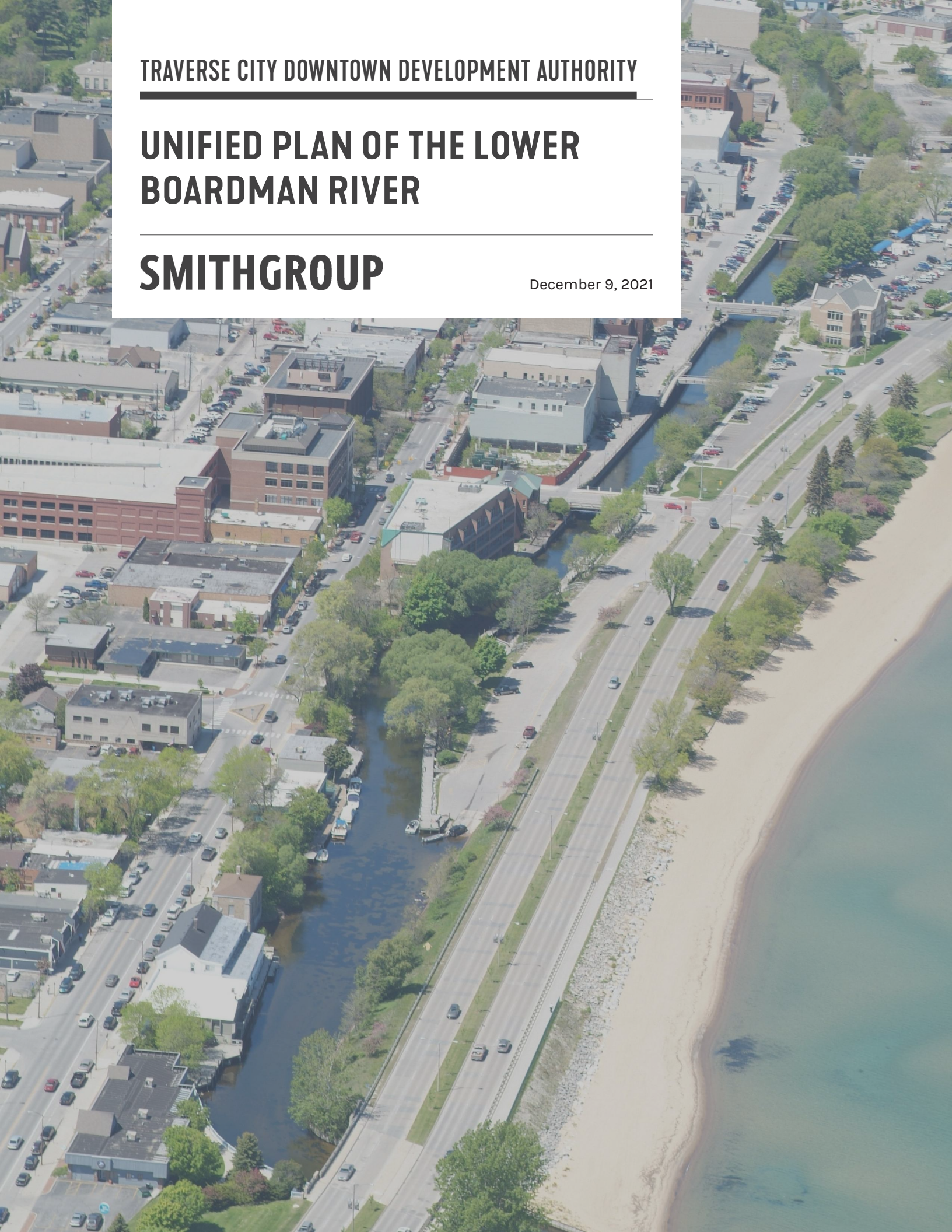
TRAVERSE CITY DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

UNIFIED PLAN OF THE LOWER BOARDMAN RIVER

SMITHGROUP

December 9, 2021



FOREWARD

The design and intent of this document was to build upon previous planning efforts and develop a single unified plan that would clarify what people want to see when they thoughtfully "turn their attention to the river" and that would help catalyze discussions, decisions and actions that will bring into being a shared vision of a healthy river at the heart of a healthy community and city.

The Unified Plan has grown out of extensive attempts to find out what people actually see, want to see, and don't want to see when they interact and experience the downtown reaches of the Lower Boardman-Ottaway River. The underlying methodology of the planning process was to ask people what they saw as desirable and undesirable about the different reaches, sites, and characteristics of the river. We asked how people thought the different sites and reaches of the river should best be connected physically and how the lower river as a whole should connect to the city's perceived "character" and to its aspirations. We asked people how they wanted to engage with and protect the river, how multiple and competing uses of the river should be balanced, and how degraded sites and habitats along the reaches of the river might be restored or regenerated. We were especially keen to hear what people had to say about how the river in a systemic sense connects to the city's current and future value as a healthy habitat for human and non-human life.

