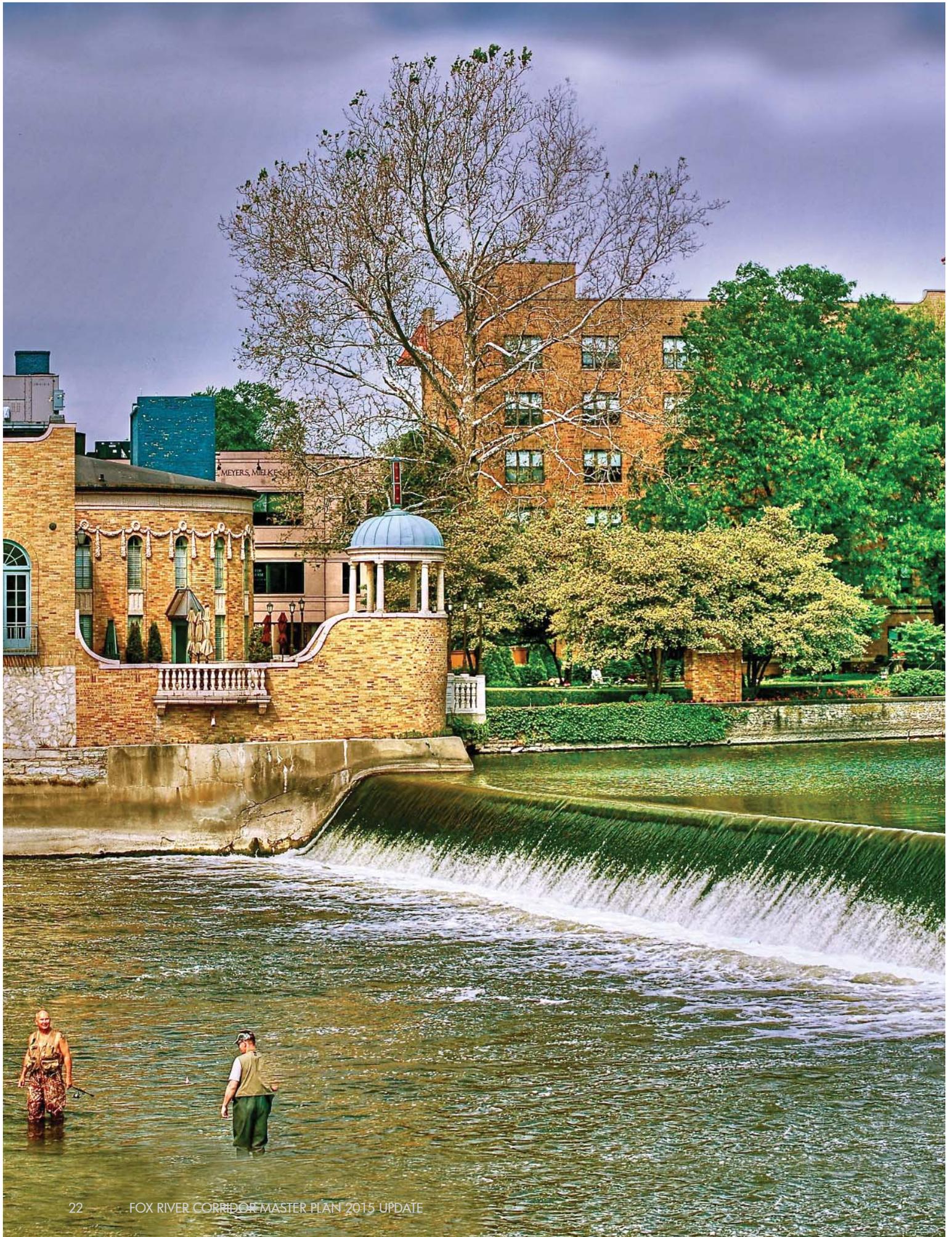
By 2025...

- **Brand:** St. Charles will be widely recognized for its exceptional river and riverfront as part of a regional Fox River experience
- **Economy and Land Use:** The marketplace will support a package of distinctive, public and private river corridor attractions and complimentary live/work/play/shop/dine/destinations
- **Mobility:** People will easily access and circulate along the river and between riverfront destinations using a variety of mobility options
- **Recreation:** The marketplace will support a variety of distinctive recreation attractions and complementary activities
- **Culture and Education:** People will enjoy the river corridor’s abundant natural and cultural assets, and learn about the community’s rich river-related heritage
- **Environment:** Water quality, wildlife passage and native habitat will be enhanced as the river flows through town

Standards

- **Sustainable:** Consider the environmental, economic and cultural longevity of improvements
- **Multi-dimensional:** Improvements will be flexible with high return on investment
- **Healthy:** Provide an active, comfortable, clean and safe environment
- **Attractive:** Improvements will be engaging, stimulating and clean
- **Distinctive:** Differentiate the area from nearby towns
- **Respectful:** Respect for resources and stakeholders
- **Barrier-free:** Areas will be accessible by all





Strategy

In order to achieve the goal to **create a lively riverfront environment that is the centerpiece of the community**, and to meet the stated objectives and standards, the St. Charles River Corridor Strategy is to:

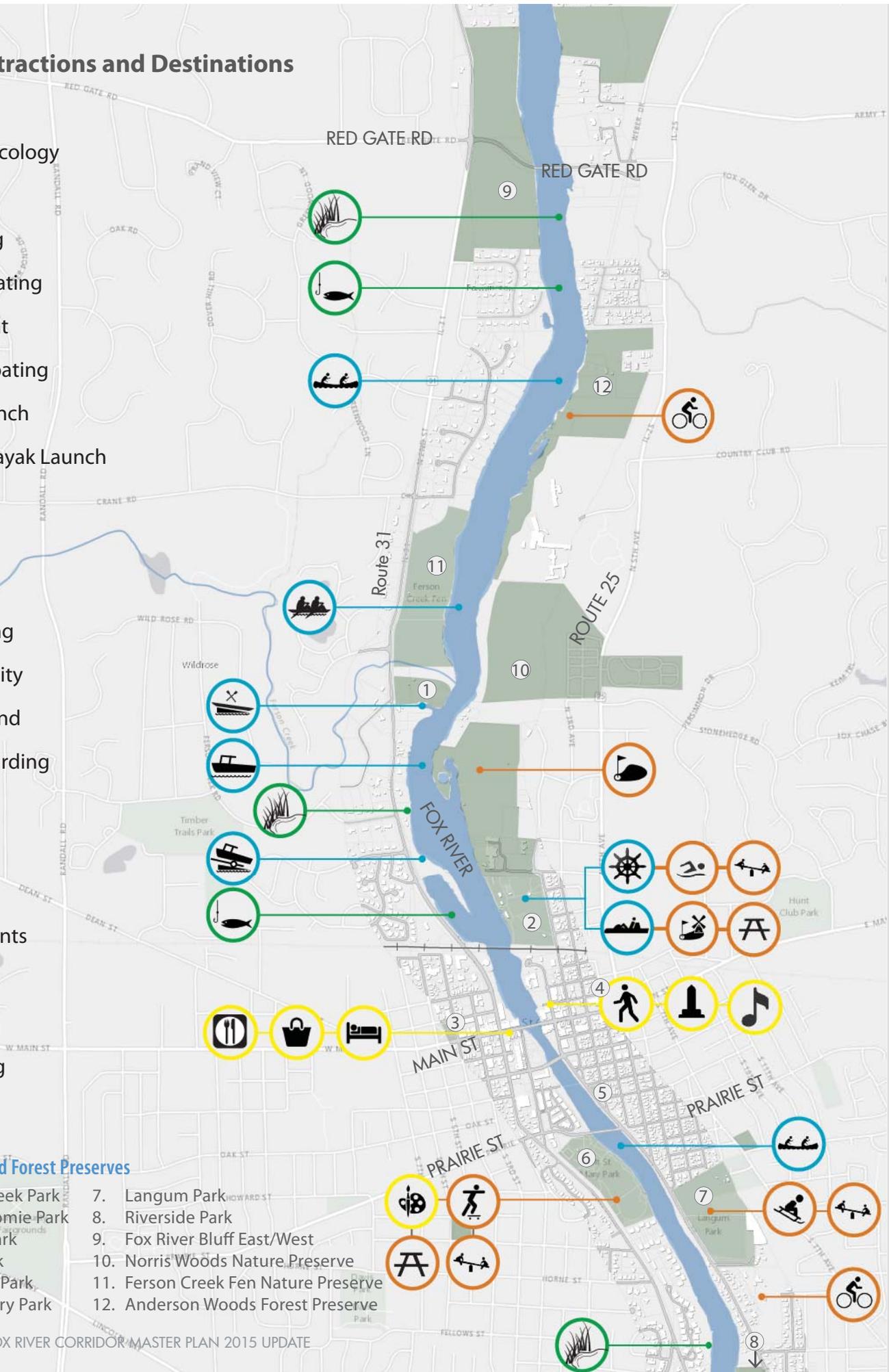
- Complete a package of seasonal and year round river-centric **attractions** and complementary **destinations**
- Complete the river, riverwalk and trail **connections**
- Embellish **natural, recreational , and cultural assets**
- Refine and align **brand** communications
- Act systematically and incrementally to gain and sustain **momentum**

Existing Attractions and Destinations

-  Fishing
-  Nature, ecology
-  Rowing
-  Canoeing
-  Pedal boating
-  River boat
-  Power Boating
-  Boat Launch
-  Canoe/Kayak Launch
-  Bicycling
-  Mini Golf
-  Golf
-  Swimming
-  Park Facility
-  Playground
-  Skateboarding
-  Sledding
-  Walking
-  Music
-  Monuments
-  Dining
-  Hotel
-  Shopping
-  Art

Existing Parks and Forest Preserves

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Ferson Creek Park | 7. Langum Park |
| 2. Pottawatomie Park | 8. Riverside Park |
| 3. Lincoln Park | 9. Fox River Bluff East/West |
| 4. Baker Park | 10. Norris Woods Nature Preserve |
| 5. Hazeltine Park | 11. Ferson Creek Fen Nature Preserve |
| 6. Mt. St. Mary Park | 12. Anderson Woods Forest Preserve |



Existing Attractions and Destinations

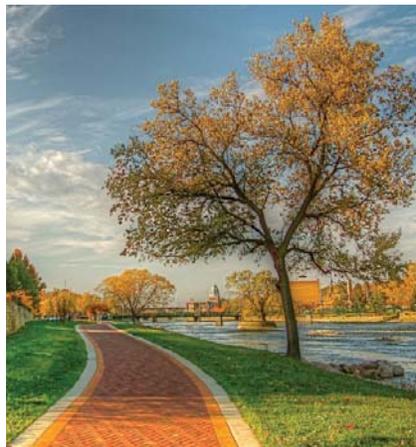
It is important to point out that there are many existing attractions and destinations located throughout the St. Charles section of the Fox River corridor that already support the overall strategy. Many of these will continue to function as they currently exist for the foreseeable future, while others will be modified or improved to advance the proposed strategy.



Boating on the Fox River



Rowing on the Fox River



Bob Leonard Memorial Walkway



Potowatomie Park



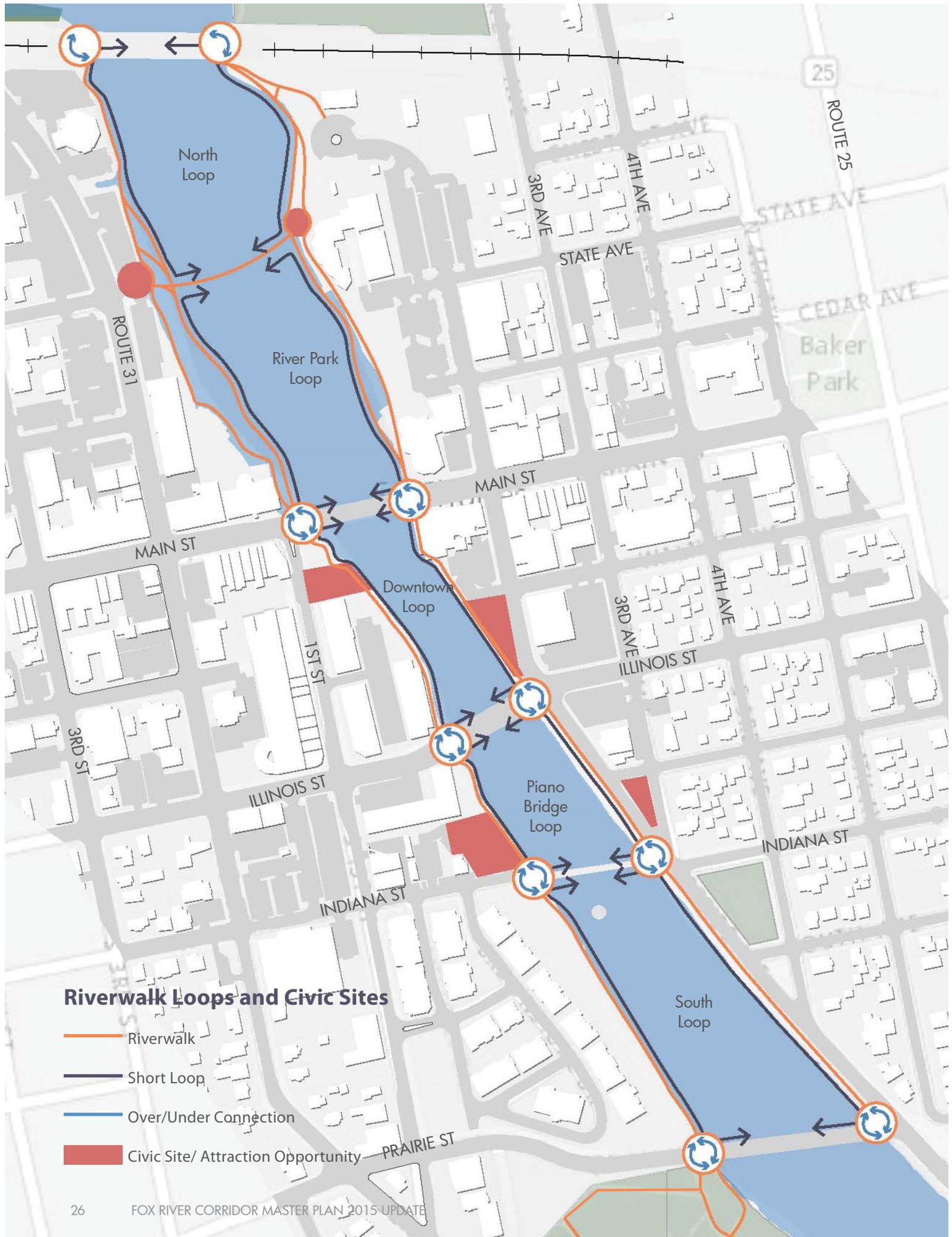
St Charles Riverfest Dragon Boat Race



St Charles Riverboat



Mt St Mary Park



Attractions

Attractions are significant components that draw interest, provide entertainment and contribute to the overall liveliness and viability of the place. The outlined Attractions are the best opportunities to achieve the Goal, Objectives and Standards based on the results of the Opportunity Analysis.

Support existing attractions, and:

- Create “River Park”; Whitewater, Paddling course, Destination water-based play, Riverwalk, Signature bridge
- Extend, complete the Riverwalk
- Extend the Regional Trails
- Create “Bridgeview” observation platform



Continuous Riverwalk



Regional Trail Connections



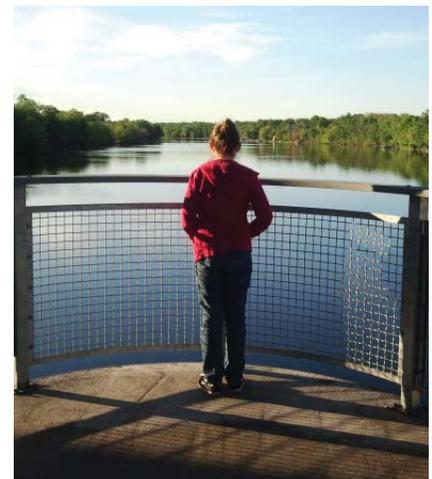
Whitewater Course



Destination Water-based Play



Signature Pedestrian Bridge



“Bridgeview” Overlook



POTTAWATOMIE
PARK

ROUTE 31

Maintain
Impoundment Pool

“Bridgeview” Observation
Area

Childrens Stream and Play
Area

Riverwalk

N RIVERSIDE AVE

STATE ST

Pedestrian Bridge and
Plazas

Dam Modification

MAIN ST

“River Park”

“Riverpark”

Momentum is growing to take action on the dam. Complete dam removal could improve water quality and wildlife passage, although it would result in reduction of the upstream impoundment pool, which is an undesirable result for the community. Modification of the dam is an alternative that would result in preservation of the impoundment pool while providing an opportunity to create a paddling course, a children’s exploration stream, and reclaimed land for construction of a continuous riverwalk. Add in a signature pedestrian bridge along with spectator observation areas and this area can become an incredibly unique “Riverpark” unlike anything else in the Fox Valley region.



Childrens Stream and Play Area



Signature Pedestrian Bridge



Dam Modification



Riverwalk Observation Area

Recommendations

- Modify the dam to create a series of drops and rapids that will be attractive to whitewater kayaking enthusiasts
- Create a safe passage for experienced canoeists and convenient portage locations for novices
- Maintain the upstream impoundment pool water level to accommodate existing water based activities
- Create a children’s splash depth play stream and water based play environment
- Complete a continuous riverwalk with spectator observation areas
- Complete a signature bridge connecting State Street to the east side of the river

Maintain Impoundment Pool

A drop structure located at the railroad bridge pier foundations will maintain the water elevation of the upstream impoundment pool and provide downstream safe passage for non-motorized boats. Provide transient boat tie-up access north of the railroad bridge along the Pottawatomie Park shoreline for power boater access to downtown.

Children’s Stream and Play Area

Develop a low-flow side channel as a children’s play stream, with a nature/water based destination play area along the shoreline. Multiple locations will act as viewing areas for river based activities.

Pedestrian Bridge and Plazas

Provide a signature pedestrian bridge for east/west access and river activity viewing. Civic plazas located at each end of the pedestrian bridge will include cultural and pedestrian amenities.

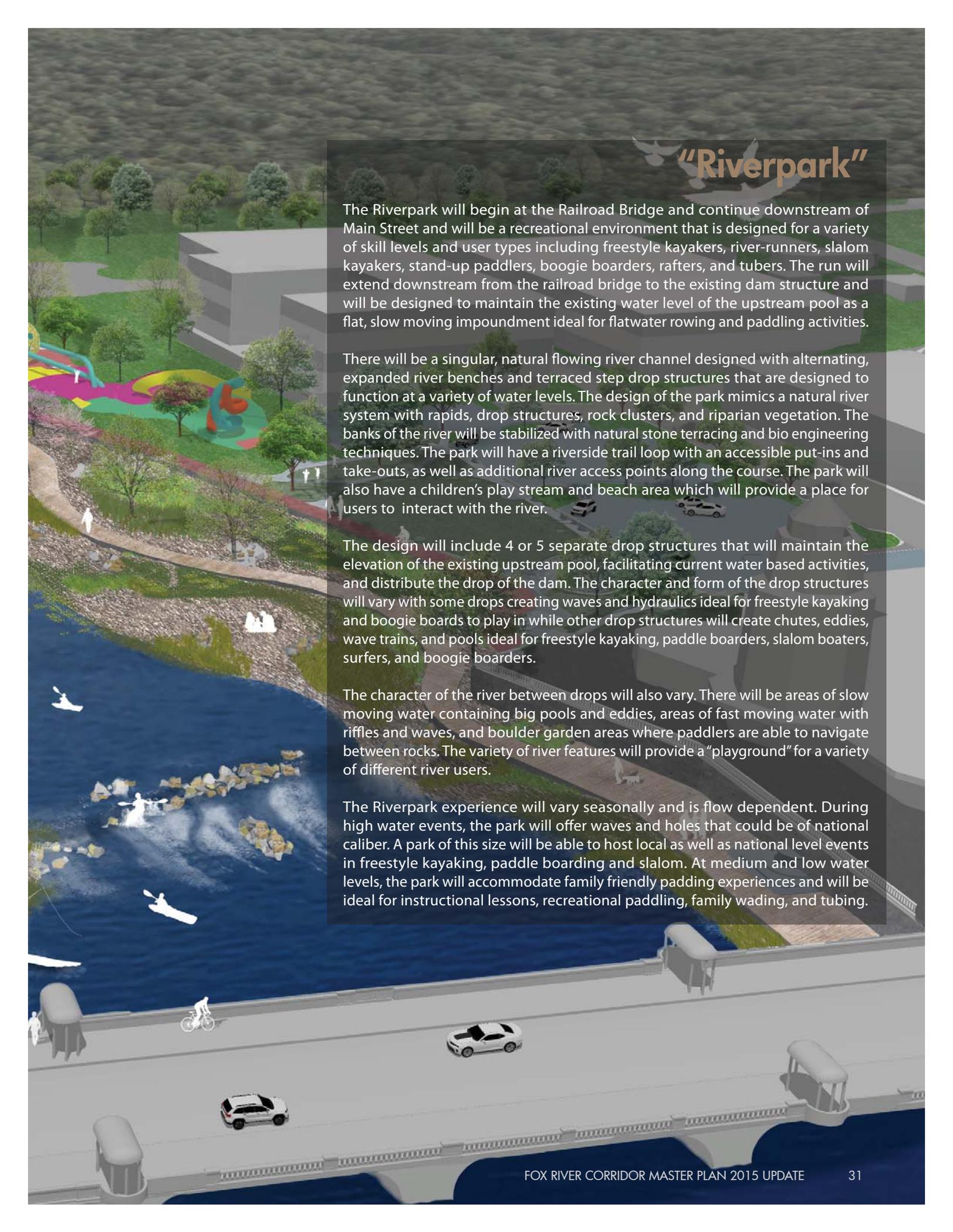
Dam Modification

Remove the dam and provide multiple terraced drop structures to create a single flowing river channel. Develop various levels of experiences that will be attractive to users of all skill levels. Provide a safe passage route and easy to access put-in and take-out points.

Riverwalk and Observation Areas

Continuous riverfront access is possible on reclaimed shoreline areas. Maintain the Freedom Trail access throughout the Riverpark and north to Pottawatomie Park. Provide overlook and observation areas at various locations throughout the Riverpark.





