



Kinnickinnic River Corridor Action Plan 2005

An Action Plan for the Kinnickinnic River Corridor

Project Overview

A series of community listening sessions were held between October 2004 and March 2005 to obtain input from local residents, business owners, nonprofit organizations, government agencies and other community stakeholders. This information, along with additional research, helped guide the development of the Action Plan.

Next steps for the project will involve continued outreach to the community to raise awareness of the Plan, and the organization of stakeholders around the four Priority Issues identified in the Plan so that we can begin to implement the recommended Action Steps. Importantly, this project is intended to be complementary to and supportive of existing programs, initiatives and organizations already in existence along the KK River Corridor.

About the Action Plan

The objective of the Kinnickinnic River Corridor Action Plan is to improve the economic, environmental and community health and vitality of the Kinnickinnic River Corridor as it travels through Milwaukee's south side. The Plan will help guide future investments of time, energy and money that will be made towards revitalizing the river corridor.

A key feature of the Plan is that it addresses challenges and opportunities that have been identified by community members, which will help to ensure the successful implementation of the Plan's components in a community-driven and sustainable manner.

This Plan is not intended to be placed on a shelf or filed in a drawer, and it is also not intended to capture all concerns, that exist along the KK River. This plan will be refined as community members and stakeholders influence and prioritize its implementation over the next several years.

Partners & Sponsors

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Today's Challenge...

If you glance at the Kinnickinnic River today, it is difficult to imagine it could look any different.

The concrete lining that serves to quickly move water out of the south side of Milwaukee and into Lake Michigan is a formidable barrier- both physically and psychologically. The river is perceived by the community as a drainage ditch or sewer more so than as a natural system. The litter that is scattered along the banks and in the river itself, including shopping carts and old tires, are disheartening to see and illustrate the disinterest and disinvestment that has characterized the river for decades. Water quality in the river is poor due to pollution-laden stormwater coming from throughout the watershed and historic contamination that settled in areas of the river bottom.

While the Kinnickinnic River faces significant challenges to its health and vitality, so too do many residents living near the river. Complex economic and cultural barriers have prevented many people from investing in this community, and particularly from addressing environmental challenges that exist in this part of the city. Threats to public safety have kept people from leading active lifestyles outside the relative safety of their homes- lifestyles that could include using the river as a community gathering place and recreational corridor.

...Tomorrow's Opportunity

For many years these challenges have prevented the emergence of a constituent voice for the Kinnickinnic River, and without that voice pushing for the revitalization of the river corridor, these challenges would likely intensify. Without well-informed community members working together to address these challenges, the potential of the river to serve as a backbone of the community will not be realized.

On the following pages you will find the Kinnickinnic River Corridor Action Plan. This Plan identifies opportunities for revitalization along the river corridor downstream from 43rd Street- the western border of Jackson Park. The Plan includes four Priority Issues, ranging from tackling quality-of-life issues in nearby residential neighborhoods to ecosystem protection and restoration along the banks of the KK. Objectives are identified for each of these Issues as well as Action Steps that, when implemented, can take advantage of the considerable knowledge, expertise and community involvement that is represented by the Potential Allies in this effort.

The development of this Action Plan has already started to build a voice for the Kinnickinnic River, and its implementation will contribute to the existing efforts of many entities in building a safe, strong, vibrant and livable community along the KK River corridor.

Issue 1: Quality of Life Objectives Need to be Addressed in Order to Achieve Sustainable Environmental Improvements

Objective 1. Improve public health and safety by supporting fish consumption advisories, reducing the risk of drownings and by fighting crime

Action Steps	Timeline	Potential Allies
A. Clearly identify high-crime areas and develop a strategy to address challenges	2005-2007	MPD, COMPASS, Aldermen, DA, Sheriff, CBO's, Block Watch
B. Work to increase police presence along the river corridor and in high-crime residential areas	2005-2007	MPD, Aldermen, Sheriff, CBO's, Block Watch
C. Identify unsafe locations along river channel and evaluate cost-effective modifications to improve safety	2005-2007	MPD, County Parks, Sheriff, CBO's, DNR, DPW
D. Develop a multi-lingual signage plan that communicates fish consumption threats and river safety while encouraging use of the river corridor	2006-2007	MHD, MFD, MPD, CBO's, Block Watch, Resident Groups
E. Educate existing block watch groups about monitoring the river corridor	2006-2007	MPD, CBO's, Block Watch, Churches
F. Initiate new block watch groups along the river corridor	2006-2007	MPD, Aldermen, CBO's, Churches