We heard many innovative and inspiring ideas and have tried to capture them in the pages that follow. What we did not hear, from anyone, was indifference or shallow concerns expressing narrow interests of intent. We heard loudly and clearly that people love the city, the region, and the river that weaves them together. Everything we heard affirmed a deep, broad, strong commitment to doing a better job of ensuring the long term cultural, ecological, and economic value of the river.

We all live downstream from deliberations, decisions, and actions that occurred before our time. We all inherit the treasures and the messes that come to us from the past. But we are also upstream actors. We are all trustees of the resources that those who come after us will inherit. Those downstream from us will be impacted by decisions we make about what we define as "progress," about what we allow to be done to our land and water in the name of progress, about whether or not we honor and protect our most precious natural resources as living beings and as public treasures. In that sense, this Unified Plan is predicated on an explicit recognition of our generational responsibility to those who come after us and it is a principled plan of action intended to help us be responsible stewards and good ancestors.

The planning team was explicitly not interested in just "making a plan" that the city could affirm as a plan. The goal of the unified planning process has been to develop an overarching framework for guiding deliberations and fostering decisions by multiple actors in the public and private sectors that will protect, restore, and enhance the Lower Boardman-Ottaway River for the benefit of future generations while honoring the generations of original stewards of the river—the Aanishinaabek—who have shared inspiring memory of what was here long before modern civilization left its legacy of designs to use the river rather than live with the river as a caregiver and fundamental source of life.

No plan has power without commitment to its principles, expressed in actions. The Unified Plan isn't a cookbook of recipes for success. The success of the plan will rest on it being a predicate for ongoing, inclusive, open minded conversations about how best to protect the river and reconcile competing uses of the river as the city grows and develops. The unified planning process has, we hope, helped to extend and focus those ongoing conversations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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DEDICATED CITIZENS

We would like to acknowledge the hundreds of local citizens that participated in the planning process and helped shape this plan.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Please take a moment to simply acknowledge the lands we are working on behalf of are lands once occupied by the Original People of the Great Lakes; the Aanishinaabek Odawa, Ojibwe, and Bodewadmi nations known widely as the Three Fires Confederacy. Who for countless generations lived intimately connected to, and held reverent care for this place prior to European settlement and dominion over its abundant resources. In this way, it is important that we ground our work with utmost respect and care for land and water as sacred, as if caring for another being, a relative. And remember that this land and water has cared for us unconditionally through time just as a family member would. Without judgment, without resentment or avarice, only to seek balance among all connections, all beings, for all time. Thank you.

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CHAPTER 1

ESTABLISHING A VISION

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The river is one of our most valuable assets from an ecologic, economic, recreational, and cultural perspective, and is a significant contributor to the sense of place in downtown Traverse City. Recognizing the value of the river, the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority (DDA) put into motion the process for developing a UNIFIED PLAN for the Lower Boardman River. The UNIFIED PLAN includes our collective vision for the Lower Boardman River and describes the land use policy recommendations, best practices for development, and physical improvements for achieving this vision.

The UNIFIED PLAN is based on the premise that the environmental value of the river corridor is central to the community; this value should be reflected and reinforced through the management of change in downtown. When the community considers all beneficiaries to the river (including nature) in the design process for future downtown and riverfront projects, then the Lower Boardman River will reflect the value placed on water, land, nature, health, and wellness.

AERIAL PHOTO OF REACHES ONE AND TWO

The "water centric" values, best practices, and development guidelines integrated into this plan will translate, over time, into better designs for public places, such as streetscapes, public park spaces, pathways, and transportation facilities, and will ensure that new development creates a better interface between the urban fabric and the river.

In a key initial step, the DDA established the Lower Boardman River Leadership Team (Leadership Team) as an ad hoc committee of the DDA to lead the development of the UNIFIED PLAN. The Leadership Team members volunteered their time and expertise, and included individuals with backgrounds in real estate, urban planning, natural resources, land conservation and stewardship, and park management, as well as city commission members, DDA staff, and community stakeholders. Throughout the process, the Leadership Team was responsible for conducting open public meetings, organizing public input sessions, establishing direction for the content and focus of the plan, and evaluating and proposing concepts and ideas.

Through the guidance of the Leadership Team the UNIFIED PLAN endeavors to protect, preserve, and appropriately develop the downtown section of the Boardman River (approximately 1.6 miles of river), connecting the northern end of Boardman Lake with Grand Traverse Bay.

This plan was developed with the engagement of all interested parties to take advantage of expertise and input. Just as the plan may identify priorities for recreational, educational, and interpretive initiatives, so should it identify projects involving land/water management policies and projects to address stormwater management and control, and habitat protection and enhancement.

VISION & VALUES

The Leadership Team developed a set of Core Values for the project prior to the formal planning process to frame the community's basic goals for the river corridor. These Core Values were discussed and tested through an open public process. During the planning process, the community reaffirmed the Core Values and provided a set of diverse and substantial ideas that are consistent with the Core Values.

