THE GRAND RIVER CORRIDOR
Implementation Plan and River Trail Design Guidelines

Core City Team:
David Marquardt  Parks & Recreation
Tim Kelly        Downtown Grand Rapids Inc
Jay Steffen          Planning Department
Jeff McCaul  City Engineering
Richard Bishop   GRWW
Stephanie Ogren   Grand Rapids Public Museum

Consultant Team:
Wenk Associates
VIRIDIS Design Group
Williams & Works
Well Design
ETM Associates, LLC
FTCH
**Reimagining the River**

**2002**
- Grand Rapids Master Plan
  - Broadening the visibility of the river and improving access to it and its edge through continuous public access
  - Expanding greenspace and recreation opportunities
  - 2,500 participants
  - 12 month process

**2010 - present**
- Grand Rapids Whitewater
  - Restoring the Rapids to improve overall river health and recreational opportunities within the region
  - 1,000s of participants
  - Ongoing process

**2012**
- Green Grand Rapids
  - Reclaiming and reinvesting in a clean, accessible, beautiful, and green river
  - 1,800 participants
  - 17 month process

**2015**
- GR Forward
  - Creating an outdoor adventure city
  - Establishing Grand Rapids as the hub in a regional river trail system
  - Enhancing neighborhood access to the river
  - 4,400 participants
  - 20 month process

**2017 - present**
- River for All
  - Implementing the vision and direction expressed from preceding plans by designing 6 opportunity sites and a 7.5-mile connected trail network flanking the river corridor
  - 1,700 participants
  - 11 month process

**2017**
- Parks & Recreation Strategic Master Plan
  - Building a Grand River Waterfront and using the river's various tributaries and trails to create a connected network
  - 5,300 participants
  - 10 month process
Grand River Revitalization & Rapids Restoration
Partnerships: A Key to Success

Local Partners:
- CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS
- GVMC
- Grand Rapids WhiteWater
- DOWNTOWN
- KENNARI CONSULTING
- RIVER FOR ALL

State Partners:
- DEQ

Federal Partners:
Project Goals

- Restore the rapids to the Grand River for everyone, with enhanced access and recreational opportunities
- Improve habitat and connectivity, water quality, riparian functions and aesthetics
- Create economic opportunities, enhance underserved communities and instill stewardship
- Optimize City owned property along the river to provide access and public space
- Provide equitable connections
Social Benefits

• Improve the community’s connection to nature within the city
• Create educational opportunities for urban youth
• Increase recreational access & opportunities for a variety of users
• Create an equitable and accessible river corridor for all
Environmental Benefits

- Improve river connectivity and fish passage
- Restore historic spawning areas for state-threatened Lake Sturgeon
- Improve river/habitat conditions for selected threatened & endangered species
- Remove five dangerous low head dams
Economic Benefits

- Expanded recreational use estimates net new economic impact of $15-$19 million per year (kayaking, fly-fishing, rafting, stand-up paddling, and other forms of riverfront recreation)

- Support or create 80-96 jobs and create $2.3 million in new earnings.

- Improved riverfront property utilization and taxable values could increase by $117.7 million

- $285M in capital investment within 10 years (~1,520 jobs)
Innovative Approach to Sea Lamprey Control

• New adjustable hydraulic structure (AHS) proposed to manage sea lamprey control efforts on the Grand River

• AHS is a joint project between USFWS, GLFC, MDNR, USACOE, City of Grand Rapids and GRWW

• AHS will be built with federal dollars through a separate permitting process
USDA: Natural Resource Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program Award (RCPP)

- $8 million awarded for instream habitat improvements and farmland conservation practices
- $4.1 million used as part of the Grand River Restoration Project
- Over 22 state, local, and federal partners contributed match for the original proposal
Anticipated Construction Schedule

**Phase I**
Permits & Final Design
2018-2019

**Lower Reach Construction**
2020-2022

**AHS Construction**
2022-2024

**Sixth Street Dam Removal**
2025-2026
River For All Project Components

Public Engagement

Grand River Corridor Design Guidelines

Strategic Asset Management Plan

Opportunity Site Concepts

1) Leonard to Ann Street Trail
2) Decommissioned Water Department Storage Yard Site
3) Coldbrook Decommissioned Water Pumping Station
4) Monroe North Site
5) Fish Ladder Site
6) Grand Rapids Public Museum Site
Public Outreach Process

Public Engagement
ArtPrize 2017 (4 days)
Water Fest 2018
Fish Ladder Design Workshop

Advisory Committee & Focus Groups

Website/Print Outreach
www.riverforall.com
“We Are GR” article
## Advisory Committee

