



CITY OF
GRAND RAPIDS
IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

RIVERFRONT FRAMEWORK PLAN

Updated 2009



City of Grand Rapids, Minnesota
Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This master plan is the culmination of the efforts of many citizens, individuals, and groups who devoted their time and energy to the future of the Grand Rapids Mississippi Riverfront. We wish to extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who made this plan possible through their enthusiasm, commitment, creative input, and financial support. A very special thanks is owed to the following individuals for their leadership throughout the planning process:

Riverfront Master Plan Steering Committee

Donna Vennie

Kris Ferraro

Todd Driscoll

Gene Baker

Rick Utech

Rick Harding

Marion Barcus

Rob Mattei

City of Grand Rapids, Minnesota

Rob Mattei, Community Development Director

Eric Trast, Community Development Specialist

Tom Pagel, City Engineer

The master plan study was made possible through financial support provided by the Blandin Foundation. We are grateful for their generosity.

Plan prepared by:

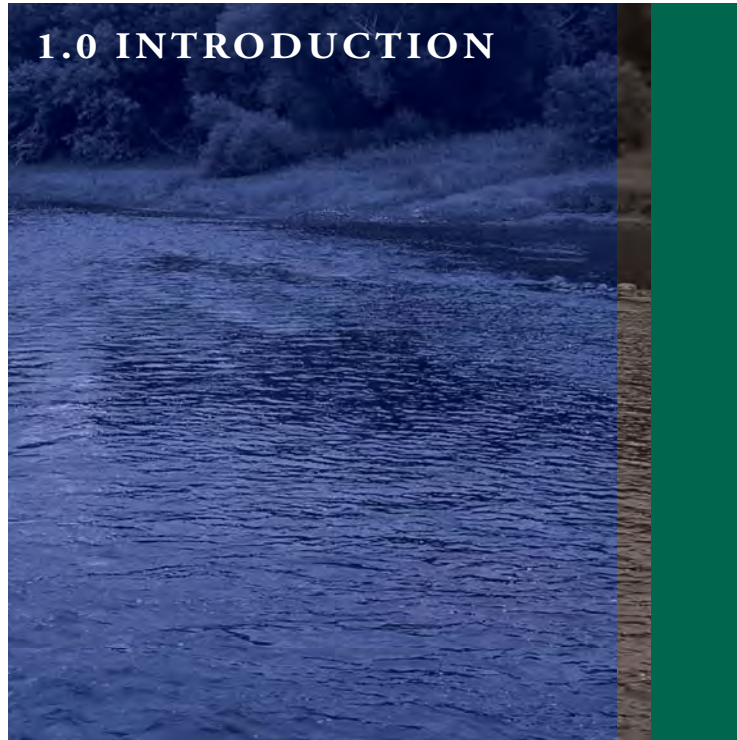
JJR, LLC • 625 Williamson Street • Madison, Wisconsin • (608) 251-1177 • www.jjr-us.com

All photography by JJR unless otherwise noted.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	See Poster Plan
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Project Overview.....	2
1.2 Goals & Objectives.....	5
1.3 Project Process.....	7
1.4 Community Input Summary.....	8
2.0 Community Framework.....	11
2.1 Mapping and Analysis.....	13
2.2 Opportunities And Constraints.....	23
3.0 Framework Plan Recommendations.....	25
3.1 Framework Plan Introduction.....	26
3.2 North Riverfront Park.....	29
3.3 South Riverfront Park.....	35
3.4 Connection Across the River.....	39
3.5 Canal Street Neighborhood.....	43
3.6 Highway 2/Itasca Street Business Corridor.....	47
4.0 Implementation.....	51
4.1 Implementation Introduction.....	52
4.2 Implementation Roles.....	53
4.3 Project Phasing.....	55
4.4 Probable Construction Cost Budgets.....	59
4.5 Funding Strategies.....	65
4.6 Partnership Opportunities.....	73
5.0 Appendix.....	74

1.0 INTRODUCTION



1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW



Mississippi River at low water



Grand Itasca redevelopment

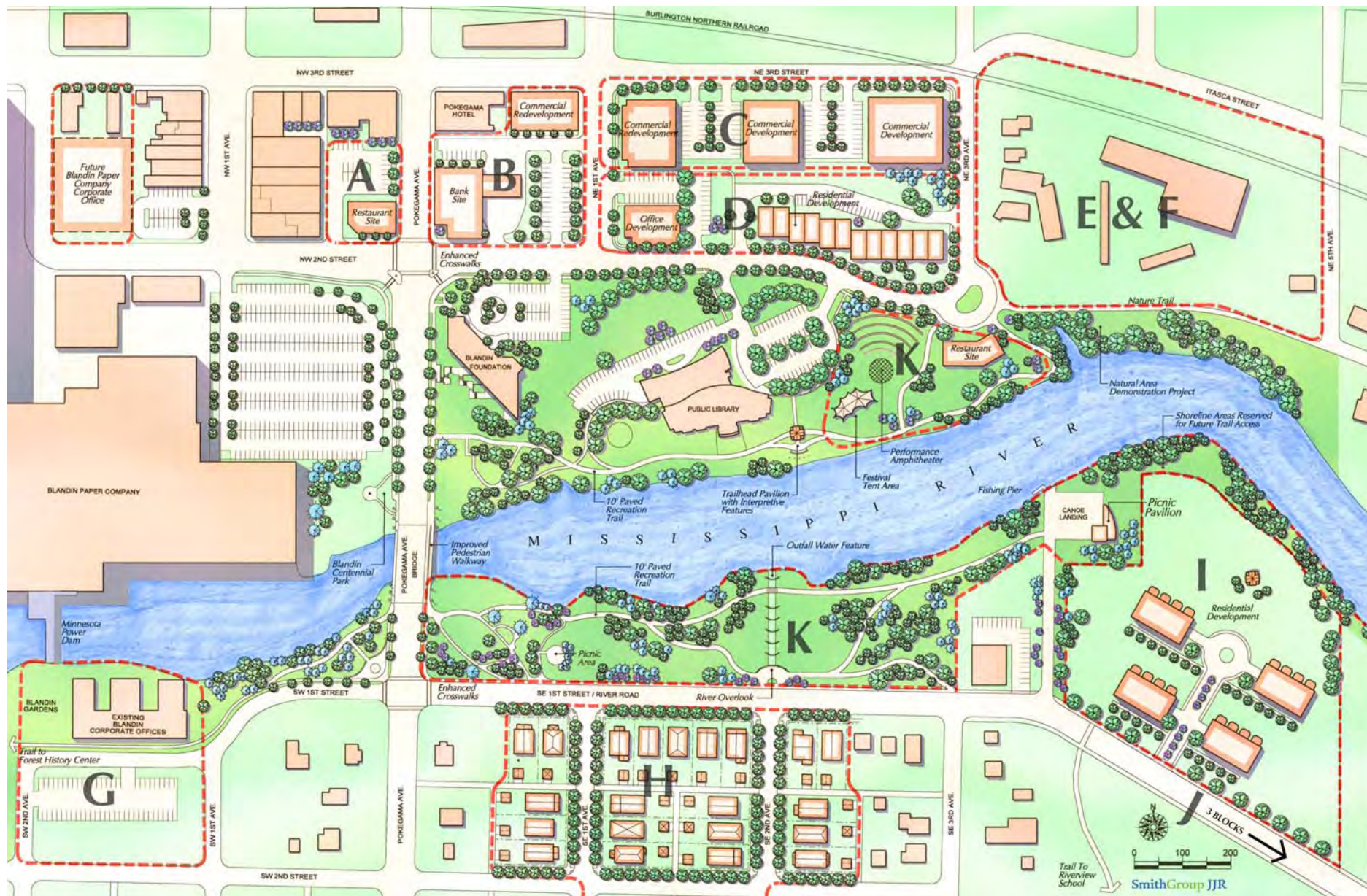
The 2009 Riverfront Framework Plan serves as an update to the 2000 Plan; building upon what was originally proposed, while providing additional insight on specific programs associated with future redevelopment. The updated Riverfront Plan complements the recommendations contained in the Downtown Redevelopment Plan (adopted in 2006) and the Housing Market Analysis (performed in 2007).

The framework plan exists to provide guidance for Grand Rapids as it evolves, and includes short, intermediate and incremental goals. The plan is designed to be flexible enough to respond to changes that have occurred since 2000 while accommodating for any future changes that the City will experience over the next 10 to 15 years.

The Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority (GREDA) and the City of Grand Rapids hired JJR, a team of landscape architects, urban planners, and engineers from Madison, Wisconsin to help with the planning process. The City appointed a Riverfront Framework Plan Steering Committee that guided the plan development process.

Over the last nine years, many of the improvement projects proposed in the 2000 Riverfront Framework Plan have been implemented.

- Redevelopment Area C: The former grocery store was redeveloped as office space; a new building contains new office space, and Rivers Wine Bar and Bistro.
- Redevelopment Area D: A high-end office building was constructed at the corner of NE 1st Avenue and NW 2nd Street.
- Redevelopment Area E&F: The City purchased the former recycling center site, and is now working through plans to extend NE 3rd Street through the parcel.
- Redevelopment Area H: The former Grand Itasca Hospital was redeveloped in 2009 as the Grand Plaza redevelopment with nineteen rental units, eighteen townhomes, and nine single-family dwellings. The historic entry on River Road was preserved and integrated into the new construction.



2000 Riverfront Framework Plan Recommendations



Mississippi River fishing pier



River vista from Canal Street, looking west

- Redevelopment Area I: The former Grand Rapids Clinic site has been redeveloped into River Grand, a 62-unit assisted living and senior living facility.
- Redevelopment Area J: A majority of the property was in the airport safety zone and thus undevelopable. The City has used some areas for stormwater detention ponding.
- Redevelopment Area K (Riverfront Park North): This area has been redeveloped, with a catalytic public library, a studio for Northern Community Radio (KAXE), and a performance area with a moveable and fabric covered structure provided by Rotary Clubs of Grand Rapids. The City and DNR constructed a fishing pier/viewing deck south of the library adjacent to the riverfront pathway.
- Redevelopment Area K (Riverfront Park South): The City acquired a small parking lot at the southeast corner of SE 2nd Avenue and River Road, for public use to access the trail system and park space.

The 2009 Framework Plan incorporates these projects and builds upon their success as components to the continued revitalization of the riverfront.

1.2 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Riverfront Framework Plan Update was directed by a series of goals and objectives. These goals originated with the 2000 Riverfront Framework and were updated by the Steering Committee. The updated recommendations flow directly from these goals and objectives.

The Riverfront Framework Plan addresses both public and privately owned land, targeting those areas that will most greatly influence future redevelopment along the waterfront. Changes that will inevitably occur on both private and public land should be coordinated to ensure simultaneously that private investments lead to greater community goals, and that public projects support private investments.

Grand Rapids Riverfront Public Improvement Goals:

- Achieve greater utilization of the riverfront as a central feature and economic asset of the community.
- Provide and improve the physical and visual access to the riverfront.
- Create a riverfront park that integrates the north and south sides of the river.
- Promote and improve the festival area and performance stage along the river.
- Integrate design themes and linkages between the Downtown Central Business District and the riverfront.
- Develop a looped trail system that will integrate the riverfront with the Central Business District, adjacent neighborhoods, open space amenities, and the YMCA.

Grand Rapids Riverfront Private Sector Development Goals:

- Redevelop Blocks 18 and 19.
- Stimulate the private sector investment and redevelopment of vacant and under-utilized City-owned property on Blocks 20 and Block 21.
- Provide adequate expansion area and coordinate planning with Blandin Paper Company.
- Protect and preserve the quality of life and property values of existing riverfront neighborhoods.



Community listening session discussions



Conceptual framework plan presentation

- Attract new housing opportunities in the central portion of the City, focusing on owner-occupied condominiums and market-rate apartments. Affordable housing options should also be addressed.

During the planning process, it became necessary to further clarify the framework plan's intentions, particularly how it recommends changes for privately-owned land. JJR supplemented the Steering Committee's goals and objectives with the following:

When addressing publicly-owned parcels, this Riverfront Framework Plan:

- Guides City decision-making and creates capital improvement priorities.
- Ensures that short-term changes do not preclude long-term opportunities.
- Directs effective and efficient infrastructure provisions.
- Addresses safety and health challenges.
- Improves the physical and economic environment for private residents and business owners.
- Communicates the City's vision to current and prospective residents and business owners.
- Increases chances of being awarded federal and state grant funding.

When addressing privately-owned parcels, this Riverfront Framework Plan:

- Establishes a community vision for long-term change.
- Shapes day-to-day parcel-level changes so that they help achieve a community benefit.
- Protects private investments in land purchases and building improvements.
- Attracts additional private investment.

1.3 PROJECT PROCESS

The update to the Riverfront Framework Plan followed a deliberate process to understand and clarify the existing conditions, seek early guidance from the Steering Committee and community residents, and work through design options step-by-step with the Steering Committee.

The Riverfront Framework Plan was updated over a series of three intensive work sessions.

- September 9-11, 2008: During this week, City staff and JJR assessed the existing conditions and asked key stakeholders the primary opportunities and goals for the riverfront. JJR met with the Steering Committee, interviewed fifteen stakeholders, and led a community workshop.
- November 18-20, 2008: Riverfront Design Charrette. Building upon the collective knowledge acquired during the September stakeholder interviews and subsequent site analysis, JJR worked with the Riverfront Steering Committee to create a redevelopment concept and present it to the community during an intensive two-day design charrette at City Hall. JJR created a “temporary studio” where a highly interactive, holistic approach was taken toward the development of a renewed and refreshed plan for the riverfront. The week ended with a public presentation of the riverfront design.
- June 2, 2009: JJR met with the Riverfront Steering Committee and City Staff to present the updated and expanded Grand Rapids Riverfront Framework Plan design, phasing, and implementation strategies.

1.4 COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY

Kick-Off Meeting with Steering Committee

The Steering Committee worked with JJR to compare recommendations made in the 2000 Riverfront Framework Plan against existing physical and market conditions, identifying potential conflicts and areas where recommendations needed revision and updating. In addition, the committee more clearly defined and expanded the project study area.

The Steering Committee felt that planning for the north side of the river was more important than the south side. The north side work should focus on the Itasca Street/Canal Street/NE 7th Avenue area, the blocks adjacent to downtown, and the riverfront park. Although physical rail crossing and street changes will be limited to the areas south of Itasca Street, the Steering Committee directed that the impacts on land use and access between Itasca Street and Highway 2 be considered during the planning process. South side improvements should focus on the riverfront park and creating connections to the south side community.

Stakeholder Interviews

Over two days, JJR met with fifteen stakeholders in one-on-one sessions to understand the existing trends, strengths, opportunities, and weaknesses of residential and non-residential uses within the City, particularly within the riverfront area. The stakeholders were chosen by the City with guidance from JJR.

Interviews were conducted to identify riverfront-suitable development that could leverage further growth in the City. Business leaders, representatives of the Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority, Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, and local business owners were included in the discussions to assess potential tenants within the expanded study area.

During the discussions, some common themes emerged:

- The City has done a tremendous job in redeveloping and reactivating the riverfront after years of turning its back to it. Private development has responded, but it still needs public support.



Steering Committee directs JJR concept development



Private redevelopment has responded to city redevelopment efforts, but it still needs public support

- Substandard housing in the study area is a problem, but there is need for affordable housing.
- Market-rate housing is needed in downtown and along the riverfront.
- The Library and Rotary Tent attract people, but they could be better programmed to bring in more of the community.
- Crossing the river by foot or bike is challenging at the Pokegama and Horn Bridge crossings.

Stakeholder meeting summary is included in the Appendix.

Community Workshop

City staff and JJR conducted a public workshop on September 11, 2008 to identify and update the community's needs and expectations, and the riverfront's challenges and opportunities. Approximately twenty community members participated in the meeting.

Workshop participants focused primarily on two areas. One group contained mostly residential property owners in the Canal Street/NE 2nd Street area, while the second contained mostly business owners in the Itasca Street/NE 5th Avenue area. Business owners were concerned about access to their businesses since many locals avoid Highway 2. Residential property owners were concerned about the littering, vandalism, and isolation of the neighborhood.