The Core Values of the UNIFIED PLAN include:

- Reflect the city's commitment to the river as a public resource and asset to be passed to residents and visitors in perpetuity.
- Contain public goals for the river and city, in keeping with the community's visions about what the river is and can become as a centerpiece for downtown identity and ethos.
- Use the natural and cultural values of the river as a guide for decisions about the commercial, economic, or utilitarian values to be leveraged for the public good.
- Be explicit to the commitment to improve, restore, and protect the health and integrity of the riparian ecosystem of the lower river.
- Provide that the recommended initiatives contained in the plan will account for the impact of those initiatives on residents, habitats, and the ecological status of the river.
- Serve to foster and sustain partnerships with shared responsibilities among public and private stakeholders who share the value that the river is a "common resource" that connects everyone.
- Identify/prioritize opportunities for multi-modal access to the river.
- Enhance ecological and aesthetic river conditions, take advantage of, and integrate iconic structures and identify new sites and structures that serve as destination or centers of programming to attract year-round access.
- Integrate existing riverwalks and pathways with new connections between sites and destinations that link the river to the city in ways that are physical, visual, aesthetic, and psychological.
- Be consistent with best riparian and aquatic science, best water and land management practices and must be harmonious with the river.
- Make nature-based stormwater best management practices (BMPs) a priority.
- Help ensure that new or rehabilitated developments along the river are compatible with the city's renewable energy goals.
- Establish that development sites, destinations and structures must protect the health, aesthetics, accessibility, and health of the relationship between the river and residents/visitors.
- Manage invasive vegetation, protect and retain existing native vegetation, and add native vegetation where possible.

- Prohibit further hardening of the shorelines that are inconsistent with the plan.
- Ensure that the natural flow of the river is enhanced and not curtailed or impeded by any element of the plan.

HARDENED AND FILLED RIVER EDGE ON THE 100 BLOCK OF FRONT STREET

EXISTING PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT & RESTORATION

For over ten years, Traverse City has been part of a initiative that has garnered national and international attention to restore the Boardman River, including the removal or modification of four dams on the river. The fruits of this initiative will all come to bear in the downtown vicinity.

There have been several interconnected initiatives designed and employed to develop concepts for use and protection of the river and watershed as it unites through Traverse City, including:

BOARDMAN RIVER WATERSHED PROSPERITY PLAN

This plan was completed in 2016. Prepared by Public Sector Consultants, The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay, Beckett & Raeder, and the Lawton Gallagher Group.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Boardman River Watershed Prosperity Plan (Prosperity Plan) is a vision and a roadmap for the future management of one of Michigan's most beautiful watersheds. The Prosperity Plan tells us to think large, recognizing that the value of, and threats to, the resources of the river need to be addressed at the local and regional scale. The Prosperity Plan defines prosperity for the watershed as achieving economic well-being for its residents, protecting and maintaining a high-quality environment (water, land, and air resources), supporting health lifestyles, helping people connect and engage with the environment and with each other, and offering a diverse range of social and cultural opportunities.

FRAMEWORK

The Prosperity Plan deals with the entire Boardman River watershed; not all goals and recommendations apply equally to the Lower Boardman River. Goals are as follows:

- Protect, restore, and enhance the high-quality water and other natural resources that are the backbone of social and economic prosperity in the watershed.
- Grow a sustainable economy that benefits and strengthens all the watershed communities.
- Improve the quality of life and advance greater social equity throughout the watershed to retain and attract businesses, a talented workforce, and student and retiree residents.
- Provide managed expansion and improvement of recreation opportunities in the watershed to attract a talented workforce, student and retiree residents, and visitors from around the world.
- Create community ownership of the Boardman River Watershed Prosperity Plan (through education and engagement efforts) and community capacity that will assure implementation of recommended actions and achievements of the goals and objectives.