"Riverpark"

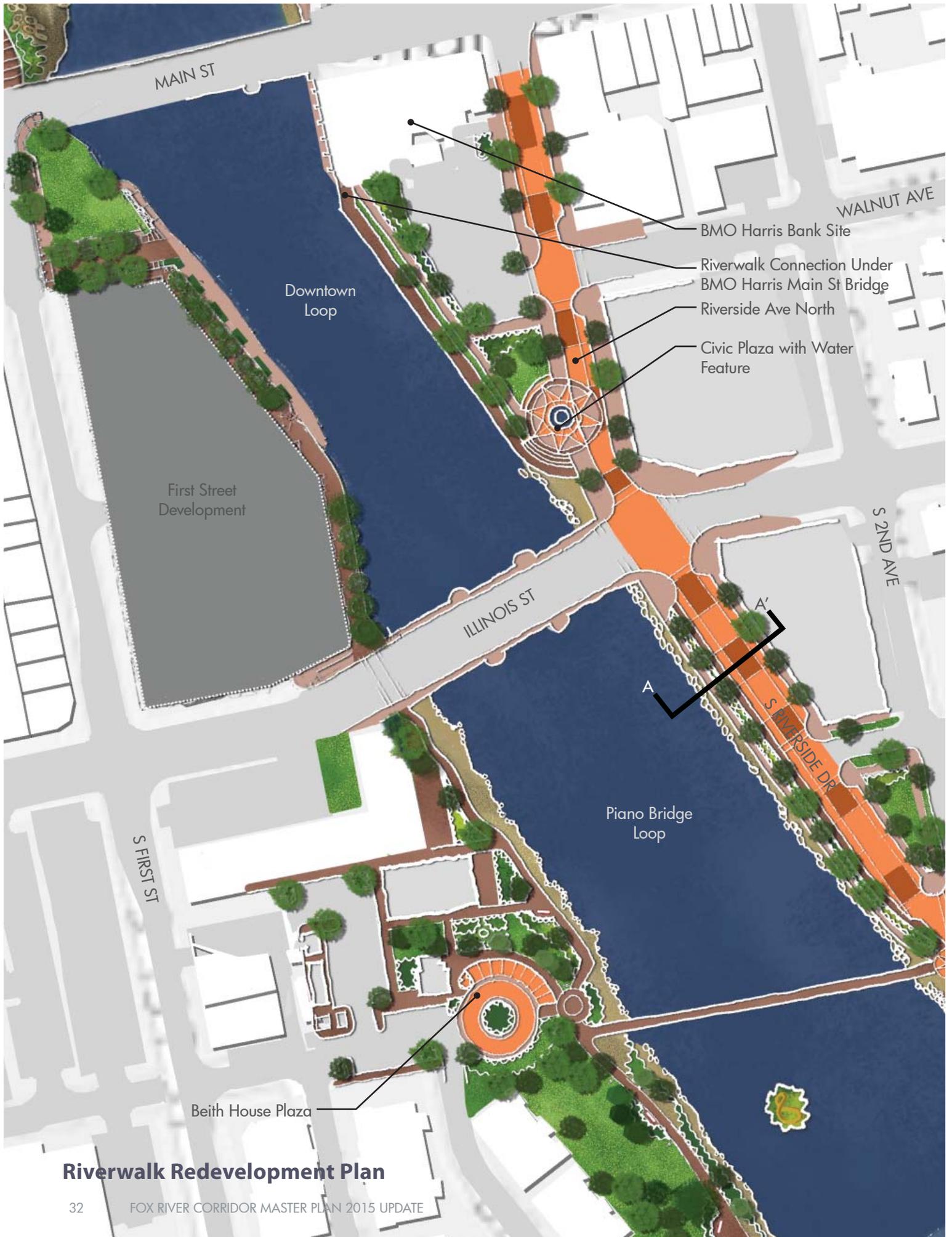
The Riverpark will begin at the Railroad Bridge and continue downstream of Main Street and will be a recreational environment that is designed for a variety of skill levels and user types including freestyle kayakers, river-runners, slalom kayakers, stand-up paddlers, boogie boarders, rafters, and tubers. The run will extend downstream from the railroad bridge to the existing dam structure and will be designed to maintain the existing water level of the upstream pool as a flat, slow moving impoundment ideal for flatwater rowing and paddling activities.

There will be a singular, natural flowing river channel designed with alternating, expanded river benches and terraced step drop structures that are designed to function at a variety of water levels. The design of the park mimics a natural river system with rapids, drop structures, rock clusters, and riparian vegetation. The banks of the river will be stabilized with natural stone terracing and bio engineering techniques. The park will have a riverside trail loop with an accessible put-ins and take-outs, as well as additional river access points along the course. The park will also have a children's play stream and beach area which will provide a place for users to interact with the river.

The design will include 4 or 5 separate drop structures that will maintain the elevation of the existing upstream pool, facilitating current water based activities, and distribute the drop of the dam. The character and form of the drop structures will vary with some drops creating waves and hydraulics ideal for freestyle kayaking and boogie boards to play in while other drop structures will create chutes, eddies, wave trains, and pools ideal for freestyle kayaking, paddle boarders, slalom boaters, surfers, and boogie boarders.

The character of the river between drops will also vary. There will be areas of slow moving water containing big pools and eddies, areas of fast moving water with riffles and waves, and boulder garden areas where paddlers are able to navigate between rocks. The variety of river features will provide a "playground" for a variety of different river users.

The Riverpark experience will vary seasonally and is flow dependent. During high water events, the park will offer waves and holes that could be of national caliber. A park of this size will be able to host local as well as national level events in freestyle kayaking, paddle boarding and slalom. At medium and low water levels, the park will accommodate family friendly paddling experiences and will be ideal for instructional lessons, recreational paddling, family wading, and tubing.



MAIN ST

WALNUT AVE

Downtown Loop

BMO Harris Bank Site

Riverwalk Connection Under BMO Harris Main St Bridge

Riverside Ave North

Civic Plaza with Water Feature

First Street Development

ILLINOIS ST

S 2ND AVE

A

A'

S RIVERSIDE DR

Piano Bridge Loop

S FIRST ST

Beith House Plaza

Riverwalk Redevelopment Plan

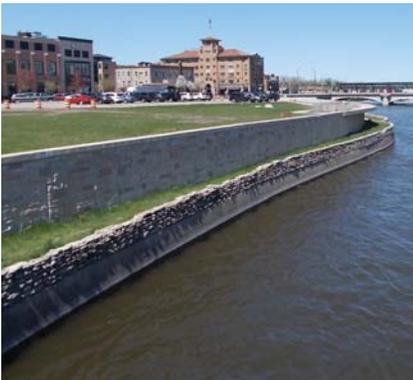
Riverwalk



Amenitized Riverwalk



Civic Gathering Spaces



First Street Development

A continuous riverwalk with large and small circulation loops, unique destinations and gathering spaces, constructed with distinctive materials and amenities, will be a significant attraction for the community. The Bob Leonard Memorial walkway is a great start to completing a continuous downtown riverwalk. Continue to develop the riverwalk as public agencies invest in the riverfront, and as riverfront properties redevelop.

Recommendations

- Create a continuous riverfront circulation loop from the Union Pacific railroad bridge on the north to Prairie Street on the south
- Create a series of secondary circulation loops along both sides of the river and at each river crossing location
- Create a series of connected gathering spaces that transition into the downtown and neighborhoods
- Construct the riverwalk using distinctive materials and incorporate history, culture and art to create a unique identity
- Include ample furnishings, pedestrian amenities and lighting for user comfort and safety
- Segregate pedestrian and bicycle traffic
- Provide grade-separated crossings where possible, and safe at-grade crossings where necessary

First Street Development

Provide continuous riverfront access along the future development. Include a civic plaza space between 1st Street and the river. Improve the at-grade pedestrian and bicycle crossings at Main Street and Illinois Street.

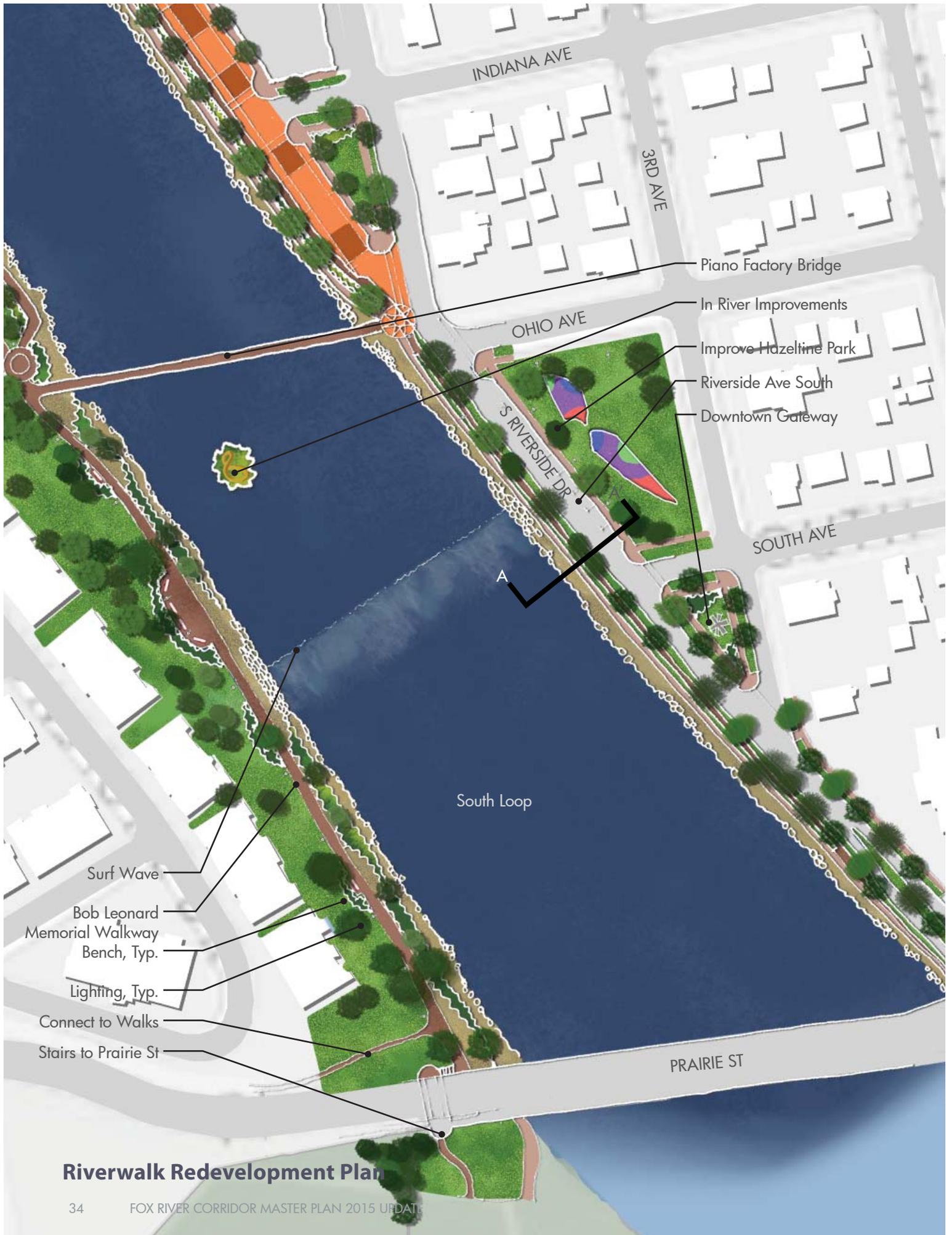
Beith House Plaza

Provide a civic plaza with a sculpture or fountain amenity and pedestrian amenities and furnishings. Include parking and a vehicular drop-off. Encourage private redevelopment on the adjacent property that engages the riverwalk with patios and other outdoor dining experiences

BMO Harris Bank Site

Provide a pedestrian connection along the river and under Main Street Bridge. Encourage private redevelopment of the existing property. Reorganize/reduce parking to provide pedestrian access along the riverfront and a Civic plaza with sculpture or fountain amenity. Restore/reconstruct the shoreline wall.





INDIANA AVE

3RD AVE

Piano Factory Bridge

OHIO AVE

In River Improvements

Improve Hazeltine Park

Riverside Ave South

Downtown Gateway

S RIVERSIDE DR

SOUTH AVE

South Loop

Surf Wave

Bob Leonard
Memorial Walkway
Bench, Typ.

Lighting, Typ.

Connect to Walks

Stairs to Prairie St

PRAIRIE ST

Riverwalk Redevelopment Plan

Riverwalk



Bob Leonard Memorial Walkway

Bob Leonard Memorial Walkway

Add pedestrian and walkway lighting, furnishings and pedestrian amenities. Include cultural components representing art and local history. Add trees and plantings, and improve at-grade pedestrian and bicycle crossings.



Shared Street

Riverside Avenue North

Divert vehicular through-traffic along 2nd Avenue to provide a “shared street” and direct riverfront access along Riverside Avenue. Include streetscape improvements continuous to Main Street including paving, lighting, trees, landscape and amenities. Provide segregated pedestrian and bicycle circulation along the riverfront with the through circulation route clearly identified. Include a civic plaza with a sculpture or fountain amenity at the Piano Factory Bridge landing. Stabilize the shoreline with naturalized restoration techniques. Encourage private development on the adjacent property.

Riverside Avenue South

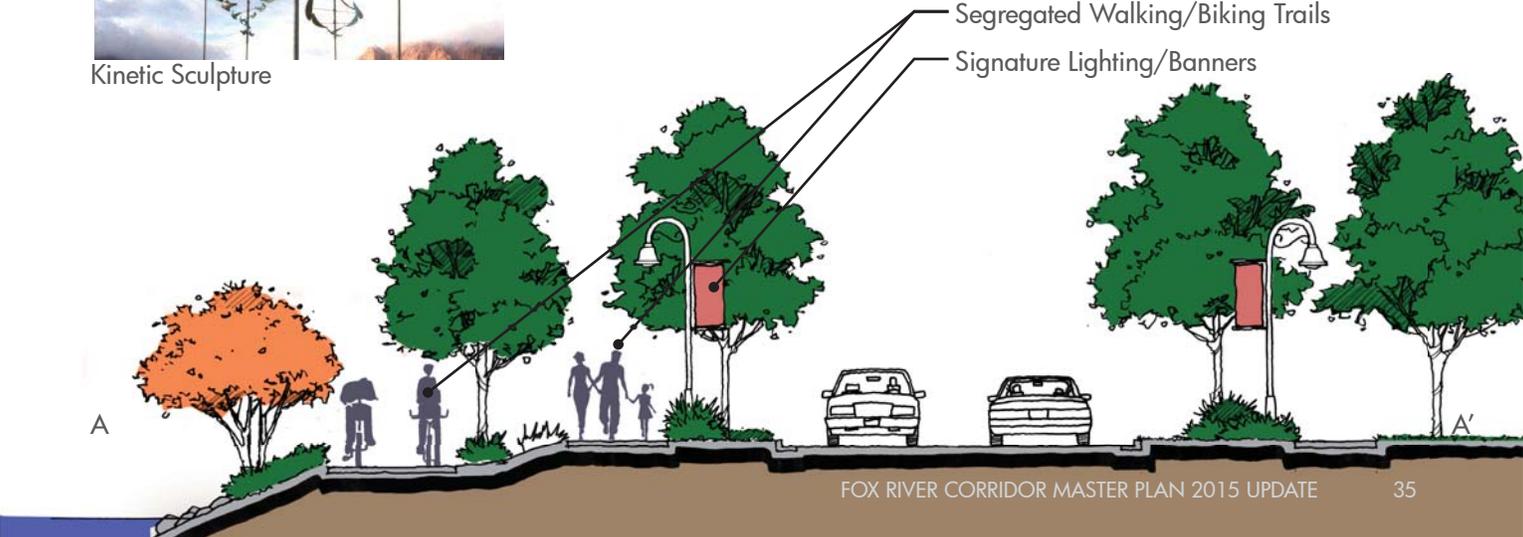
Segregate pedestrian and bicycle circulation along the riverfront and stabilize the shoreline with naturalized restoration techniques. Provide pedestrian overlook/gathering spaces in various locations. Improve Hazeltine Park as a destination play environment. Implement Streetscape improvements including lighting, trees and landscape.



Kinetic Sculpture

“In River” Improvements

Study the condition of the Piano Factory Pedestrian Bridge and determine timeline for repairs or replacement. Develop a “surf wave” south of the Indiana Street Bridge. Install a kinetic sculpture and landscaping on the existing island south of the Piano Factory Bridge. Promote temporary Art Installations on the river between Main Street and Illinois Street. Stabilize the shoreline with naturalized restoration techniques throughout.



Regional Trails

The Fox River Trail and the Great Western Trail connect to an extensive regional trail system that extends throughout the Fox River valley and beyond. The trails are already an attraction throughout the region and improvements to connect gaps, especially through downtown, along with adding clear signage, support facilities and amenities, will strengthen the system within the community and as a part of the regional system.

Recommendations

- Utilize the Union Pacific railroad bridge to connect the Great Western Trail located west of downtown, to the Prairie Path located east of downtown
- Extend the west-side Fox River Trail north along the Route 31 right-of-way, taking care not to disturb Ferson Creek Fen.
- Improve the east-side Fox River Trail north connection by providing a more direct route along the east side of Pottawatomie Park and/or along the riverfront
- Connect trail gaps throughout the downtown and beyond
- Improve trail signage
- Provide support facilities and amenities



Clearly Delineated Trail System



Trail Signage and Crossing



Red Gate Rd Bridge Trail Connection



Dedicated On-Street Bike Lane

“Bridgeview”

The Union Pacific railroad bridge offers fantastic views of the river. The proximity to the River Park presents an excellent opportunity to create an observation platform in combination with the regional trail connection as a unique attraction in the community.

Recommendations

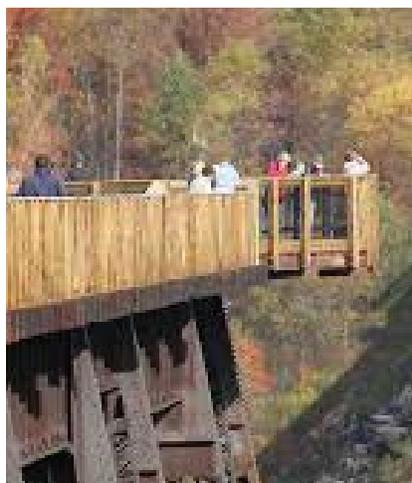
- Obtain the rights to use the existing railroad bridge and right-of-way
- Construct an observation platform in combination with the regional trail connection
- Provide pedestrian furnishings and amenities, and potentially vendor services



Unique Observation Platform



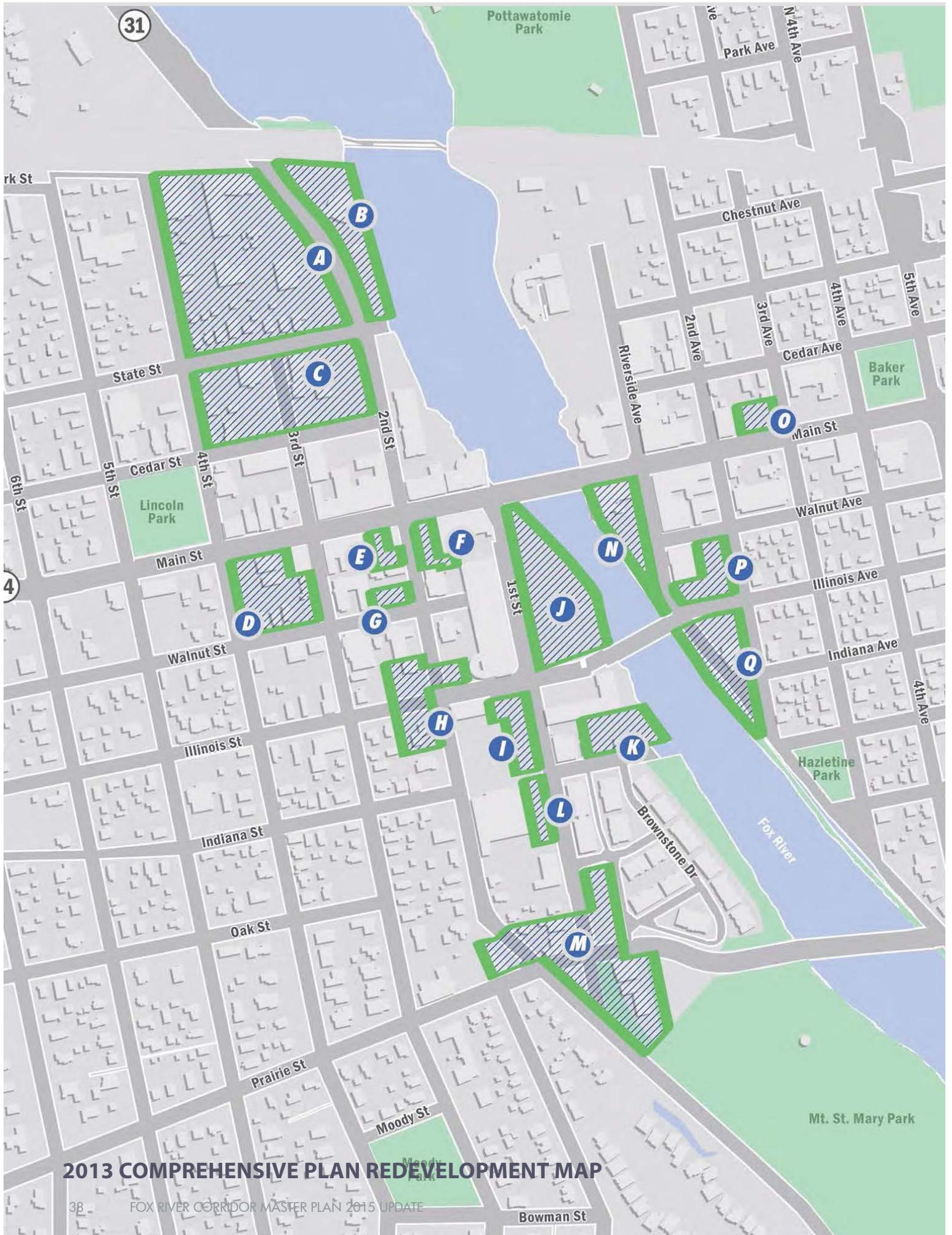
Private Vendor Services



Overlook Constructed on Existing Trestle



Iconic Overlook Structure



2013 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REDEVELOPMENT MAP

Destinations

Destinations are places that offer a unique experience and people will make a special trip to visit. There are many existing destinations throughout the corridor, although the proposed destinations are complimentary to the riverfront attractions.

Promote complimentary destinations such as:

- Residential, office, hotel, retail and dining infill
- Rowing training center
- Recreational activities (climbing/ropes/zip line courses)
- Camping
- Seasonal activities (food trucks, rentals, etc)
- Electric boats/public boat docks

Residential, office, retail and dining infill

The proposed development of the river corridor is likely to trigger redevelopment for commercial real estate parcels in the downtown. Development is expected to happen in two-waves. The first will happen in sites with the greatest proximity to the river, while the second will happen throughout the downtown, dependant on the success of the first wave.

Success of the river redevelopment will hinge on both physical design and financial factors. Creating a pedestrian friendly and attractive downtown will attract more users, allowing for infill development to follow the initial wave of redevelopment. The scale of St Charles should also be respected so that projects will be large enough to produce financial returns without overwhelming the future demands for space.

The Police station parcel is the most attractive site for redevelopment as it will have direct access to the new river amenities. This parcel is attractive for a hotel and banquet facility as well as additional restaurants and retail.

The parcels along route 31 to the west are close enough to enjoy river views and have access to amenities but are adjacent to a residential neighborhood and are well suited for a residential product that wraps around a garage. A setback from Route 31 on the east end for a small parking lot would match the setbacks to the north and give the appearance of plenty of parking making the first floor appealing for retail.