After a project introduction, workshop participants gathered around base maps at two tables to list and draw out the riverfront primary opportunities and their goals for the community. Community member identified these top issues:

- Perceived and real crime in Canal Street area
- Costs of improvements, parcel assessments
- Connections across the river
- Connecting art installations to create an arts walk
- Extending riverfront trails into the community
- Facilitating activity/community interaction along the river



Rail crossing at 3rd Avenue is considered unsafe

Specific issues relating to the rail crossing closure and intersection modification include:

- Rail crossings at 5th Avenue and 3rd Avenue are considered unsafe crossings
- The City, Minnesota Department of Transportation and Burlington Northern Santa Fe are working to increase the safety of these intersections
- If these and two other intersections are improved, trains can increase their speed through town from 12.5 to 25 mph
- Due to existing topography, 5th Avenue crossing will be closed
- Rail crossing closures at 3rd and 5th Avenues would change rear access opportunities into Highway 2 businesses
- Based on discussion at the community meeting, the City has created an option to improve the safety of the 3rd Avenue crossing while keeping it open

The community workshop summary is included in the Appendix.



City is seeking to increase train speed, thus reducing time spent blocking traffic movements

2.0 COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK



2.1 MAPPING AND ANALYSIS

Based upon the input from the meetings, workshops and interviews, JJR performed an Opportunities and Constraints analysis that helped drive the Design Week efforts. The analysis synthesized, categorized and organized critical issues relating to redevelopment within the greater riverfront area. Major components of the design were broken down and segregated into specific categories that summarize the study area's major issues.

Land Use

Both sides of the river have a mixture of land uses, but each side has its own mix and character. On the north side, there is a greater concentration of business and industrial uses. The Blandin Paper Company, the Central Business District, and retail businesses oriented to Highways 2 and 169 comprise the majority of the study area on the north side of the river. The north side does have some residential at the eastern end of the study area in the form of multi-family apartments, a manufactured housing park and some single-family homes west of 7th Avenue and south of the rail line.

The south side is predominantly residential, consisting of single-family homes with multi-family structures at River Road and 7th Avenue, River Grand and other senior apartment housing, and the current Grand Plaza project (redevelopment of the Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital site). The Blandin Paper Company offices is the most prominent of a handful of commercial uses on the south side.

Both north and south sides of the river have significant public use areas, with the library, KAXE studios and Veterans Memorial Park on the north, and the YMCA on the south. Open parkland exists on both sides, but is currently under-utilized due to perceived limited access and a physical disconnect between each of these areas.

Since the open spaces on the north side are connected with the downtown and public institutions, the north side open spaces should be more heavily programmed and designed for special events. Conversely, the open spaces on the south side are more closely associated with lower density residential areas, and thus should be more passive open spaces, consisting of recreational trails and picnic areas.



Public art in under utilized open space west of the library



Itasca Street manufactured homes park



Sources: City of Grand Rapids, JJR analysis.

Airport Safety Zone

The Airport Safety Zone overlays the southeastern half of the study area. The intent of the overlay is to reduce the density of land uses that attract large numbers of people to reduce the potential loss of life should there be an aircraft malfunction or crash.

The parcels within the study and within the airport safety overlay are entirely within Zone B. The development restrictions for Zone B include:

- Prohibition of development on sites less than 3 acres
- Restriction to one building plot, with restrictions on the building plot size relative to parcel size
- Restrictions of use that will attract people, including specific prohibitions on churches, hospitals, schools, theaters, stadiums, hotels, motels, trailer courts, campgrounds and other places of public/semi-public assembly.
- Density limitations, with a maximum of 15 persons/acre occupancy

Many parcels in the study area have been designated an Existing Residential Neighborhood (ERN). These parcels are permanently exempt from the Zone B development restrictions, even if they are redeveloped as a different use. The Airport Safety Zone exhibit shows those parcels that are within the ERN designation. The only parcel on the north side that is not in the ERN is a city-owned triangular open space parcel between Canal Street and NE 2nd Street. Because of its size, this parcel must remain undeveloped.

Shoreland Zoning

In accordance with state regulations, the City zoning code includes shoreland protection standards for all parcels within the defined shoreland area. Parcels are zoned a separate zoning district, but many of the design regulations match those of the similar non-shoreland district.

In the study area, there are currently parcels zoned as Shoreland General Business (SGB), Shoreland General Industrial Park (SI-2), Shoreland Limited Business (SLB), Shoreland Public Use (SPU), Shoreland One-Family Residence (SR-1), Shoreland



Sources: City of Grand Rapids, Minnesota Department of Transportation.

One and Two Family Residence (SR-2), and Shoreland Multi-Family Residence (SR-3). The Shoreland regulations increase minimum lot sizes and setbacks, decreases maximum lot coverages, and limits removal of vegetation.

Circulation

The Pokegama Bridge and the Robert K. Horn Bridge are the only two arterial roadways within the study area that cross the Mississippi River, and therefore handle the majority of vehicular traffic. The large volume of traffic over these bridges makes them unsuitable for pedestrian use. Pedestrians have only one alternative river crossing, the Bill Powers Memorial Trail Bridge that connects Oakland Park and Veterans Memorial Park, which is east of the study area.

Deliveries to the Blandin Paper Company have a significant impact on daily traffic within the city, which is exacerbated by the inappropriate use of certain streets and receiving locations. Deliveries to the Blandin Paper Company are frequently and mistakenly made to their office location on SE 1st Street instead of their industrial receiving dock on NE 2nd Street. This creates unnecessary traffic pressure on the Pokegama Bridge and compromises the delineation of land use between industry and those uses which are more civic-oriented.

It is JJR's understanding that Blandin Paper is in the process of changing its ordering paperwork to clarify this delivery mistake. When leaving the industrial loading docks, trucks traveling east will frequently use NE 3rd Street/Itasca Street to access Highway 2, putting unnecessary pressure on the local roads, which were designed as collectors for smaller local businesses. Restricting truck use to arterial roads would reduce traffic congestion on local roads within the central business district while placing emphasis on pedestrian safety.

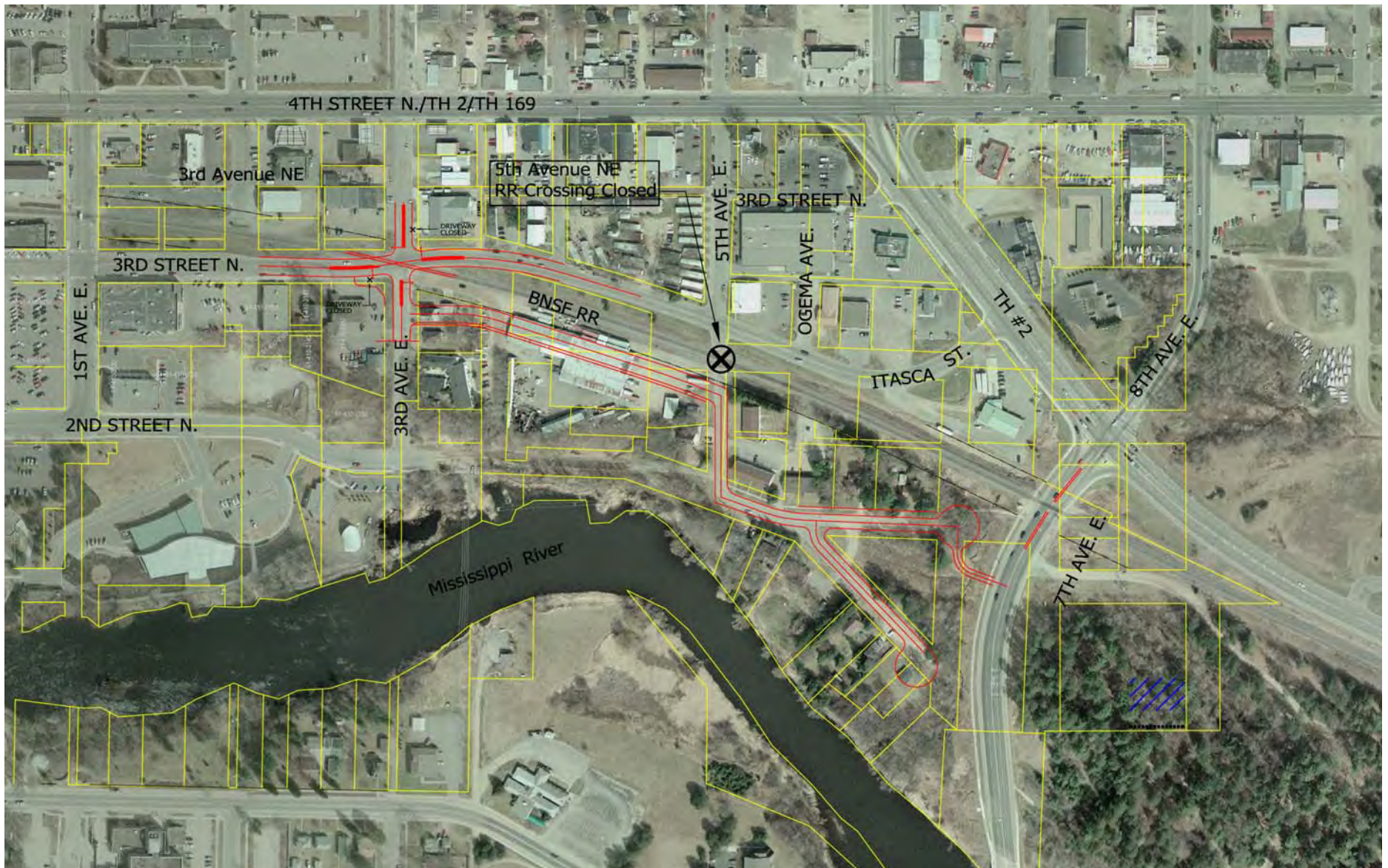
The City and Minnesota DOT have planned a realignment of SE 4th Street at Pokegama Avenue. The realignment will remove the jog in the SE 4th Street crossing. The City is also planning to extend SE 4th Street east past SE 3rd Avenue to connect to SE 4th Street in the Public Works complex. A trail is planned along the section of SE 4th Street west of SE 7th Avenue. This strengthened east-west



Crossing the Horn Bridge by bicycle



Itasca Street is a frequent cut-through for delivery vehicles



Proposed Rail Crossing Closure and Intersection Modifications

Source: City of Grand Rapids Engineering.

connection will provide another option for east-west circulation south of the river for drivers, bikers, and pedestrians alike. This connection will share the traffic that is now on River Road, making crossing River Road more friendly for pedestrians.

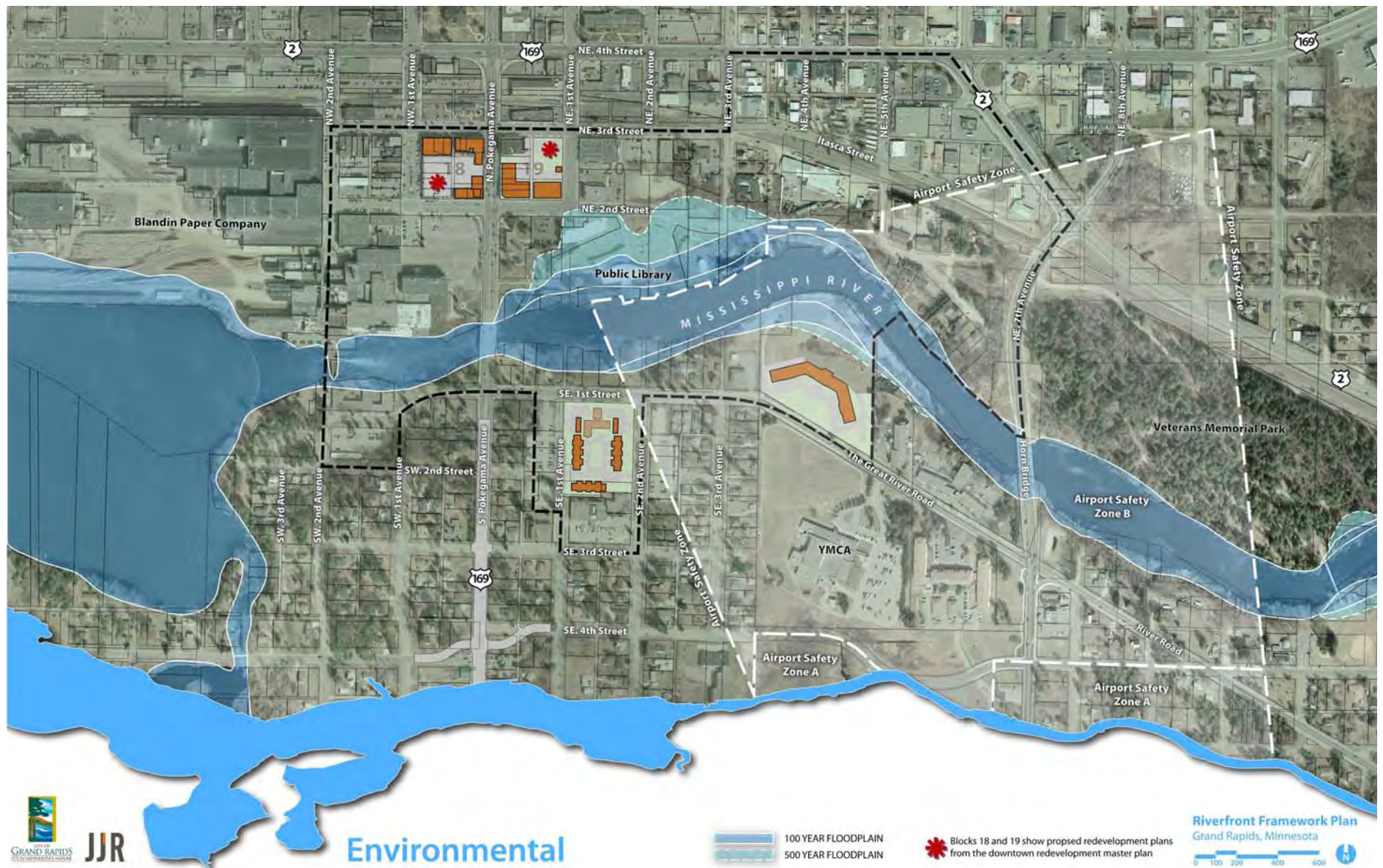
Rail Crossing Closure and Intersection Reconstruction

The Burlington Northern rail line is a significant barrier to circulation within the riverfront and downtown areas. The trains travel slowly through Grand Rapids due to the number of vehicular rail crossings. To increase the top head end train speed from 12.5 mph to 25 mph, the City is proposing the closure of rail crossing at NE 5th Avenue and an intersection reconstruction at NE 3rd Avenue. These changes, combined with other rail crossing improvements, will support the City's goal to establish a train horn quiet zone within five to ten years.

At the NE 3rd Avenue crossing, rail crossing barrier arms will be installed on all approaches, and medians will prevent motorists from bypassing the barrier arms. The proposed NE 3rd Avenue intersection reconfiguration will increase safety at this skewed and complicated intersection. The medians proposed at each of the intersection approaches will prohibit left turns from the road and left turns from adjacent driveways for three parcels adjacent to the intersection. The proposed intersection changes will close driveways on two of the parcels, but business access will be maintained.

At the NE 5th Avenue crossing, the rail crossing will be closed. Previous studies considered a vehicular underpass at this intersection, but this approach is considered financially infeasible. Access to the Canal Street area will be maintained through a new road segment from NE 3rd Avenue through the former recycling center parcel and connecting to NE 5th Avenue.

The proposed NE 5th Avenue rail crossing closure will disconnect the parcels between the river and rail line east of NE 3rd Avenue from Highways 2 and 169, and the commercial uses north of the rail line. The Canal Street area is currently isolated from its surroundings because no throughway exists. The result of this isolation is a quiet, passive residential environment that occasionally experiences certain illegal



Note: The depicted floodplain shows the most recent delineation. However, this delineation is from a 1976 study and it does not reflect topographic changes that resulted from the Library, KAXE, and other floodplain developments.

Source: City of Grand Rapids.

activities. The NE 5th Avenue rail closure will amplify both positive and negative attributes associated with such isolation.

Environmental

There are two primary environmental challenges within the study area – floodplain and soil stability. As illustrated in the Environmental exhibit, much of the study area along the north side of the river lies within the 100-year floodplain, including the Public Library and the Rotary Tent. Between NE 1st Avenue and NE 3rd Avenue, the 500-year floodplain extends further back, covering the Library parking lot, the KAXE studios and much of NE 2nd Street. The Library and the KAXE studios have either been built following flood-proofing standards or their floor elevation has been constructed above the floodplain. Future structures built within the floodplain will need to be similarly flood-proofed. The 100-year and 500-year floodplains on the south side are limited to the river's edge and areas already dedicated to open space. Any new structure at the canoe-landing facility will need to be constructed in conformance with local and state floodplain/shoreland requirements.