FISHPASS PROJECT

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

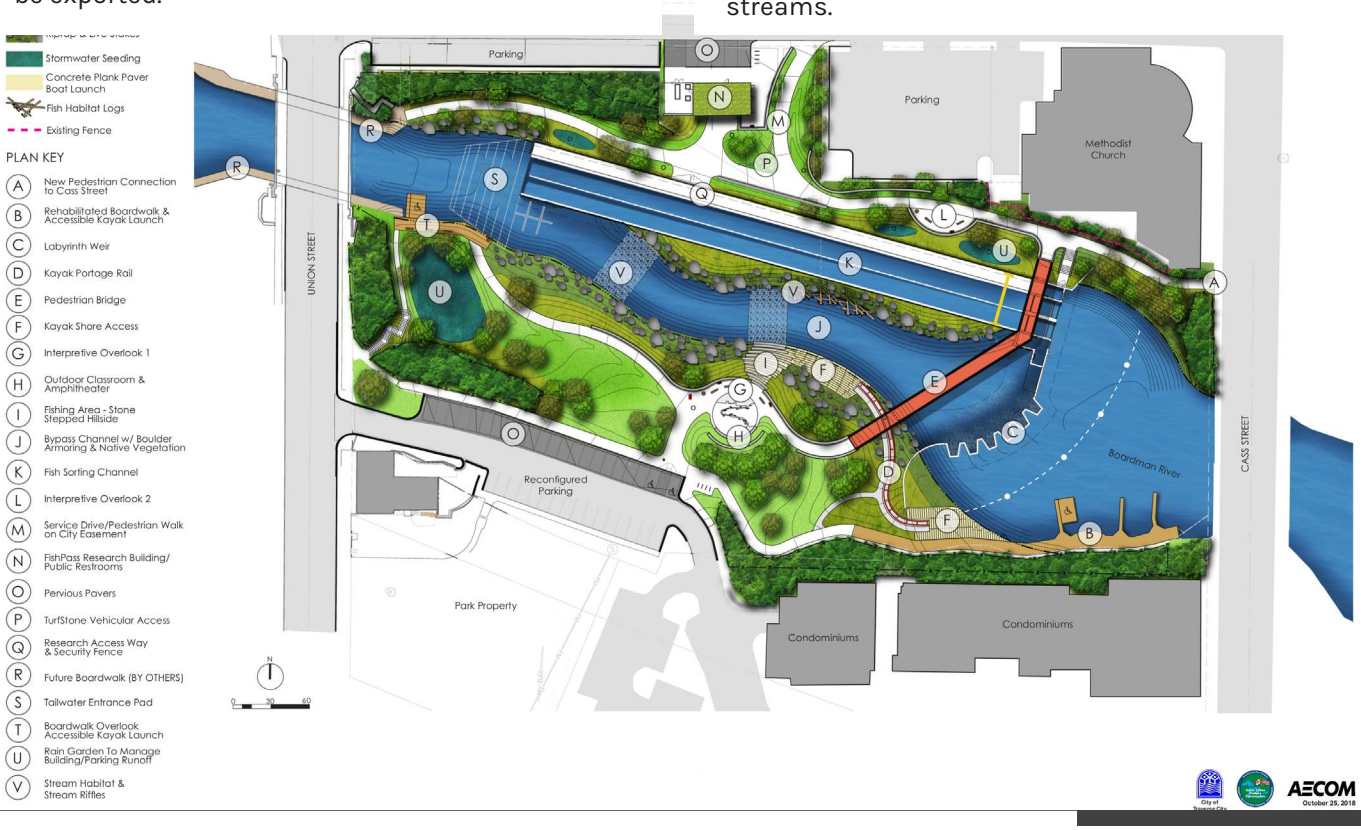
The mission of FishPass is to provide up- and down-stream passage of desirable fishes, while simultaneously blocking and/or removing undesirable fishes. To achieve this mission, FishPass has three overarching objectives:

- Develop and implement selective bi-directional fish guidance, sorting, and passage techniques and technologies.
- Determine protocols for implementing selective passage solutions within the Boardman River and throughout the Great Lakes basin.
- Set solutions in a global context so the approach can be exported.

FRAMEWORK

The project goals were articulated to reflect the values of the community and serve as guiding principles for the design, construction, and operation of FishPass as follows:.

- Provide a naturalized landscape consistent with public input.
- Protect water quality standards and maintain stable water levels in Boardman Lake.
- No sea lamprey production requiring treatment in the Boardman River above the project site.
- Increase the fishery production in the Boardman River to a level comparable to other tributaries/ streams.



- Provide enhanced, sustainable business opportunities.
- Provide abundant, diverse, and high-quality outdoor recreation amenities.
- Enhance access and use of the site for education, wayfinding, fishing, boating, and biking.
- Integrate the river into the fabric of the city by aligning the project with the city master plan.
- Improve public understanding of the threat from invasive species.
- Inform the public on the role of human landscape alterations on fisheries and communities.
- Promote engagement regarding broad objectives for the Boardman River, ecosystem management, and city planning.

The FishPass project team has completed the final construction documents and regulatory permits. Construction was set to begin in the fall of 2020; however, resolution of litigation is pending which has delayed the project.

BOARDMAN WATER TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Completed in 2016. Prepared by the LIAA.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Boardman Water Trail Development Plan outlines the activities, process, and framework to establish a water trail along the Boardman River. The resulting efforts of this plan will seek to improve public access to the Boardman River, complement ongoing conservation and environmental initiatives along the river, raise awareness of the unique and valuable natural resources within the river corridor, and provide for a safe and responsible recreational water trail.

FRAMEWORK

These assumptions summarize the specific goals and expectations for the water trail and ultimately establish the benchmark for success of the water trail:

- The water trail should balance safe recreation with ongoing conservation and restoration efforts.
- The river supports paddling, fishing, boating, and swimming.
- The water trail complements and is integrated with surrounding land-based trails.
- The public has points of access to the river.
- The river and the ways it is used will continue to evolve.
- Downtown Traverse City should have better connections to the river.
- The river will continue to be managed and maintained through inter-jurisdictional public, private, and non-profit partnerships.
- Paddlers will respect private property along the water trail.