Sites “N”, “P” and “Q” could be redeveloped as a small boutique hotel, with retail and restaurant uses. While not directly on the improved stretch of the river, unlike the other parcels in town, these parcels have direct access to the new amenities.

These developments, described in more detail in the appendix, could result in total investment value of almost \$210 million (preliminarily) and support more than 220 full-time-equivalent jobs in the downtown.



Riverfront Hotel



Riverfront Mixed Use Development

Rowing Training Center

Rowing is increasing in popularity on a national level and the St. Charles section of the Fox River is particularly attractive for rowing. Three rowing clubs currently utilize the river; Row America, the St. Charles Rowing Club, and Wheaton College. A shared rowing training center can serve all users and become a destination for the larger regional rowing community.

Recommendations

- Coordinate with the active rowing clubs to determine the desire and program for a community rowing training center
- Consider sites along the riverfront that could serve as a Rowing Training Center
- Establish a budget and process to advance the design, planning and construction of the Rowing Training Center



Open Air Rowing Shelter



Boat House, Community Center

Camping

Camping is a complementary use for river and trail users. Similar to hotels, nearby overnight accommodations will become a destination. Interesting cabin facilities can also offer a unique nature experience for non-traditional users.

Recommendations

- Evaluate riverfront sites to determine the feasibility to provide camping



Camping in Close Proximity to River



Unique Cabin Facilities

Seasonal Activities

As active uses along the Riverfront gain in popularity, seasonal programs and activities become more economically feasible. Food trucks, vendors, equipment rentals and similar items contribute to the livelihood and popularity of the area.

Recommendations

- Determine the economic feasibility of providing seasonal programs and activities
- Recruit private entities to operate seasonal programs and activities



Food Trucks Offer Seasonal Dining Opportunities



Equipment Rentals for River Related Uses

Public Boat Docks, Electric Boats

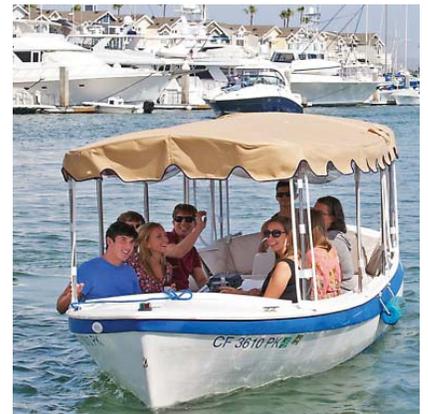
Power boating continues to be a popular activity along the river. Stakeholders expressed the desire to dock in close proximity to the downtown on a temporary basis. Paddle boating is offered from Pottawatomie Park, but electric boats would offer a fun alternative for passive users to gain access to the water

Recommendations

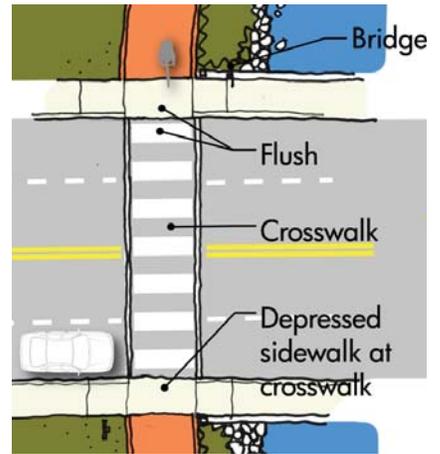
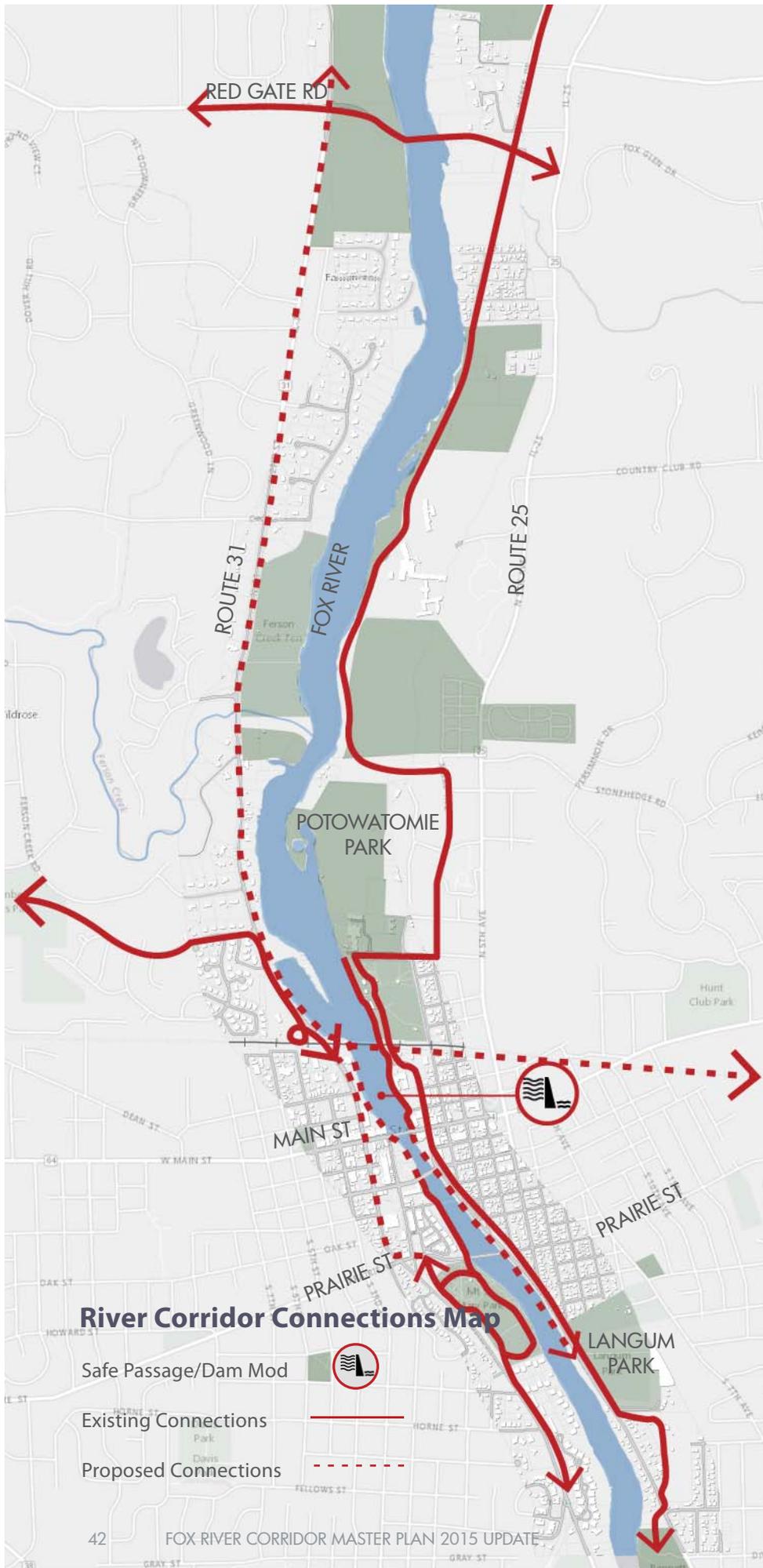
- Explore the possibility to provide docking facilities at Pottawatomie Park
- Explore the possibility to provide electric boats either through the Park District or as a private operator



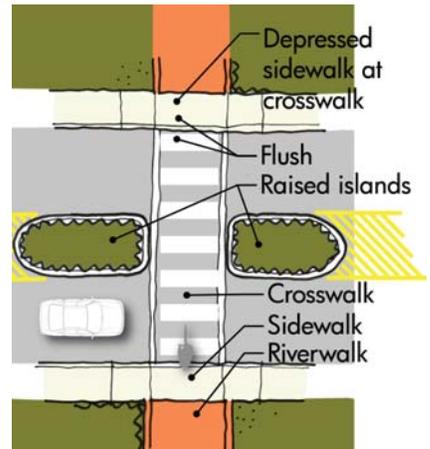
Accommodate Power Boat Access to Downtown



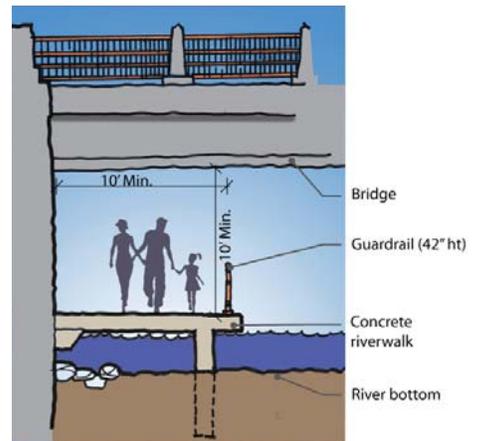
Electric Boat Rentals



Standard Crosswalk



Standard Crosswalk with Pedestrian safe zone



Under Bridge Connection

Connections



Delineated Crosswalk with Pedestrian Safe Zone



Under Bridge Connection



Gateway

Vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian connections are critical to the success of the corridor. Vehicular connections have traditionally taken precedence, although providing continuous pedestrian access, regional bicycle trail connections, and safe crossings are important factors to create a complete circulation system.

Maintain existing connections, and:

- Complete both sides of the Riverwalk
- Extend the Fox River Trail, both sides, north of RR
- Extend Great Western Trail
- Modify the dam, create a navigable route
- Signature bridge
- Grade separated where possible, safe at-grade where necessary
- Gateways and wayfinding

Complete both sides of the Riverwalk

As described previously, the riverwalk can become an attraction in its own right, but it also provides important pedestrian connections along the riverfront and throughout the downtown.

Extend the Fox River Trail and Great Western Trail

Similarly, the trail system is an attraction that can be extended to provide improved bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout the community and beyond.

Modify the dam, create a more navigable route

We don't often think about the river as a connection, but currently the dam is an impediment to providing river connectivity. Modifying the dam and creating a navigable route completes a waterway connection that has been absent for many years. This would also allow this section of the river to become part of the National Water Trails System.

Signature bridge

The northwest section of the downtown is somewhat disconnected from the riverfront and a signature pedestrian bridge would provide a direct connection to the river and the east bank in addition to becoming an iconic riverfront structure in the community.

Grade separated crossings where possible, safe at-grade crossings where necessary

Separating pedestrians and bicycles from vehicular traffic at crossings is the most desirable solution to create a safe and comfortable environment. Wherever possible, provide grade separated crossings, but where impractical, improve at-grade crossings with traffic calming devices, signals, and signage.

Gateways and wayfinding

Gateway components can define the limits of the community and provide a clear identity for the riverwalk. A comprehensive family of wayfinding signage can communicate the desired image while helping people navigate along the riverfront.



Fishing Station



Wildlife Habitat



Naturalized Shoreline Restoration

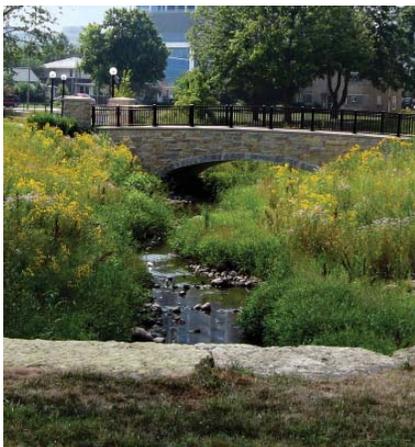
Natural Assets



Permeable Paving/ Bioswales



Shoreline Stabilization



Tributary Restoration

Many of the natural areas within the project area have degraded to a certain degree and should be improved over time. Large scale projects and initiatives are identified that can have a significant positive impact on the river and environment. Although specific technical and scientific study is beyond the scope of this project, it is important to note that all new improvements should have a positive effect on the environment. The community does not have control over what happens upstream or on many private properties, but improving the natural environment with all initiatives sets a positive example.

Maintain, improve and embellish existing assets

- [Modify the dam, manage sediment in upstream pool](#)
- [Modify Boy Scout Island](#)
- [Naturalize the shoreline](#)
- [Rehabilitate river tributaries](#)
- [Complete the Riverwalk amenities](#)
- [Incorporate stormwater best management practices](#)

Modify the dam, manage sediment in the upstream pool

Dam modification will create a more natural environment with improved aeration, wildlife passage, and habitat restoration. Managing the sediment in the upstream pool will continue to be a challenge but will be improved from the existing condition. Further study will determine the specific impacts related to dam modification.

Modify Boy Scout Island

Boy Scout Island was once an actual island. Currently it is a peninsula creating a stagnant bay of water that is challenging to maintain. Modify Boy Scout Island to return it to an island, improving water flow and allowing for creation of new wildlife habitat and ecological restoration. Provide a bridge to access the island and improve the power boat launch and parking lot

Naturalize the shoreline

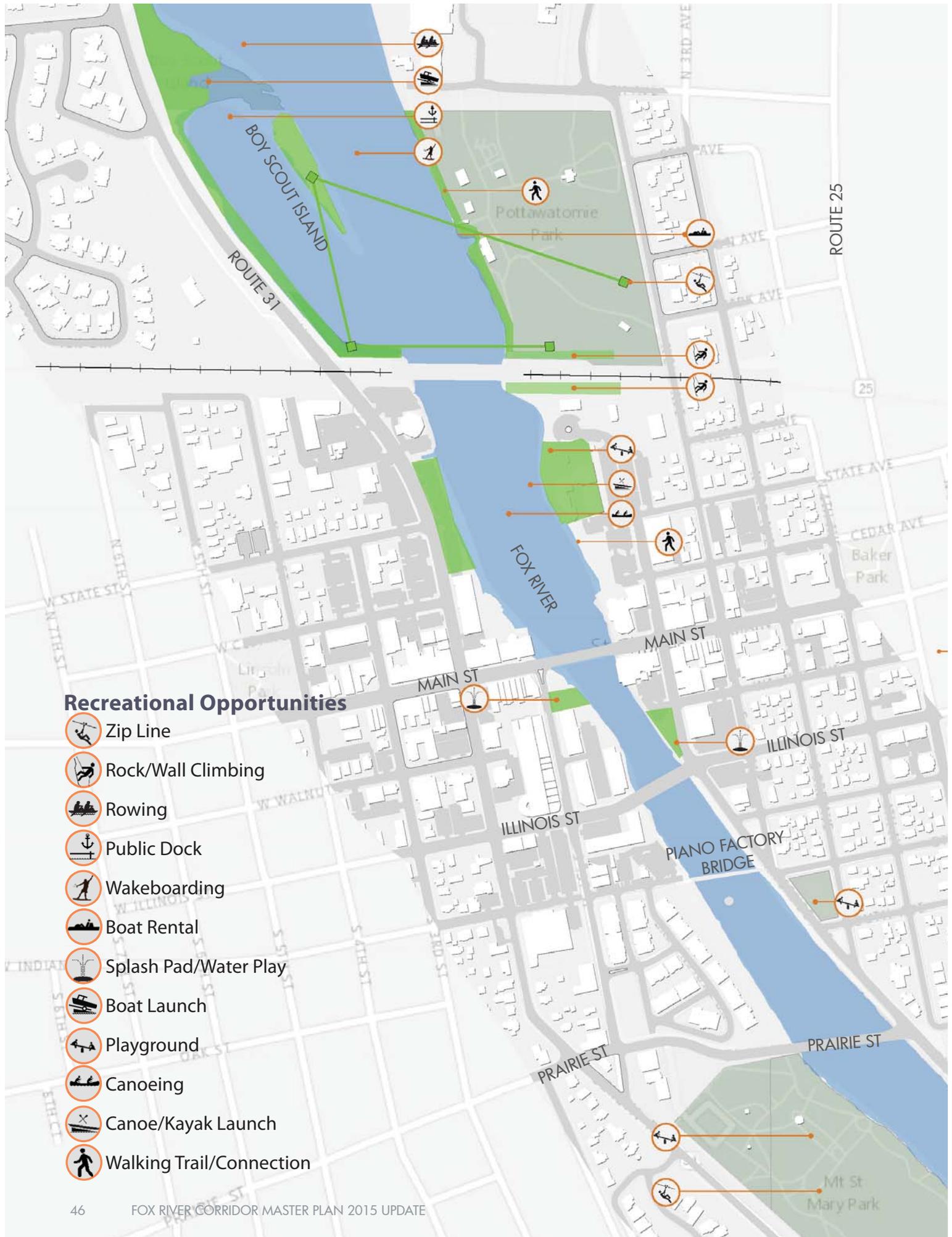
There are approx. 4 miles of shoreline within the St. Charles City limits. Much of the shoreline is natural, although erosion has degraded the shoreline in many locations. Stabilize and restore the shoreline to reduce sedimentation, improve water quality and provide wildlife habitat.

Rehabilitate river tributaries

As development occurred adjacent to the Fox River, many tributaries were disrupted, piped or filled. Restore the river tributaries to a more natural state to improve water quality, wildlife habitat and the environment.

Incorporate Stormwater Best Management Practices

Stormwater best management practices consist of requirements and actions to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff and ways to treat stormwater before it enters the river. Institute policies that require stormwater best management practices for both private and public developments to have a positive impact on the quality of the river.



Recreational Opportunities

-  Zip Line
-  Rock/Wall Climbing
-  Rowing
-  Public Dock
-  Wakeboarding
-  Boat Rental
-  Splash Pad/Water Play
-  Boat Launch
-  Playground
-  Canoeing
-  Canoe/Kayak Launch
-  Walking Trail/Connection

Recreational Assets

The St. Charles Park District already provides many recreational opportunities along the Fox River corridor. Improving the existing assets and taking advantage of the river as a natural resource by adding passive and active activities, along with encouraging private programs and activities, will further establish St. Charles as an active lifestyle community.

Maintain, improve and embellish existing recreational assets

- Provide recreational activities such as splash pads and destination playgrounds along the riverwalk and in downtown plazas and open spaces
- Provide active outdoor recreational activities such as climbing walls, ropes courses and zip lines along the riverfront
- Improve passive recreational activities such as bird watching, fishing, hiking and walking
- Support and encourage private recreation such as rowing, canoeing, kayaking, biking, and power boating
- Provide accessible fishing facilities



Playground



Splash Pad



Zipline/Ropes Course

Provide downtown and riverwalk recreational activities

The Park District supports programs and maintains neighborhood and regional parks throughout the community. Adding small recreational activities such as splash pads and destination play environments throughout the downtown and along the riverwalk will strengthen the riverfront overall.

Provide active outdoor recreational activities along the riverfront

Active recreational activities such as climbing walls, ropes courses and zip lines along the riverfront will support an active lifestyle and help establish St. Charles as a recreational destination.

Improve passive recreational activities

Recreational activities such as bird watching, hiking and walking are extremely popular. Providing convenient and interesting opportunities for people to experience the outdoors, riverfront, community and environment will support achieving the overall project goal.

Support and encourage private recreation

Public agencies can provide support for private activities without providing specific organized programs. Activities such as rowing, canoeing, kayaking, biking, and power boating are all privately organized but can benefit from public support.

Provide fishing stations

Fishing continues to be one of the most popular recreational activities along the Fox River. Provide convenient access to the river in popular fishing areas to support this popular recreational activity.

Cultural Assets

Cultural assets are all of the various items that communicate the attitudes, customs and beliefs that make a community unique. Incorporate and support art, history, programs and events that represent the culture of St. Charles throughout the river corridor.

Maintain, improve and embellish existing cultural assets

- Incorporate Art along the riverfront and throughout downtown
- Represent the history of the community
- Support community festivals and programmed events (Riverfest, Scarecrow, Fine Arts, etc.)
- Complete the Riverwalk amenities

Incorporate Art along the riverfront and throughout downtown

Sculpture, public art, performances and temporary installations all create interest and are attractions along the riverfront. Utilize the riverfront and the river itself for art displays and installations to create a unique riverfront experience.

Represent the history of the community

The City of St. Charles has a rich and storied history. Communicate the history of the community through sculpture, displays, and events for future generations to come.

Support community festivals and programmed events

The community hosts a number of events including Riverfest, the Scarecrow Festival and the Fine Arts festival within the downtown and along the riverfront. Support these community events along with other programs to continue to make St. Charles an attractive place to live and a regional destination.

Complete the Riverwalk amenities

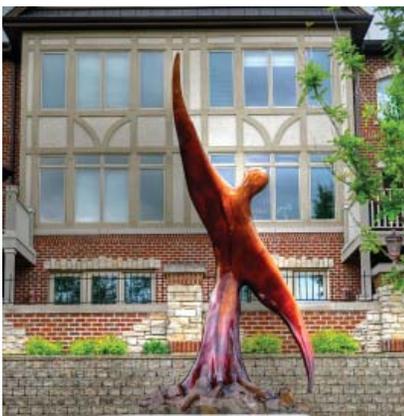
The existing riverwalk is a good start, but adding pedestrian amenities and other cultural assets will contribute to creating a riverwalk that is not just a walkway, but a regional attraction.



Local Lore and History



Local Events and Festivals



Memorial Sculptures



River Based Art Installations



Unique Cultural Attractions

Brand

The image of St. Charles, “Pride of the Fox”, is closely aligned with the river. Further emphasis on the river by refining the platform, tools and communications will only strengthen the community’s position and create a more recognizable, authentic brand.

Refine existing platform, tools, and communications

- Emphasize the river (programming and communications)
- Emphasize the package (multi-dimensional, lifestyle and visitor appeal)
- Promote new features as they come on line (must be authentic)
- Target audience (local, regional)

Emphasize the river (programming and communications)

The City of St. Charles is known as the “Pride of the Fox” and the identity of the community is closely tied to the river. Emphasize this fact through all programming and communications among the various, agencies, organizations, and groups to project a consistent, coordinated message.

Emphasize the package (multi-dimensional, lifestyle and visitor appeal)

It’s all about the river but there’s more to it than just the river. Emphasize the community as a whole, its diversity, lifestyle and visitor appeal as an active river community.

Promote new features as they come on line (must be authentic)

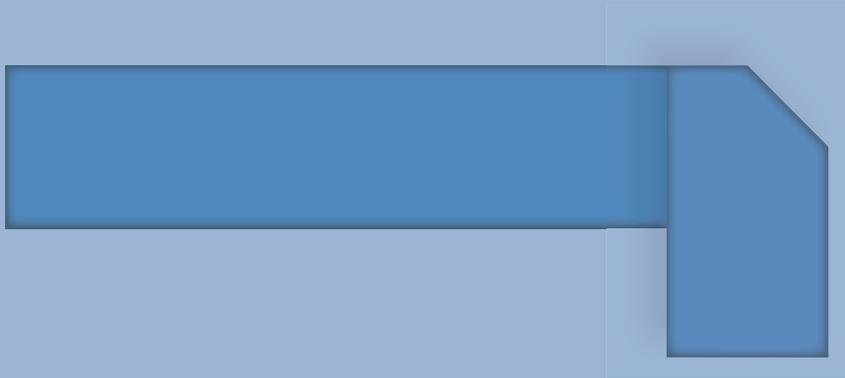
It is important to get the word out and promote new features as they come on line to create interest and attract users. Promotions must be authentic and not oversell an idea which could lead to a disappointing experience and loss of return visitors.