Another significant environmental and economic challenge is the historic use of bark fill along the north shore of the river. Bark fill, a waste product from the forest product industries, does not provide a solid enough foundation for structures. Therefore, new structures within this area must use expensive piling systems for support or must remove and replace the existing material. The area of bark fill is not completely known, but it is believed to include at least a portion of Blocks 19, 20, and 21 and the lower areas of the north riverfront park (including the Public Library and KAXE studios).

Safety Issues

Participants in the stakeholder interviews and the community meeting noted that safety concerns are present, particularly in the Itasca Street and Canal Street areas. Participants noted that there is occasional neighborhood crime, including trespassing in the homes on Canal Street and the eastern portion of the NE 2nd Street neighborhood.



Veteran's Memorial Park



River Grand, developed by DW Jones



Except from bridges, it is difficult to see the river

The Grand Rapids Deputy Chief has stated that crime rates in the Itasca Street, NE 2nd Street, and Canal Street areas are not any higher than other neighborhoods with similar density within Grand Rapids. However, due to the somewhat isolated location of the Itasca/2nd Street area, the Deputy Chief noted that there is an increased perception of crime. This neighborhood is isolated due to topography and a lack of street connections from 7th Avenue and across the rail line. In addition, lighting levels are low in many parts of the riverfront, contributing to both perceived and actual crime threats.

Other Elements

Other elements identified as influential to the master plan include:

- *Community Growth Patterns:* While there is some rekindled interest in the downtown and riverfront, those residents that have a housing choice tend to live on the shores of the area's many lakes. Attracting residential uses downtown has been difficult, and some of the residential on the north side of the river is substandard.
- *Market Trends:* On the north side, the most recent redevelopment has been for office buildings, primarily developed by Rennix and Rick Glorvigen, with some supporting retail. Additional office uses are not desired as they do not animate the riverfront in evenings and weekends. On the south side, Skip Duchesneau with DW Jones has developed two subsidized and/or elderly residential projects – River Grand and Grand Plaza. These redevelopment projects have been welcomed, but there is a desire for market-rate housing in downtown and along the riverfront. There are no mixed-use projects in the City, and no current developer has experience in mixed-use projects.
- *Shoreline Treatment:* Except for views from the bridges, it is difficult to see the Mississippi River. Thick shoreline vegetation within the urban riverfront areas (Pokegama Ave to NE/SE 3rd Avenue) obstructs views from riverfront parks, while the existing tree canopy blocks views into the forested riverfront areas. There is a public desire to balance this softer, more naturalized edge with a more open, manicured edge that provides clear vistas to the river and adjacent park space.

2.2 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Summary of Opportunities

Below is a list of the key opportunities associated with the study area, which were explored throughout the community workshop process.

- *Public Interest in the Riverfront:* The community has witnessed success, and thus will be more likely to support future riverfront redevelopment efforts.
- *Development Momentum:* Recent redevelopment successes have created a momentum for quality construction projects in the market place.
- *Community Anchors:* The riverfront hosts the Public Library and Rotary Tent, community institutions that regularly attract groups of people. The plan will help realize their full potential by connecting, strengthening, and expanding these and similar institutions. The existing art pieces throughout town only require a connecting path to highlight them.
- *Riverfront Task Force:* This informal group of individuals has been the torchbearer and champion for the existing Riverfront Development Framework Plan, and they have a proven track record of implementation success. If the updated and expanded plan also captures their attention and imagination, then the plan likely has a champion.
- *Community Trail System:* The existing and planned trail system, while missing some key connections, has the potential to link the north and south sides.
- *Connection to Downtown:* The Riverfront and Downtown are intimately linked. Recent and ongoing Downtown redevelopment successes, the Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan, and Downtown street and gateway improvements are perpetuating the momentum of continued successful Riverfront redevelopment.



Rotary Tent



Public art near KAXE studios



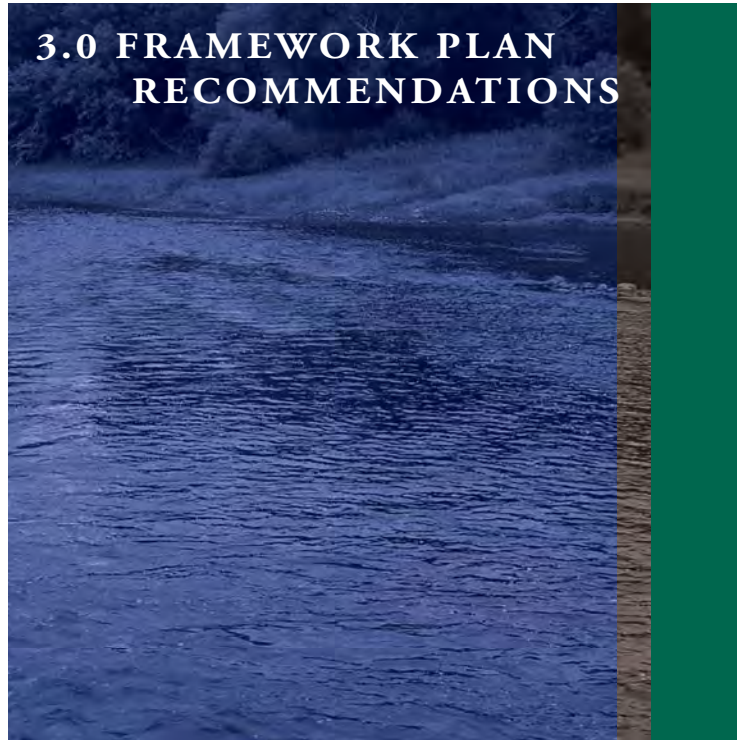
Power lines in the Highway 2 business corridor

Summary of Constraints

Below is a list of the primary constraints affecting redevelopment within the study area. These constraints will be addressed during the charrette process in an attempt to minimize their impact.

- *Rail crossing closure at NE 5th Avenue and intersection changes at NE 3rd Avenue:* The isolation created by the NE 5th Avenue closure will have significant impacts on land use and public safety. A new road connection between NE 3rd Avenue and NE 5th Avenue change access to the Canal Street neighborhood. The new medians associated with the NE 3rd Avenue/ NE 3rd Street/rail intersection will constrain parcel access and redevelopment efforts.
- *Airport Safety Zone:* The parcels that are not within the ERN face significant development restrictions, which will limit the scale and intensity of redevelopment.
- *Pedestrian River Crossings:* The Bill Powers Memorial Trail Bridge is the only comfortable pedestrian river crossing to connect the north and south riverfront parks, but this is outside of the central riverfront area.
- *Northside Residential Structures:* Residential uses east of NE 3rd Avenue consist of substandard multifamily apartment buildings, a trailer park and isolated single-family riverfront homes. The need for affordable housing in the study area must be addressed, along with the perceived and real safety threats of the residential areas.
- *Above Ground Electrical Infrastructure:* The unsightly appearance of above ground electrical line and infrastructure between the rail line and Highway 2 is considered a barrier to redevelopment.

3.0 FRAMEWORK PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS



3.1 FRAMEWORK PLAN INTRODUCTION

Prior to the Design Week workshops, JJR met with the Grand Rapids Riverfront Steering Committee to review the environmental, market, and policy frameworks in which redevelopment can continue along the City's riverfront. The Steering Committee discussed and debated alternative ideas. The Steering Committee reconfirmed specific areas on which to focus:

- Blocks 20/21 (north of NE 2nd Street, east of NE 1st Street, south of NE 3rd Street, west of NE 3rd Avenue): Reassess 2000 Riverfront Plan recommendations in light of rail crossing closure and intersection modification; relate to the Downtown Plan and the Library/riverfront
- Northeastside Residential Area (north of river, east of NE 3rd Avenue, south of rail line, west of NE 7th Avenue): Redevelop with river orientation, address isolation and substandard housing, redevelopment plan for recycling center
- Highway 2/169 Commercial Area (north of rail line, east of NE 3rd Avenue, south and west of Highway 2): Redevelop with highway orientation, address rear access.
- Riverfront Park North Side: design use for open space west of the Library
- Riverfront Park South Side: connections to trail and to canoe landing
- Trails and connections into Central Business District and into the community

Over two days, JJR worked in collaboration with the Steering Committee members. JJR led a pin-up session to gain further critique and guidance from the Steering Committee. City engineers conducted a thorough investigation of the proposed road closure and intersection modification occurring within the study area, and provided JJR with recommended solutions that were incorporated into the framework plan.

After receiving final input from the Steering Committee, JJR presented the updated riverfront redevelopment plan to the general public, concentrating on areas within the study area. Approximately seventeen community members attended the meeting. The majority of the questions and discussions centered on the City's recommendations for the NE 5th Avenue rail crossing and reconfiguration of the NE 3rd Avenue rail intersection.

The updated plan provides a framework for city decision making and prioritization of public improvement projects, while serving as a guide for private landowners in consideration of both short-term and long-term goals. The land use portion of the plan identifies necessary infrastructure improvements; including vehicular and pedestrian circulation, parking, stormwater management, and waterfront access.

The framework plan underscores fundamental components of the design that are intended to stimulate healthy redevelopment within the study area, including:

Forging Connections:

- From downtown to the riverfront
- Between the north side and south side
- From riverfront trails to community wide trails
- Between the public library and the YMCA

Creating Spaces:

- A gathering space west of the library
- An active and visible amphitheater and performance stage
- A quiet north side riverfront neighborhood
- Park space for passive recreation along the south side of the river
- Mixed-use redevelopment along NE 2nd Street

Fostering Economic Development:

- Draw residents and tourists to the river
- Encourage appropriate redevelopment along the river and downtown
- Improve the functionality and appearance of the Highway 2/Itasca Street businesses
- Increase the livability of riverfront residential areas

3.2 NORTH RIVERFRONT PARK

North Riverfront Park is the most visible, intense, and influential component of the Riverfront Framework Plan and includes land north of the Mississippi River, east of Pokegama Avenue, south of NE 2nd Street and west of NE 3rd Avenue.

Although many improvements have been made to this area since adoption of the 2000 Framework Plan, additional programming is required to most effectively utilize this highly valued space. Building upon the success of the Public Library, KAXE studios, and the Rotary Tent, the updated Framework Plan emphasizes this area's relationship to the central business district. The Mississippi River is the City's primary public amenity and it is imperative that a strong connection is made between it and Downtown Grand Rapids.

Short-Term Challenges for the North Riverfront Park:

- Connection to Downtown/CBD
- Under utilized areas between the Library and the Blandin Foundation, and between the Library and the river
- Limited/obstructed views of the river from Downtown

Long-Term Opportunities for the North Riverfront Park:

- Expanded riverfront plaza and amphitheater
- A wider, more deliberate pedestrian promenade along the river
- Stronger pedestrian connection between the river and new development along NE 2nd Street

In the updated Framework Plan, a 12-foot wide promenade extending from the sidewalk along Pokegama Avenue to the KAXE parking lot provides access to public gathering spaces throughout the park, while offering greater access to the river itself.

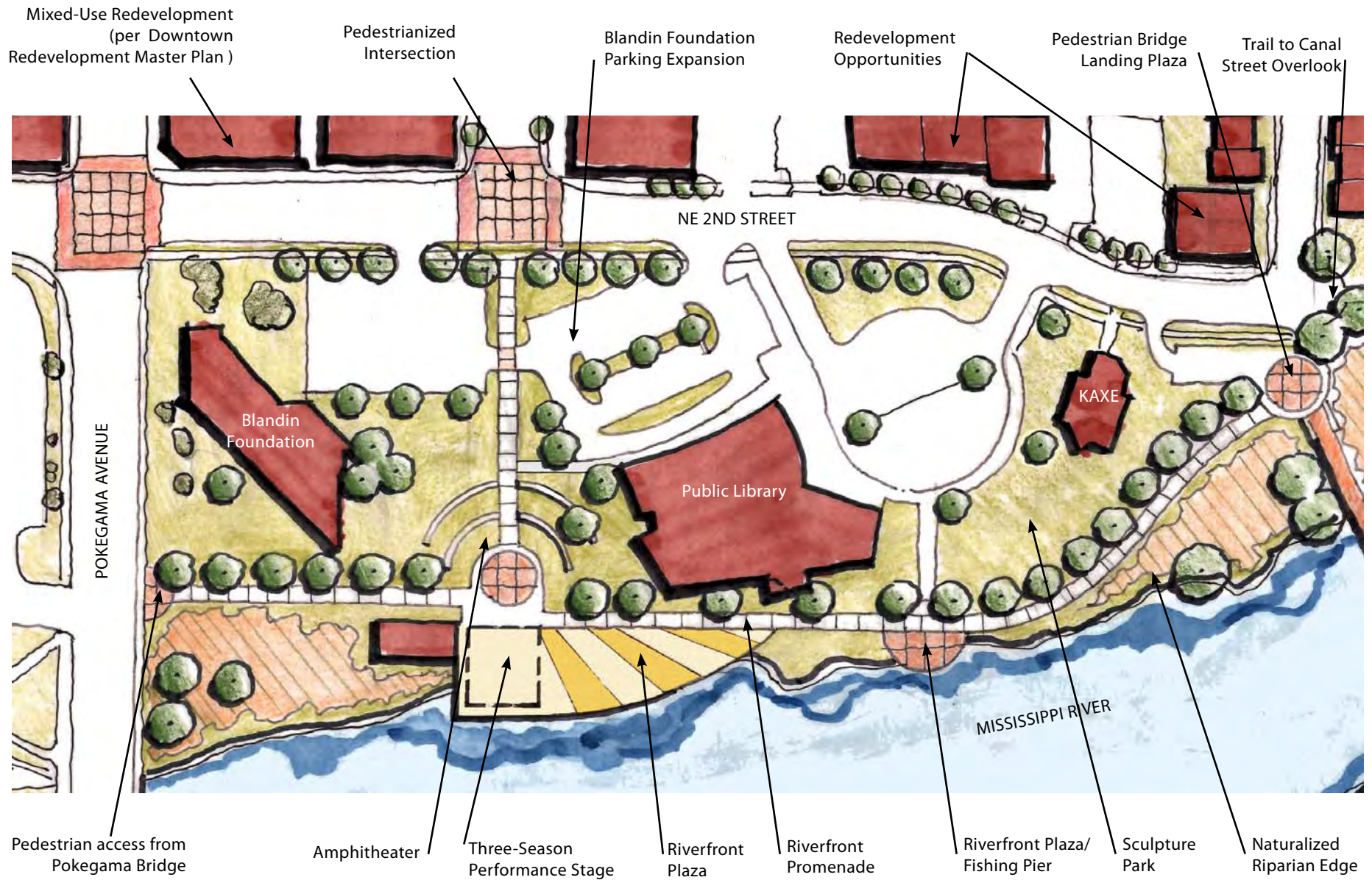
Another 12-foot wide walk is proposed between the Blandin Foundation parking lot and the Public Library to provide an important north-south pedestrian link between the river and proposed development along NE 2nd Street. This north-south walk is aligned with NE 1st Avenue to strengthen both physical and perceptual access to the river from NE 2nd Street. The path connection between NE 1st Avenue and the riverfront can and should be designed to meet ADA accessibility guidelines. The



Interpretive signage in front of KAXE



KAXE Studio and Rotary Tent



North Riverfront Park

design and installation of the wide promenades should allow maintenance vehicles to occasionally access the riverfront, including the waterfront plaza and the adjacent screen house.

Intersection improvements at the NE 2nd Street crossings with Pokegama Avenue and NE 1st Avenue will make the intersections more pedestrian-friendly and strengthen the link to downtown. The intersection improvements should include specialty paving and landscaping enhancements, which should match the improved intersections elsewhere in downtown.

A waterfront plaza with performance stage and amphitheater is proposed where these two walks intersect. This plaza is a key feature within the study area, and will be one of two catalytic projects for future redevelopment along the river. An amphitheater was proposed in the 2000 Framework Plan, but never fully realized. The existing Rotary tent adjacent to the KAXE studios is underutilized in its existing location and has a limited lifespan. Relocating the amphitheater use to the proposed waterfront plaza will make it a more influential component of North Riverfront Park. Replacing the existing tent with a more permanent, three-season structure will accommodate a wider range of uses throughout the year, while serving as a visual anchor aligned with NE 1st Avenue. The waterfront plaza can re-utilize the steel pilings that were installed for the current fishing pier.