BOARDMAN RIVER PLAN

Completed in 2013. Prepared by the University of Michigan.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Boardman River Plan seeks to integrate the river into the fabric of Traverse City, revitalizing it into one of the defining elements of the dynamic urban area. Heavily influenced by extensive site analysis, this plan provides a coherent, interconnected conceptual vision for the future of this historically vital waterway. The plan recognizes the importance of both social and environmental factors, working to improve the riverfront in a contextually appropriate way that integrates the needs of the community with the functionality of a healthy river system.

FRAMEWORK

Strategies/reoccurring themes:

- Vegetation as a driver for ecological health
- Public gathering spaces
- Iconic urban destinations
- Urban recreation
- Enhanced riparian habitat
- Linkages

BOARDMAN RIVER FISHERIES REPORT

Completed in 2009. Prepared by Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Boardman River Fisheries Report collected, cataloged, summarized, and discussed existing data on Boardman River fisheries in the context of its adequacy in evaluating alternatives for the fates of the Boardman River dams.

FRAMEWORK

For purposes of disseminating the existing data in a framework useful for identifying gaps in essential data and evaluating alternative fates of the Boardman River dams, in this report the Boardman River was divided into ten segments, including three segments that fall within the Lower Boardman River UNIFIED PLAN project area.

- From Union Street Dam downstream to Lake Michigan, and Hospital (Kids) Creek.
- Union Street Dam impoundments, also known as Boardman Lake.
- From Sabin Dam downstream to Union Street Dam impoundments, or Boardman Lake.

YOUR BAY, YOUR SAY

Completed in 2007. Prepared by SmithGroup and Wade Trim.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The plan made several recommendations to improve pedestrian access and connectivity, including a public pier at the mouth of the Boardman River.

FRAMEWORK

The plan includes the following key recommendations:

- Connect the downtown and neighborhoods to the waterfront.
- Create a new Central Park, a town square on the water.
- Promote mixed-use infill to reinforce the edges of the park.
- Provide a variety of activities and public spaces along the waterfront.
- Respect the natural beauty and ecological integrity of the bay and Boardman River.

BOARDMAN RIVER WALL STABILIZATION PROJECT

Completed in 2020. Prepared by SmithGroup, Limnotech, Wade Trim, and SME.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The plan evaluated the soil stability issues adjacent to the retaining wall located along the river on the 100 and 200 blocks of downtown Traverse City, including a topographic survey, geotechnical borings, hydraulic model of the river, and engineering assessment of the wall and sewer, and provided recommendations for repair and stabilization.

FRAMEWORK

During the spring of 2020, depressions formed in the landscape areas, paving showed signs of failure, and signposts began falling over, all of which indicated that soil stability issues exist adjacent to the wall.

The soil subsidence has posed risks to the public infrastructure, including the wall and a major sanitary sewer, and those who use the sidewalks, parking, and alley. The study concluded that the amount of annual subsidence has increased over the past decade, and that this trend is unlikely to slow.

The analysis and assessment determined that the most prudent solution to these issues is to treat the two blocks uniquely and respond to the site conditions and constraints of each. For the 100 block, the study recommended removing the existing retaining wall and relocating the sanitary sewer, allowing for a natural shoreline and restoration of habitat along the riverfront.

For the 200 block, the study recommended preservation of the concrete wall and installation of a sheet pile wall on the river side of the wall.

CURRENT REGULATORY & POLICY GUIDANCE

COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN

State of Michigan statues provide each community with the right and responsibility to regulate the development of private land and public infrastructure. A comprehensive planning document, commonly referred to as the Community Master Plan, establishes goals, strategies, and priorities to guide land use, transportation infrastructure, downtown development, neighborhood preservation, non-motorized transportation, land development guidelines (such as setbacks and character), and similar subjects.

The current City of Traverse City Master Plan was developed in 2009 and amended in 2017. The city is considering the timing and focus of the next master plan update, providing an opportunity to integrate the findings of the UNIFIED PLAN into the chapters which focus on downtown.

ZONING

Zoning ordinances are the regulatory application of the goals established by the Community Master Plan. Zoning ordinances establish development standards that are applied to a given parcel of land when that site is either developed, or significantly redeveloped.

Each parcel of land in the community is designated into a specific zone which has its own set of standards. The project area includes properties which are zoned for:

- 1OS - Open Space (typically publicly owned land)
- R-3 - Multiple Family Dwelling
- C-3 – Community Center
- C-4 - Regional Center
- D-1 – Ironworks Development
- D-2 – Depot Development
- GP – Government/Public

The zoning District C-4 is the core area of downtown, and is further divided into sub-categories, a, b, and c, which vary in allowed building heights. This zoning district includes the most shoreline of the Boardman River in the project area, followed by Open Space.

Each zoning district includes a set of requirements that guide new development's building height, property line and river setbacks, density, and allowed land uses.