Objective 2. Improve aesthetics by assessing and eliminating litter and garbage problems on land and water

Action Steps	Timeline	Potential Allies
A. Develop an anti-litter marketing campaign for neighborhoods surrounding the river	2006-2008	KGMB, FMR, CBO's, Aldermen, MHD, Block Watch, BID's
B. Identify additional sites along the river corridor for annual river clean-ups	2006-2008	KGMB, FMR, CBO's, Block Watch
C. Identify and support existing neighborhood cleanup activities and work to expand activities to cover the river corridor	2006-2008	KGMB, CBO's, Block Watch, Aldermen

Objective 3. Improve community ownership by increasing investments in nearby housing stock and commercial districts

Action Steps	Timeline	Potential Allies
A. Ensure the City of Milwaukee's Southeast Side Comprehensive Plan supports and complements Kinnickinnic River improvement activities	2005-2007	DCD, Aldermen, CBO's
B. Support existing commercial district revitalization efforts along Lincoln Avenue and Kinnickinnic Avenue	2005-2008	LVBA, BVBA, DCD, CBO's
C. Deliver existing homebuyer support programs to neighborhoods adjacent to the river corridor	2006-2008	CBO's, MFHC, WHEDA, DCD, Private Lenders
D. Deliver existing home rehabilitation support programs to neighborhoods adjacent to the river corridor	2006-2008	CBO's, NIP, TIN, Private Lenders

Issue 2: A Diverse Stakeholder Group Needs to be Educated & Engaged Through a Broad Variety of Activities

Objective 1. Improve the community's awareness and understanding of the river and local water resources, including impacts of past activities, aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity and habitat, storm drain function and flood control

Action Steps	Timeline	Potential Allies
A. Make information about the river (e.g. river and watershed characteristics, water quality, etc.) available to a broad audience via the internet	2005	DNR, MMSD, UWM GLWI, MRBP
B. Identify and expand existing community and resident communication networks to aid the sharing of information	2005-2008	Aldermen, CBO's, Block Watch
C. Develop place-making outreach materials that build a connection between the local community and the river corridor	2006	UWM SARUP, DNR, MMSD, MRBP, Pier Wisconsin, CBO's
D. Develop an environmental education outreach strategy that builds on existing curricula and organizational resources	2006	DNR, MMSD, UWEX, MRBP, MPS, CBO's, UWM GLWI
E. Work with local schools to use the river corridor as an outdoor laboratory by providing curricula that address water resource issues	2006-2008	DNR, MMSD, UWEX, MRBP, MPS, CBO's, UWM GLWI

Objective 2. Build the community's interest and ability to actively engage in river stewardship activities (e.g. cleanups, restoration activities, etc.)

Action Steps	Timeline	Potential Allies
A. Work with a diverse group of organizations and entities to host a series of social events along the river corridor (e.g. picnics, river hikes, bicycle and canoe trips, etc.)	2005-2008	CBO's, Block Watch, FMR, BFW, UEC, Churches, MPS, Schools

Issue 3: A Vision for Change Needs to be Developed that Illustrates the Potential for Improvement Along the River Corridor

Objective 1. Increase access to and enjoyment of the river corridor by defining a community-supported future state

Action Steps	Timeline	Potential Allies
A. Engage community stakeholders in the development of the City of Milwaukee's Kinnickinnic River Bicycle Trail	2005-2007	NPS, DPW, BFW, CBO's
B. Create and implement a River Greenway Plan that identifies recreation and open space improvement priorities along the river corridor	2006-2007	NPS, DNR, MMSD, County Parks, DCD, DPW, UWM SARUP, FMR, RRF
C. Define and establish a network of trails connecting to and traveling through the river corridor, including along Wilson Park Creek	2006-2007	NPS, DPW, DCD, County Parks, FMR, RRF, BFW, CBO's
D. Develop and implement a signage plan that incorporates environmental, cultural and historical resources, way-finding and river safety	2007-2008	DNR, MMSD, County Parks, Urb-An, LVBA, BVHA, BVNA