The waterfront will be a community asset and should be programmed by multiple community groups. KAXE and the Library are expected to be regular users, but other community arts and heritage groups, such as Reif Center and MacRostie Art Center, should expand their community outreach to the waterfront plaza gathering space. Construction of the waterfront plaza may take many years to achieve, but community arts and heritage groups should begin programming the space west of the Library immediately to garner community support and raise community expectations.

Open lawn adjacent to the waterfront plaza will provide flex-space for different events throughout the year, from live music venues to lunchtime picnicking. Eventual relocation of the existing fishing pier to align with the walkway connection between



Existing river path



KAXE Studio and Rotary Tent



A waterfront plaza will be the focal point of the North Riverfront Park.

the eastside Library parking lot and the pedestrian promenade will improve the pier's visibility and better serve as a contributing element in the progressive series of public site amenities along the riverfront. The pier should be relocated to where the river bottom is deep enough and close enough to the river's edge to provide for good fishing opportunities.

The vacant parcels on the north side of 2nd Street should be redeveloped. Located between the riverfront and downtown and with excellent visibility from the Pokegama Bridge, the midblock section could be office space, coordinating with the office use to the west and the downtown office market. An office use would include vehicle parking that could be used in evenings and weekends for large events at the library and riverfront amphitheater.

The parcel at the northwest corner of 2nd Street and 3rd Avenue will be a transition use, connecting offices uses to the west and residential uses to the east. Located at the foot of the new pedestrian bridge and across from the riverfront park, this development could be a park-related mixed-use activity hub. A riverfront restaurant or ice cream/coffeeshop supported by library and YMCA patrons could occupy the ground floor, with riverfront residential on upper floors.

Any structures or other development within the North Riverfront Park and on the north side of 2nd Street will be within the floodplain. Accordingly, all structures should be constructed so that habitable spaces are elevated above the floodplain or otherwise floodproofed, as was done with the Glorvigen, Library, and KAXE structures.

Restrictions associated with the removal of vegetation along the river will require a balance between selective removal of less desirable plants and the desire for a more manicured landscape palette. Views to and across the river are important, and the preservation of riparian habitat in strategic locations will assist in determining view locations. Medium-sized canopy trees planted along the primary pedestrian promenade will reinforce the promenades presence as the unifying component within the park. Intermittent lighting, seating, and other site furnishings will provide additional functionality and visual interest. Views from primary library riverfront windows to the river should remain open.



Blandin Foundation Native Prairie



The screening plant should be incorporated but minimized in the performance stage design.

Interpretive signage attached to proposed lighting provides opportunity for festive advertisement and city promotions. Street trees along the south side of NE 2nd Street will contribute to its aesthetic, pedestrian-scale character, while mixed-used development proposed along the north side of NE 2nd Street will reinforce the mixed-use character of the revitalization of the riverfront. The existing native prairie exhibit adjacent to the Pokegama Bridge should be preserved and properly maintained.

3.3 SOUTH RIVERFRONT PARK

South Riverfront Park includes open space south of the river, north of SE 1st Street and east of Pokegama Avenue to the canoe launch.

Short-Term Challenges for South Riverfront Park:

- Obstructed views of the river from the park and southside neighborhoods.
- Limited connections from the neighborhood south of River Road.
- Limited access/parking at the canoe landing.
- Inconspicuous “Mississippi River” sign at the Pokegama Bridge.

Long-Term Opportunities for South Riverfront Park:

- Potential incremental expansion of the park eastward.
- Increased accessibility of park from adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Areas dedicated to passive recreational uses.

The south side of the riverfront park is close to residential neighborhoods and further from Downtown, so it has a more passive character. The existing trail system should be expanded to provide greater access throughout the park for pedestrians and bicyclists alike.

Three public gathering spaces are proposed, including improvements to the existing overlook adjacent to the Pokegama Bridge, and two smaller overlook plazas aligned with SE 1st Avenue and SE 2nd Avenue. The plazas’ alignment with these existing streets provides greater visual access to the river and surrounding parkland from SE 1st Street. A walk connecting these new overlooks to the SE 1st Street sidewalk provides more direct physical access to the park from the adjacent residential neighborhood.

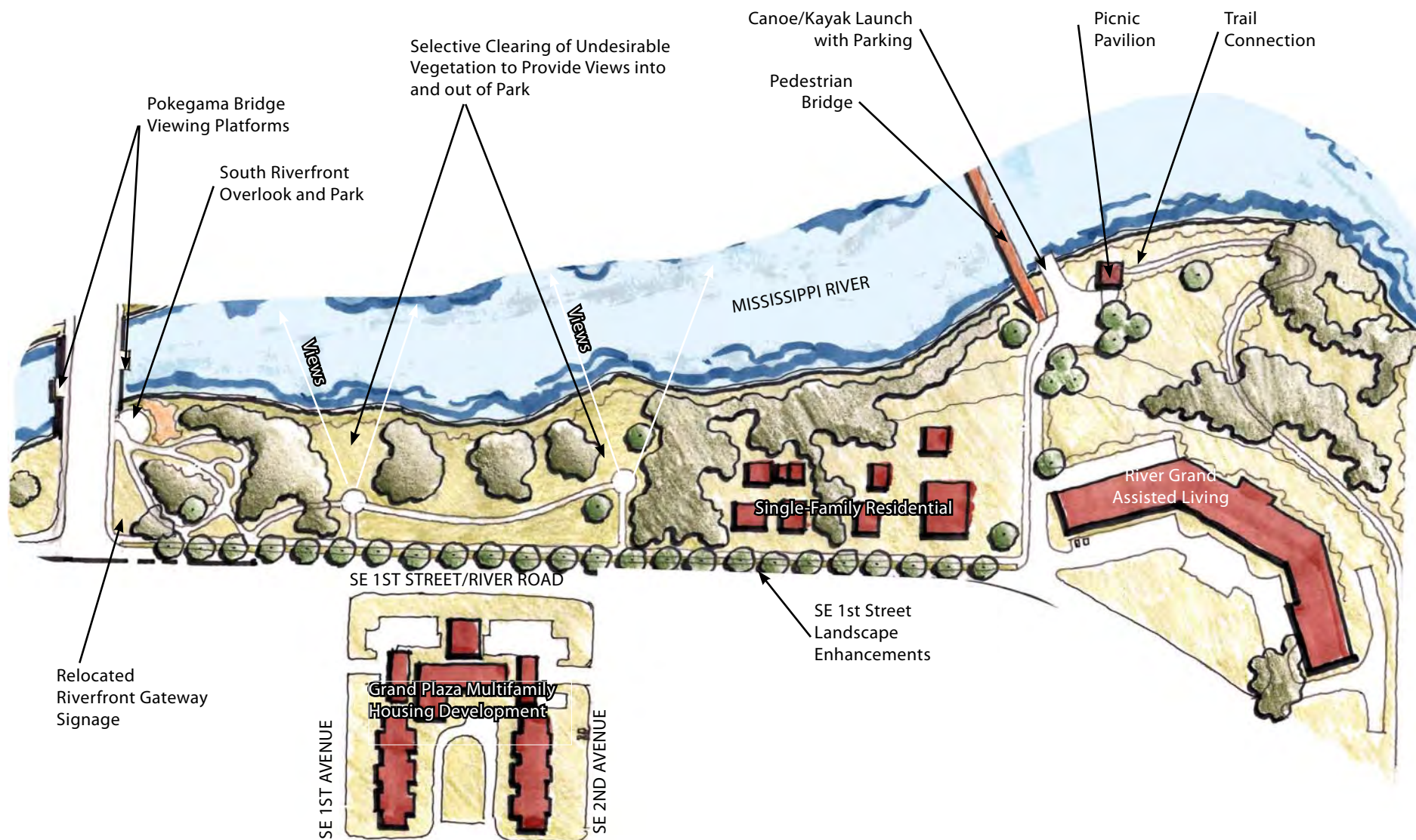
Selective removal of existing vegetation to create clearings within the park will provide flexible space that facilitates a broader range of passive recreational uses. Selective removal of undesirable vegetation will also open views to and across the river. Establishing views across the river is almost as important as seeing the river itself, because it draws people from one side of the river to the other, resulting in a mutually symbiotic relationship between the two sides.



Views across the river are blocked



Existing canoe landing



South Riverfront Park is a passive recreational area, with a natural river edge and selective canopy vegetation clearing to open views to the North Riverfront Park.

A softer, more natural landscape character should dominate the site, with little manicured treatment beyond those areas to be cleared. Natural landscape restoration and riverbank stabilization should be applied throughout the park.

The Mississippi River sign that is currently located at the existing Pokegama Bridge overlook is transparent and set back from the road, making it inconspicuous to the casual observer. The gateway sign should be relocated closer to the intersection of Pokegama Avenue and SE 1st Street to make it a more pronounced and effective interpretive element.

There are several opportunities for enhancement of the canoe launch area. City staff has indicated the existing pumping station building will be replaced with a submersible pumping station in the near future. The existing pump house can be replaced with a less visible control box, perhaps combined with a riverfront picnic pavilion/interpretive trailhead. The pedestrian bridge approach, pedestrian trail, a more clearly defined access drive, reconfigured parking area, and improved canoe launch will improve the functionality and attractiveness of this recreational space.

Three homes and a small office separate the canoe launch from the South Riverfront Park. This plan recommends that the River Road sidewalk in front of these parcels be improved and connected to the South Riverfront Park trail network and the SE 3rd Avenue crossing to connect these disconnected areas. The City need not actively seek to remove these uses, but in the long-term, when these parcels become available, the City should seek to purchase them and expand South Riverfront Park east to the canoe landing.



Transparent gateway signage is difficult to read



An opened SE 2nd Avenue vista would visually connect to the library



The view from the Pokegama Bridge will highlight the Library and the waterfront plaza activities. In the background will be the more nature-based fishing pier and pedestrian/bike river crossing.

3.4 CONNECTION ACROSS THE RIVER

In the central portion of Grand Rapids, there is no perceived safe path for pedestrians or bicyclists to cross the river. South side walkers and bikers must traverse the Pokegama Bridge or the Horn Bridge to access Downtown, the Library, the proposed amphitheater, and North Riverfront Park. Similarly, Downtown residents and North Riverfront Park users cannot safely access the canoe landing and the YMCA by foot or bike.

This physical disconnect limits the functionality of central Grand Rapids's riverfront activities. For example, in many communities, YMCA programs and libraries share educational and recreational opportunities. South side residents cannot easily walk to riverfront concerts. The City's north side and south side extensive bike trail system can only be safely connected via the Bill Powers Memorial Trail Bridge.

Short-Term Challenges for the River Crossing:

- Difficulty in crossing the river by foot and bike.
- Connecting Library with YMCA, south neighborhoods and new senior housing.

Long-Term Opportunities for the River Crossing:

- Need to replace/bury overhead power lines by canoe landing area, providing additional opportunity for shared pedestrian bridge/utility crossing.

A pedestrian link across the river between North Riverfront Park and South Riverfront Park is proposed adjacent to the KAXE parking lot and canoe launch. This pedestrian/bicycle bridge could be of similar scale and character to the existing Bill Powers Memorial Trail Bridge that connects Veterans Memorial Park and Oakland Park for pedestrians, bicyclists, and snowmobilers.

The proposed bridge is strategically located between the existing Pokegama Avenue and Horn Bridges, serving as a visual anchor that signifies the beginning of the City's more heavily programmed waterfront.

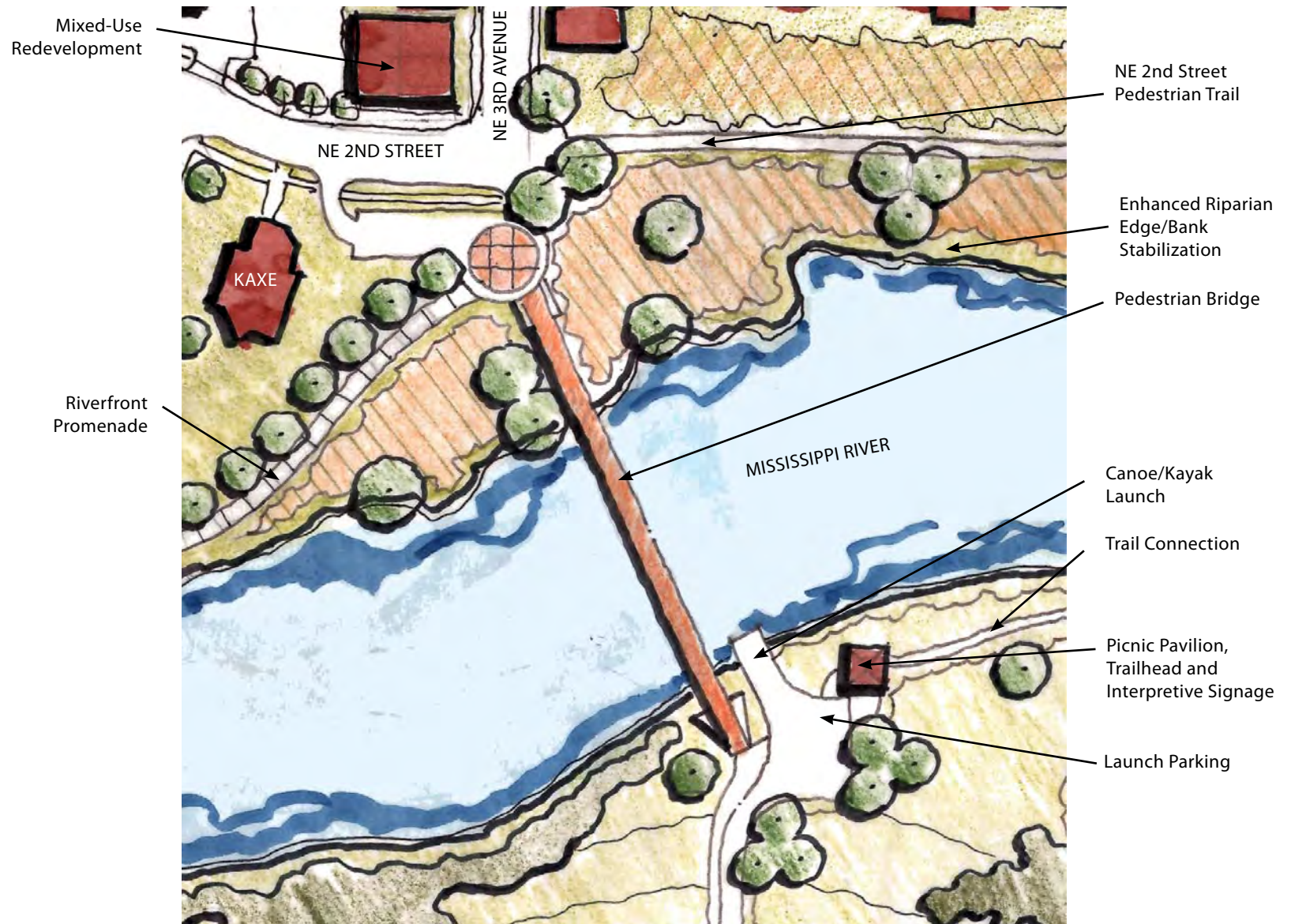
The bridge will provide a safe and convenient route for pedestrians and bicyclists needing to cross the river for more direct access to trails on either side of the river and between public amenities such as the north side library and the south side



Bill Powers Memorial Trail Bridge connects two parks



The bollards can be removed to allow for emergency vehicle access



Additional connection across the river

YMCA. Because the proposed bridge location is within close proximity to many existing public amenities, it will serve as the primary pedestrian link across the river and therefore functions as one of two catalytic projects within the Riverfront Redevelopment Framework Plan.

On the north side, adjacent to the KAXE parking lot, the bridge terminates at a small public plaza that signifies one end of the public promenade along the waterfront. On the south side adjacent to the canoe launch, the bridge terminates within view of the proposed pavilion and trailhead, emphasizing the importance of an integrated trail system that provides access to all public amenities within the City. With an overlook and interpretive signage as the bridge passes over north bank wetlands, the bridge will also provide a unique opportunity to view wildlife within their native riparian habitat.