Relative to the development of river frontage are several key zoning ordinances including:

- Chapter 1368 - Size and Area Requirements

COMMUNITY PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

The Community Parks and Recreation Plan is updated every five years and includes an assessment of the conditions of public parks, public engagement, and a set of recommendations for park improvements. An up-to-date plan is required to access state funding of parks through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund.

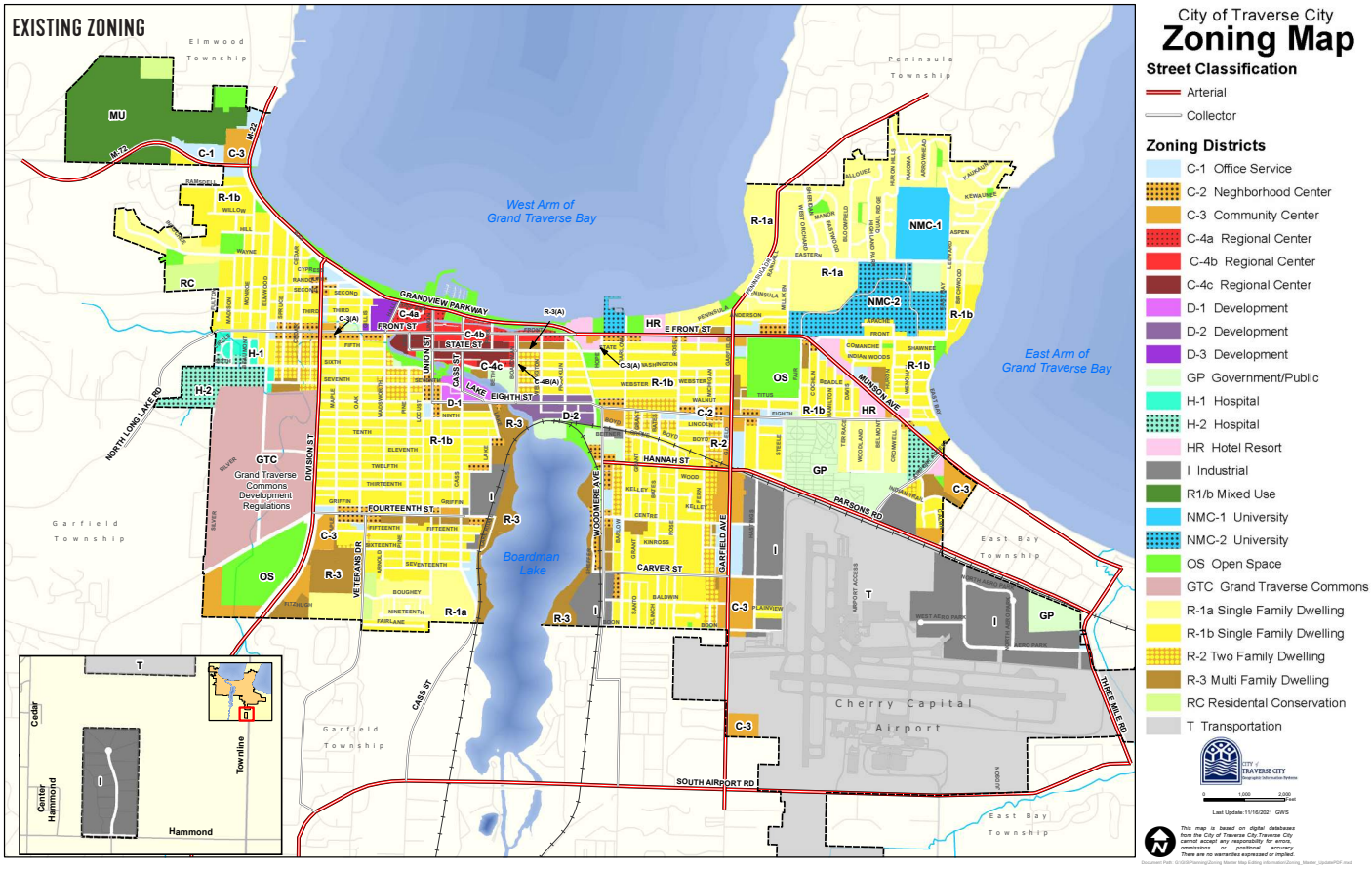
Though not specifically a plan that has regulatory authority to manage development in the river corridor, the parks and recreation plan and the UNIFIED PLAN are companion pieces that provide guidance in the decision-making process for future design efforts, and therefore, should be coordinated as the Community Parks and Recreation Plan is updated.

REGULATORY ORDINANCES

The City of Traverse has adopted, over time, a series of regulatory ordinances that have the legal authority to establish standards for a variety of subjects, from the development of utility systems to the management of public nuisances.