Objective 2. Develop a stronger sense of connection between the local business community and the river by defining business interests in the improvement of the river corridor

Action Steps	Timeline	Potential Allies
A. Develop a Kinnickinnic River Business Directory, including a map with the river as a central feature, that identifies businesses in close proximity to the river	2006	LVBA, BVBA, BID's, CBO's
B. Encourage business support and involvement in hosting social activities along the river	2006-2008	LVBA, BVBA, BID's, CBO's

Issue 4: The Ecological and Environmental Integrity of the River Needs to be Revitalized in a Community-Supported and Sustainable Manner

Objective 1. Restore natural functions and aesthetics to the river channel and corridor

Action Steps	Timeline	Potential Allies
A. Leverage the City of Milwaukee's Kinnickinnic River Bicycle Trail investment to implement aesthetic and ecosystem improvements	2005-2007	NPS, EPA, DNR, MMSD, County Parks, DPW, DCD, FMR, RRF, BFW, MCSC, CBO's
B. Evaluate localized tree canopies and identify opportunities to increase coverage along the river corridor and adjacent neighborhoods	2006-2007	UWM Geography, DPW, MMSD, County Parks, Greening, MKE
C. Identify existing recreational open space and natural areas in need of protection and enhancement, within and outside of the target area	2006-2007	NPS, DNR, SEWRPC, MMSD, County Parks, DPW, DCD, FMR, RRF, MPS, UWM GLWI, MCSC, CBO's
D. Identify opportunities to create new recreational open space and natural areas	2006-2007	NPS, DNR, SEWRPC, MMSD, County Parks, DPW, DCD, FMR, RRF, MPS, UWM GLWI, MCSC, CBO's
E. Identify opportunities for aquatic and terrestrial habitat creation and restoration	2006-2007	NPS, DNR, SEWRPC, MMSD, County Parks, DPW, DCD, FMR, RRF, MPS, UWM GLWI, MCSC, CBO's
F. Improve vegetation and landscaping adjacent to the river channel	2007-2008	NPS, EPA, DNR, MMSD, County Parks, DPW, DCD, FMR, RRF, BFW, MCSC, CBO's
G. Plan for the removal of concrete lining downstream from Jackson Park to Baran Park	2007-2008	ACOE, SEWRPC, MMSD, County Parks, Aldermen, CBO's

Objective 2. Restore the health of the river by addressing contamination issues, including nonpoint source pollution and contaminated sediment

Action Steps	Timeline	Potential Allies
A. Identify portions of the target area that lie within and outside of the combined sewer service area	2005	MMSD
B. Implement practices that reduce pollutant loading within the separate sewer service area (e.g. storm drain stenciling, evaluation of street sweeping and road salting, etc.)	2006-2008	DNR, MMSD, DPW, UWEX, UWM GLWI, FMR, RRF, MCSC, CBO's
C. Implement stormwater best management practices within the combined sewer service area that help reduce the risk of combined sewer overflows and improve overall water quality (e.g. rain barrels, rain gardens, etc.)	2006-2008	DNR, MMSD, DPW, UWEX, UWM GLWI, FMR, RRF, MCSC, CBO's
D. Support the efforts of the Kinnickinnic River Business Improvement District and Kinnickinnic River Revitalization Association, Inc. to improve lower reaches of the river corridor	2006-2008	EPA, DNR, BID's, CBO's

Objective 3. Evaluate revitalization efforts by utilizing citizen-based water quality monitoring

Action Steps	Timeline	Potential Allies
A. Organize community members and implement a water quality monitoring program, including a long-term tracking and reporting system	2006	DNR, MMSD, UWM GLWI, UWM BIO, CBO's, Block Watch