The bridge must be designed to accommodate minimum clearance of 3 feet above the 50 year flood stage for navigational purposes (Minnesota Statutes 6115.0231), resulting in an approximate finished deck elevation of 1,260 feet. The bridge must also span the Mississippi floodway, which was determined to be between 250 and 300 feet.

A design that could meet these requirements would include one 250-foot long prefabricated truss bridge (such as a Continental Bridge or similar style) spanning the river channel, linked to a 80-foot span near the north shoreline by a concrete pier. The 80-foot span would cross the existing wetland, terminating at the proposed public plaza. Bridge construction should be closely coordinated with regulatory agencies to address environmental and navigational issues.

The City desires to eliminate overhead power lines over the river and is considering a plan to bury the lines under the river. However, the lines could be hung from the pedestrian/bicycle bridge, a less expensive alternative to burying the lines. The bridge could be considered both utility and transportation projects, allowing for the combination of two funding sources.



Crossing the Pokegama Bridge is uncomfortable as a pedestrian



The proposed bridge would span a riparian wetland, providing an educational opportunity



Bollards could provide separation between the sidewalk and vehicles

In addition to proposed pedestrian/bicycle bridge, the other river crossings should be improved to increase the comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists. When the Pokegama Bridge and Horn Bridge are reconstructed/improved during their regular bridge reconstruction schedule, the sidewalks should be widened to provide a wide multi-use trail with a width of at least 10 feet on the east side of the Pokegama Bridge and west side of the Horn Bridge. The design should include an appropriate separation of the trail from vehicular traffic. In addition, the Pokegama Bridge should include mid-river an expanded width for overlook areas on both sides of the bridge. These viewing platforms should include interpretive signage telling the story of the Blandin Dam (potentially energy generation, paper mill, and the 1948 dam failure).

The design, funding, and construction of the pedestrian/bicycle bridge crossing likely will take years and the Pokegama and Horn Bridge reconstruction is unscheduled. In the interim, the existing Pokegama Bridge should be improved to increase the comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists on the bridge's narrow sidewalks. The installation of bollards similar to those on the newly reconstructed Highway 2 would provide separation and comfort for those walking and biking on the bridge. The existing sidewalk is narrow and the installation of bollards would further narrow it. Minimum ADA accessibility guidelines would be accommodated; the bollards would be located 30 inches from the curb, providing a sidewalk of just over 3 feet wide. (The existing Horn Bridge sidewalk is narrower than the Pokegama Bridge sidewalk, and meeting minimum ADA guidelines will be very difficult.)

The Pokegama Bridge bollards would be removed in the winter for snow removal and maintenance. Pokegama Avenue is a state route, and Minnesota DOT would require a permit to work within the bridge right of way and a bollard maintenance agreement.

3.5 CANAL STREET NEIGHBORHOOD

The Canal Street Neighborhood is located north of the river, south of the rail line, east of NE 3rd Avenue, and west of NE 7th Avenue. This riverfront neighborhood is isolated from the rest of the City. Because Canal Street dead-ends before reaching NE 7th Avenue, there is no through traffic within the entire neighborhood. The anticipated road closure at NE 5th Avenue and Itasca Street will amplify the neighborhood's isolated condition.

Short-Term Challenges for the Canal Street Neighborhood

- NE 5th Avenue rail crossing closure.
- Need for emergency vehicle access.
- Perceived and real crime threats.

Long-Term Opportunities for the Canal Street Neighborhood:

- Redevelopment of the multi-family residential structures.
- Redevelopment of the recycling center.
- Creation of riverview vistas.

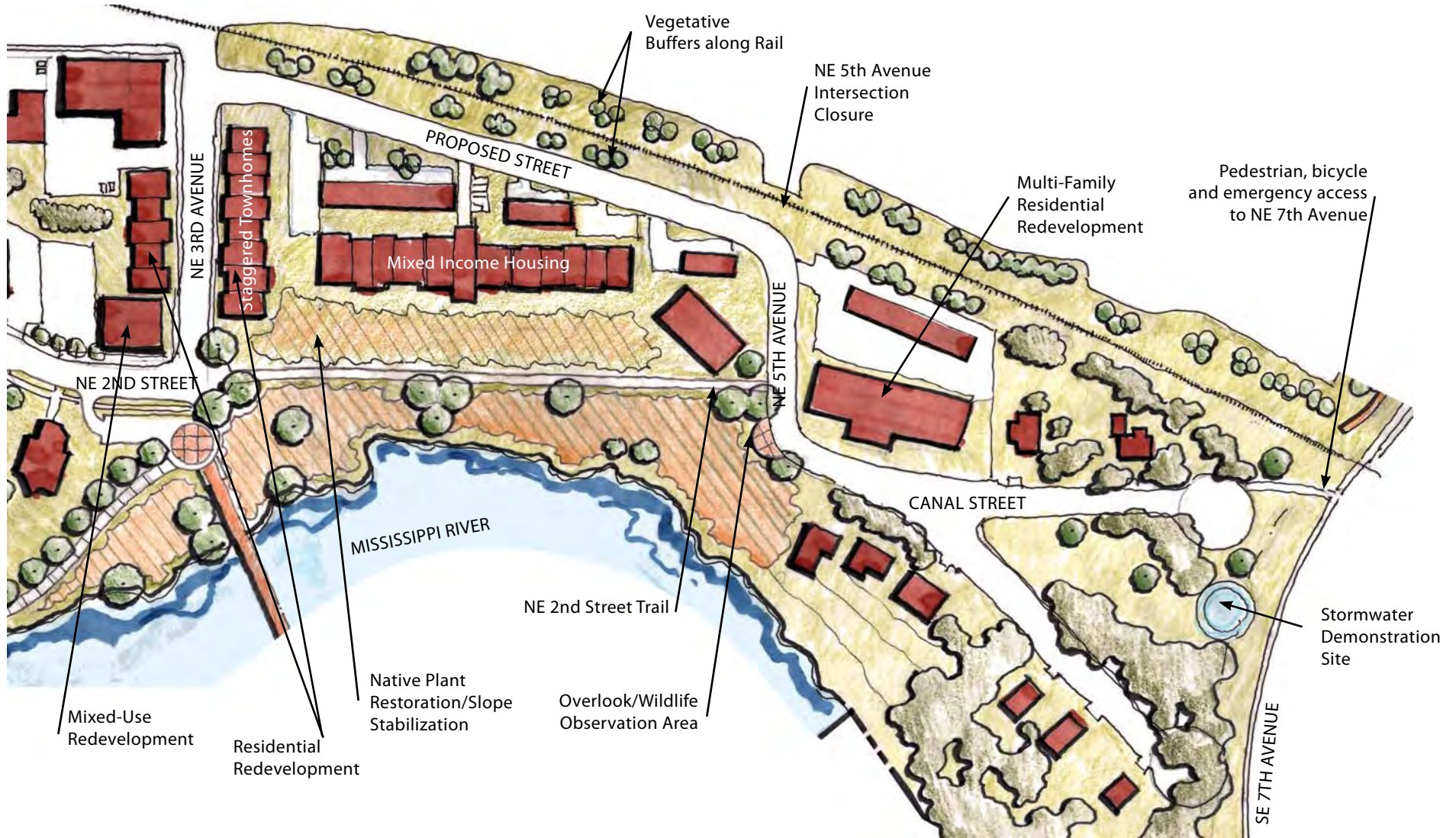
The closure of the rail crossing at NE 5th Street will further isolate the Canal Street neighborhood. To maintain a street connection, the City has purchased the former recycling center site on NE 3rd Street, will clear the site and will extend Canal Street west to NE 3rd Street. This will ensure continued street connection, but also extend the length of the Canal Street cul-de-sac. A vegetative buffer on both sides of the rail line will provide an implied barrier for safety and an aesthetic alternative to the commercial/industrial uses to the north.

The closure of the NE 5th Street rail crossing and the addition of access restrictions at other rail crossings will enable the creation of a quiet zone, reducing the need for train horns at every crossing and increasing the livability of residential areas near the rail line. The Riverfront Framework Plan recommends the continued pursuit of the rail quiet zone.

This plan recommends the construction of multi-family housing on the remaining portion the recycling center parcel, overlooking the Mississippi River. This and adjacent housing redevelopment should be mixed-income, providing replacement



Existing pedestrian connection between Canal Street and NE 7th Avenue



Canal Street Neighborhood

affordable housing and providing new market-rate riverfront housing. While many in Grand Rapids such as Canal Street residents live in neighborhoods adjacent to the active rail line, HUD restrictions limit financial support for new residential projects very near active rail lines. The housing units will comply with HUD distance requirements (more than 100 feet between the rail and the building edge), and some noise attenuation (e.g. natural and artificial berms, triple pane windows, additional insulation, etc.) may be recommended.

City utility maps indicate a fairly large diameter storm sewer currently crossing the recycling center property. No structure should be constructed on top of this sewer. Therefore, some public investment may be required to either reroute this storm sewer, create a stormwater feature, or provide a similar alternative to improve the viability of this site for redevelopment.

Additional market-rate housing could be stacked along the west side of NE 3rd Avenue south of NE 3rd Street. This residential area would have views to the river and direct access to the North Riverfront Park and its amenities.

A mixed-use building is proposed at the northwest corner at NE 2nd Street and NE 3rd Avenue, functioning as the commercial anchor for the east side of the North Riverfront Park, while tying into the mixed-use development proposed along the north side of NE 2nd Street. Potential ground floor retail uses that would capitalize on its adjacency to North Riverfront Park are a small restaurant, ice cream shop, or similar riverfront destination.

Currently, NE 2nd Street east of NE 3rd Avenue is a gravel road with a steep incline that provides secondary access between NE 3rd Avenue and Canal Street. This unpaved section of 2nd Street is recommended to be closed to vehicular traffic, serving exclusively as a pedestrian/bicycle link between the waterfront promenade and the City trails north and east of the Canal Street neighborhood.

An overlook is proposed where the NE 2nd Street trail intersects Canal Street, providing panoramic views of the Mississippi River, the pedestrian/bicycle bridge,



NE 2nd Street gravel road connection to Canal Street



Due to the visibility from NE 7th Avenue, the city parcel could become a demonstration stormwater amenity.

and both North and South Riverfront Parks. Native landscape restoration along steep slopes will minimize the impacts of new development, while natural bank stabilization applications along the river's edge will prevent loss of native riparian habitat.

Canal Street should remain a cul-de-sac, with no vehicular access to NE 7th Avenue. A secondary access should be installed for safety purposes. This can be accomplished by improving the existing trail connection between Canal Street and NE 7th Avenue and restricting vehicular access with break-away bollards or other forms of restriction.

The triangular City park space along NE 7th Avenue is an excellent location for a necessary stormwater feature. Given its prominent location at the foot of the Horn Bridge, the stormwater feature could be a demonstration site and/or a well-designed amenity.

Canal Street Mississippi River Overlook, showing one concept of the pedestrian bridge



3.6 HIGHWAY 2/ITASCA STREET BUSINESS CORRIDOR

The Highway 2/Itasca Street Business Corridor is located north of the rail line, south of Highway 169, east of NE 3rd Avenue and west of Highway 2. The primarily retail area is highway-oriented, but forms the eastern edge of Downtown. The closure of the NE 5th Street rail crossing will reduce some rear accessibility.

Short-Term Challenges for the Highway 2/Itasca Street Area:

- Area in transition – some downtown-style buildings, some suburban style.
- Lack of adequate parking for downtown-style buildings.
- Public alleys are not being utilized effectively.
- The manufactured home park is a residential use in a commercial location and in poor condition.

Long-Term Opportunities for the Highway 2/Itasca Street Area:

- Incremental long-term redevelopment.
- A eastern community gateway at Highway 2 and Itasca Street.

The existing collection of commercial structures in the area serves as a solid foundation for an improved business corridor.

This framework plan does not recommend specific redevelopment of parcels within this area. The exception is the recommended redevelopment of the manufactured housing park located between NE 4th and NE 5th Streets. Many structures in this park are in poor structural condition with an inappropriately high density. With the likely closure of the NE 5th Street rail crossing, the manufactured housing park will be an isolated residential use within a busy commercial district. This plan recommends redevelopment to a more appropriate commercial use that fronts Itasca Street. The need for affordable housing in central Grand Rapids remains, so affordable housing opportunities should be included in redevelopment projects in the Canal Street and North Riverfront Park areas.

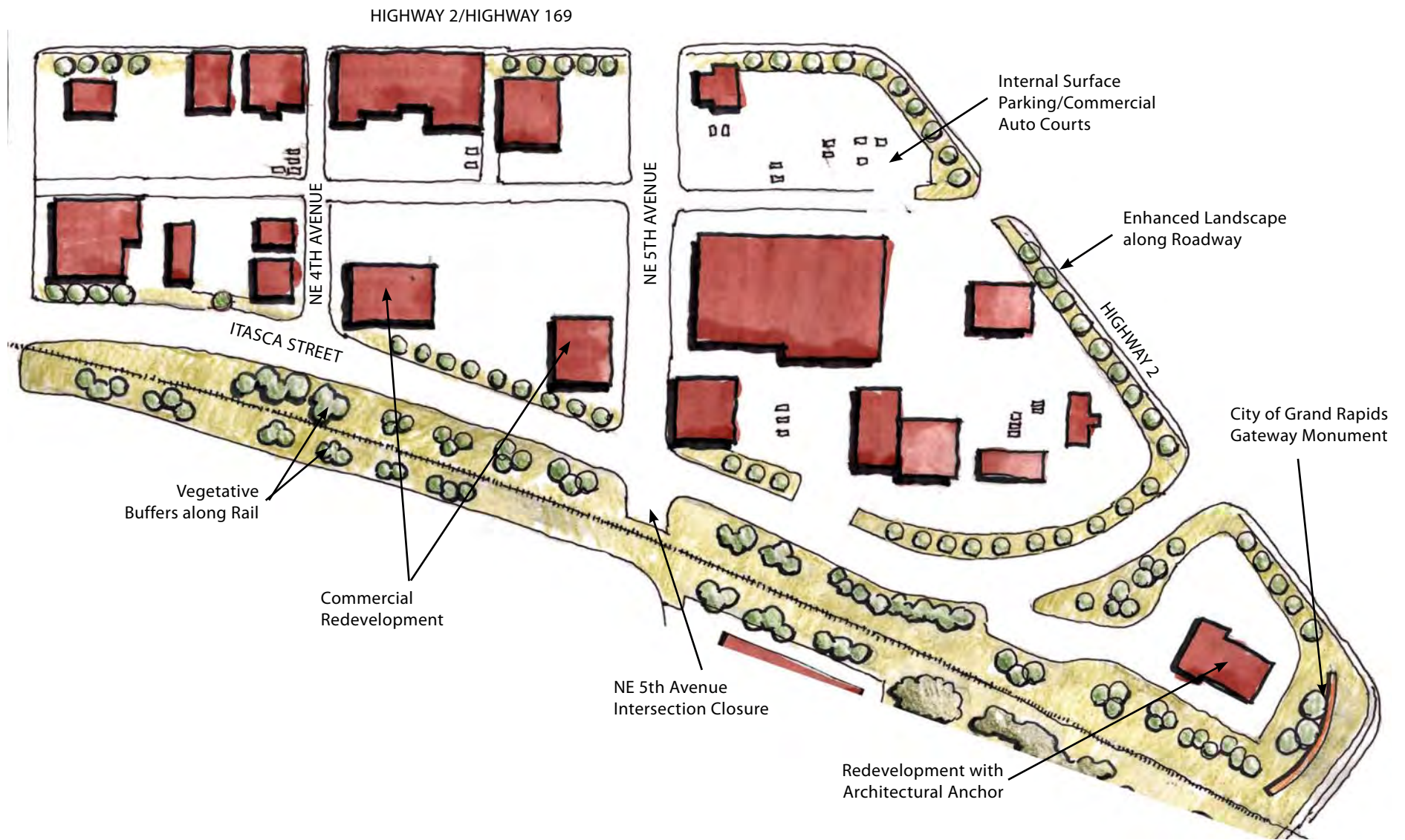
While the uses are appropriate for the district, the design of parking lots, alleys, and landscaping areas detract from the functionality of the areas. A lack of clear delineation between existing roads and parking lots within this area results in inefficient parking patterns, particularly where parking is a premium. Additionally,



Poor street/parking definition on Itasca Street



The manufactured home neighborhood is the only residential in this highway-oriented commercial area



Highway 2/Itasca Street Business Corridor

insufficient streetscaping and vegetation at the street detracts from the appearance and attraction of the retail businesses. The poor image negatively impacts the sales and profits of the retail businesses.