As discussed later in this report, regulatory ordinances could be a key element of helping the community establish standards for managing behavior of river and park users. Key regulatory ordnances include:

- Chapter 1062 Harbor and Waterfront (establishes a dock line for the river corridor)
- Chapter 1064 Parks
- Chapter 1068 Ground-Water Protection and Storm-Water Runoff Control
- Chapter 1458 - Flood Plain Management



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & PLANNING PROCESS

Just as the Lower Boardman River has a personality that takes on many forms and shapes depending upon the season, its flow, and location, the UNIFIED PLAN for the Lower Boardman River will reflect differing values, perspectives, and uses of the river. What is essential is that this process, much like the process to determine the fate of the Boardman River Dams, must include and welcome through civic engagement of all of the many interested parties to develop a plan that is truly unifying and has the backing and consensus to be implemented.

OUTREACH METHODS

In the summer of 2019 (Round One) and 2021 (Round Two) the Leadership Team lead a variety of civic engagement approaches to gather public input for the plan. Round One was conducted as the study was beginning to gain an understanding of the key issues and concerns the community held about the Lower Boardman River. Round Two presented a series of recommendations and alternative ideas for addressing those issues and engaged the community in expressing preferences and support for these ideas.

For each of these two outreach efforts, the following methodologies were used:

WEBSITE

The DDA maintained a website throughout the planning process that provided project updates, notifications on engagement opportunities, and posting of ideas and master plan concepts under consideration:.

LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETINGS

The Leadership Team met over two dozen times during the process, and all meetings were public. The agendas and results of those meetings were published on the DDA website.

ONLINE SURVEYS

An online survey was conducted for both outreach efforts and provided the community and interested parties an opportunity to provide input. Together the two rounds of surveys had over 700 participants.

E-MAIL DISTRIBUTION

Interested individuals were asked to sign up to receive e-mails regarding upcoming events, updates and calls for assistance, and to volunteer to help.

NEWS RELEASES

News releases were issued to promote the kick-off meeting in June 2019 and throughout the planning process to provide information to the public on the status of the project and announce future public meetings.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media was utilized as an important outreach tool throughout the process:

- Facebook: @DowntownTCOfficial
- Twitter: @DowntownTC
- Instagram: downtown_tc

POP-UP MEETINGS

To meet people where they are, volunteers from the community participated in "Pop-Up" events, reaching out to the community at the Downtown Farmers Market and other public venues through the spring and summer of 2019 and 2021.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Leadership Team utilized public meetings of elected and appointed officials (DDA, City Planning Commission, City Parks and Recreation Commission, and City Commission) to invite discussions, update the community, and advertise upcoming engagement events.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Open public workshops were conducted to provide interactive engagement with the Leadership Team, DDA staff, and planning consultants during both rounds of engagement, with over 100 people that actively participated.

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

For both rounds of engagement, a series of smaller focus group meetings was conducted, reaching approximately 100 participants. The smaller, more intimate format of Focus Group Meetings were intended to allow for more in-depth discussion of the project and the community's needs and desires for the river corridor. The workshops were not intended to be formal presentations, but an opportunity to get feedback from generally well informed and active citizens.

The meetings had an intended focus; however, the public was welcomed to attend each and any of the meetings as they wished. The focus of each meeting was as follows:

- Meeting #1: Recreation Groups
- Meeting #2: Community Development, Business Focused Organizations and Other Groups
- Meeting #3: Business and Property Owners
- Meeting #4: Sustainability Groups

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ROUND ONE RESULTS

WORKSHOPS AND FOCUS GROUPS

In June of 2019 a public open house style workshop was conducted in the Sara Hardy Downtown Farmers Market in downtown Traverse City, under a large tent and during inclement weather. Despite the rain and outdoor location, over 100 people attended the workshop and provided a great deal of input on the project.

The workshop was conducted early in the planning process before specific plans, strategies, and approaches were developed. The DDA started the workshop with a brief presentation that outlined the purpose of, and background to the study, discussed how past efforts to study the area would be used as building blocks for this new effort, and introduced the Leadership Team of the DDA.

After the presentation, participants were invited to meet with the Leadership Team and planning consultants at a set of six topical stations, including:

- Engagement and Past Planning
- Vision and Values
- History and Culture
- River Conditions and Habitat
- Access, Open Space, and Recreation
- Planning, Land Use, and Development

Participants were asked to record their concerns, ideas, knowledge on sticky notes at each station, which were then recorded and summarized on a spreadsheet report.

The discussions focused on answering the following questions:

- How do you value the Lower Boardman River?
- How you use or would like to use the river?
- How do we protect or restore the river and river corridor?
- How do we provide access for all people?
- How we celebrate the cultural and historic values of the river?
- How should policies and rules be developed, or modified?

A series of four Focus Group Meetings were conducted near the end of July 2019 in downtown Traverse City. The purpose of the meetings was to provide the public with an understanding of the project and solicit input

into the direction of the project early in the planning process.

Participants were led through a similar opportunity to provide input at the public workshop and could also review and comment on the input previously received. Feedback from these sessions were reasonably consistent with the results from the June 2019 public workshop, and the focus group setting allowed for more discussion and dialogue about the key issues and concerns.