Target audience (local, regional)

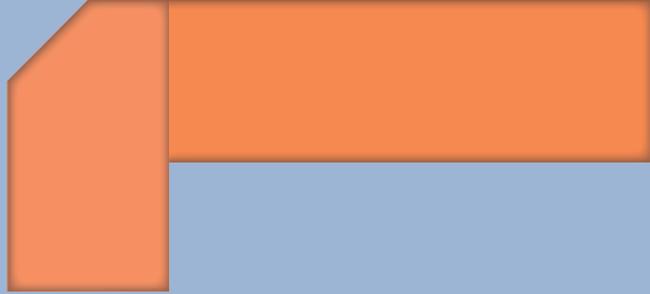
Riverfront improvements benefit the local community and economy, creating a better place for its citizens. Targeting a larger regional audience can strengthen the reputation of the community and lead to continued growth and prosperity.



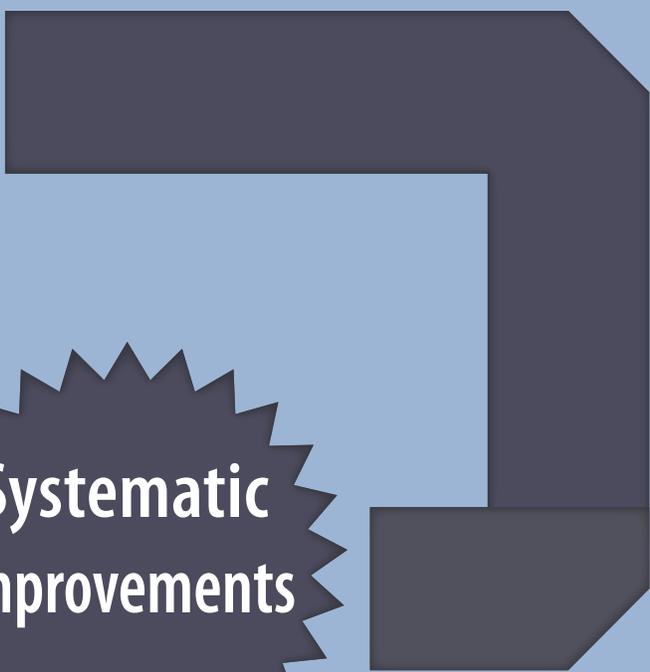
**Prioritize
River**



**Align and
Coordinate**



**Leverage
Water
Quality**



**Systematic
Improvements**

Momentum

The master plan outlines many improvement recommendations. It can be challenging to determine where to begin and how to accomplish meaningful improvements. By acting systematically and incrementally, the community can gain and sustain momentum to accomplish the project goals, objectives and standards.

Advocate the strategy

- Prioritize river and riverfront across partner organizations
- Align and coordinate organizational initiatives
- Leverage water quality to facilitate dam modification
- Commit to systematic, incremental capital improvements

Prioritize the river and riverfront across partner organizations

Various stakeholder agencies, organizations and groups have a number of competing interests to consider. Prioritizing these needs is not easy. The partner organizations must make the river and riverfront improvements a priority to gain and sustain momentum to meet the goals and objectives.

Align and coordinate organizational initiatives

If organizations make the river a priority, the next step is to align and coordinate specific initiatives among the organizations. Each organization has their own interests, but by coordinating together, multiple agencies can align their priorities and leverage river related initiatives.

Leverage water quality to facilitate dam modification

The time is now to align the City's interests with the pending water quality regulatory requirements. Coordination between the partner organizations and the regulatory agencies can lead to implementation of the recommendations as outlined in the master plan.

Commit to systematic, incremental capital improvements

Some of the improvements such as the dam modification are complicated and expensive, and will take a number of years to complete. It is important to get started on these larger scale projects now, although it is just as important to commit to systematic, incremental advancement of a variety of smaller projects on a continuous basis.



Implementation

The Fox River Corridor Master Plan includes dozens of important recommendations to “Create a lively riverfront environment that is the centerpiece of the community”. Fortunately, as detailed in the Opportunity Analysis, St. Charles has the critical natural, cultural and physical resources that enable community leaders to execute the strategy with confidence. However, the size of the study area, the number of improvement recommendations, and the multi-jurisdictional influences make rapid implementation a daunting task.

In this section, the recommendations are translated into specific, prioritized projects and actions that are organized as Public Policy Improvements, Operational Improvements, and Capital Improvements. Each project describes the type, potential cost, potential funding source, and the leaders and partners who are responsible for completing the project. Projects are prioritized based on their level of complication, potential cost, their catalytic potential and expected return on investment.

Both public and private sector leaders and property owners will be responsible for executing the actions outlined in this plan, often in close collaboration with each other. With the periodic assistance of legal, marketing and other business consultants, the Active River Task Force (ARTF) can accomplish many modest cost initiatives such as policy and operational changes, if members are willing to invest the time to work through the issues. By comparison, many of the larger capital improvements will require the assistance of design and engineering consultants and involve considerable City, Park District, and/or Forest Preserve leadership and investment because of their scale, complexity and cost. Since the construction of some of the new capital improvements will depend, in part, on outside grant funding, completion may extend beyond the outlined time horizon. Lastly, private redevelopment is heavily influenced by the market, investor and property owner circumstances that are difficult to forecast. Logically, redevelopment will likely follow and be influenced by the public policy and operational improvements.

Policy Improvements

Park District, City, and Forest Preserve District leaders, property and business owners, and other stakeholders need to closely collaborate to update and refine certain policies that will help advance the strategy. The ARTF, made up of representatives from each of these groups, should continue to remain active to advance the priority policy improvements.

Policy Improvements

COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE	ACTION/DELIVERABLE	LEADERSHIP
Codes, Ordinances and Studies			
TBD	TBD	Adopt this River Corridor Master Plan Update, review and update the priority actions and improvements annually	City of St. Charles (City) St. Charles Park District (SCPD) Forest Preserve District of Kane County (FPDKC)
TBD	TBD	Complete Police Facility Study	City
TBD	TBD	Continue negotiations with UPRR to purchase vacated RR bridge	City, SCPD, FPDKC
TBD	TBD	Evaluate, incorporate, and require environmental best management practices in ordinances and policies	City, SCPD, FPDKC
Agency Coordination			
TBD	TBD	Vigorously advocate the Active River Strategy with the Fox River Study Group	City, other Fox River cities
TBD	TBD	Synchronize City, Park District and County policies to prioritize river corridor improvements	Active River Task Force/ River Corridor Foundation of St. Charles (ARTF), All River Corridor Partners
TBD	TBD	Review the Strategy with regulatory Agencies to determine project related regulations and requirements	City, SCPD
TBD	TBD	Continue to advocate for the improvements on behalf of all river corridor partners	ARTF
Finance			
TBD	TBD	Select river corridor improvements and align with partner agency Capital Improvement Plans and all sources of revenue (include both simple-to-execute and complex projects like the Phase I study of the dam)	City, SCPD, FPDKC
TBD	TBD	Assign someone to research grant funding and produce periodic memos shared/compared with other corridor partners. Identify best opportunities and partnerships, apply for/facilitate awards	All River Corridor Partners
TBD	TBD	Seek funding through state and federal sources to complete a Phase I study of the dam modification, confirm local match(es)	City
TBD	TBD	Seek corporate and individual donations	Active River Task Force/River Corridor Foundation of St. Charles (ARTF)

Operational Improvements

The Park District, City, and Forest Preserve District are responsible for many day-to-day operational activities such as code enforcement, public property maintenance and programming, along with community outreach and advocacy. Additionally, private property and business owners are responsible for leasing, managing and maintaining their properties. Ideally, all public and private sector stakeholders will work closely together to improve the river corridor. Focusing on areas of common interest and defining how each entity can participate mitigates any potential overlap or competing interests in the work necessary to improve the river corridor. Once again, the ARTF can continue to play an important role in advancing the priority operational improvements.

Operational Improvements

COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE	ACTION/DELIVERABLE	LEADERSHIP
Organization			
TBD	TBD	Synchronize 2016 City, Park District, County and organizational operations plans to prioritize river corridor promotion and programming	ARTF, All River Corridor Partners
TBD	TBD	Prioritize operational plan improvements to advance future implementation items	ARTF, City, SCPD, FPDKC, KDOT, Downtown St. Charles Partnership, Inc St. Charles Convention and Visitor's Bureau
Advocacy, Promotion and Marketing			
TBD	TBD	Continue to advance community outreach and advocacy with agencies, potential developers and the public	ARTF
TBD	TBD	Actively encourage private recreational activities such as rowing, canoeing, kayaking, and bicycling programs and groups	ARTF, SCPD
TBD	TBD	Explore the possibility for private vendors to provide specialized recreational activities such as climbing walls, ropes coursed and zip lines	ARTF, SCPD
TBD	TBD	Continue to support and promote the arts and programmed events and activities throughout the river corridor	ARTF, St. Charles Arts Council (SCAC)
TBD	TBD	Align the activities of partner agencies and stakeholders related to "brand" , emphasizing the river, promoting new features, and portraying an active lifestyle and visitor appeal	All River Corridor Partners
Public Space			
TBD	TBD	Continue existing maintenance practices for existing public properties	City, SCPD, FPDKC
TBD	TBD	Develop a plan for maintenance of future capital improvements	City, SCPD, FPDKC

Capital Improvements

This plan identifies many capital improvements, some of which can be completed in a relatively short timeline. Others, because of cost and complexity, will take many years to implement. Park District, City and Forest Preserve District leaders should start with simple, high impact, modest cost projects, then budget for and initiate more complicated, high-investment/high impact projects, as funding allows, giving the highest priority to the most catalytic projects. Leaders should also link the master-planned capital improvements to significant private sector investment, whenever possible to leverage the impacts.

Capital improvement projects typically follow a three phase process: Preliminary Design and Engineering (Phase I), Final Design and Engineering (Phase II), and Construction (Phase III). Customarily, the cost of Phase I and Phase II services is 10 percent of the project value, and the cost of Phase III is typically 3-5 percent of the total project value. With more complex projects, leaders should initiate Phase I consulting services well in advance of the targeted construction date to accommodate sometimes lengthy outreach, design, engineering and multi-jurisdictional permitting timelines.

Capital Improvements

COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE	ACTION/DELIVERABLE	LEADERSHIP
Riverpark			
TBD	TBD	Align temporary bulkhead wall (city hall-police station) rehabilitation with Active River Strategy	City
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct the dam modification	City
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct the children's play environment	City, SCPD
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct the signature pedestrian bridge	City
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct the Bridgeview observation area	City, SCPD
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct the continuous riverfront walkway, water access, and observation areas	City
Riverwalk			
TBD	TBD	Create an enhancement plan for the Leonard Walkway for fundraising and construction	ARTF, City, SCPD
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct the Riverside Avenue Riverwalk (North of Prairie)	City
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct the Riverside Avenue (South of Prairie) Riverwalk	City
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct the downtown loop civic plaza	City

COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE	ACTION/DELIVERABLE	LEADERSHIP
Riverwalk (cont.)			
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct the Beith House civic plaza	City
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct the Hazletine Park destination play environment	City
TBD	TBD	Explore the possibility to add a kinetic sculpture and plantings on the island	City, SCAC
TBD	TBD	Align Piano Factory Bridge rehabilitation with the Active River Strategy	City
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct surf wave south of Piano Factory Bridge	City
Regional Trails and Connections			
TBD	TBD	Align Fox River Trail sign improvements with the Active River Strategy	Kane County Department of Transportation (KDOT)
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct the Fox River Trail north extension	SCPD, FPDKC
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct the Fox River Trail (east side) north extension	SCPD, FPDKC
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct the Fox River Trail (west side) north extension	SCPD, FPDKC
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct the east/west Great Western trail connection across the railroad bridge	SCPD, FPDKC
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct grade separated and at-grade pedestrian and bike connections	SCPD, FPDKC
TBD	TBD	Evaluate existing bike paths and determine areas in need of improvement	ARTF, SCPD, FPDKC
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct priority bike path improvements	SCPD, FPDKC
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct river corridor gateways	City, SCPD
Private Development			
TBD	TBD	Align the First Street Redevelopment improvements with the Active River Strategy	ARTF, City
TBD	TBD	Align future riverfront redevelopment projects with the Active River Strategy	ARTF, City
TBD	TBD	Facilitate discussions with stakeholders regarding the potential for a rowing training center, camping and seasonal activities and rentals	ARTF, SCPD

COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE	ACTION/DELIVERABLE	LEADERSHIP
Natural Assets			
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct the Boy Scout Island modifications	SCPD, City
TBD	TBD	Evaluate the shoreline to determine locations requiring shoreline restoration	ARTF, SCPD, City
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct shoreline restoration improvements	SCPD, City
TBD	TBD	Determine locations for fishing stations	ARTF, SCPD, City
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct fishing stations	SCPD, City
TBD	TBD	Evaluate river tributaries and determine locations requiring restoration	ARTF, SCPD, City
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct tributary restoration improvements	SCPD, City
TBD	TBD	Evaluate areas with poor drainage and flooding, and determine locations requiring improvement	SCPD, City
Recreational Assets			
TBD	TBD	Evaluate locations throughout the river corridor to incorporate splash pads, destination playgrounds, and specialized recreation opportunities	ARTF, SCPD, City
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct specialized recreational improvements	SCPD
TBD	TBD	Evaluate passive recreational activities to determine potential improvements throughout the river corridor	ARTF, SCPD, City
TBD	TBD	Design, engineer, permit and construct improvements to passive recreational activities throughout the river corridor	SCPD
Cultural Assets			
TBD	TBD	Align the Active River Strategy with the St. Charles Arts Council and other affiliated organizations to promote cultural asset improvements throughout the river corridor	ARTF, City
TBD	TBD	Fundraise and install art and historical components along the riverfront and throughout the river corridor	ARTF, SCAC

Priority Actions and Improvements

Community leaders should use this prioritized list of actions and improvements to guide policy, capital and operational improvements over the next 3 years. They should update this list, annually, to review progress, re-order actions based on changed circumstances, and identify new actions related to emerging opportunities. Costs are uninflated 2015 dollars, and leadership roles are noted with the understanding that elected leaders in the partnering agencies must approve all policies and appropriations.

The recommended actions and improvements are prioritized based on:

- An appropriate return on investment (broadly defined as the use of valuable financial, physical and human resources to create community impacts in support of the River Corridor Strategy)
- Availability of adequate funding (from public or private sources)
- Appropriate control of or access to river and/or corridor property
- Complexity and time to complete (creating and sustaining momentum with a combination of small, large, simple and complex projects)
- Relationship to private sector development (desirable private development adjacent to the river should always advance the corridor strategy)
- Relationship to public sector infrastructure projects (public improvements adjacent to the river should always advance the corridor strategy)

2015

Policy Improvements

Cost	Action/Deliverable	Leadership
NA	Adopt this River Corridor Master Plan Update	City of St. Charles (City) St. Charles Park District (SCPD) Forest Preserve District of Kane County (FPDKC)
TBD	Vigorously advocate the Active River Strategy with the Fox River Study Group	City, other downstream cities
TBD	Select river corridor improvements for the 2016 and the 3-year Capital Improvement Plan (include both simple-to-execute and complex projects like the Phase I study of the dam)	City, SCPD, FPDKC
TBD	Seek funding through state and federal sources to complete a Phase I study of the dam modification. Confirm local match(es).	City
TBD	Assign someone to research grant funding and produce periodic memos shared/compared with other corridor partners. Identify best opportunities and partnerships, apply for/facilitate awards.	All River Corridor Partners
NA	Complete Police Facility Study	City
TBD	Continue negotiations with UPRR to purchase vacated RR bridge	City, SCPD, FPDKC

Priority Capital Improvements

Cost	Action	Leadership
TBD	Align Piano Factory Bridge rehabilitation with the Active River Strategy	City
TBD	Align temporary bulkhead wall (city hall-police station) rehabilitation with Active River Strategy	City
TBD	Align Fox River Trail sign improvements with the Active River Strategy	Kane County Department of Transportation (KDOT)
TBD	Align First Street Redevelopment improvements with the Active River Strategy	City

Priority Operational Improvements

Cost	Action	Leadership
TBD	Synchronize 2016 City, Park District, County and organizational operations plans to prioritize river corridor promotion and programming	Active River Task Force/River Corridor Foundation of St. Charles (ARTF), All River Corridor Partners
	Community outreach and advocacy	ARTF

2016

Priority Policy Improvements

Cost	Action	Leadership
	Continue to advocate Active River Strategy with Fox River Study Group	City
	Prioritize river corridor improvements for 2017 Capital Improvement Plans	City, SCPD, FPDKC
	Continue to seek funding for dam modification	City, IEPA
	Continue to monitor grant opportunities	All River Corridor Partners

Priority Capital Improvements

Cost	Action	Leadership
\$1,000,000	Start Preliminary Design/Engineering of the dam modification	City
\$50,000	Complete Preliminary Design/Engineering of Riverside Drive Riverwalk (Ohio-Prairie)	City
\$10,000	Create an enhancement plan for "Leonard" Riverwalk for fundraising, periodic completion	ARTF
\$15,000	Prepare Preliminary Design/Engineering for shoreline enhancements for Riverside Drive, south of Prairie	City
TBD	Design and construct a small project from simple-to-execute projects list	ARTF, City, SCPD

Priority Operational Improvements

Cost	Action	Leadership
	Synchronize 2017 City, Park District, County and organizational operations plans to prioritize river corridor promotion and programming	ARTF, City, SCPD, FPDKC, KDOT, Downtown St. Charles Partnership, Inc St. Charles Convention and Visitor's Bureau
	Community outreach and advocacy	ARTF

2017

Priority Policy Improvements

Cost	Action	Leadership
	Continue to advance dam modification plans	City
	Prioritize river corridor improvements for 2018 Capital Improvement Plans	City, SCPD, FPDKC

Priority Capital Improvements

Cost	Action	Leadership
	Complete Preliminary Design/Engineering of dam modification; Continue funding/implementation strategy	City
\$200,000	Complete Final Design/Engineering of Riverside Drive Riverwalk (Ohio-Prairie)	City
\$25,000	Prepare Preliminary Design/Engineering for Fox River Trail at Golf Course	SCPD, FPDKC
\$100,000	Construct some enhancements on "Leonard" Riverwalk	City
\$60,000	Prepare Final Design/Engineering for selected shoreline enhancements along Riverside Drive, south of Prairie	City

Priority Operational Improvements

Cost	Action	Leadership
	Synchronize 2018 City, Park District, County and organizational operations plans to prioritize river corridor promotion and programming	All River Corridor Partners
	Community outreach and advocacy	ARTF

2018

Priority Policy Improvements

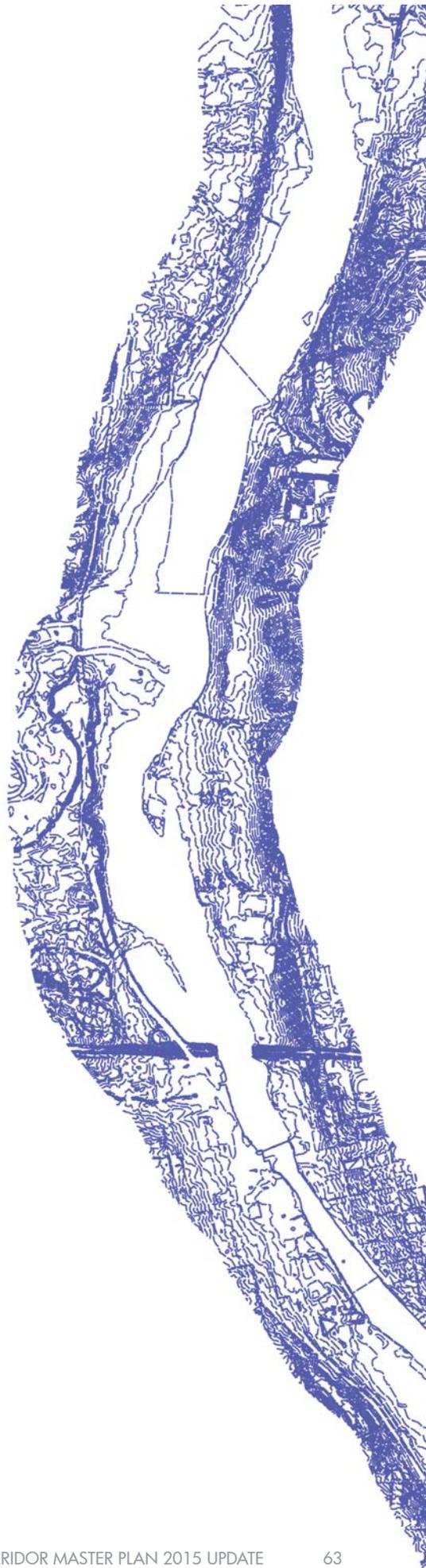
Cost	Action	Leadership
	Continue to advance dam modification plans	City
	Prioritize river corridor improvements for 2019 Capital Improvement Plans	City, SCPD, FPDKC