As parcels redevelop, the City should require the implementation of current parking and landscaping standards. The delineation of parking areas and streets/alleys should be reinforced with edge curb and landscaping requirements. Particularly in areas of insufficient parking spaces, adjacent and complementary businesses should be encouraged to share parking spaces.

In addition, many of the buildings within this area are visual eyesores in need of redevelopment. The City should require the implementation of current building code and zoning appearance requirements, and GREDA should promote and encourage participation in the Commercial Building Improvement Loan Program.

Many private driveways opening onto Highway 2 reduces the safety of those using Highway 2, but also confuses way-finding and blurs the line between parking and street. As parcels redevelop, the City and MNDOT should encourage the removal of driveways on Highway 2, instead enabling and encouraging the use of NE 4th and NE 5th Avenues to access parking lots located behind redeveloped buildings that front Highway 2. The recent redevelopment of the Subway restaurant on the north side of Highway 2 should serve as a model of locating structures near the street while still providing adequate, convenient, and visible parking.

The corner of Itasca Street and Highway 2 is the gateway into the commercial core of Grand Rapids for those entering the city on Highway 2 from La Prairie and Duluth, and the City should pursue short and long-term efforts to improve this gateway.

In the short-term, the City should construct an entry gateway monument at the west side of the Highway 2/NE 7th Avenue intersection. Landscape improvements within the Highway 2 streetscape will improve this gateway, strengthen the appearance of the Highway 2 corridor, and contribute to the City's overall beautification.



Structure on the street with side parking



Proposed entry gateway location

In the longer term, when the parcel at the west side of the Highway 2/NE 7th Avenue intersection redevelops, the City should encourage and support the construction of an architecturally significant building with parking located behind the building. General redevelopment of all buildings that front Highway 2 with parking located to the side or the rear will incrementally improve the gateway and the City's overall image.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION



4.1 IMPLEMENTATION INTRODUCTION

After the completion of the 2000 Riverfront Framework Plan, the City of Grand Rapids achieved significant implementation success. This updated Framework Plan seeks to strengthen and extend this success.

This chapter outlines actions and strategies for implementing the Framework Plan recommendations. It describes the appropriate roles of the public and private sectors, estimates the public costs for priority projects, lists potential funding sources for those costs, and recommends a logical phasing plan.

4.2 IMPLEMENTATION ROLES

Implementation of the Riverfront Framework Plan will require coordination and cooperation between the City, nonprofit, and private sectors.

City of Grand Rapids Role

The City of Grand Rapids role in implementing recommendations of the Riverfront Framework Plan includes:

- Constructing improvements within publicly-owned land along the river and in public street rights-of-way.
- Regulating the type and quality of development through zoning and other development regulations.
- Coordinating activities of City, State, and Federal agencies.
- Applying to State and Federal agencies for grants and loans to implement projects.
- Providing financial assistance on key redevelopment sites to stimulate private sector investment.

In general, the level of public assistance given to redevelopment is characterized as “gap financing” which is defined as the minimum level of financial assistance to make a project feasible in the market place. The primary tool used by municipalities to finance redevelopment is Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Potential TIF projects need to yield sufficient tax revenues to the City to finance the public assistance and retire any borrowing done to support the project.

Nonprofit Sector Involvement

Nonprofit sector involvement includes participation of private donors, which could include individuals, corporate donors, or foundations, such as the Blandin Foundation.

Grand Rapids is fortunate in being the home of the Blandin Foundation, which is the leading nonprofit organization providing assistance to communities in the region. The Blandin Foundation has been instrumental in the implementation success of the 2000 Riverfront Framework Plan. The Foundation’s focus is now shifting to core health and educational concerns. The City and the Grand Rapids Economic



Blandin Foundation building at the Pokegama Bridge

Development Authority should seek to establish and deepen relationships with other nonprofit service providers and foundations to seek assistance for both physical improvements along the riverfront and involvement in redeveloping key sites within the City.

The Grand Rapids area also has a successful record of raising funds from both individual and corporate donors through general fund-raising programs for specific projects. The success of the Rotary Tent is such an example. Several of the specific improvements identified in the Riverfront Framework Plan could be funded by service clubs or fund-raising programs.

Private Sector Involvement

The key to full implementation of the plan with respect to redevelopment of privately owned land is new investment by the private sector.

In recent years, the majority of private investment in the Grand Rapids area has tended to occur outside the Downtown area. The growth of commercial development along South Pokegama Avenue and other highways entering the City siphoned development dollars away from the central business district.

Recent streetscape investments and redevelopment projects have renewed interest in Downtown. The Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan set a vision for continued investment and improvement. The renewed interest and redevelopment in the riverfront and Downtown should build on each other.

One of the major purposes of City investment in downtown infrastructure and beautification is to stimulate private sector investment in both new commercial and residential development. Continued beautification of the

riverfront is expected to yield increased private investment in sites near the river, particularly investments in new housing.

Similarly, the City's development assistance programs, such as tax increment financing, should increase private sector investment on key redevelopment sites. The City should continue to ensure that use of development assistance requires private capital investment that results in an expanded tax base to support the assistance.

4.3 PROJECT PHASING

For implementation of the Framework Plan, recommendations have been prioritized into action items for the short-term, intermediate term, and incremental. Each phase lists public implementation tasks.

While these projects have been categorized as short-term, intermediate term, and incremental, in reality all projects are continuous tasks. The City, GREDA, and the Mississippi Riverfront Committee should continuously look for opportunities for funding and establishing partnerships. Tasks listed as intermediate term, for example, will require years of organization and preparation.

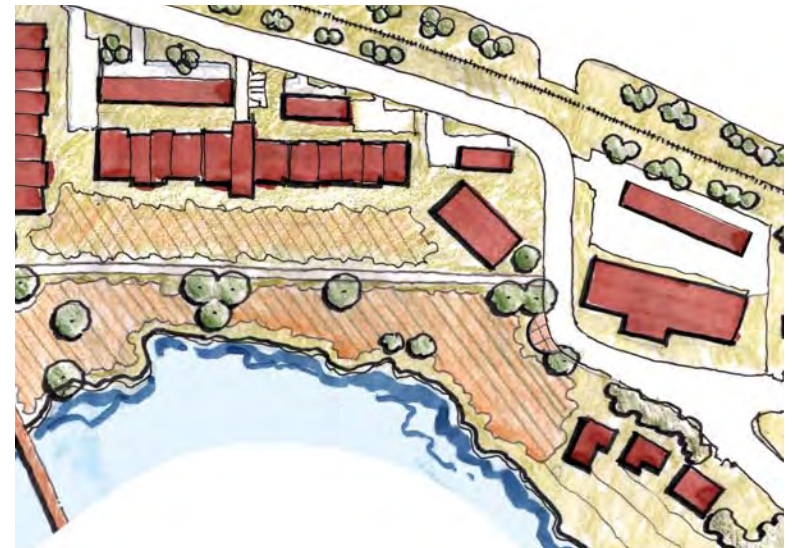
Short-Term Improvement Projects

The primary objectives of the first phase of the implementation are to respond to imminent changes to the street network in the Canal Street neighborhood, and to build on the momentum of the North Riverfront Park success.

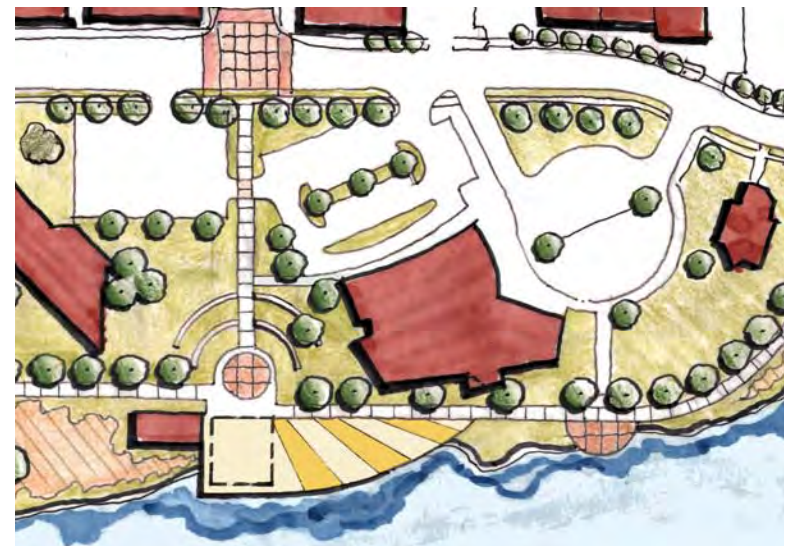
Canal Street Neighborhood

The City seeks to close the NE 5th Street rail crossing and reconstruct the NE 3rd Avenue/Itasca Street intersection in the near future. Necessary street connections for conventional and emergency access will enable the implementation of many Canal Street recommendations.

- Extend canal street to connect NE 3rd Avenue with NE 5th Avenue.
- Install a landscaped buffer along existing railroad tracks.
- Prepare the balance of the recycling center site for multi-family housing - including relocating the storm sewer.
- Promote mixed-use development at the corner of NE 2nd Street/NE 3rd Avenue and along NE 3rd Avenue.
- Convert NE 2nd Street between NE 3rd Avenue and NE 5th Avenue to bike/pedestrian corridor.
- Plan and install an overlook at NE 2nd Street/Canal Street.
- Create a pedestrian path between Canal Street and NE 7th Avenue.
- Plan and install a stormwater pond along NE 7th Avenue.



Canal Street neighborhood recommendations



North Riverside Park recommendations

North Riverside Park

The momentum of the success of KAXE, the Rotary Tent, and the fishing pier should continue through targeted improvements in the North Riverside Park area.

- Expand and improve the promenade along the south side of the library.
- Construct a waterfront plaza southwest of the library.
- Construct a riverfront amphitheater within the waterfront plaza.
- Relocate the fishing pier to southeast of the library.
- Improve the Pokegama/NE 2nd Street and NE 1st Avenue/NE 2nd Street intersections with speciality paving and landscaping.
- Install a riverfront sculpture park near KAXE.
- Install a naturalized riparian river edge between the waterfront plaza and the fishing pier.

Intermediate Term Projects

The intermediate term projects should follow after the initial success of the Canal Street Neighborhood and North Riverside Park improvements, or as opportunities arise.

Additional River Crossing

The additional river crossing is a high-profile catalytic project.

- Construct the north approach/plaza east of KAXE at the terminus of NE 3rd Avenue.
- Install bridge abutments/piers/foundations.
- Install prefabricated bridge sections.
- Install bridge lighting.
- Construct the south approach in the canoe launch area.
- Permits/wetland mitigation.
- Incorporate overhead electrical supply.

Canoe Launch Improvements

The canoe launch and pavilion improvements can be combined with the construction of the Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge.

South Riverfront Park

The additional river crossing will provide new and prominent access to the South Riverside Park, prompting the necessary improvements there.

- Extend the existing South Riverfront Park trail, connect to SE 1st Avenue and SE 2nd Avenue intersections.
- Improve the Pokegama Bridge overlook.
- Improve the SE 1st Avenue overlook.
- Improve the SE 2nd Avenue overlook.
- Selective vegetation removal for enhanced vistas.

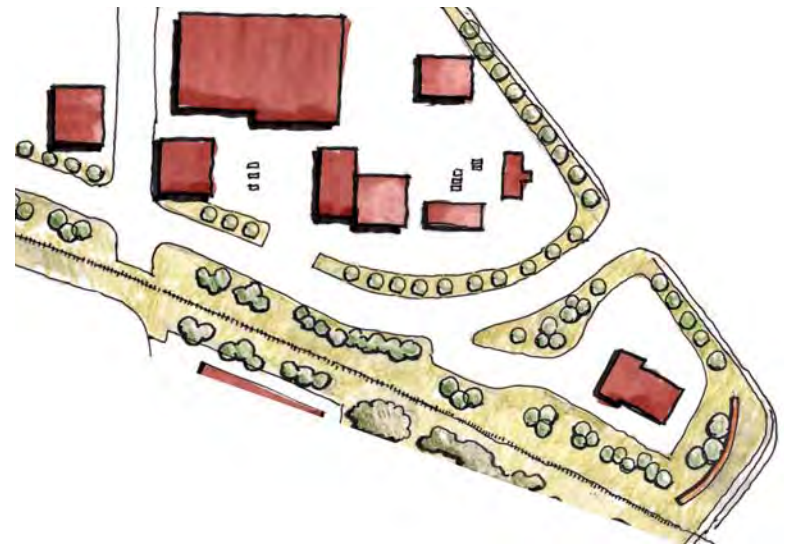
Incremental Projects

The redevelopment of the Highway 2/Itasca Street Business Corridor will occur incrementally and full redevelopment will be long-term.

- Encourage the redevelopment of the manufactured housing lot into a more appropriate use.
- Encourage participation in GREDA's Commercial Building Improvement Loan Program.
- Implement current city parking and landscape standards as redevelopment occurs.
- Consolidate and reduce private driveways on Highway 2 (in conjunction with Minnesota DOT).
- Install landscape improvements along Highway 2 - as street improvements are done and parcels redevelop.
- Install an entry monument at Highway 2 and Itasca Street (signage and landscaping).



South Riverfront recommendations



Itasca Street Business Corridor recommendations

Implementation of Short-Term Framework Plan Recommendations

The following table establishes a time line for immediate implementation of short-term action items to be pursued by the City of Grand Rapids and GREDA. These priorities will need to be incorporated into the City and GREDA priorities as funding becomes available, based on the discretion of the City Council.

Action Item	Groups Involved
Canal Street Neighborhood Redevelopment	
1. Implement Canal St. Extension Project	City of Grand Rapids
2. Landscaped Buffer along Existing Railroad Tracks	City of Grand Rapids
3. Prepare Recycling Center Site for Multi-Family Housing	City of Grand Rapids, GREDA
4. Mixed-Use Development - NE 2nd/NE 3rd	Private Development, GREDA, City
5. Convert NE 2nd to Bike/Ped Corridor	City of Grand Rapids
6. NE 2nd/Canal St. Overlook	City of Grand Rapids
7. Canal St. to NE 7th Pedestrian Path	City of Grand Rapids
8. Stormwater Pond	City of Grand Rapids
North Riverside Park	
1. Promenade	City of Grand Rapids, Library
2. Waterfront Plaza	City of Grand Rapids
3. Riverfront Amphitheater	City of Grand Rapids
4. Fishing Pier Relocation	City of Grand Rapids, DNR
5. Intersection Improvements	City of Grand Rapids
6. Riverfront Sculpture Park	City of Grand Rapids, KAXE
7. Naturalized Riparian River Edge	City of Grand Rapids, DNR

4.4 PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COST BUDGETS

To assist in developing facility improvement projects for the riverfront, JJR has estimated the construction costs for individual elements recommended by the Framework Plan. As individual projects are scheduled, these figures will provide a general idea of what costs may be anticipated during the initial planning stages.

This opinion of probable construction costs is limited to structural or built improvements only, and is based on a conceptual level of design detail. The preliminary estimates of cost provided in this master plan for each project are based on very general plans and the use of “unit cost estimates”. Detailed design studies will be needed to accurately determine more specific estimates of cost. The accuracy of the estimate will be improved during the schematic design of each plan element. All costs are given in 2009 dollars, and can be anticipated to increase at approximately 3% to 5% annually. All costs include a 25% contingency, common at conceptual level cost budgets.

Costs include installation, assuming all design and construction would be performed by hired contractors. Using volunteer labor or other partnering opportunities identified in this document would substantially reduce project costs, and may be considered by funding agencies as in-kind match for grant money.

The last column, Potential Funding Sources, refers to the charts beginning on page 65.