**26 members**  
3+ meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization/Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anne Armstrong Cusack</td>
<td>Governor’s Office of Urban Initiatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dale Robertson</td>
<td>Grand Rapids Public Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darel Ross</td>
<td>Start Garden, Planning Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Swanson</td>
<td>Kent County, Assistant Administrator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dave Bulkowski</td>
<td>Kent County Commission, Disability Advocates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim Bachmeir</td>
<td>Grand Valley State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janet Korn</td>
<td>Experience GR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roberto Torres</td>
<td>Exec Hispanic Center of West MI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelli Jo Peltier</td>
<td>Parks and Rec Advisory Board</td>
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<td>Ryan Waalkes</td>
<td>Parks and Rec Advisory Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senita Lenear</td>
<td>3rd Ward City Commissioner</td>
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<td>Joe Jones</td>
<td>2nd Ward City Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kurt Reppart</td>
<td>1st Ward City Commissioner</td>
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<td>Lamont Cole</td>
<td>Compelling Connections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa Knight</td>
<td>GR Urban League</td>
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<tr>
<td>Levi Rickert</td>
<td>Tribal Community</td>
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<td>Eddie Tadlock</td>
<td>SMG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amy Knape</td>
<td>WMCAT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tamara Jorkasky</td>
<td>MDNR Trust Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Bishop</td>
<td>Grand Rapids White Water</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Staal</td>
<td>Environmental Services, City of Grand Rapids</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nikri VanBloem</td>
<td>DNR SW Michigan Trail Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Spegel</td>
<td>DNR Heritage Trail Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Sargent</td>
<td>DNR Regional Prosperity Coordinator (4a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Gunderman</td>
<td>Fisheries - Southern Lake MI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Hanshue</td>
<td>Fisheries - Biologist for Grand River</td>
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6 Focus Groups + 8 Outreach Groups

**ART**

Joe Becherer
Frederick Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park
Grand Rapids Art Museum

Dana Friis-Hansen
ArtPrize Representative
ArtsGraampa

Angela Steele
Artists Creating Together

George Bayard
Site Lab

Paul Amenta
DisArt

Christopher Smit
Avenue for the Arts

Jenn Schaub
Terry Allen
Richard App

Trudy Ngo-Brown
Steefanie Rosalez
Asante Cain

**NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY**

Jim Davis
Hannah Berry
Diede Deering
Yvonne Cornejo
Troy Williams
Lara Dengerink
Shawntee Williams
Kyle Heys
Bryan Earvin
Rachel Posthumus
Mark Roys
Sonya Hughes
Jeremy DelRoo
Stacy Stout
Rico Rodriguez
Annette Vanderberg
Chi Benedict
Marie Cimochowicz

West Side Collaborative
Creston Neighborhood (Riverside) Representative
North Monroe Business Association
United in Christ Ministries
Switchback Gear Exchange
MNTIFA
Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
LINC
City of Grand Rapids
Roosevelt Park Neighborhood
West Grand Neighborhood Association
West Grand Neighborhood Association

**TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Liliana Garcia
Tim Mroz
Andy Johnston
Jon Nunn
Tripp Frey
Jamiel Robinson
Jermale Eddie
Kate Moore
Cle Jackson
Ryan Kilpatrick
Janet Korn
Eddie Tadlock
Darius Quinn
Joshua Longar

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
The Right Place
Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Grand Action
Grand Action / Frey Foundation
GRAB
Malamish Juice Bar, DDA Board
Vice President of Marketing, Grand Rapids Public Museum
NAACP/Blue Cross/Blue Shields
Michigan Economic Development Corporation
Experience GR
SMG
Kent County & Convention and Arena Authority
Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce

**USER GROUPS**

Mike Guswiler
West Michigan Sports Commission
John Morrison
West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition
Landon Bartley
Grand Rapids Rowing
Don Remington
President, Grand Rapids Steelheaders
Bob Sark
Secretary, Grand Rapids Steelheaders
Peter Hallas
Angler
Matt Roy
Avid fisherman
Jay Fowler
GR Bicycle Coalition
Jeff Neumann
Owner, GR Paddling
Elyse Mathos
Member of Mayor’s Millennial Advisory Group
Alex Melton
City of Grand Rapids Digital Team
Ken Cipriano
Entrepreneur
Ken James
Chamber
Mark Miller
Pedestrian / Urbanist
Chris Grey
Skateboard Community
Shawntee Williams
Dwelling Place/Avenue for the Arts
Virginia Smith
Senior Community