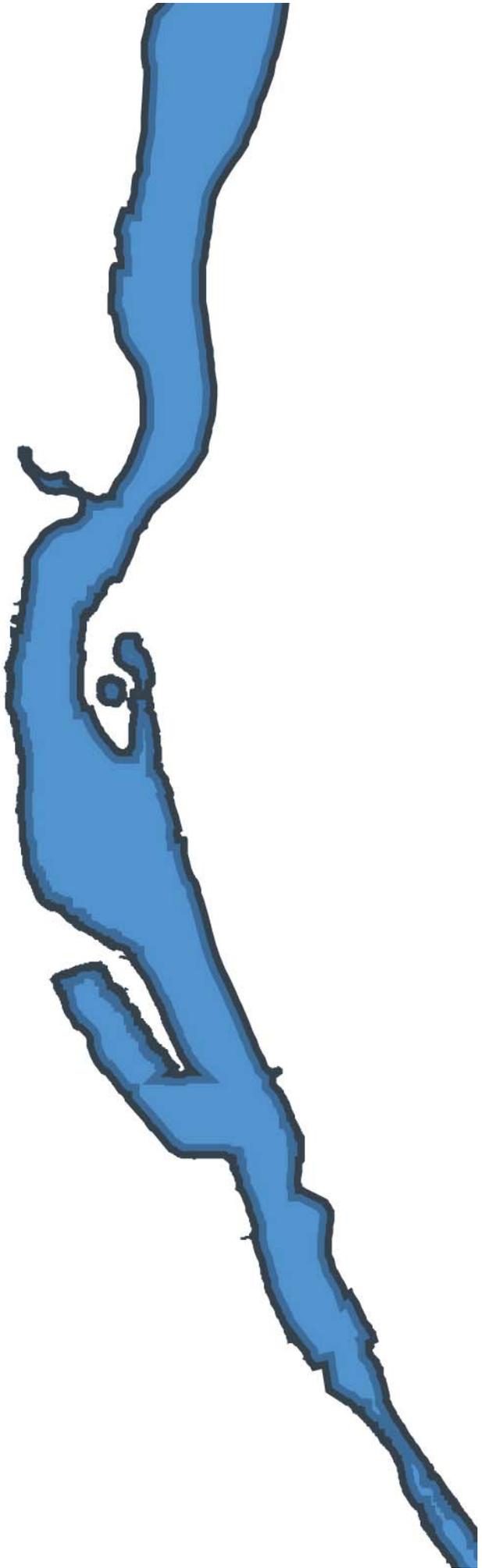
Priority Capital Improvements

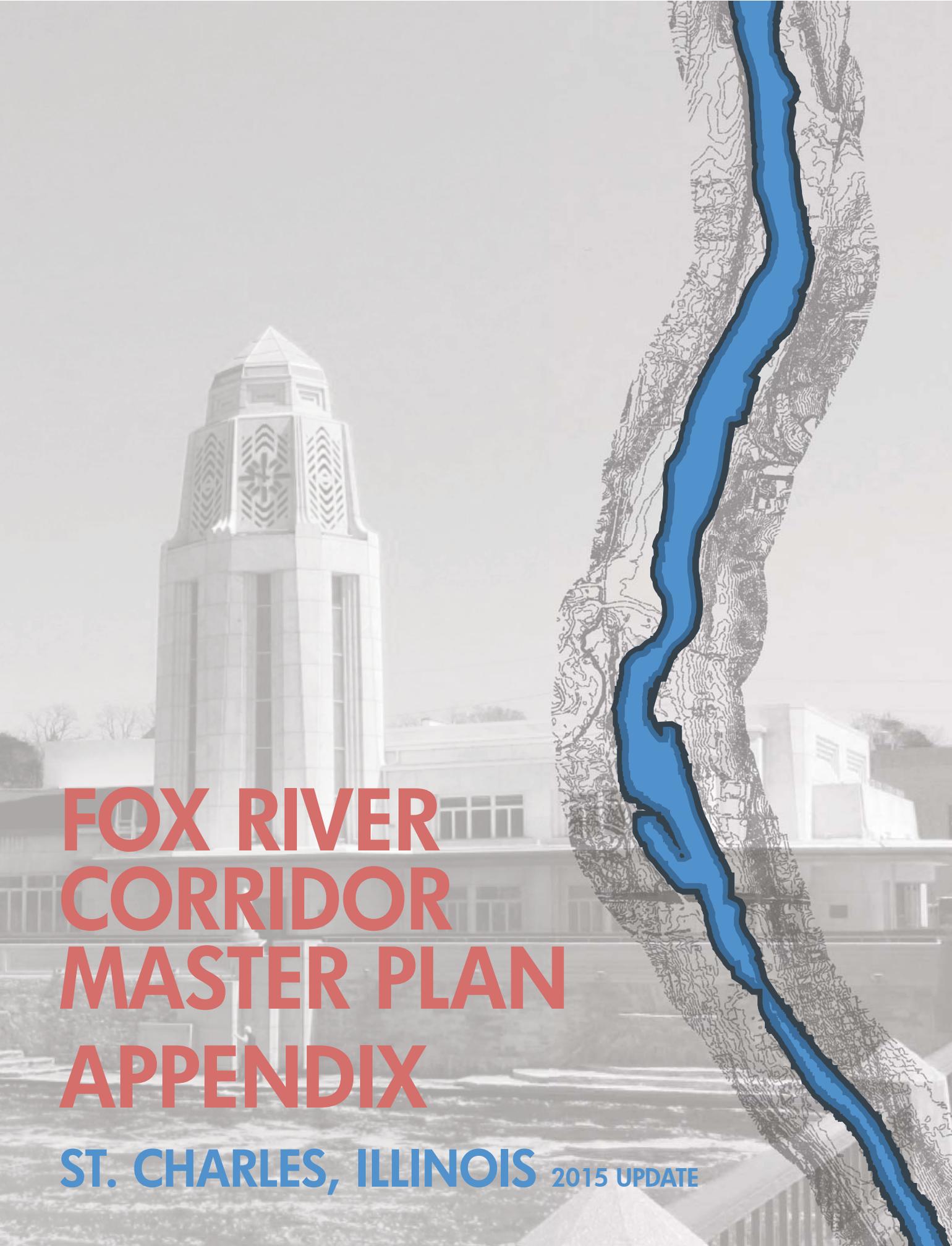
Cost	Action	Leadership
\$2,500,000	Construct Riverside Drive Riverwalk (Ohio-Prairie)	City
\$100,000	Construct additional enhancements to "Leonard" Riverwalk	City

Priority Operational Improvements

Cost	Action	Leadership
	Community outreach and advocacy	ARTF

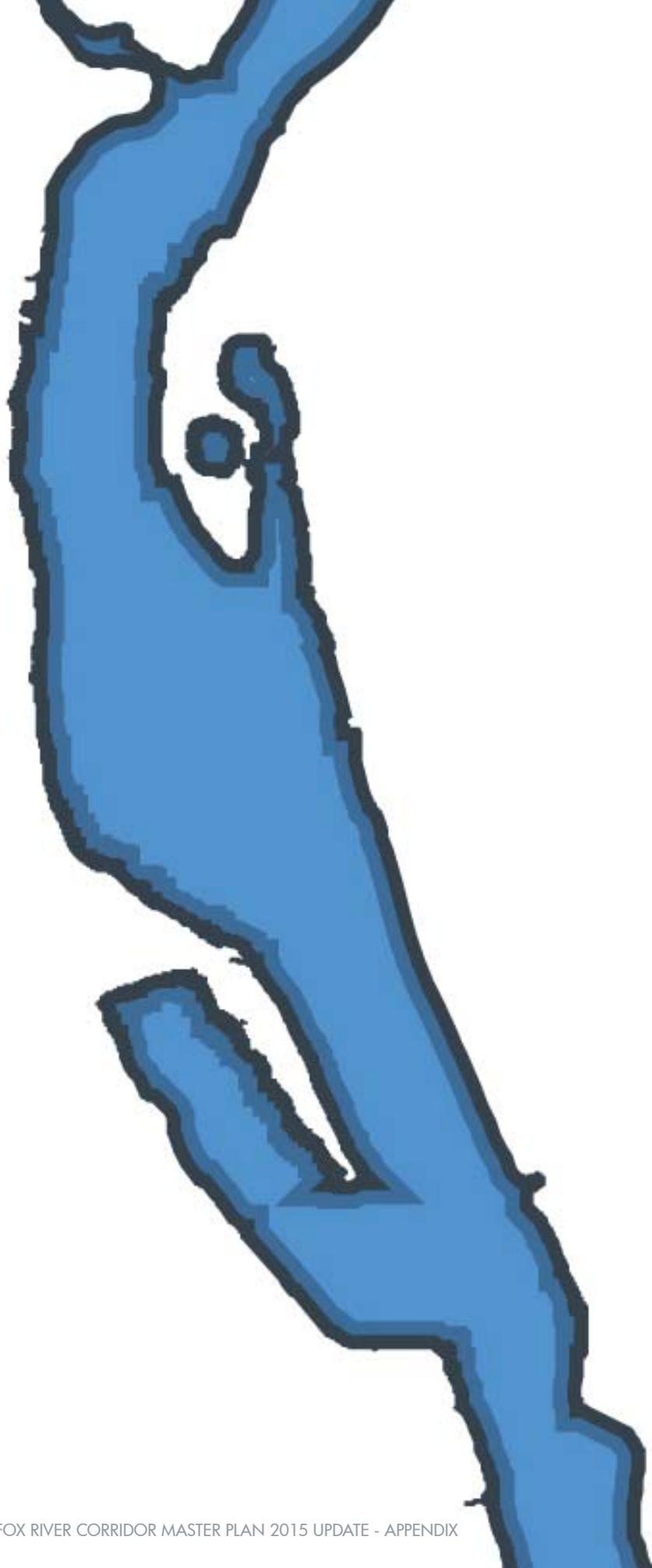






FOX RIVER CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN APPENDIX

ST. CHARLES, ILLINOIS 2015 UPDATE



Appendix

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Memorandum

Date: June 10, 2015

To: Project Team

From: HDG

RE: St. Charles River Corridor - Preliminary Opportunity Analysis

Acknowledgements

Sponsor Agencies

River Corridor Foundation of St. Charles
St. Charles Park District
City of St. Charles
Kane County Forest Preserve

Active River Task Force Members

John Rabchuk, Chairman, River Corridor Foundation of St. Charles
Chris Adesso, Vice Chairman, City of St. Charles Public Works
Holly Cabel, St. Charles Park District
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Hitchcock Design Group – Planning, Landscape Architecture
Market & Feasibility Advisors – Market Economics
Wills Burke Kelsey Associates – Civil/Water Resource Engineering
S2O Design and Engineering – Active River Feasibility

Executive Summary

This Opportunity Analysis concludes the first of our three-phased study of the St. Charles River Corridor. It includes a review of important study area resources, market place conditions and stakeholder interests. It also summarizes promising opportunities that we will explore in greater detail in the upcoming Preferred Strategy phase.

Our analysis of the river corridor study area revealed the following preliminary conclusions:

Resources

- River as an asset
- Positive community image



- Viable downtown environment
- Community support
- Support for existing activities and programs
- Recreational reputation as a draw
- Potential drawback of limited redevelopment opportunity sites
- Limited residential property within the downtown

Marketplace

- Affluent community
- Good positioning in regional context
- Affiliation/coordination with other Fox River Communities
- Reaction to changing demographics within the community

Stakeholder Interests

- Support for dam modification and active re-use
- Support for ecological river improvement
- Need for improved connectivity
- Participation in existing and support for new activities and programming
- Support for additional downtown redevelopment
- Skepticism about the ability to reinvent St. Charles as a walkable downtown community
- Skepticism about the ability to fund the proposed improvements
- Lack of support for downtown housing opportunities

Promising Opportunities

- Dam modification, whitewater course
- Ecological improvement
- Connectivity
- Activities and programming
- Associated development
- Community position in the region



Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to update the 2002 River Corridor Master Plan with an increased focus on active river recreation, economic development opportunities and ecological improvement initiatives. The plan will provide policy and resource guidance to leaders over the next several years.

The Study Area includes the extent of the Fox River within the City of St. Charles municipal boundaries from approximately Red Gate Road on the north to Division Street on the south, including the properties that border the River. Downtown St. Charles is located within the study area and is considered part of the River Corridor project area.

Process

In January of 2015 the Active River Task Force selected the Hitchcock Design Group (HDG) team to complete a three phased study, starting with the Opportunity Analysis. The Opportunity Analysis considers the study area Resources, Market Place and Stakeholder interests. The best opportunities occur when the Resources, Market Place and Stakeholder interests are most closely aligned.

During the Opportunity Analysis Phase, the HDG team coordinated closely with the Active River Task Force to gain an understanding of the current conditions within the corridor, to identify project stakeholders and to outline a comprehensive process for public outreach. The HDG team reviewed and analyzed existing plans, demographic information, current land uses and activities, and market trends to evaluate the existing conditions within the study area. Simultaneously, the team launched a project website in coordination with the River Corridor Foundation, Park District, City, and Forest Preserve District. The HDG team then conducted approximately 35 individual stakeholder interviews with a broad cross section of participants that included business and property owners, elected officials, regulatory agencies and special interest groups (see the appendix for a list of interviewees and a summary of survey results). The same evening as the interviews, the HDG team facilitated a community workshop to review existing resources, market and stakeholder characteristics and to brainstorm ideas on how to improve the river corridor. Approximately 85 participants were asked to share their thoughts on how, and how frequently they use the river and riverfront today, and what they would use and support in the future (see the appendix for a list of workshop attendees and a summary of results).

In the next phase, the Preferred Strategy, the HDG team will define an integrated strategy for the study area and prepare Alternative Framework, Corridor Character, and Preliminary Implementation recommendations. Finally, the HDG team will complete the final Vision Plan including detailed implementation actions to guide the community over the next several years.

Existing Policies, Plans, Reports

The River Corridor Master Plan is one of a number of policy documents that actively influence the study area.

The City of St. Charles Comprehensive Plan completed in 2013 includes guiding policies for all of St. Charles. Of particular interest is the demographic information along with the Downtown Subarea Plan that identifies framework, character and redevelopment sites that directly influence the river corridor.

The St. Charles Park District Comprehensive Plan completed in 2011 includes policies that influence the river and Park District properties located along the river. Information regarding Park District users and programs are of particular interest to the development of the river corridor plan.



The Forest Preserve District of Kane County Master Plan from 2008-2012 is particularly relevant to the north end of the corridor where Forest Preserve District property is located adjacent to the river corridor along with the trail system that extends throughout the project area.

The Downtown St. Charles Strategy Plan from 2000, prepared by the City of St. Charles and the Downtown St. Charles Partnership, is now 15 years old and some of the content might be considered out-of-date. However, it is worth noting that a number of the ideas represented in the plan are still relevant and can influence the river corridor plan in a positive way.

The intent of this plan is not to repeat information already contained in these existing plans, but to build on these ideas specifically related to the river corridor.

River Corridor Foundation/Active River Task Force

The River Corridor Foundation is a group of private citizen volunteers working with public agencies to improve the Fox River Corridor of St. Charles. The River Corridor Foundation's Mission Statement is as follows:

The River Corridor Foundation of St. Charles supports and advocates for projects that will enhance the downtown riverfront environment as a destination for cultural, educational, and economic opportunities that are accessible to all. In order to carry out this mission the Foundation will:

- *Financially support projects*
- *Review and evaluate ideas*
- *Collaborate with others*
- *Identify and plan enhancements*
- *Create awareness of the importance of the river corridor*

The Active River Task Force is a group of Foundation members including members of each of the sponsor agencies who were assembled to guide the creation of the River Corridor Master Plan. Members of the Active River Task Force have been giving presentations to organizations in the area to promote the active river initiative.

Resources

Context

The City of St. Charles is located in both DuPage and Kane counties and is 35 miles west of downtown Chicago. According to the City website, *"International employers, innovative schools, beautiful parks, local and regional resources, and unique architecture have earned St. Charles its reputation as the Pride of the Fox!"* The traditional downtown environment combined with the remarkable natural resource of the Fox River sets St. Charles apart from other communities within the Chicagoland region.

Within the Fox River Valley, St. Charles along with Geneva and Batavia to the south are often referred to as the tri-cities due to their close proximity to one another. The tri-city area has a reputation as a great place to live, work and play, along with being a shopping, dining and recreational destination.

The Fox River bisects the City of St. Charles which is commonly considered to be made up of three distinct commercial areas; Downtown, East, and West sections. The downtown is the historic center of the City located along the Fox River, while the east section is centered on Kirk Road, and the West section is centered on Randall Road. Route 64 (Main Street) connects the east and west sections of the City and is an important commercial and transportation corridor within the City.



Historic and Cultural Resources

Settlers were originally attracted to the St. Charles area's varied natural setting and by the 1920's tourism became a major component of the St. Charles economy and identity. Between the period of 1920 and 1940 St. Charles became known as a resort town. Not until the 1960's with major industrial development did St. Charles experience significant growth. In the 1970's people began to view St. Charles as a desirable city in which to raise a family and the 1980's brought significant residential and commercial growth. Today St. Charles is an award-winning community renowned for its high quality of life and natural beauty.

The St. Charles History Museum is located in downtown St. Charles in close proximity to the river corridor. In addition to the Museum itself, the organization is an incredible resource for historical and cultural information within the community.

The River Corridor Foundation conducts an annual Riverwalk – *"a historical tour of the people and places that have made the downtown St. Charles river corridor the charming spot that it is today"*. The Riverwalk is a great way to share the story of St. Charles to residents and visitors alike.

The St. Charles Arts Council is a volunteer organization whose mission is to *"serve and promote the arts and cultural activities in St. Charles, to the mutual benefit of the arts and community"*. The Arts Council serves individuals, organizations, businesses, and groups, with the primary long-range goal to transform St. Charles into an arts community, an arts magnet, and a nationally-known arts market.

Natural Resources

The Fox River is obviously an important natural resource for the St. Charles community. The 3.8 mile section of the Fox River within St. Charles is particularly scenic and offers a variety of recreational opportunities due to the 18 acre upstream pool created by the dam and the 7 miles of unobstructed river until the next dam north located in South Elgin. Due to its popularity, the balance of multiple uses within the river can be a challenge at times.

The floodplain and floodway extends beyond the banks of the river in some locations and can be source of periodic flooding and inconvenience. This impacts potential development/redevelopment sites and will require further study and permitting as specific site improvements are considered.

There are a number of preserved natural areas along the river through St. Charles including Forest Preserve, Park District, and City owned properties. On whole, environmental quality is considered to be improving in the area and continues to be the focus of many regulatory and special interest groups, along with the community in general.

Water quality is of particular concern within the Fox Valley region. Although the general perception is that water quality has improved over the past several years, current high phosphorus levels lead to the algae blooms and low dissolved oxygen levels in the river. The Fox River Study Group (FRSG) was formed to study the river relative to wastewater treatment plant discharge and to establish sound regulations based on water sampling and models. Representatives from local communities, including the City of St. Charles, make up the FRSG and are developing recommendations for improving water quality. The resulting Fox River Implementation Plan (FRIP) will include guidelines for improving water quality in lieu of mandated discharge levels as determined by the IEPA.

St. Charles Dam

The St. Charles Dam is a subject of considerable recent study and debate. The dam was originally constructed as a grist mill and served an important function for the community. The dam is owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and currently is considered recreational in use, although for many, it serves a meaningful function that it maintains the upstream pool, considered a priceless



cultural and recreational asset for the community. To others the environmental benefits of complete dam removal including improved water quality, wildlife habitat, and safe passage offset the recreational and cultural benefits of maintaining the dam.

Jurisdictional Information

A number of agencies have jurisdiction over the Fox River and adjacent properties that will need to be considered with any modifications and development.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources – Office of Water Resources (IDNR-OWR) Section 10 Rivers and Harbors Act related to navigability of public waters applies because the Fox River is a Public Body of Water (PBW) as identified by the State of Illinois. The PBW designation causes public interest / involvement with any proposed modification. Floodway impacts are also regulated by the OWR and they also have an interest in dam safety.

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulates waters of the US and wetlands jurisdiction through 404 permits.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulates revisions to the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) or floodway remapping that may occur as part of any redevelopment initiative.

The United State Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), IDNR-Fisheries, and the IEPA all regulate biology and water quality and may require certain improvements as a condition of any permit approvals.

The United States Coast Guard – 9th District also has jurisdiction over the waterway related to safety.

Finally, the State of Illinois has jurisdiction related to the American Disabilities Act and within State rights-of-way, and the City has jurisdiction related to local building codes and zoning regulations. The Park District and Forest Preserve District also have development requirements related to construction within their facilities.

Land Use and Ownership

With the exception of the downtown area, the majority of the project area riverfront is publicly owned. The Park District and Forest Preserve District own a majority of the property with the exception of single family residential properties in some locations. The Q Center is a unique facility that includes forest preserve access along the riverfront and is considered an opportunity site for future improvement.

The majority of the downtown property is commercial although the City Municipal Center and Police Station are located along the northeast part of the riverfront. Park District Properties including Pottawatomie Park, Mount St. Mary Park and the smaller Hazletine Park are significant downtown land uses and Langum Park is a City owned Park at the southeast end of the project area. Housing is under-represented within the downtown area although the recent Brownstone townhouse project is an attractive riverfront development.

The City Comprehensive Plan identifies a number of potential redevelopment sites, consisting of mixed uses including commercial (retail and office) along with housing opportunities. The First Street development originally initiated by the City of St. Charles is currently in progress with additional phases along the riverfront due to come on line in the near future.



Publicly controlled riverfront property can be considered a double-edged sword. On one hand public access is a critical component to creating continuous riverfront access and locations for public activities. On the other hand, the lack of private controlled properties can limit the potential for private investment leading to increased economic development.

Transportation and Infrastructure

St. Charles is accessible from major arterial roadways including Illinois Route 64 (Main Street) running east/west, Illinois Route 25 running north/south on the east side of the river, and Illinois Route 31 running north/south on the west side of the river. Kirk Road is the major north/south corridor on the east side of St. Charles and Randall Road is the major north/south corridor on the west side of St. Charles, both are Kane County highways.

St. Charles does not have direct access to interstate highways, but three interstates are located in close proximity; I-90 is located 9 miles to the north, I-88 7.5 miles to the south and I-355 11 miles to the east. St. Charles does not have commuter train access but the Geneva Metra station is located 1.5 miles to the south.

One of the corridor's most important assets is the regional trail system including the Fox River Trail (east and west sides of the river) and The Great Western Trail that heads west from downtown. These trail systems connect to an extensive regional trail system that extends throughout the Fox River valley and beyond. There are opportunities to improve the trail system by connecting gaps, especially through downtown along with adding clear signage, support facilities and amenities throughout.

Pedestrian and bicycle circulation is adequate but not especially noteworthy. The corridor would benefit from improved pedestrian crossings, traffic calming, and complete streets initiatives to improve the multi-modal experience within the corridor. Where possible, grade separated crossings either under or over roadways are preferred.

The railroad bridge located just north of Main Street is owned by the Union Pacific (UP) railroad and is no longer in service. The Park District and City have approached UP to discuss future control of the bridge and UP would consider selling the structure. There have been discussions about purchasing the structure for use as a regional trail connection although funding is not currently available.

Parking is important to any viable development, downtown or corridor. Parking in downtown St. Charles is considered adequate although surface parking lots take up valuable land within the project area, especially along the riverfront. Two parking structures in the downtown provide increased parking per square foot of area and additional parking decks would be a benefit as additional development and programmed uses are added. Shared public and private parking within off-street lots is another way to leverage the limited space available for parking.

Public infrastructure and utilities are considered adequate within the corridor but any significant development would need to consider infrastructure and utility needs. There are utility crossings under the river that also need to be considered with any significant modification project.

The City of St. Charles has gateway signage at the Village limits along with wayfinding signs throughout the downtown. Other community groups and agencies have signage with various messages throughout the corridor. The community as a whole would benefit from a consistent image and messaging throughout the downtown and corridor.

Financial Resources

With the current State fiscal situation, public funding for improvements is limited. Government agencies including the Park District, City and Forest Preserve District are challenged to fund existing



programs let alone new initiatives. However, Regional, State and Federal grants still exist for certain types of improvements, especially related to environmental improvements.

Additionally, local sources of funding including Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIF), Special Service Areas (SSA), and Business Improvement Districts (BID) can all be used to advance the improvement strategies. Private investment and fundraising could also be a significant source of funding for individual projects.

As the economy and the health of the State's financial situation improves, a combination of public capital improvement projects and grant funding along with private development and fund raising initiatives can be considered to implement the recommendations of this study.

The River Corridor Foundation has also established an endowment for maintenance of the river corridor improvements in perpetuity.

Current Projects

It must not be overlooked that the River Corridor Foundation, the City of St. Charles, the St. Charles Park District, and the Forest Preserve District are all actively advancing projects within the river corridor. Of particular note that could impact the river corridor in a significant way are the First Street development, being constructed in multiple phases, the Indiana Street pedestrian bridge replacement – feasibility study in progress, and the Municipal Center riverwall evaluation – feasibility study in progress. The City of St. Charles is also in the process of determining the future of the police station, analyzing the potential for improvement to the existing facility, reconstruction of the existing facility in the same location, or relocating the facility to another location within the City.