Short-Term Improvement Projects

Canal Street Neighborhood Redevelopment

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Opinion of Probable City Capital Cost</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>Potential Funding Sources (see pg 65)</i>
Implement Canal Street Extension Project	\$1.5 million	Already programmed	10
Landscaped Buffer along Existing Railroad Tracks	\$47,500	Already programmed	10
Close NE 5th Avenue Rail Crossing		Already programmed	Burlington Northern 10
Prepare Recycling Center Site for Multi-Family Housing	\$100,000	Cost indicated is for relocation of public infrastructure	10, 12
Promote Mixed-Use Development - NE 2nd/ NE 3rd		Private Investment	
Convert NE 2nd to Bike/Ped Corridor	\$45,000	Includes ornamental trees, lighting (pole-mounted, pedestrian), bollards (at each end), paved	1, 2, 10, 15
NE 2nd/Canal St. Overlook	\$48,500	Includes clear/grub, site grading, benches, waste receptacles, deck structure (with railing)	9, 12, 15
Canal St. to NE 7th Pedestrian Path	\$91,500	8' wide, asphalt	2, 3
Stormwater Pond	\$225,500	Includes clearing/grubbing, earthwork/grading, water main relocation, control structure, planting/landscaping, topsoil/seed/restoration, bollards	10, 12, 14, 16, 17

North Riverside Park

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Opinion of Probable City Capital Cost</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>Potential Funding Sources (see pg 65)</i>
Promenade	\$429,000	Includes site grading (approx. 1.5' of fill)' library parking lot reconstruction, concrete pavement (promenade along river), specialty paving (entry from Pokegama), shade and ornamental trees, benches, waste receptacles, lighting (pole-mounted, 80' o.c.), topsoil/seeding/restoration (5' on each side), bollards (80' o.c.)	1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11
Waterfront Plaza	\$455,000	Includes site grading, specialty paving, 3-season pavilion/ stage, structural support (pile vs. bin wall), decorative railing, benches, lighting (bollard), waste receptacle	1, 9, 15
Riverfront Amphitheater	\$185,500	Includes remove existing pavement (parking lot), site grading (approx. 2' of fill), formlined concrete seatwalls w/isolation joints (18" ht.), concrete pavement (12' wide walk connecting to 2nd Street), specialty paving, lighting (beveled/inset), lighting (bollard, 40' o.c.), topsoil/seeding/restoration	1, 9, 15, 19, 20
Fishing Pier Relocation	\$17,500	Includes dismantle/salvage superstructure, foundation/ pilings at new location, turf/bank restoration	5, 13
Intersection Improvements at NE 2nd St./NE 1st Ave. and NE 2nd St./Pokegama Ave.	\$357,500	Includes existing pavement removal, specialty paving (throughout entire intersections), shade and ornamental trees, topsoil/seed restoration	10
Riverfront Sculpture Park	\$12,900	Includes remove existing asphalt stage, rain garden, topsoil/ seed/turf restoration	20
Naturalized Riparian River Edge	\$85,500		8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16

Intermediate Term Improvement Projects

Connection Across Mississippi River

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Opinion of Probable City Capital Cost</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>Potential Funding Sources (see pg 65)</i>
North Approach/Plaza	\$66,300		1, 9, 15
Abutments/Piers/Foundations	\$37,500		1, 2, 3, 6
Prefabricated Bridge Sections	\$495,000	Assumes Continental Bridge (80' Span) and Continental Bridge (250' Span)	1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 11
Lighting	\$25,000		1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 11
South Approach	\$12,500		1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 11
Permits/Wetland Mitigation	\$43,800		1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 11

Canoe Launch Area Improvements

Canoe Launch Area Improvements	\$163,000	Includes site grading, 8' asphalt trail (1st St. to connector) & subbase, 20' asphalt driveway & subbase, kayak/canoe launch, 54' x 54' asphalt parking lot & subbase, pavilion/picnic area, rain garden, shade and ornamental trees, site furnishings, lighting	1, 4, 11, 13, 15, 20
--------------------------------	-----------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------

South Riverfront Park

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Opinion of Probable City Capital Cost</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>Potential Funding Sources (see pg 65)</i>
Park Trail Extension/1st Street Sidewalk Extension	\$93,600	Includes site grading (approx. 1.5' of fill), asphalt trail/subbase (8' wide), 8' concrete sidewalk (along SE 1st St.), topsoil/seed/turf restoration	1, 2, 3, 11
Pokegama Bridge Overlook Improvement	\$61,400	Includes site grading (approx. 1.5' of fill), decorative rail, specialty pavement, benches, waste receptacles, entry signage (relocate and enhance),	1, 10, 16
SE 1st Avenue Overlook	\$38,700	Includes site grading (approx. 1.5' of fill), specialty pavement, concrete pavement (8' wide), benches, ornamental plantings, waste receptacles, topsoil/seed/turf restoration	1, 10, 16
SE 2nd Avenue Overlook	\$42,000	Includes site grading (approx. 1.5' of fill), specialty pavement/subbase, concrete pavement (8' wide), benches, waste receptacles, ornamental plantings, topsoil/seed/turf restoration	1, 10, 16
Selective Vegetation Removal for Enhanced Vistas			

Incremental Projects

Itasca Street Business Corridor

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Opinion of Probable City Capital Cost</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>Potential Funding Sources (see pg 65)</i>
Improve NE 3rd Street/Itasca Street/NE 3rd Avenue rail crossing and intersection		Already programmed	Burlington Northern 10
Redevelop Manufactured Housing Lot to Appropriate Use		Private Investment	12
Implement Current Parking and Landscape Standards		Ordinance Enforcement as redevelopment occurs.	
Market City Façade Improvement Grants		City funds can serve as matching funds for IRR Community Business Partnership Grant Program	12
Reduce Private Driveways to Highway 2		Enforce MNDOT Standards as redevelopment occurs.	
Landscape Improvements along Highway 2	\$70,000		10
Entry Monument (signage and landscape)	\$94,000		10, 19

4.5 FUNDING STRATEGIES

The tables on the following pages list funding sources that may potentially benefit riverfront projects, including everything from land acquisition and trail construction to habitat restoration and invasive species control. Funding sources can generally be classified into these categories:

- State of Minnesota agency grants or loans
- Federal agency grants or loans
- Local government
- Private corporation or non-profit organization grants or loans

Criteria for applicable projects, the grant matching requirement, and the application cycle are identified for each funding source. As competition for funding is high, communication with the sponsoring agency or organization prior to grant submission is essential to ensure a successful application. The City, GREDA, and the Riverfront Committee should build working relationships with local, state, and federal funding agencies prior to application submission.

This funding source list is only the beginning. As old funding sources run their course, new ones are created, and the City, GREDA, and the Riverfront Committee should continue to track potential funding sources and expand this list.

Seek out creative financial collaborations. The City and GREDA should work with and support efforts by the local school district as well as private recreational organizations to implement projects recommended in this plan. Partnerships with all service providers that are active along the riverfront. For example, the costs of the additional river crossing could be shared among federal and state grants for bicycle trail connections, wetland preservation and interpretation funding, the local electrical utility, and other potential partners.

	<i>Funding Sources</i>	<i>Funding and Grant Focus</i>	<i>Funding Available</i>	<i>Application Deadlines</i>	<i>Contact</i>
State Agency Grants and Loans					
	Minnesota DNR Grants				Traci Vibo, DNR Grant Coordinator MN Department of Natural Resources Trails and Waterways Division 500 Lafayette Road, Box 52 St. Paul, MN 55155-4052 Traci.Vibo@dnr.state.mn.us
1	• Outdoor Recreation	Increase and Enhance public outdoor recreation facilities	Currently no funding - \$10,000 Matching Grant	Spring even years	
2	• Local Trail Connections Program	Focused on completing trail connections where people live	Maximum grant \$100,000; 50/50 cash match	February	
3	• Federal Regional Trail Grant Program (cooperative with MNDOT)	Encourage maintenance and development of motorized/ non-motorized trails	Maximum grant \$150,000; 50/50 match	February	
4	• Boat Access	Develop and improve public boat access, parking, docks and ramps	Maximum grant variable	Open	
5	• Fishing Pier	Develop and install fishing piers, shore fishing sites or platforms	Maximum grant variable	Open	
6	• Regional Trail	Promote acquisition and/ or development of regionally significant trails	Maximum grant \$250,000	February	
7	• Natural and Scenic Area	Acquisition and or easement of natural and scenic areas	Maximum grant \$500,000; 50/50 match	March	
8	• Remediation Fund	Acquisition of natural areas, ecological restoration - native plant communities	Maximum grant \$500,000	March	
9	Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR)	Make funding recommendations to the MN legislature for special environmental and natural resource projects	Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Funds	Odd years - Reviews and public input Even Years - Feb/Mar proposal due Proposal on web format only	Susan Thornton Assistant director 651-296-2406 lcmr@commissions.leg.state.mn.us

	<i>Funding Sources</i>	<i>Funding and Grant Focus</i>	<i>Funding Available</i>	<i>Application Deadlines</i>	<i>Contact</i>
10	Minnesota Department of Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface Transportation Program Transportation Enhancements Set-aside • Recreational Trails Program • Municipal State Aid Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian and bicycle facilities, safety and education for pedestrians and bicyclists, and rail-trails • Nonmotorized or mixed-use trails. Eligible categories are trail maintenance and rehabilitation, trailside or trailhead facilities, construction and maintenance equipment, trail construction, trail assessments, and trail safety and environmental protection education 			
11	Lessard – Sams Conservation Partners Legacy Grants	Enhancement, restoration, or protection of forests, wetlands, prairies, and habitat for fish, game, or wildlife on lands permanently protected by conservation easement or public ownership	Maximum grant available is \$400,000 Up to 90% of total eligible costs; 10% non-state cash or in-kind match	Open	Leslie Tannahill Conservation Grant Program Manager MnDNR Box 20, 500 Lafayette Road St. Paul, MN 55155 651-259-5242 LSCPLGrants.DNR@state.mn.us

	<i>Funding Sources</i>	<i>Funding and Grant Focus</i>	<i>Funding Available</i>	<i>Application Deadlines</i>	<i>Contact</i>
12	Iron Range Resources	Economic activity within the Taconite Assistance Area		February	Iron Range Resources 4261 Hwy 53 South P.O. Box 441 Eveleth, Minnesota 55734 www.ironrangeresources.org
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Business Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building renovation projects (exterior improvements, energy improvements, rehabilitation of distressed properties, structural improvements, roof improvements, handicap accessibility, or other general improvements) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$150,000 available annually Awarded to municipalities 		Lori Spielman 218-744-7400, ext. 341 1-800-765-5043 218-744-7402 (Fax) Lori.Spielman@state.mn.us
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture and Tourism Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting arts, cultural or heritage-related activities Enhancing or expanding existing programs Planning or implementing capital improvements Attracting visitors and encouraging visitor spending Advancing sustainable tourism in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$100,000 available annually Individual grants are minimum of \$2,500 and a maximum of \$10,000 Awarded to non-profits 		Mary Somnis 218-735-3040 1-800-765-5043 ext 3040 218-735-3047 (Fax) mary.somnis@state.mn.us

	<i>Funding Sources</i>	<i>Funding and Grant Focus</i>	<i>Funding Available</i>	<i>Application Deadlines</i>	<i>Contact</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Works Infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicly owned infrastructure, including wastewater collection and treatment, drinking water, storm sewers, utility extensions, site improvement and streets, which support community business development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$350,000 available annually 		Dick Walsh 218-744-7345 1-800-765-5043 Ext. 345 218-744-7402 (Fax) Dick.Walsh@state.mn.us
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential Community Redevelopment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removing slum or blight, creating a cleaner, healthier environment or making way for new construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iron Range Resources provides the staff and equipment required for the removal of structures. 		Gordy Dormanen 801 SW Hwy 169, Suite 2 Chisholm, Minnesota 55719 218-254-7967 218-254-7973 (Fax) Gordy.Dormanen@state.mn.us
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant writing and related proposal development expenses Up to half the cost of preparing a grant application for financial support from state (other than IRR), federal or private grant programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to \$3,500 per application 	Open	Richard Walsh 218-735-3044 1-800-765-5043 Ext 3044 218-735-3046 (Fax) Dick.Walsh@state.mn.us

	<i>Funding Sources</i>	<i>Funding and Grant Focus</i>	<i>Funding Available</i>	<i>Application Deadlines</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Federal Agency Grants and Loans					
13	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act	Protection and improvement of wildlife and habitat, boater access, hunter and aquatic education	Apportionments (2009), excise taxes and import duties	Open	US Fish & Wildlife Service 1 Federal Drive, BHW Federal Building Fort Snelling, MN 55111 612-713-5130
14	US Army Corps of Engineers: Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration	Benefitting the environment through restoration and protection of aquatic habitat	\$100,000 and a cost shared portion 50/50 match		Joseph Mose Jeosph.H.Mose@usace.army.mil 651-290-5567
15	National Park Service: Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	Recreation development and conservation to strengthen the health and vitality of the American people	Federal Appropriations	Open	MN Department of Natural Resources 500 Lafayette Road, Box 52 St. Paul, MN 55155-4052
16	EPA Five Star Restoration Program	Provides grants to build partnerships that work together on riparian and wetland restoration projects	\$10,000 - \$40,000 with matching funds/in kind services	February 15	Room 6105 1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW Washington, DC 202-566-1225
Local Government					
17	City of Grand Rapids Stormwater Utility	Stormwater, rain gardens			Tom Pagel City of Grand Rapids

	<i>Funding Sources</i>	<i>Funding and Grant Focus</i>	<i>Funding Available</i>	<i>Application Deadlines</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Private Corporation Gifts					
18	Mississippi River Trail (MRT) Programs	Promote and develop the Mississippi River Bike Trail - headwaters to the gulf	Technical, planning and funding assistance	Open	Mississippi River Trail, Inc. 858 North Jackson, Fayetteville, AR 72701 479-236-0938, www.mississippirivertrail.org
19	The Blandin Foundation	Endeavors that benefit the Grand Rapids/Itasca area - education/arts focus	\$1,000 - \$250,000	March 15, September 15, December 15	Blandin Foundation 100 North Pokegama Grand Rapids, MN 55744 grants@blandinfoundation.org
20	Minnesota Power Foundation	Education, environment, community services, youth development, arts and culture	Up to \$1,000,000	Open	Minnesota Power Foundation 30 W. Superior St. Duluth, MN 55802
21	American Greenways Program, The Conservation Fund	Expenses needed to complete a greenway project, planning, technical assistance, legal and other costs	\$500-\$1000 Maximum grant \$2,500	June 30	American Greenways Program Coordinator 703-525-6300 greeways@conservationfund.org

Private Corporation Gifts

Private grants and gifts vary widely in both the types of projects that are funded as well as in the application processes and award types. The Blandin Foundation has been a leader in funding past riverfront investments, but the Foundation's funding priorities have focused on other issues.

Other local businesses and corporations may be interested in investing in their community either by direct cash donation or by the sponsorship of special events or riverfront amenities. Corporate sponsorships often carry with them the expectation of recognition or advertising posted at the site. Interpretive signage offers the opportunity for such recognition.

Local Government

Many of the projects in this framework plan will include a contribution by the City of Grand Rapids, likely through reallocation of funds in the annual capital and operating budgets. Riverfront projects that have the potential for generating revenue, such as the Riverfront Amphitheater, could be funded in part by bonds sponsored by the local government. Improvements in the Itasca Street Business Corridor could be funded by tax increment financing or other programs that capitalize on the increased land value after redevelopment.

Private Sector

Improvements in community amenities such as the Grand Rapids riverfront are the result of a combination of public and private contributions. Many of the improvements since 2000, such as the KAXE studios and the nonprofit Rotary Tent, were made possible only through the contributions of the private sector.

The City should encourage and facilitate future private sector contributions to the continued riverfront redevelopment. Private sector contributions could include:

- Park dedication requirements/fees - through the subdivision plat process, in particular for riverfront residential redevelopment projects
- Voluntary Donations - equipment, easements, land
- Contributions - cash, securities
- In-Kind Matches - labor, knowledge, time, political support
- Fundraisers - benefits, sales, etc.

The City should also consider sponsoring and supporting a volunteer nonprofit organization, such as Friends of the River, that could work with the Riverfront Committee. The nonprofit could focus on private fundraising and volunteer development to help in the coordination and implementation of projects and programs outlined in this framework plan.

4.6 PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The successful implementation of the 2000 Riverfront Framework Plan demonstrated that many diverse groups and individuals are interested in protecting, enhancing, and promoting the Grand Rapids riverfront. By fostering relationships between the City, GREDA, the Riverfront Committee, state agencies, and other agencies, groups will remain aware of each others efforts and be more effective at implementing projects. Stressing the cooperation among these groups will also increase the likelihood for riverfront projects to receive grants and other support from outside the community.

Riverfront Committee Volunteers

Volunteers are essential to successful implementation of the master plan. The volunteers of the Riverfront Task Force were the torchbearers for the 2000 Riverfront Framework Plan. Through the update process, the Task Force has evolved into an appointed City committee, gaining organizational support and the spotlight of a public body. Still volunteers, the members of the Riverfront Committee are likely to continue to lead the implementation charge of this updated plan. The energy and enthusiasm of these diligent workers needs to be recognized and sustained through future implementation activities.