**CULTURE, EDUCATION, AND HISTORY**

Ron Yob
Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians
Maria Ehlers
Assistant Director, Grand Rapids Public Library
Mike Posthumus
Representative from Grand Rapids Public Museum
Mark Frost
Principal, Innovation Central
Daniel Williams
WMCAT
Jim Winslow
Tour GR / Public Museum Archivist
Tom Dilley
Historic Preservation Commission
Gayle Debruyne
KCAD Design Education Director
John Helmholdt
Grand Rapids Public Schools

**ADDITIONAL OUTREACH GROUPS**

Mayor’s Youth Council
Mayor’s Millennial Advisory Board
DGRI Board of Advisors
DGRI Alliance Goal 1
Anishinabe Community
Natural Areas Coalition
Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc.
City Design Team

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

Dave Warners
Calvin College Stormwater Biologist

Carrie Rivette
City of Grand Rapids ESD

Gail Heher
Plaster Creek Stewards

Rachel Nagorsen
Friends of Indian Mill Creek

Chi Benedict
City Arts Advisory Committee Staff

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

Marie Schafer
Wege Natural Resources Fellow

Joe Sulak
City of Grand Rapids Park Operations Superintendent

Dotti Clune
Friends of Grand Rapids Urban Forestry Committee

Wendy Oghvie
City of Grand Rapids Park Operations Supervisor

Stephanie Adams
Friends of Grand Rapids Parks

John Schultz
Ottawa County Parks

Curt TerHaar
Ottawa County Parks

Aaron Boddy-Mast
Ottawa County Parks

Bill Wood
WMEAC

**ADDITIONAL OUTREACH GROUPS**

Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc.
City Design Team

**ADDITIONAL OUTREACH GROUPS**

Mayor’s Youth Council
Mayor’s Millennial Advisory Board
DGRI Board of Advisors
DGRI Alliance Goal 1
Anishinabe Community
Natural Areas Coalition
Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc.
City Design Team
I would like for the **RIVER CORRIDOR** to have...

- More trees and plants - keep and encourage the natural river edges
- Multi-generational, active, and passive recreation spaces
- More seating and lighting
- More boat launches and places to touch the river
- Places to learn about river ecology and community history
- More food and drink options
- More public art
- Spaces for live performances
- Connections to walk, bike, and bus from my neighborhood
- Trails and crosswalks in N/S and E/W directions

**Access:**
- Bi-lingual wayfinding to also include indigenous language
- Street crossings with crosswalks and refuge islands
- Boat launch, dockage, and barrier free access
- Visual and physical connection to the river, use streetgrid

**Programming:**
- Education/history
- Eating and drinking
- Interactive art
- Live performances
- Inclusive recreation

**Landscaping:**
- Lighting and seating to enhance user safety and belonging
- Add/protect native trees and plants
The Design Guidelines

Corridor-Wide Guidelines

- Circulation
- River Edge
- Resilient Systems
- Signage, Identity, & Wayfinding
- Public Art
- Historical & Cultural Themes

Site Types & Character Areas Guidelines

- Site Type & Character Area Recommendations
- Materials
Corridor-Wide Guidelines

Circulation

Primary River Trail with parallel Lower River Edge Path

Cantilevered River Trail

Existing Building

Primary River Trail

100-year + 3’ freeboard

Existing Floodwall

Regional Trail to connect to Pleasure Point Trail along and further southwest to Millennium Park.
Corridor-Wide Guidelines

River Edge

N1 Riparian Edge

Primary River Trail

Existing Floodwall

100-year 8'-freeboard

Existing Building / Window

N2 Naturalized River Edge

Nd River Access

P9 Private Development River Edge

R1 Redevelopment Edge with Floodwall

30' OD-GR setback

10' Primary River Trail

5'

100-year + 3' freeboard

R3 Evaluate Potential to Raise Existing Path

Existing Building / Window

Raised Path

Fill on existing path

4.5' 8.4'
Corridor-Wide Site Components

Railings

Lighting

‘Welcome Mats’ Identity Markers

Benches

Litter & Recycling Receptacle

Figure 3.2.2 - Railing System - Typical

Figure 3.2.3 - Railing System - On Top of Floodwall

DO NOT DO THIS: Rail height should be 42”, typ. from ground plane wherever feasible throughout the corridor to allow for unobstructed views of the river and fishing access.
Corridor-Wide Guidelines

Signage, Identity & Wayfinding

River Trail
‘Welcome Mats’
and
‘Bread Crumbs’
Site Type & Character Area Guidelines

Site Types
Represent broad categories of public and private use

Character Areas
Subsets of ‘site types’ that reflect:
• changes in land use
• development density
• variations in river edge types
• inherent existing site characteristics
Site Types

Natural Riverfront Parks
Site Types

Industrial Redevelopment Areas
Site Types

Public Riverfront Parks
Site Types

Urban Riverfront Parks
4 Proposed Levels of Service for the GRC

- **Heart of Downtown (A)**
  - high use, downtown areas

- **GRC Base Level (B)**
  - well-used, urban areas

- **High Profile Natural Areas (C)**
  - natural areas with consistent use

- **Natural Areas & Reserves (D)**
  - remote/less used areas
Public River Front Parks

- Grand Rapids Public Museum
- Coldbrook Decommissioned Water Pumping Station
- Leonard to Ann Trail
- Decommissioned Water Department Storage Yard Site

Urban River Front Parks

- Monroe North Site
- Fish Ladder Park Site
Decommissioned Water Department Storage Yard Site

What we heard...