Market Profile

Visitor Market for the project area

- Current market size
- Typical motivations for visit
- Typical party composition
- Seasonality
- Activity analysis for a typical visitor (what is this visitor's activity choices by time of day)
- Origin market geographic distribution (and the facilities they have in home markets)
- Historic growth
- Visitor characteristics
- Activity preferences and activity notes

Profile of riverfront destinations, attractions and active river facilities for comparable study areas, regionally and nationally

Key characteristics for successful downtowns and active river sites and compare to the study area

- Proximity to users
- Proximity to overnight accommodations
- Topography and natural amenities
- Physical limitations and constraints
- Relationships to surrounding uses



Stakeholder Interests

The Active River Task Force alone represents a broad cross section of the community stakeholders, however a comprehensive list of stakeholders has been compiled by the River Corridor Foundation and other sponsor agencies including property and business owners, residents/users, organizations, and governments/jurisdictional agencies.

Through individual stakeholder interviews, the HDG team was able to gain a current snapshot of the stakeholder views and opinions. A complete summary of stakeholder input is included in the Appendix and can be summarized as follows:

Summary/Implications:

- River focus, capitalize on the River as a natural asset
- Dam removal vs. reconfiguration, balance of recreational use and ecological improvement
- Balance of competing interests for River and riverfront uses
- Capitalize on development potential
- Increase sense of community pride
- Recognize and account for changing demographics
- Develop implementation strategy recognizing funding challenges

Community Workshop

In an effort to gain a broader perspective of the community interests the HDG team facilitated a community workshop. Approximately 85 participants attended and were asked the following questions:

- How and how often do you use the River or Riverfront today?
- How and how often will you use the River or Riverfront tomorrow? What will you use and support?

A complete summary of stakeholder input is included in the Appendix and can be summarized as follows:

Uses on the River and Riverfront today:

- Walking, running, biking
- Paddling, rowing, power boating
- Nature, bird watching, fishing
- Dining, shopping, cultural events
- Festivals and events

Uses on the River and Riverfront Tomorrow:

- Whitewater course
- Ecological improvement
- Variety of activities
- Trail connectivity
- Development



Existing Activities/Facilities

It should be noted that although the River Corridor Master Plan is focused on potential improvements that will enhance and improve the corridor, there are already an extensive number of activities and facilities already in place. A comprehensive list of activities and facilities is included in the appendix.

By combining existing activities and facilities with new improvements and programs, the intent is to achieve the goals and objectives of the River Corridor Master Plan.

Existing Park District/City/Private Programs/events

In addition to the Activities and Facilities within the project area, existing programs and events are an important part of creating a regional destination.

The Park District has a number of programs in Pottawatomie Park – mostly active (golf, swimming pool, community programs, mini-golf, paddle boats, ballfield, pavilion reservations) and in Mount St. Mary's Park – mostly passive (sculpture walk, walking path, seating areas, playground, pavilion, open space)

The City also programs events including Thursday concerts in the parks and the farmers market. Other City festivals include Riverfest, the Scarecrow Festival and the Fine Arts, show, all of which draw significant crowds to the downtown area.

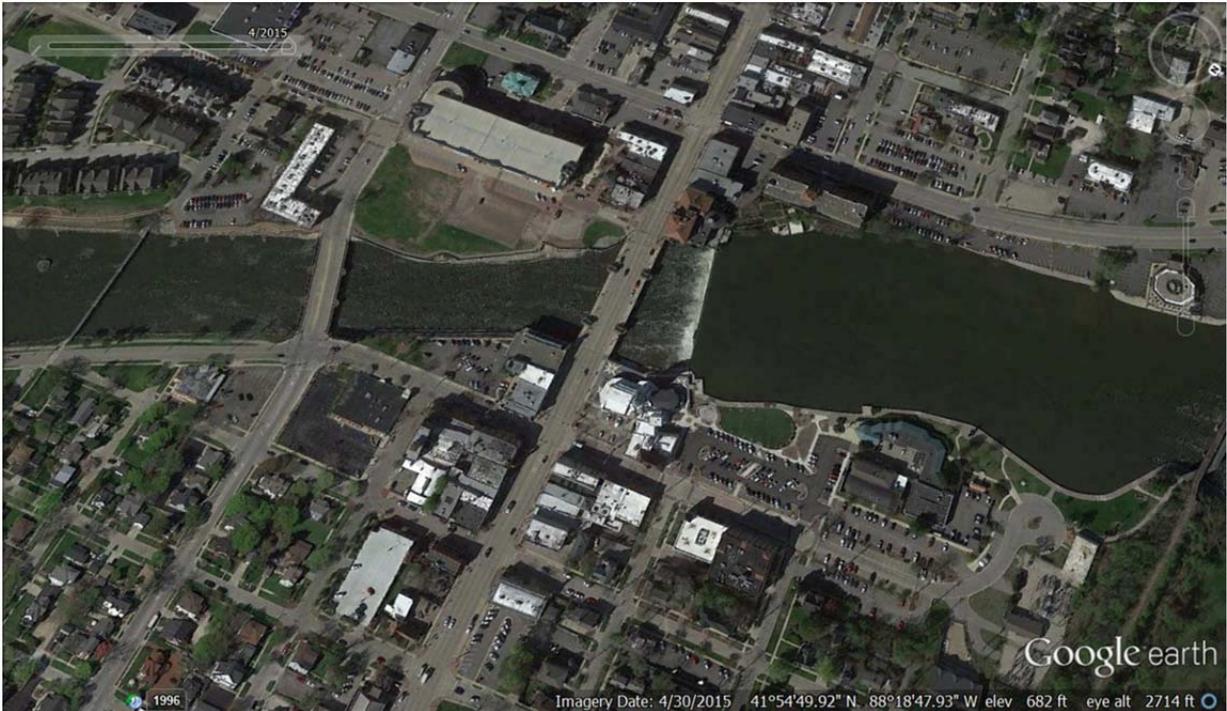
Conclusion

Based on this analysis of the corridor resources, marketplace and stakeholder interests, the HDG team will determine a recommended goal and supporting objectives for the St. Charles River Corridor.

Appendices

- Market Research
- Current Activities and Programs
- Stakeholder Interviews Summary
- Community Workshop Summary
- Charrette Summary
- List of Comparable Communities
- (Other)

Market Profile



The project area, is the Fox River as it passes through the heart of downtown St. Charles as shown in the aerial. St. Charles is a prosperous community located in the western suburbs of the Chicago metropolitan area.

We profile the immediate market area around the downtown with three drive time rings defined by a five minute drive-time, a five to ten minute drive-time, and a ten to fifteen minute drive time – all illustrated by a map below.

Within a five minute drive of downtown St. Charles live just over 23,000 people in almost 9,400 households – 69% of which own their own home. The household income breakdown is 30% under \$50,000, 29% \$50,000 to \$100,000, and 41% over \$100,000. In the five to ten mile drive the population increases to approximately 54,000. For that population the household income breakdown is 22% under \$50,000, 25% \$50,000 to \$100,000, and 52% over \$100,000. In the last drive-time area, ten to fifteen minutes, the population is approximately 112,600 and the income breakdown continues to be affluent with percentages by category of 23%, 31%, and 46%.

The St. Charles area is also a surprisingly successful visitor destination with more than 2,500 rooms. Even if the less fully utilized Q Center and its 1,000 rooms are deducted, St Charles house as many as 440,000 overnight guests a year assuming a 62% occupancy rate. The properties are listed in the table below.

St. Charles Area Hotels (Within 5 miles)		
Property Name	Rooms	%
The Hotel Baker	54	2%
Super 8 St Charles	67	3%
Quality Inn & Suites St Charles	123	5%
Geneva Motel Inn	83	3%
Best Western Inn Of St Charles	52	2%
Q Center	1,042	40%
Fairfield Inn & Suites Chicago St Charles	92	4%
Courtyard Chicago St Charles	121	5%
Hampton Inn Suites Chicago St Charles	92	4%
The Herrington Inn	61	2%
Country Inn & Suites Saint Charles	84	3%
Geneva Motel	26	1%
Pheasant Run Resort	473	18%
Hilton Garden Inn St Charles	120	5%
Comfort Inn & Suites Geneva	90	3%
Total	2,580	100%

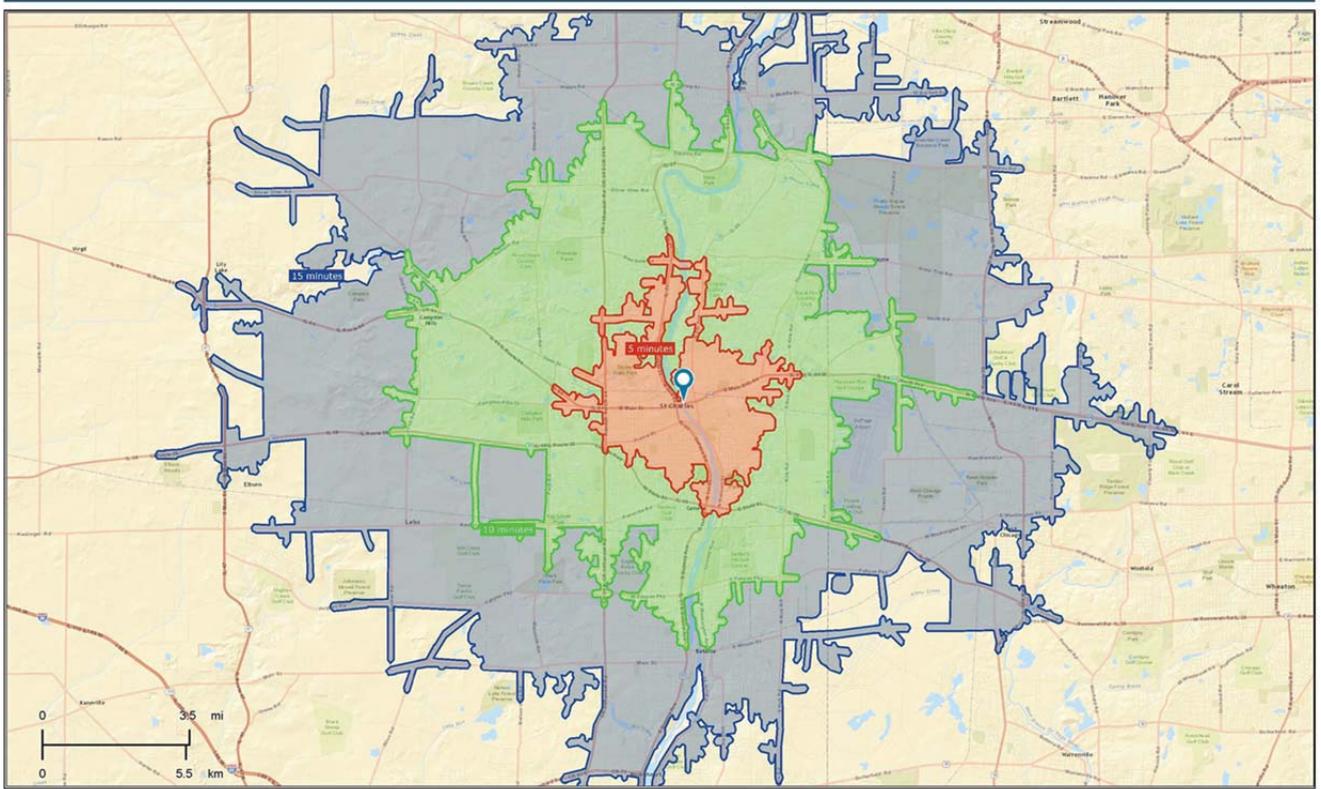
Potentially the population in the fifteen minute drive-time use water, principally the Fox River, for boating, canoeing, fishing, kayaking, swimming and water skiing. The available statistics are for people aged 7 and older making the populations in each area a little smaller in the table below but the table shows, on average, the number of participants in this population that would engage in these activities in these areas. As this is an average for a population in this region, we expect that the real participation in St. Charles is higher as affluence allows for an increase in recreational pursuits and as the proximity of the Fox River makes participation in these activities a lot easier. The easier it is to engage in these activities, the higher the participation goes.

The yearly experiences table shows how many times people engage in each of these activities by multiplying the number of participants by the mean of how many times people in this region engage in each activity. As this is an average, including places that don't have rivers or river access, the numbers are undoubtedly higher for St. Charles and would be even higher yet if access to these activities is made easy.

St. Charles Area Demographics				
2015	5 Minute	5 to 10 Minute	10 to 15 Minute	Total
Indicator				
Population	23,173	53,738	112,567	189,478
Households	9,391	18,527	36,696	64,614
Families	6,184	14,246	28,953	49,383
Average HH Size	2.41	2.85	3.04	
Owner Households	6,471	15,169	30,033	51,673
Renter Households	2,921	3,359	6,663	12,943
Median Age	41.1	41.6	36.9	
Income Brackets				
Under \$50,000	30%	22%	23%	
\$50,000 - \$99,999	29%	25%	31%	
\$100,000>	41%	52%	46%	

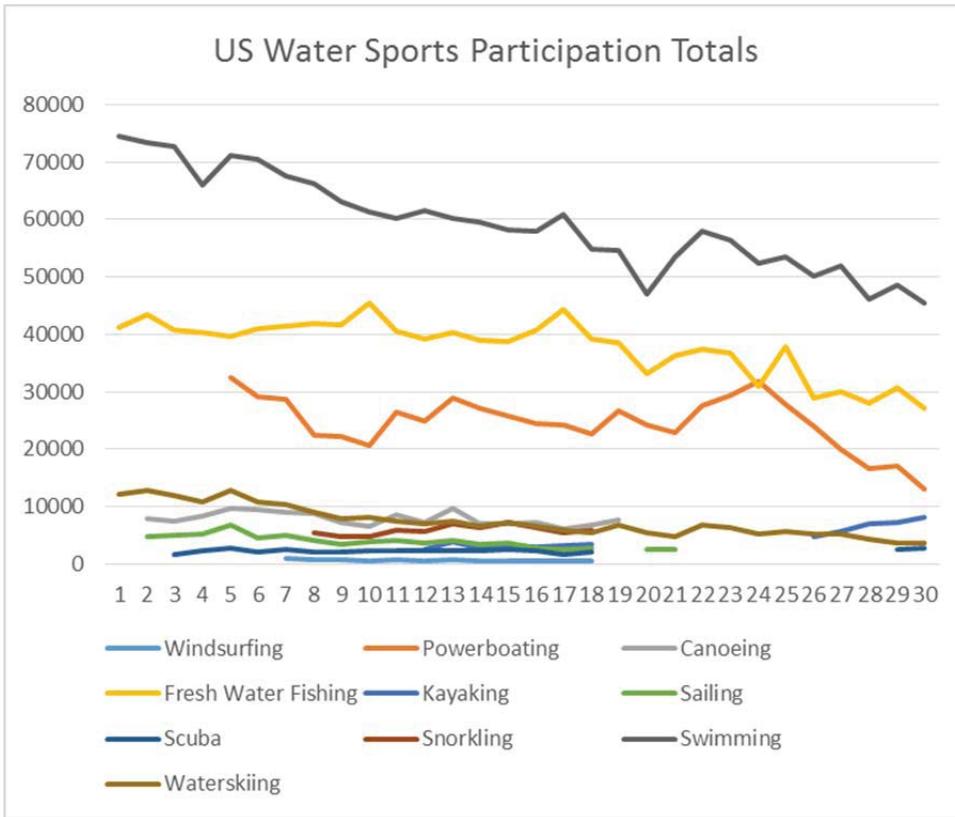
Participants				
2015	5 minutes	5 to 10 minutes	10 to 15 minutes	Total
Population	21,449	49,858	101,480	172,787
Boating (Motor/Power)	1,219	2,833	5,767	9,819
Canoeing	571	1,328	2,702	4,601
Fishing (Fresh Water)	2,116	4,918	10,011	17,045
Kayaking	625	1,453	2,958	5,036
Swimming	2,920	6,788	13,816	23,525
Water Skiing	314	731	1,487	2,532

Yearly Experiences				
2015	5 minutes	5 to 10 minutes	10 to 15 minutes	Total
Population	21,449	49,858	101,480	172,787
Boating (Motor/Power)	15,394	35,784	72,834	124,012
Canoeing	2,536	5,895	11,998	20,428
Fishing (Fresh Water)	29,178	67,824	138,047	235,048
Kayaking	3,707	8,618	17,541	29,866
Swimming	93,507	217,356	442,402	753,265
Water Skiing	1,940	4,508	9,176	15,624



The chart below shows the US (not regional) watersports participation totals (actual participants in millions, not a participation rate in a percent) over the last 30 years.

While swimming, fishing, and boating remain at the top, all three are in decline. The other seven watersports shown all have fewer participants but some, like kayaking are growing, others like canoeing are holding steady, and some like waterskiing are trending downward. It is generally assumed in the industry that individual watersports using personal craft, like kayaking, canoeing, and others are increasing in participation as urban and suburban waterways become more accessible and opportunities for participation, such as rental opportunities at outfitters, become more common.

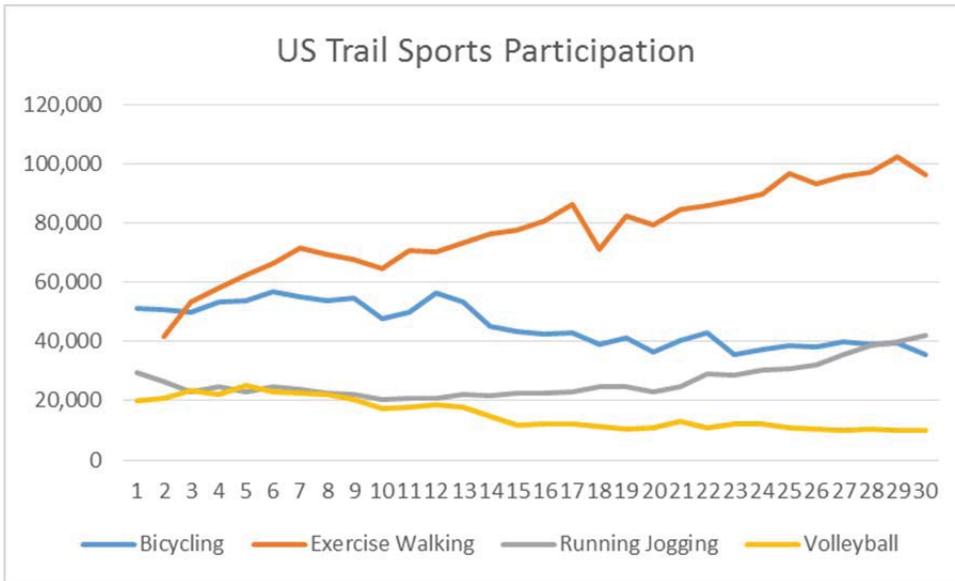


In addition to activities actually on the water, there are a number of pursuits often found along waterways like the Fox River. Their long term participation rates are shown on the chart below as US Trail Sports and include bicycling, running and jogging, exercise walking, and volleyball. Volleyball, is not a trail sport but a frequent player in waterside activities.

As with the statistics discussed above, the opportunity to participate can drive local participation above regional and national averages. More safe, accessible, and attractive trails will increase local participation and lead to healthier communities. The chart shows that participation in exercise walking continues to grow as more people of all ages engage. Running and jogging becomes increasingly popular too both on its own appeal and within reach as more people walk.

Historically, bicycling, one of these activities, has been driven by the participation of children. Nationally, bicycling in decline as fewer children engage in this activity. In part, this is because more US children grow up in urban neighborhoods less conducive to this activity.

As childhood participation drops, all-ages participation has been growing as cycling becomes less of way for a child to get around their neighborhood than a weekend “bike trip” personal activity like canoeing or kayaking – all driven by the availability/ownership of the equipment and a place (path, trail, lake, or river) to use it.



In sum, as St. Charles considers how to activate its riverfront it is apparent that there are great opportunities here. Populations in affluent communities like St. Charles engage more often in athletic activities – if the opportunity presents itself and is easily accessed. The river offers the ideal venue for activities including walking, bicycling, running and jogging all along the water’s edge and kayaking, canoeing, fishing and potentially swimming right in the water.

The following table shows a deeper dive into participation for a thirty mile ring around St. Charles and the projected participation of those residents in riverside and on-the-river activities. As previously noted, the data is for people aged 7 and older.

This table illustrates the potential market for Fox River riverfront activities in St. Charles is substantial. Increasing the availability, attractiveness, and access to these activities to individuals in this larger market area can increase day visitation to downtown St. Charles that will support restaurants, shops, and other retail and increase the appeal of downtown St. Charles to people who engage in these activity and have the financial wherewithal to live there.

It is worth noting that the number of participants in these activities is projected to continue to grow in all of these activity categories.

The proposed water course that would result from the removal of the dam will make downtown St. Charles a destination for kayakers, swimmers, fisherman and others.

The estimated 29,000 kayakers living in the thirty mile ring will be drawn to this opportunity both by the facility and the attractiveness in the location of well-amenitized downtown 45,000 to 50,000 a year. A similar or higher number of fisherman would be drawn to the location and approximately 30,000 to 40,000 to the river play area. The constraints on this usage are not demand, but capacity and the weather. We project lower levels of utilization outside of summer and a comfortable level of usage for participants.

Estimated River Activity Participation With 30 Miles of Downtown St Charles			
Activity	2015	2020	Change
Bicycle Riding	125,426	127,810	2,384
Canoeing	27,092	27,607	515
Exercise Walking	315,071	321,060	5,989
Fishing (Fresh Water)	99,338	101,226	1,888
In-line Roller Skating	21,072	21,472	401
Kayaking	29,099	29,652	553
Mountain Biking	9,031	9,202	172
Running/Jogging	136,464	139,058	2,594
Skateboarding	11,038	11,247	210
Swimming	136,464	139,058	2,594

Comparable Communities

We profiled more than a dozen communities around the US that had successfully completed significant river enhancements, similar to those contemplated in St. Charles. Four were stronger examples than the others: Salida, Colorado, Columbus, Georgia, Greenville, South Carolina and Richmond, Virginia.

In the tables below we show estimates of activity participation totals using the applicable regional statistics for populations over age 7 in the 0-15 and the 15 to 120 minute market areas of St. Charles and the four communities. The limitations of this data noted earlier apply here as well – the data is based on the average participation of the population in a US region regardless of whether the activities are available or locally supported. For areas with well-supported activities, the number would therefore be low. The reverse would be true for areas without supported and available activities.

The 0-15 minute market was chosen as that represents a resident market area. The 15 to 120 minute drive-time market is more of a regional one.

For the 0-15 minute market: Richmond has a much larger population than St. Charles and therefore a larger number of estimated active participants, Greenville is reasonably close and Columbus a little less, Salida considerably less.

The situation is similar for the 15 to 120 mile ring with Richmond larger, but not much as St. Charles is backed by the metro Chicago market to east (with less dense population to the west). Greenville is almost identical. Columbus a third smaller and Salida still considerably less.

Some regional differences in participation rates are evident. For example exercise walking is more popular in the southeastern US while in-line skating is more popular in the East North Central States where St. Charles is located.