Key Partners

Not one group or agency will implement this framework plan. Rather, the Riverfront Committee should seek out a characteristic group of partners for each project it pursues. The group of implementation partners to plan and construct the pedestrian/bicycle bridge will differ from that supporting vegetation removal, and differ from that creating the Canal Street overlook, etc. Yet, the Riverfront Committee, with the support of the City and GREDA, should be the unifying leader in all riverfront efforts.

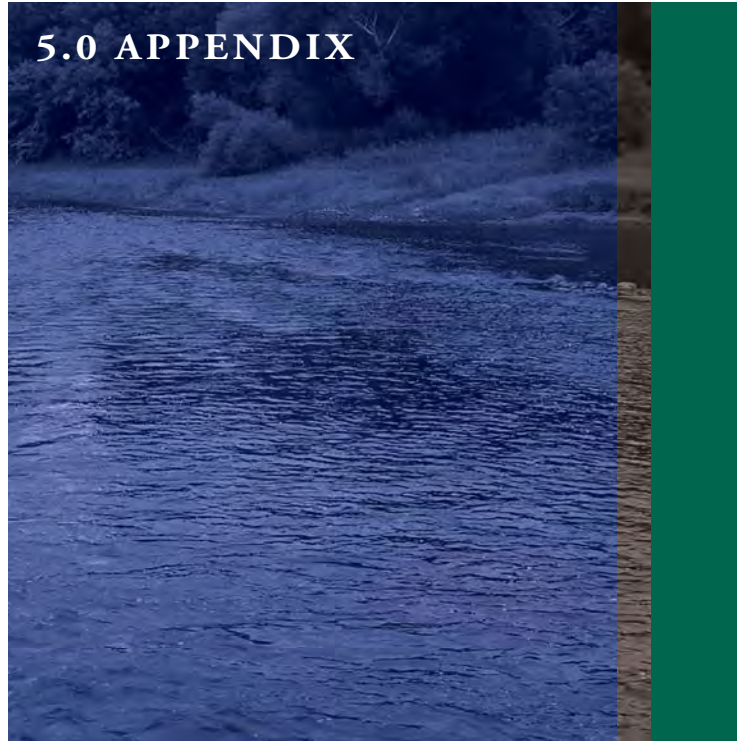
The Riverfront Committee should keep an open and creative mind when seeking out partners. At the writing of this plan, the following

organizations have indicated a strong desire to be an implementation partner, as appropriate.

- *Minnesota Power:* The utility is seeking opportunities to partner with local communities to create environmental and energy related educational opportunities and materials.
- *Department of Natural Resources:* The agency seeks to connect the state's population with its natural resources, sponsoring educational and experiential programs. DNR funding supported the fishing pier near the Library.
- *DW Jones:* The private development company has successfully completed multiple affordable housing projects on and near the south side of the river, and is a potential developer for developing affordable housing opportunities in the redevelopment of the Canal Street neighborhood and Highway 2/Itasca Street Business Corridor.
- *Central Business District Association:* The organization is focused on implementation of projects, particularly brick and mortar projects. The CBDA should be a partner in all projects that connect the river to the downtown.
- *KAXE and Library:* The community radio station and public library are committed riverfront tenants, and should be key stakeholders in efforts to activate the riverfront and construct the river walk and amphitheater.
- *Blandin Corporation:* The paper company seeks to support downtown and riverfront redevelopment. One example - its operations and its control over the operations of its suppliers will be key in street use and streetscape improvements on NE 2nd Street and NE 3rd Street.

Multiple other potential partnership opportunities exist, and the Riverfront Committee members should seek them out.

5.0 APPENDIX



5.1 MEETING SUMMARIES

- Steering Committee, September 9, 2008
- Community Meeting, September 11, 2008
- Steering Committee Meeting, June 2, 2009

Steering Committee Meeting

MEETING SUBJECT

Grand Rapids City Council Chambers

LOCATION

Grand Rapids Riverfront Master Plan

PROJECT NAME

Jon Hoffman, Jon Stumpf

PREPARED BY

PARTICIPANTS

Kris Ferraro
Todd Driscoll
Gene Baker
Rick Utech
Rick Harding
Marion Barcus
Rob Mattei
Jon Stumpf
Jon Hoffman

September 9, 2008

MEETING DATE

6:00pm

MEETING TIME

50098.000

PROJECT NUMBER

October 6, 2008

ISSUE DATE

REPRESENTING

Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority
Community Development Director, City of Grand Rapids
JJR
JJR

JJR presented the project background, the status of the 2000 Riverfront Framework Plan, and a description of the activities planned for September 9-11. The PowerPoint presentation is available. The following is the discussion and direction provided by the Steering Committee.

In a general discussion of the riverfront opportunities, the Steering Committee discussed:

- Skip Duchesneau parcel – City established an easement along the river for a for trail
- KAXE – allows GREDA to sponsor non-KAXE events
 - Rotary Tent – the use of the performance space and the tent needs to be worked out; Rotary maintaining it
- Trail system
 - Walk trail maps – effort of downtown business association
 - Walking trails – record existing trails and Sylvan Point and Forest history trails
 - Kayak trail
- Grand Plaza – mix of owner-occupied and rental housing including single-family, townhomes, and apartment-style units; not market rate
- Syndicate Area (A) – 75' setback from highwater
- Need to have a greater study area – should extend study area west to the city's newly annexed edge (bridge)
- Showboat – organization is internally reassessing its location
- Sylvan Trail System – expand to west and south; Kayak area
- Blandin Paper - plan for office location is unclear now; JJR should follow the downtown plan
- River Reservoir – needs fishing piers at end of streets, water access
- Veterans Memorial Park – crime issues, drugs
 - Could it be an RV park? RV park is needed, but access to the water is difficult
 - Pokegama Dam - good RV Park with good access
- Airport safety zone expansion – there was a Public Hearing last winter
 - Exemption for existing residential neighborhood
 - JJR should map the safety zone areas
- Blandin Foundation is proposing to expand its parking lot to the east
 - No obscured views of river from 2nd Street
- Open space area west of Library – Riverfront Task Force Member proposed (3) concepts
- Bridge – needs a river platform
- Public Art – need connections between connections to create a visitor' art walk; need a list of locations
- Downtown gateway signs – being built at NW & NE areas
- New fishing dock behind Assisted Living Facility; for residents but open to public

- Riverview School – recently closed; re-use?
- STH 169 (Pokegama) Improvements – 4th Streets realigned so that the streets line up
- Implementation partners– Central Business District Association
 - Dam - Minnesota Power; Corps of Engineers
 - Minnesota Power Source of information – Josh Skelton
- Finding Sources
 - Bridge financing - EDA

In a discussion on updating the goals and objectives from the 2000 plan, the Steering Committee's edits included the following:

- River should be described as an economic asset
- The plan should provide and improve access (both physical and visual) to the river
- Riverfront park system should encompass both the north and south sides
- The plan should promote and improve the festival area (KAXE area)
- The plan should maintain soft edges along the river
- Connect the entirety of the city by connecting to the city's trail system

In a review of the currency of the recommendations from the 2000 plan, the Steering Committee determined the areas that will require updates. (The letters refer to the 2000 poster plan.)

- Areas A and B – follow the recommendations of the Downtown plan
- C and D – Re-think area during Riverfront Design Charrette; reference the Downtown Plan
- E and F – Re-think area during Riverfront Design Charrette
- G – park as more public use, but keep the same
- G – Although the Blandin offices haven't moved, the plan should still prepare for that
- H and I – Address connection issues – to riverfront, to canoe landing, to park space
- K – Improve connections, improve and increase use
 - North side: consider an art walk; design use for open space west of the Library
 - South side: remove the proposed Centennial Park in NW corner of SW 1st and Pokegama; keep the existing riverfront homes; connections to trail and to canoe landing
- Syndicate Area – revise plan recommendations; expand the study boundary west to end of Blandin properties
- Trails – connection into Central Business District (follow the downtown plan)

Next Steering Committee Meetings

- Steering Committee Meeting – October 14, 1:00 p.m., to review Opps/Analysis memorandum
 - JJR will submit Opps/Analysis memorandum by Monday, October 6
- Charrette Week
 - Steering Committee meeting on Tuesday, November 18. Majority of Steering Committee members would prefer 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. start time.
 - Charrette work space should be in Library or at the Blandin Foundation

Our summarization of this meeting is transcribed as above. Please notify the preparer within five (5) business days of this transmission of any disagreement as the foregoing becomes part of the project record and is the basis upon which we will proceed.

Community Meeting

MEETING SUBJECT

Grand Rapids City Council Chambers

LOCATION

Grand Rapids Riverfront Master Plan

PROJECT NAME

Jon Hoffman, Jon Stumpf

PREPARED BY

September 11, 2008

MEETING DATE

6:00pm

MEETING TIME

50098.000

PROJECT NUMBER

October 6, 2008

ISSUE DATE

1 2
PAGE OF PAGES

JJR presented the project background and the status of the 2000 Riverfront Framework Plan. The PowerPoint presentation is available. The participants then broke into two tables to individually discuss the opportunities and challenges of the study area, and what they would like to see in the area. The groups then reported back to each other at the close of the meeting.

The following notes were recorded from the Group 1 discussion:

- Need to connect Grand River and Public Library
- Pokegama and 1st Street – street crossing walk time too short
- Should have a walkway under the Pokegama bridge
- There needs to be a sidewalk along the north side of SE 1st from west (portaging canoeists walk in grass)
- Homes on south side along the riverfront should stay
- Need comfortable trail on the south side
- Trailer park – substandard, eyesore, but affordable housing is needed
- Reach out to trailer park residents
- Canal Street – garbage, walkers, public urination, home intrusion
- Vandals – use the old walking trail connection to 7th Avenue
- Residents have to maintain the area
- Veterans' Park – drug dealing occurs in the afternoons
- Use lighting to open up views
- City needs money to manage and maintain trails
- Tunnel under the railroad to connect NE 2nd Street and Itasca
- Library – area to the west should be a sculpture garden, children playing on it
- River walk enhancements- use flagstone
- Divert water from the river to in front at library (sculpture, garden)
- Let community know that KAXE area is available for events
- Crossing the river – the river crossing should be grand; consider a Bridge of Flowers (bridge located in Shelburne Falls, MA; landscaped with blooming flowers)
- Is there the necessary elevations to cross the river?
- Canoe landing – circulation and parking areas should be larger, but it shouldn't allow bigger boats, needs more parking
- Use porous materials at the canoe landing
- Residential uses should be located down by the library
- KAXE parking – sufficient except during events, people park everywhere including empty lot across the street
- Building obscures the river views
- Bluff across from the library – create a landscaped water wall; tourist attraction; recreate "Grand Rapids" – water; can be a tourist attraction; very high profile
- Apartment complexes – include in interview process

The following notes were recorded from the Group 2 discussion:

- Flooding risk to improvements to high along the river and resulting fiscal impacts on the taxpayer
- Access to local business impaired if 3rd ave closure occurs
- Little concern about train traffic to their business
- Street and Streetscape Improvements create tax increase – assessments
- 5th Avenue closure – OK, better than 3rd

- Anything better than closure of the street intersections
- Concern about being able to expand operations within business core due to new codes
- Little interest in riverfront improvements due future assessments to taxpayers

Our summarization of this meeting is transcribed as above. Please notify the preparer within five (5) business days of this transmission of any disagreement as the foregoing becomes part of the project record and is the basis upon which we will proceed.

Steering Committee Meeting

MEETING SUBJECT

Grand Rapids City Hall

LOCATION

Grand Rapids Riverfront Master Plan

PROJECT NAME

Jon Hoffman

PREPARED BY

PARTICIPANTS

Kris Ferraro
Todd Driscoll
Gene Baker
Rick Utech
Rick Harding
Marion Barcus
Rob Mattei
Eric Trast
Jon Hoffman

June 2, 2009

MEETING DATE

12:00-2:00pm

MEETING TIME

50098.000

PROJECT NUMBER

June 4, 2008

ISSUE DATE

REPRESENTING

1 2
PAGE OF PAGES

Community Development Director, City of Grand Rapids
Community Development Specialist, City of Grand Rapids
JJR

Over a working lunch, JJR presented the implementation portion of the Framework and the Committee questioned and discussed edits to the draft plan. The following is the discussion and direction provided by the Steering Committee.

- Canal Street Neighborhood – Street improvements will be resurfacing in most areas since the roads were rebuilt relatively recently.
 - Canal Street improvements not yet designed, but they likely will include a narrower cross-section.
 - North leg cul-de-sac – the new turn around may remove many existing trees and open the east edge of the neighborhood to 7th Avenue traffic noise. All vegetation removal should be mitigated.
 - NW 2nd Street has a slope that is too steep for bikes; it will need regarding/paving.
- While the plan shows long-term North Riverside Park improvements, there should be temporary improvements west of Library, such as a water feature.
 - Hoffman recommended that temporary uses should be active uses so the community understands that the future character of the site will be active. Improvements should be low cost, and easily retrofitted.
 - The Library is considering creating a demonstration solar panel array. The array could be small, and could fit within the North Riverside Park design dependent on design.
- Apartments/manufactured homes in the Canal Street and Itasca Street areas are a draw for drug crimes.
- Pedestrian crossing bridge – It should have a flat design, possibly a suspension bridge, and should be attractive. A flat design would be easier for crossing by those in wheelchairs.
- Recycling Center – After the structure demolition, the parcel title will go to GREDA. GREDA will seek to sell the parcel at the market rate, but won't recoup clean-up and infrastructure costs.
- Did JJR listen to and incorporate the concerns of the business owners in Highway 2 area that were voiced at the last community meeting? Yes – the plan's recommendations emphasize an incentives-based and long-term incremental approach. Improvements will come as property owners decide to redevelopment their own parcels, with potential assistance from the City and GREDA.
- The Framework Plan will be approved by GREDA. GREDA will then refer the plan to the City for inclusion in the city's Comprehensive Plan. The previous Framework Plan was incorporated into the comp plan.
- With the last plan, John Stockham outreached to Chamber of Commerce and that was successful. A Chamber luncheon presentation after plan is complete is a good idea. The presentation should be on the overall plan strategies, not the details.
- The plan should get additional review by Canal Street neighbors and the general public.
- Most of the river should maintain a natural edge, and the draft plan does that.
- Implementation should focus on private redevelopment in the short term because it provides a needed tax base increase.
- The City needs an approach to manage rental residencies; moving out residents as improvements occur. Much of the current residential areas are for rent.

- The Riverfront Task Force will become the Mississippi Riverfront Committee, a committee of GREDA.
 - Need to get Community interested in participating on the Riverfront Committee; more Community Outreach is needed
 - Taskforce/Committee – needs to keep the drumbeat, get articles in paper, publicize successes
 - Committee Members need to feel engaged/informed by City Staff of activities
- Implementation tasks – Perhaps the tasks should be characterized by what will be done by Mississippi Riverfront Committee Volunteers, other done by City Staff; others by GREDA
 - Consensus: Riverfront Committee should determine its own work plan
- The Committee debated the phasing categories.
 - Tom Pagel has asked to move North Riverfront Parkway from Short-Term (0-5 years) to Intermediate (5-10 years) since funding will be complicated enough that the project won't happen for at least 5 years.
 - Some felt that putting interesting projects like the North Riverfront Parkway in the Intermediate category will discourage potential Committee members from getting involved.
 - After discussion, the group decided to keep North Riverfront in the Short-Term category and remove the specific number of years.
 - The plan should reinforce the opportunistic nature of phasing, and work needs to begin now for projects listed in the intermediate term if they are to happen 5-10 years from now.
- City-owned land should be priority. The plan should include a map.
- Next Steps:
 - Steering Committee has 1 week to review document and get comments back to staff. Staff will consolidate comments and forward them to JJR.
 - In 3-4 weeks, JJR will provide a draft of the Poster Plan and a draft of the Interpretative Signage.
 - JJR will send the drafts to Staff, who will distribute them. The Committee will meet to discuss, and staff will provide consolidated comments back to JJR.

Our summarization of this meeting is transcribed as above. Please notify the preparer within five (5) business days of this transmission of any disagreement as the foregoing becomes part of the project record and is the basis upon which we will proceed.