- Live performances
- Eating and drinking
- Inclusive recreation
- Interactive art
- Education/history
- Lighting and seating to enhance use safety and belonging
- Add/protection native trees and plants
- Bi-lingual wayfinding including indigenous language
- Street crossings with crosswalks and refuge islands
- Boat launch, dockage, and barrier-free access
Decommissioned Water Department Storage Yard Site

Repurposed Water Tank

Overlook

Canopy Trail

Log Jam Inspired Playground

Winter Lodge / Boathouse
Decommissioned Water Department Storage Yard Site
Coldbrook Decommissioned Water Pumping Station Site

What we heard...

- Live performances
- Eating and drinking
- Inclusive recreation
- Interactive art
- Education/history
- Lighting and seating to enhance use safety and belonging
- Add/protect native trees and plants
- Bi-lingual wayfinding including indigenous language
- Street crossings with crosswalks and refuge islands
- Boat launch, dockage, and barrier-free access
Coldbrook Decommissioned Water Pumping Station Site

Overlook

Outdoor Education Plaza

Coldbrook Creek Feature

Wetland Edge & Walls
Coldbrook Decommissioned Water Pumping Station Site
Monroe North Site

What we heard...

- Live performances
- Eating and drinking
- Inclusive recreation
- Interactive art
- Education/history
- Lighting and seating to enhance use safety and belonging
- Add/protection native trees and plants
- Bi-lingual wayfinding including indigenous language
- Street crossings with crosswalks and refuge islands
- Boat launch, dockage, and barrier-free access
Monroe North Site

- Stepped River Edge
- Event Pavilion & Lawn
- Shaded Seating Edge
- Midlevel Terrace
- Skate Park
Monroe North Site
Fish Ladder Site

What we heard...

- Live performances
- Eating and drinking
- Inclusive recreation
- Interactive art
- Education/history
- Lighting and seating to enhance use safety and belonging
- Add/protect native trees and plants
- Bi-lingual wayfinding including indigenous language
- Street crossings with crosswalks and refuge islands
- Boat launch, dockage, and barrier-free access
Fish Ladder Site

Sloped Lawn

Viewing Terrace

River Step Access
Fish Ladder Site
Grand Rapids Public Museum

What we heard...

- Live performances
- Eating and drinking
- Inclusive recreation
- Interactive art
- Education/history

- Lighting and seating to enhance use safety and belonging
- Add/protect native trees and plants
- Bi-lingual wayfinding including indigenous language
- Street crossings with crosswalks and refuge islands
- Boat launch, dockage, and barrier-free access
Grand Rapids Public Museum

- Flume Water Feature
- River Classroom
- Amphitheater
- Woods Adventure Play & Treehouse Deck
Next Steps

- Phase 1 – River Restoration
- City Approval Process for the Design Guidelines
- Identify funding sources for the Opportunity Sites & Trail Improvements
Other ideas that the City is pursuing:

- Green streetscape elements & wider walks on bridges
- Governance, maintenance, funding, and coordination of wet & dry aspects
- Consider kayak transport on a DASH bus
- New DASH routes for river activities
- Review ordinances for swimming in the river
- Prioritize certain spaces for ceremonial activities
- Support local & minority-owned businesses & entrepreneurs with river construction & projects
- Maintain the trail 365 days a year
- Education opportunities & collaboration with GRPS and local universities
- Consider parking for commercial boating if desired in the future
- And many more….
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Marquardt</td>
<td>Director, Parks and Recreation, City of Grand Rapids</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suzanne Schultz</td>
<td>Managing Director, Design and Development, City of Grand Rapids</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wendy Ogilvie</td>
<td>Director, Environmental Programs, Grand Valley Metro Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt Chapman</td>
<td>Grand Rapids Whitewater</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim Kelly</td>
<td>President + CEO, Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeff McCaul P.E.</td>
<td>Acting City Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Ogren, PhD.</td>
<td>Vice President of Science and Education, Grand Rapids Public Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole Horst</td>
<td>Principal, Wenk and Associates</td>
</tr>
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Thank you.