Estimated 2015 Participation Water & Riverfront Activity 0-15 Minutes Market					
Activity	St Charles, IL	Richmond, VA	Salida, CO	Columbus, GA	Greenville, SC
Bicycle Riding	21,605	42,355	1,212	16,469	24,102
Boating (Motor/Power)	9,852	15,103	346	5,873	8,594
Canoeing	4,667	6,567	197	2,553	3,737
Exercise Walking	54,273	111,962	3,006	43,535	63,710
Fishing (Fresh Water)	17,111	27,908	1,015	10,852	15,881
Hiking	19,186	35,460	1,968	13,788	20,178
In-line Roller Skating	3,630	6,238	189	2,426	3,550
Kayaking	5,012	9,193	165	3,575	5,231
Mountain Biking	1,556	4,925	268	1,915	2,803
Running/Jogging	23,507	45,310	1,456	17,618	25,783
Skateboarding	1,901	5,910	268	2,298	3,363
Swimming	23,507	53,518	1,511	20,810	30,454
Water Skiing	2,593	2,298	134	894	1,308
Estimated 2020 Participation Water & Riverfront Activity 0-15 Minutes Market					
Activity	St Charles, IL	Richmond, VA	Salida, CO	Columbus, GA	Greenville, SC
Bicycle Riding	22,035	44,842	1,280	17,914	25,715
Boating (Motor/Power)	10,048	15,990	366	6,388	9,170
Canoeing	4,760	6,952	208	2,777	3,987
Exercise Walking	55,352	118,535	3,174	47,353	67,976
Fishing (Fresh Water)	17,452	29,547	1,072	11,804	16,944
Hiking	19,567	37,542	2,077	14,997	21,529
In-line Roller Skating	3,702	6,605	199	2,638	3,788
Kayaking	5,112	9,733	174	3,888	5,582
Mountain Biking	1,587	5,214	283	2,083	2,990
Running/Jogging	23,974	47,970	1,537	19,163	27,509
Skateboarding	1,939	6,257	283	2,500	3,588
Swimming	23,974	56,661	1,595	22,635	32,493
Water Skiing	2,644	2,433	141	972	1,395

Estimated 2015 Participation Water & Riverfront Activity 15 to 120 Minute Market					
Activity	St Charles, IL	Richmond, VA	Salida, CO	Columbus, GA	Greenville, SC
Bicycle Riding	626,838	739,265	51,992	460,981	624,821
Boating (Motor/Power)	285,838	263,614	14,855	164,381	222,804
Canoeing	135,397	114,615	8,440	71,470	96,871
Exercise Walking	1,574,617	1,954,180	128,968	1,218,562	1,651,658
Fishing (Fresh Water)	496,456	487,112	43,552	303,747	411,704
Hiking	556,632	618,919	84,403	385,938	523,106
In-line Roller Skating	105,309	108,884	8,103	67,896	92,028
Kayaking	145,426	160,461	7,090	100,058	135,620
Mountain Biking	45,132	85,961	11,479	53,602	72,654
Running/Jogging	682,000	790,841	62,458	493,143	668,413
Skateboarding	55,162	103,153	11,479	64,323	87,184
Swimming	682,000	934,110	64,822	582,480	789,502
Water Skiing	75,221	40,115	5,739	25,014	33,905
Estimated 2020 Participation Water & Riverfront Activity 15 to 120 Minute Market					
Activity	St Charles, IL	Richmond, VA	Salida, CO	Columbus, GA	Greenville, SC
Bicycle Riding	637,097	779,592	53,113	478,906	663,228
Boating (Motor/Power)	290,516	277,994	15,175	170,773	236,500
Canoeing	137,613	120,867	8,622	74,249	102,826
Exercise Walking	1,600,389	2,060,783	131,749	1,265,945	1,753,184
Fishing (Fresh Water)	504,581	513,685	44,491	315,558	437,011
Hiking	565,742	652,682	86,223	400,944	555,261
In-line Roller Skating	107,032	114,824	8,277	70,537	97,685
Kayaking	147,807	169,214	7,243	103,949	143,956
Mountain Biking	45,871	90,650	11,726	55,687	77,120
Running/Jogging	693,162	833,982	63,805	512,318	709,500
Skateboarding	56,065	108,780	11,726	66,824	92,543
Swimming	693,162	985,066	66,219	605,129	838,032
Water Skiing	76,452	42,303	5,863	25,987	35,989

Development Impacts in Downtown St. Charles

The proposed development of the river corridor is likely to trigger the redevelopment, for commercial real estate purposed of a number of parcels in the downtown. We expect that this will happen in two-waves. The first will happen to those sites with the greatest proximity to the redeveloped river while the second will happen throughout the downtown and depend on the success of the first wave.

Success is both financial and in an urban design sense – does the first wave create a pedestrian friendly attractive and convivial downtown that more people will them want to be a part of? If yes, then additional development will surround the first wave and move south along the river – much like the waves created by a pebble dropped in calm water. The urban design is important for another reason. The scale of downtown should be respected so that projects can be of an economic size (large enough to be profitably developed) but not so overwhelming that they consume all of the future demand for space in the downtown and overwhelm surrounding blocks too much (they are likely to be denser and larger to be economically successful).

The Police station parcel is easily the most attractive as it will be on the amenity rich east side of the river with direct access to the amenities. We suggest that this makes the parcel attractive for a hotel and banquet facility as well as additional restaurants and retail.

The parcels along route 31 to the west are close enough to enjoy river views and have access to the amenities but are on the edge of neighborhood and well suited for a residential product that wraps around a garage as much as possible. A setback from 31 on the east end for a small parking lot would match the setbacks to the north and give the appearance of plenty of parking making the first floor appealing for parking.

The current BMO parcel on the east side of the river is understood to be available for redevelopment as is a parcel south east of it across the street. With sensitivity to the older structures at the east end of this block, this block could be redeveloped for a small boutique hotel and retail and restaurant uses. While not directly on the improved stretch of the river, unlike the other parcels in town it has a front row seat on the new amenities.

These developments, described more completely below, would total investment of almost \$210 million (preliminarily) and support more than 220 full-time-equivalent jobs in the downtown.

If this first wave is done well we would anticipate a second wave of similar or more likely greater value.

First Wave of Construction

West of River Development

3.55 Acre site west of Rt. 31 - block south of State Street

As drawn on redevelopment plan sheet but all housing
6 to 8 stories with interior parking deck
300 units

1.4 Acre site west of Rt. 31 - block north of State Street
 As drawn on redevelopment plan sheet, all housing
 5 story with parking in basement and on first floor
 120 units

East of River Development

2.5 Acre site at current Police Station Site
 As drawn on redevelopment plan sheet but Hotel not housing
 28,000 sf first floor meeting and event space and 7,200 sf retail
 second floor roof garden pool
 3 to 5 stories with 210 hotel units and a parking deck behind

Not drawn but 15,000 for single story retail and restaurant space too.

1.12 Acre site referred to as Site N (BMO Bank site)
 25,000 sf first floor retail and restaurant space
 2 to 3 stories above for small 50 room hotel
 Parking on .63 acre site P or other nearby lot

First Wave of Construction			
Development Type	Number	Value	FTE Jobs
Housing Units w/parking	420	\$ 105,000,000	4
Hotel Rooms w/parking	260	\$ 65,000,000	156
Square feet of retail/restaurant space	47,200	\$ 8,260,000	47
Square feet of meeting, event space	28,000	\$ 4,900,000	14
		\$ 183,160,000	221
Structured parking spaces	1,000	\$ 25,000,000	
		\$ 208,160,000	



Current Activities and Programs

Date: June 10, 2015

RE: **St. Charles River Corridor – Current Activities and Programs**

Current Activities/Facilities (in no particular order)

- Biking, walking
- Fishing
- Camping
- Rowing
- Canoeing
- Paddle boating
- River boat
- Power boating/personal watercraft
- Ecology based activities (bird watching, naturalists, etc)
- Golf
- Miniature golf
- Playground
- Ballfield
- Swimming (pool, river?)
- Park District programs/community center
- Pavilion rentals
- Shopping
- Dining
- Cultural/historical events
- Social gatherings
- Boat launch
- Canoe launch

Existing Park District/City/Private Programs/Events

- Pottawatomie Park – mostly active (golf, swimming pool, community programs, mini-golf, paddle boats, ballfield, pavilion reservations)
- Mount St. Mary's Park – mostly passive (sculpture walk, walking path, seating areas, playground, pavilion, open space)
- City owned Parks – concerts in the parks, farmers market, other?
- City festivals (Riverfest, Scarecrow Festival, Fine Arts, etc.)
- Private Recreation – rowing, canoeing, kayaking, biking, riverboat, power boating

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Stakeholder Interviews Summary

Date: May 20, 2015
Location: St. Charles City Hall

Interviewers: Rick Hitchcock, Hitchcock Design Group (HDG)
Tim King, Hitchcock Design Group
Greg Chismark, Wills Burke Kelsey Associates (WBK)
Scott Shipley, S2O Design and Engineering (S2O)
Dan Martin, Market & Feasibility Advisors (MFA)

RE: St. Charles River Corridor

On May 20, 2015 the consultant team interviewed project stakeholders selected by the Active River Task Force in 30 minute, one-on-one sessions. The following is a list of stakeholders interviewed.

Interviewee List

Dave Patzelt – President, Shodeen Development
Amy Egoff – Director, St. Charles Convention & Visitors Bureau
Adam Salerno – Owner, Salerno's on the Fox Restaurant
Maurice McNally – Owner, Avondale Construction
Jace Murray – Owner, Murray Commercial Real Estate
John Hoscheit, Kane County Board Member (former President of Forest Preserve)
Mike Frazier – Owner, The Wine Exchange
Jessica Aderman - Environmental Science Student, St. Charles East H.S.
Laura Macklin-Purdy - Business Development Manager, STC Chamber of Commerce
Ron Onesti – Owner, Onesti Entertainment (Arcada Theatre)
Kevin Versino – Owner, Rocktown Adventures (Aurora & Rockford) water adventures
John Collins – Owner, Collins Real Estate
Karl Teske, St. Charles Canoe Club
Paul Lencioni – President, Blue Goose Market
Tom Anderson - Chairman, Colonial Cafe
Jim Cooke – Board Commissioner, St. Charles Park District
Libby Scarlatos – Director, Row America
Chris Woelfer – President, STC Capital Bank
Chris Meldrum – STC Rowing Club
Russ Colby – City of St. Charles, Community Development
Cindy Skrukud – Fox River Study Group, Sierra Club
Bob Carne – Board Commissioner, St. Charles Park District
Brian Eber – Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Robert Zimmers – Owner, A.L.E. Solutions, Inc.
Elizabeth Belaver - St. Charles Arts Council
Jim Petterec – Owner, JP Jewelers
Larry Rakunas – Willowgate Homeowners Association
Chris Lannert - Principal, The Lannert Group
Steve Gaugel – St. Charles Alderman (downtown ward)
Gary Swick – Friends of the Fox River
Abigail Andrews – Environmental Science Student, STC North H.S.
Rita Payleitner – St. Charles Alderman

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Eric Sprenne – Chicago Whitewater Association
Ray Rogina - Mayor of St. Charles

The following is a general summary of the comments received, not attributable to any one interviewee. Comments are organized by general subject.

General Summary of Comments

Environmental

- Public body of water, 3704 rules apply, area lost for public use has to be mitigated
- 3708 rules apply Fox River is not conveyance only floodway
- Recreation and water quality are goals of IDNR
- Sediment management is important
- Maintain water level of pool
- Water quality is suspect
- Should be a safety line at the dam
- Enhance the island in the River near the Piano Factory Bridge
- Balance total dam removal with water quality issues and laws
- The river has a dirty, buggy perception
- Loading of nutrients is a problem
-

Land Use, Development

- Should be affordable housing requirements
- Need better destination restaurants
- Downtown St. Charles concept to be walkable urban center is a great idea – but it isn't really developed as such yet, can it ever be?
- Recruit a brew pub
- Move the Beith house to Langum Park, create a historic village
- Outfitter on river Rentals should be in st. Charles
- Remove UPRR embankment for viewshed to Pottawatomie Park
- Salernos under-utilized trail to south is needed
- Form a property owner perspective walkability, apartments and downtown lifestyle are important

Water Use

- Fishing, but how much and what quality?
- Easy access to water important for paddlers (Ferson Creek with sandy beach is good)
- Canoe races of different lengths for different experience levels bring in many people
- Conflicts between recreational paddlers, rowers, power boaters, more enforcement by DNR needed but funding limited
- Great place for rowing, 3 clubs now, increasing in popularity
- ADA access to the water important
- Establish a National Water Trail
- Asking the River to accommodate too many things, make decisions on priorities
- Rowing much nicer on Fox River than any other facility in the area



- Sometimes there is so much activity that it is intimidating

Recreation

- Highlight recreation competitions (rowing, kayaking, biking, running)
- Bouldering walls, slacklining, high ropes course

Connectivity

- Trail connectivity could be improved in some areas
- Near downtown path under main street like Geneva
- No dead ends –leads to another area
- Main Street is dangerous
- Access at IL 31 and UPRR would be great

Programs, Activities

- Need more food vendors
- Promote trail running
- Water trampolines and water balls
- Electric Boats rentals

Demographics, Users

- Population is aging, less kids
- Lots of visitors from out of town use Pottawatomie Park
- The City is not friendly to young people

Community Image

- Used to have a bar town reputation but is changing
- All encompassing comprehensive consistent look
- Consistency of vision is a problem
- St. Charles is second To Geneva

Implementation

- City council buy in is necessary and critical
- Intergovt agencies, tax revenues, appetite for tax increase is not there



Community Workshop Summary

Date: May 20, 2015
Location: Hickory Knolls Discovery Center

Attendees: Members of the Public (see attached sign-in sheet)
Active River Task Force Members (ARTF)
Rick Hitchcock, Hitchcock Design Group (HDG)
Tim King, Hitchcock Design Group
Greg Chismark, Wills Burke Kelsey Associates (WBK)
Scott Shipley, S2O Design and Engineering (S2O)
Dan Martin, Market & Feasibility Advisors (MFA)

RE: St. Charles River Corridor

On May 20, 2015 the project team conducted a Community Workshop to solicit input for the Active River project. Approximately 85 people attended the workshop. The consultant team gave a presentation outlining the project background, a summary of existing resources, and characteristics of comparable communities. The team then asked attendees to list how they use the River today, and then, ideas for how they might use the River in the future. The group then organized the comments into categories. The information is summarized below and will form a basis for developing improvement recommendations (in no particular order).

How and how often do you use the River or Riverfront today?

- Walking, running, biking
- Festivals
- Picnicking
- Bird watching, nature
- Scenic driving, nature viewing
- Fishing
- Paddling, rowing
- Power boating
- Golf, mini-golf
- Dining
- Shopping
- Visiting art
- Paddle boats
- Riverboat tours
- Fireworks
- River cleanup
- Playground
- Civic meetings
- Teaching
- Adult programming (for those with disabilities)
- Fireworks

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- Frisbee
- Don't use

How and how often will you use the River or Riverfront tomorrow? What will you use and support?

Whitewater Park

- surf wave
- freestyle
- safe passage
- competitions
- rafting/tubing
- Active vs. passive
- lessons

Ecological Improvement

- preservation
- improve water quality (perception vs. reality)
- fish, wildlife quality
- shoreline stabilization
- riparian areas
- naturalized planting
- dam remediation

Activities

- water skiing
- beach area
- hydro-power
- more landings
- more gathering places
- water sport spectating
- live music, entertainment stage
- stand-up paddle boarding
- bouldering, rope course, zip line, slack lines
- River stewardship classes

Trails

- connectivity
- crossings
- nature education

Development

- dining, shopping
- multi-family housing



Meeting Sign-in Sheet

Date: May 20, 2015
 Time: 7:00 pm
 Location: Hickory Knolls Community Center

RE: St. Charles Active River Project – Community Workshop

Name	(Company / Affiliation)	Email
BOS MENARD	Whitewater Kayaker	CIRCUITMONKEY@HOTMAIL.COM
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Bob Kershner	RESIDENT	BKERSH@ATT.NET
Candice Jacobs	KPSWCD	Candice.jacobs@il.usda.gov
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Ken	"	"
John Wessel		jwessel@steparks.org





Charrette Summary

Date: May 21, 2015
Location: St. Charles City Hall

Attendees: Active River Task Force Members (ARTF)
Rick Hitchcock, Hitchcock Design Group (HDG)
Tim King, Hitchcock Design Group
Mark Underwood, Hitchcock Design Group
Andrew Trimble, Hitchcock Design Group
Greg Chismark, Wills Burke Kelsey Associates (WBK)
Scott Shipley, S2O Design and Engineering (S2O)
Dan Martin, Market & Feasibility Advisors (MFA)

RE: St. Charles River Corridor

On May 21, 2015 the project team conducted a Charrette to review the results of the community workshop and further explore the most promising opportunities. The following is a summary of the ideas developed.

Charrette Comments

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How and how often do you use the River or Riverfront today?

- Walking, running, biking
- Festivals
- Picnicking
- Bird watching, nature
- Scenic driving, nature viewing
- Fishing
- Paddling, rowing
- Power boating
- Golf, mini-golf
- Dining
- Shopping
- Visiting art
- Paddle boats
- Riverboat tours
- Fireworks
- River cleanup
- Playground
- Civic meetings
- Teaching
- Adult programming (for those with disabilities)
- Fireworks
- Frisbee



- Don't use

How and how often will you use the River or Riverfront tomorrow? What will you use and support?

Whitewater Park

- surf wave
- freestyle
- safe passage
- competitions
- rafting/tubing
- Active vs. passive
- lessons

Ecological Improvement

- preservation
- improve water quality (perception vs. reality)
- fish, wildlife quality
- shoreline stabilization
- riparian areas
- naturalized planting
- dam remediation

Activities

- water skiing
- beach area
- hydro-power
- more landings
- more gathering places
- water sport spectating
- live music, entertainment stage
- stand-up paddle boarding
- bouldering, rope course, zip line, slack lines
- River stewardship classes

Trails

- connectivity
- crossings
- nature education

Development

- dining, shopping
- multi-family housing



Issues and Opportunities (brainstorm)

- What to do with railroad trestle (ownership, bike trail connection)
- Mayflies, algae, stagnant water
- “energy” in downtown – tourism vs. locals
- “active” recreation alternatives
- Boat docks near downtown?
- Multi-family housing/more population downtown, not supported by community
- Pride of the Fox, scarecrow festival, fine arts festival all geared towards families and older populations
- Operations of “venues” / maintenance
- Property assessments down, taxes up
- Environmental education / water research / river ecology
- Floating stage
- Floating gardens
- Fishing south of Illinois Street
- First Street playground / splash pad
- “unique” recreation opportunities
- Safer road crossings
- Golf rounds are down, but top ranked course designed by Robert Trent Jones
- Illinois River Bridge low clearance
- Main Street bridge arches are façade only
- Location for parking to support development
- Police station relocate and redevelop site
- Concerts in Lincoln Park on Thursdays, potentially move to riverfront
- Farmers Market by Baker Park, potentially move to riverfront
- River cleanup as part of project (broken concrete, rebar, glass)
- Camping?
- Bigger rowing events
- Hotels nearby but not on riverfront (Baker more a wedding banquet facility)
- “pool” in river?
- Winter activities
- Culture, history vs. progressive forward thinking
- Power generation, green power (pr vs real economic value)
- Draw younger demographic
- Piano factory bridge, repair or replace?
- Harris Bank “park”

Opportunity Categories

- Connectivity
- Ecology
- Development/economy
- Whitewater
- Active recreation
- Programs, activities
- Image



Challenges

- Balance of uses
- Funding
- Permitting
- Public/private access
- Difficulty changing perceptions
- Operations, maintenance

Goal

- Create a lively downtown riverfront environment that is the centerpiece of the community

Objectives

- Recreation
- Destination
- Access and Circulation
- Economic Development
- Environment
- Education, Culture

Strategies

- Preserve and enhance existing uses
- Create complimentary attractions
- Promote, create venues for events, competitions

Improvements

Connectivity

- trail gaps
- rr trestle
- under bridges
- wayfinding/gateways
- at grade crossings
- Pace connection to Geneva Metra

Development

- office
- police station
- riverside drive
- hotel, lodge
- daytime work force/jobs
- incentives
- brew pubs
- parking
- multi-family housing
- re-use of existing buildings
- "NW" property development
- Affordable housing



- Tent, cabin camping

Ecology

- preservation
- BMP's, improve water quality (perception vs. reality)
- fish, wildlife quality
- shoreline stabilization
- riparian areas
- naturalized planting
- dam remediation

Whitewater

- surf wave
- freestyle
- safe passage
- competitions
- rafting/tubing
- Active vs. passive
- lessons

Active Recreation

- zip lines
- wake boarding
- interactive fountain/playground
- balance of on-river activities (regulations?)
- ropes course

Programs / Activities

- Thursday concerts to riverfront
- farmers market
- festivals
- races/competitions
- parking/crowd control

Funding

- TIFs
- Grants
- DNR
- Riverboat fund

Image

- fit and finish
- consistent brand

ADA

- Water
- Trails



- fishing

Programs, Activities

- Races, competitions
- Thursday concerts, larger concerts and events
- Farmers market
- Festivals
- Rentable shelters (multiple locations)
- Food trucks, vendors
- Zip lines
- Destination/nature playground, interactive fountain
- Ropes course
- Bouldering
- Ice ribbon
- Pool facility

Development Sites

- Finish First Street
- Police Station (3 acres)
- Riverside Drive area (fire truck access)
- Harris Bank (partial?)
- "Northwest" quadrant
- Q Center?
- Norris scout center?

Next Steps

- Understand hydrology to qualify dam modifications
- Identify specific ecological initiatives
- Qualify potential programs, activities
- Explore development site opportunities
- Evaluate economic impact of proposed improvements and programs



Public Open House Summary

Date: July 7, 2015
Location: Hickory Knolls Discovery Center

Attendees: Members of the Public (see attached sign-in sheet)
Active River Task Force Members (ARTF)
Greg Chismark, Wills Burke Kelsey Associates (WBK)
Dan Martin, Market & Feasibility Advisors (MFA)
Rick Hitchcock, Hitchcock Design Group (HDG)
Mark Underwood, Hitchcock Design Group
Andrew Trimble, Hitchcock Design Group
Tim King, Hitchcock Design Group

RE: St. Charles River Corridor

On July 7, 2015 the project team held a Public Open House to solicit input for the Active River project. Approximately 130 people attended the open house. The consultant team gave a presentation outlining the opportunity analysis, strategy, framework plans and character illustrations. The open house exhibits and presentation are attached. Comments from attendees are as follows (in no particular order).

Opportunity Analysis

- Your bullet point says the river is underutilized. By whom or what? Citizens, wildlife, native inhabitants, other? If it becomes so busy w/ human activity, can its peaceful, calming affect be preserved?

Goal and Objectives

- Why a 10 year horizon? Isn't that too long?

Trail Connections

- KDOT/Kane/Kendall/KCFPD are currently updating the Fox River Trail wayfinding plan and recommendations should be included with this plan
- Where bike path crosses 25 please consider some changes with regards to safety so bike path can continue to be enjoyed by families with children

Riverwalk

- Love the continuous riverwalk, do this first please!
- Make sure there are benches, even perhaps tables & chairs on the new pedestrian bridge
- Keep materials natural/native, no Wisconsin Dells look or tone

Paddling Course

- What about winter ice dams? Spring flooding? Low water levels late summer?
- What are the best practices for getting kayaks/canoes back up to the top of the whitewater course? (carry the boat, public use boat cart?)
- Permanent slalom race gates
- Will there be water features between the (3) 2' drops – e.g. big rocks to create eddies or something with more continuous rapids?

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- How are you going to prevent all those drunken people at downtown bars from deciding to take up paddle-boating?
- World class paddle course?
- Call it a whitewater park – that’s what it was represented as before, and should continue to be called as a Midwestern destination
- If this turns out anything like Buena Vista or Salida CO it will be a huge asset to the Fox River
- Has the hydrology been studied to prove that the upstream impoundment can be maintained?
- What is the downstream effect on what exists today? Any issue with flooding?
- How specifically will the volume of water be controlled?
- Love the idea of gradating the 6’ drop into (3) 2’ drops. Love the channel wading area idea at grade.
- Add water gardens at wading channel like proposed at Boy Scout Island

Recreation

- Would hate to see an increase in motor boat traffic – defeats the purpose of improving conditions for wildlife, etc.
- Sounds unfortunately like the river will be turned into a waterpark of sorts. Where will those of us who so enjoy the peacefulness of the downstream river area go? You lost me at wake boarding!

Mobility

- Consider other parking sites for folks to access the river between Illinois Street and Division Street
- Parking complications at Brownstone
- Any new improvement that will draw people needs to consider parking and parking is not even mentioned in the materials

Natural and Cultural Assets

- How can wildlife passage and native habitat be preserved and enhanced if the project leads to much increased commercialization?
- How will water quality be “enhanced” (improved)?
- I’m concerned about what happens to the size of our river that sustains much wildlife if/when Geneva, Batavia and North Aurora remove their dams. Would this project include dredging the river area north of Redgate Bridge, Blackhawk area & Tekawitha Woods & Riverwoods? Very shallow, would expand boating area.
- If Geneva possibly removes their dam, as talked about, and the river is substantially narrower, what happens to this proposal?
- Where are the arts? Cultural amenities? Artistic and cultural assets?
- Please be sure to consider handicap accessibility to new fishing area access (wider pier areas, close to parking, adapted benches, etc.)
- Plan as shown will not improve the sediment and water quality issues
- What is the anticipated increase in noise level? How will this affect wildlife habitat?
- Love the rock ledges! Nice for fishing as well as peaceful river watching

Brand

- See soulofthecommunity.org, survey of why people come to, stay in their communities



Implementation

- Why has it taken so long (since the last river comprehensive plan) and why can't the previous rapids design be implemented (preferred, more aesthetic). Who do we have to lobby in congress to kickstart this? 100 years ago Col. George Fabyan had the weight to influence congress.
- What is the potential economic impact to the community?

encl: Open House Boards
Open House Presentation

cc: Scott Shipley, S2O Design and Engineering (S2O)



Meeting Sign-in Sheet

Date: July 7, 2015
 Time: 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
 Location: Hickory Knolls Community Center

RE: St. Charles Active River Project - Public Open House

Name	(Company / Affiliation)	Email
Bob Hannigan		whtwtrkloco@hotmail.com
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Mike Corbett		mike.corbett@edwardjones.com
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Comparable Communities

Date: June 10, 2015

RE: **St. Charles River Corridor – Comparable Communities**

Comparable Communities (MFA compiled list)

- Salida, Colorado
- Missoula, Montana
- Bend, Oregon
- Boise, Idaho
- Tallulah, Georgia
- Asheville, North Carolina
- Richmond, Virginia
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Hood River, Oregon
- Columbia, South Carolina

Comparable Communities (S20 Projects)

- San Marcos, Texas
- Wanaka, New Zealand
- Reno, Nevada
- Durango, Colorado

Comparable Communities (Mentioned throughout the Opportunity Analysis process)

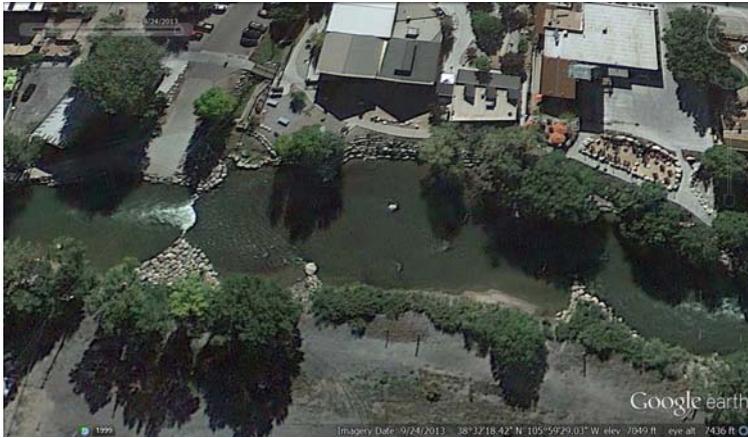
- Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- Providence, Rhode Island
- Columbia, South Carolina
- Portland, Oregon
- Denver, Colorado
- Columbus, Georgia
- Charlotte, North Carolina
- Chicago, Illinois
- Yorkville, Illinois
- Blue Island, Illinois
- Wausau, Wisconsin (locals go here to kayak)
- Greenville, South Carolina
- Charles City, Iowa
- Manchester, Iowa
- Grand Rapids, Michigan
- South Bend, Indiana
- Columbus, Ohio
- Phoenix City, Alabama
- Other Fox Valley towns

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Salida, Colorado

The Salida story can be seen in pictures below. A kayaking course has been put in the river as well as a waterplay area as envisioned for St. Charles. As a result the community has seen an increase in visitation from other parts of Colorado and redevelopment along the river that has turned it into a community asset.



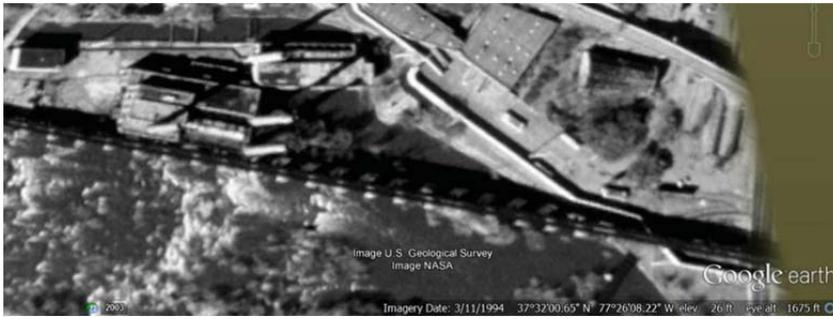
Richmond, Virginia

The James River in Richmond already had rapids that were fun to kayak through. A canal which can be seen at the top of the picture below circumnavigated them for commerce. However the river was badly polluted and lined with industry. As that situation was reversed, the water cleaned and the industry moved away, there has been a considerable amount of development along the river banks and the river itself has been claimed by the local populace for constant use and a series of successful festivals each summer.

In the center of the pictures below, separated by 20 years, you can see considerable new commercial development along the north (top) side of the river between the two bridges.



In the two pictures below, new connectivity to the riverfront and parking there can be seen as well as new development and redevelopment for housing and entertainment from the left to the right sides of the picture.

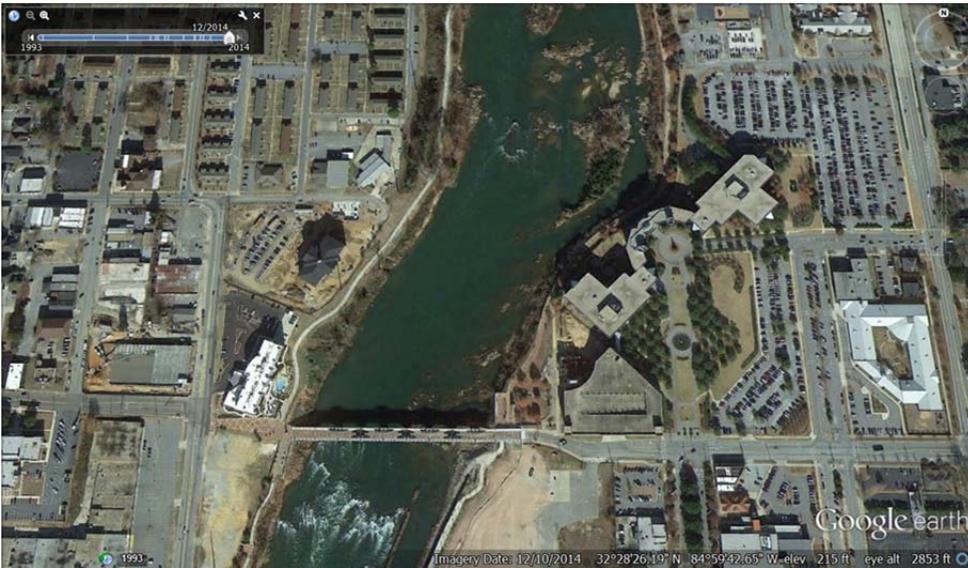


Columbus, Georgia

Columbus, and its neighboring city Phenix City, AL (left on the pictures) benefitted from the removal of dams on the Chattahoochee River and the addition of one bridge and improvements to another.

In the pictures below, twenty years apart, a large new civic center can be seen on the right bank and additional construction to that project's right as well as an improved bridge connecting the two cities. A cleared area for redevelopment, directly below the improvements on the right bank can also be seen.





In the pictures below the former dam, replaced by a bridge can be seen along with a large new residential complex on the right bank that utilized old factory buildings. New improvements in Phenix City on the left bank has also followed.





The picture below of the right bank, Columbus, shows new parkland, corporate offices, and residential development.

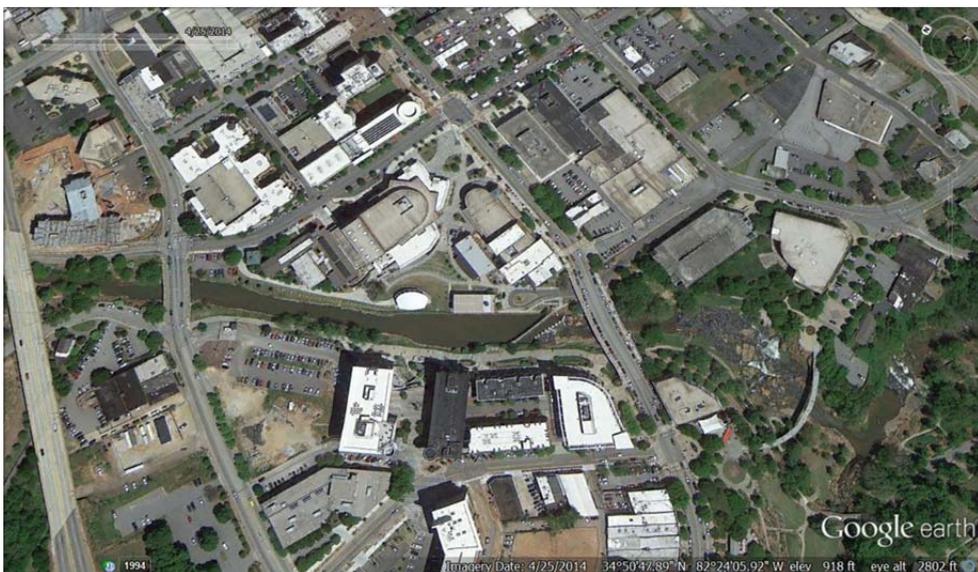
The river itself has been completely changed into a recreational habitat with rafting, kayaking, canoeing and obstacle courses and waterplay in the river and new paths for trail sports on the banks.



Greenville, South Carolina

Unlike Columbus, Greenville took out a vehicular bridge and replaced it with an elegant pedestrian one over some natural water falls in the downtown and significantly improved all of the riverbanks, saving some historic structures.

The two pictures below show much of the improvement – from the bridge that was removed (top picture right end) and replaced by an elegant curved pedestrian bridge over a small but beautiful valley park (current picture) – to vacant space on the upper riverbank in the top picture, now filled in the bottom picture, to new hotel and commercial office development on the lower riverbank in the bottom picture.



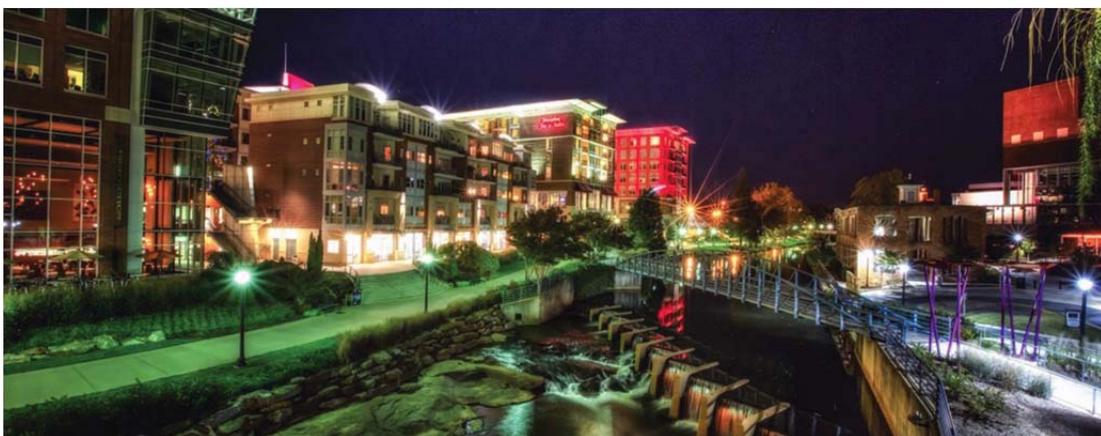
The pictures below offer a focused picture of the end where the vehicular bridge was removed and a below-the-falls parks improved.

It should be noted that the river had been improved in a previous generation too. An amphitheater and riverwalks can be seen in the old pictures. This earlier development served to make the community more aware and appreciative of the river and support its further redevelopment.

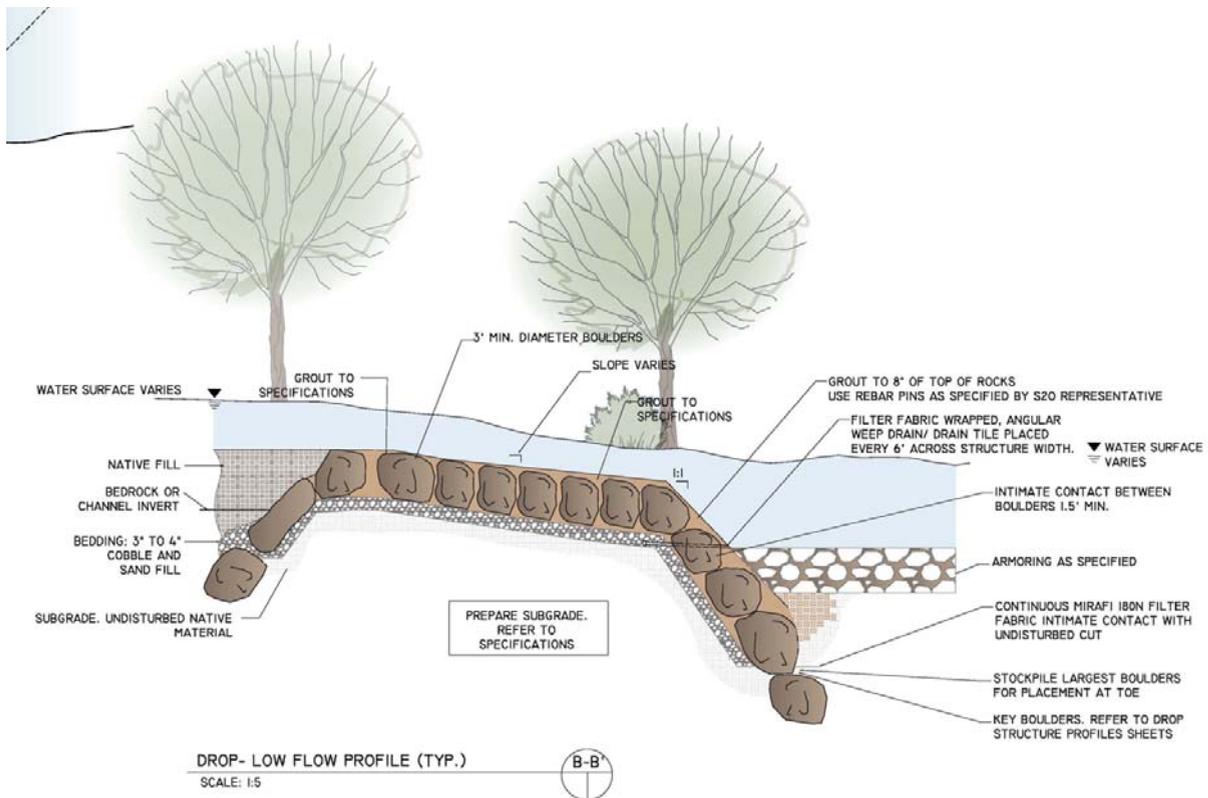
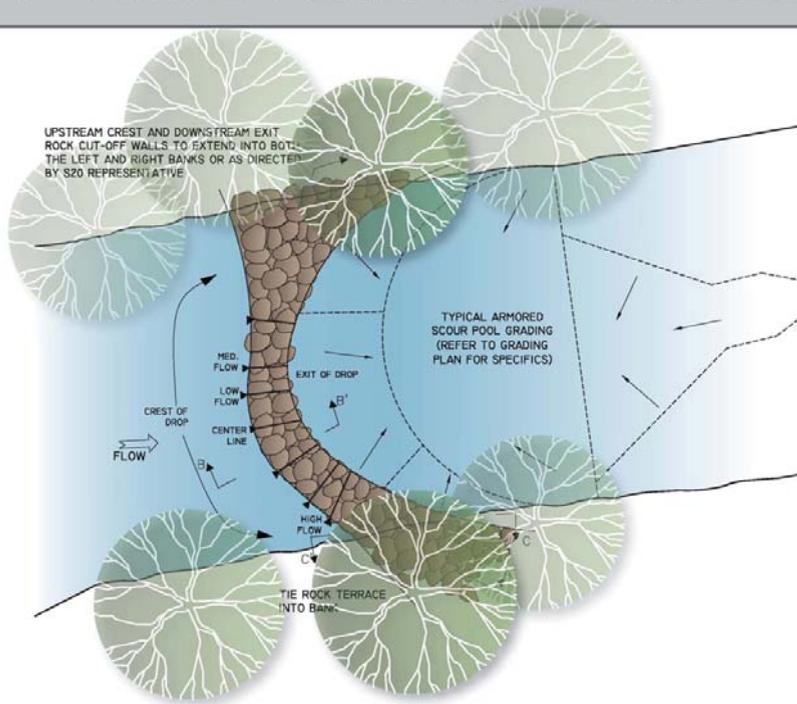


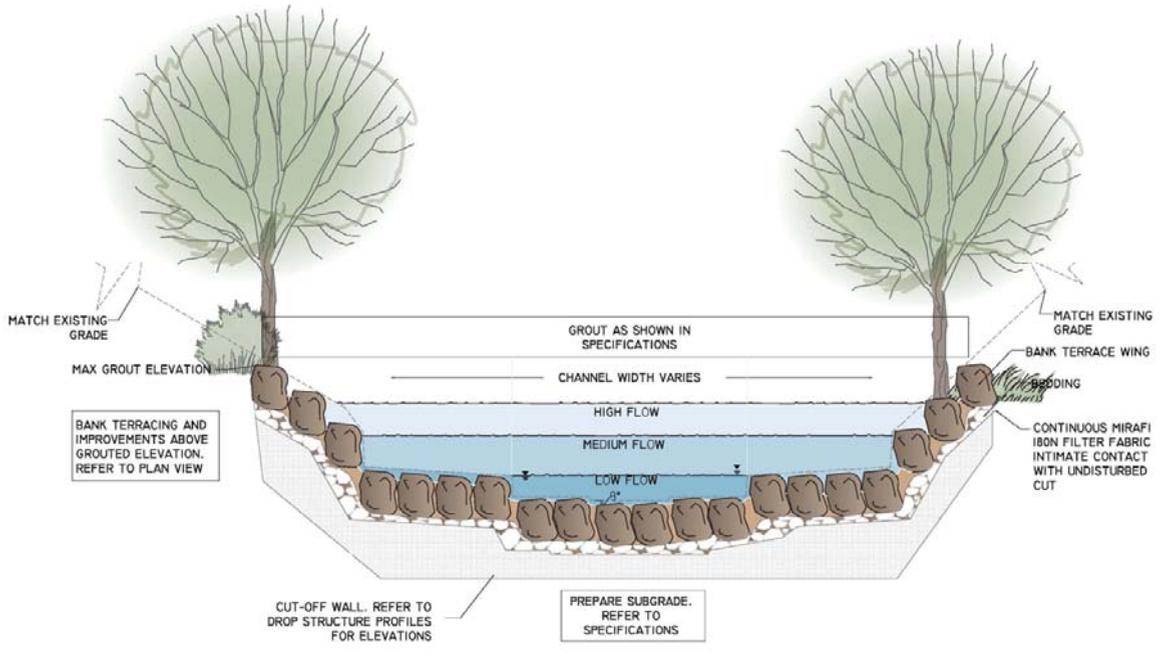


The picture below is of the south bank showing the new urban design landscape, new hotel and new commercial and residential development.

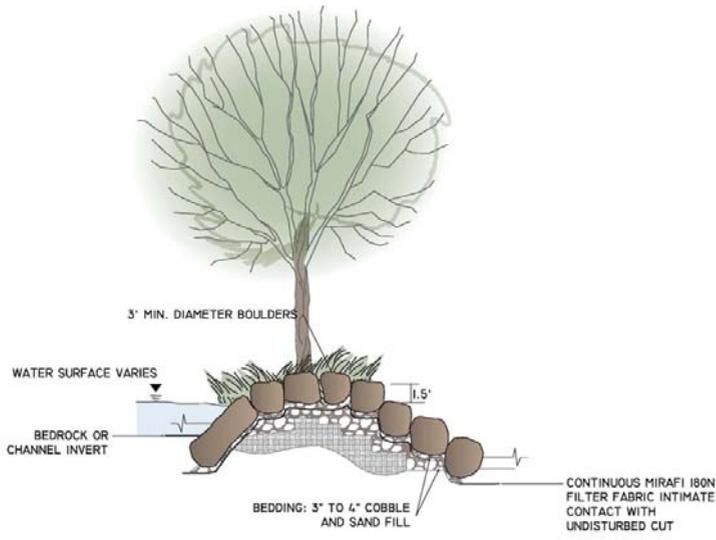


WHITEWATER DETAILS





DROP-CROSS SECTION (TYP.)
SCALE: 1:5



WING PROFILE (TYP.)
SCALE: 1:5