From the kick-off workshop and the Focus Group Meetings of Round One in 2019 the following priorities from the public rose to the top of the list:

Projects

- Provide public access (e.g. boardwalks) along the river; assume the need for universal access.
- Monitor and repair places where high water and currents are undermining the shoreline-return to soft shores wherever possible.
- Encourage native fish species, limit invasive species and add aquatic habitat.
- Create additional/improve access and portage for kayaks.
- Soften shore treatment/restore natural edge.
- Add interpretive learning places and opportunities.
- Increase and Improve Open Space on river corridor.

Policies

- Limit/manage additional development along the river corridor.
- Remove/limit parking from riverbanks.
- Increase building setbacks.
- Limit/manage the use of kayaks and tubes on the river to ensure opportunities for all users and quiet enjoyment of the river for downtown residents.
- No additional hardened edge should be allowed.

Best Practices

- Support the use of native plants and habitat creation to control erosion.
- Utilize best practices to manage stormwater and other means of improving water quality.
- Ensure that the river corridor receives necessary maintenance and management, both in the short- and long-term.

Values/Other

- Continue to engage the public throughout the planning process.
- Shift the balance towards habitat and nature over human recreation and economic development.
- Limit facilities for gathering or events along the river-focus should be on downtown/bay.
- Restore Ottaway as name of river.
- Keep river corridor natural and passive.

ONLINE SURVEY

A public online survey was conducted from June until early September 2019. Like the initial public input sessions, the survey was conducted prior to establishing any specific plans, policies, or strategies. Over 500 individuals participated in the survey, which is a significant response when measured as a percentage of the total population of the city and region.

The survey included seven questions (six shown below), almost all of which were open ended questions that allowed participants to provide both brief and expansive responses. The responses were recorded and summarized and include:

1. ***What is your favorite activity related to the Lower Boardman River?*** Top answers (in order of priority cited) include walking, enjoying nature, watching wildlife, kayaking/canoing, sitting/picnicking, and fishing.

2. ***Where is your favorite place along the Lower Boardman River?*** The overwhelming majority of the specific locations cited are within three of the six reaches of the study area, including (in order of responses) Reach Five/Six: N. Union Street to the bay, Reach Three: S. Union to Front Street, and Reach One: Boardman Lake to Cass Street.

3. ***What is your favorite memory of the Lower Boardman River?*** Top answers (in order of priority cited) include kayak/canoe trips, wildlife watching, social activity and quiet enjoyment, and fishing.

5. ***What do you think are the top priorities for improving and protecting the natural environment along the Lower Boardman River?*** Top priorities noted (in order of priority cited) include water quality (especially related to non-point source pollution), managing stormwater and flooding, shoreline stabilization and eliminating hard edges, maintenance and removal of invasives, habitat protection and creation, and managing development, parking, and expansion of boardwalks.

6. ***What do you think are the top priorities to improve the built environment along the Lower Boardman River?*** Top priorities noted (in order of priority cited) include manage/restrict new development, ensure access along private land, provide more/better access, facilities, places, connections, protect/enhance natural environment and character (find balance), and make the waterfront universally accessible.

7. ***What is the most important thing to keep in mind as we develop a UNIFIED PLAN for the Lower Boardman River?*** Top priorities noted (in order of priority cited) include protect and enhance natural environment, water quality, health, implement a realistic plan with transparency, accountability/oversight, limit development and influence of economic interests, and use values-based plan to influence government policy

The detailed results of Round One of Public Engagement, including the public workshop, focus group meetings, and on-line survey can be found in Appendix 1.

The Public Engagement Round Two events and outreach were focused on the alternative plan concepts and policy recommendations that were built from the input received during Round One. The results of Round Two will be discussed in Chapter Four: ILLUSTRATED PLAN

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CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING THE LOWER BOARDMAN

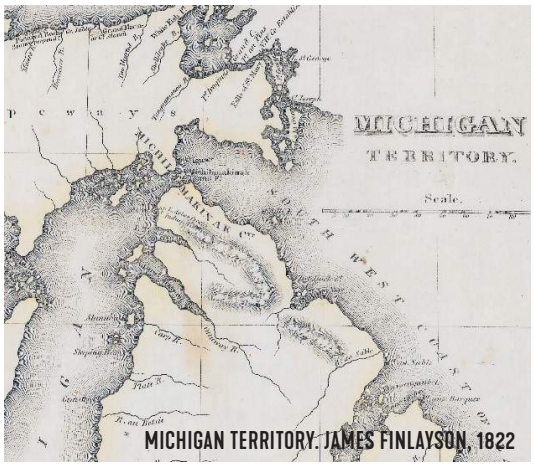
HISTORIC & CULTURAL CONTEXT

Much has been written and documented about the history of the region from the Aanishinaabek original inhabitants through the initial settlement of Europeans, development of logging enterprises, and industrial growth and use of the river.

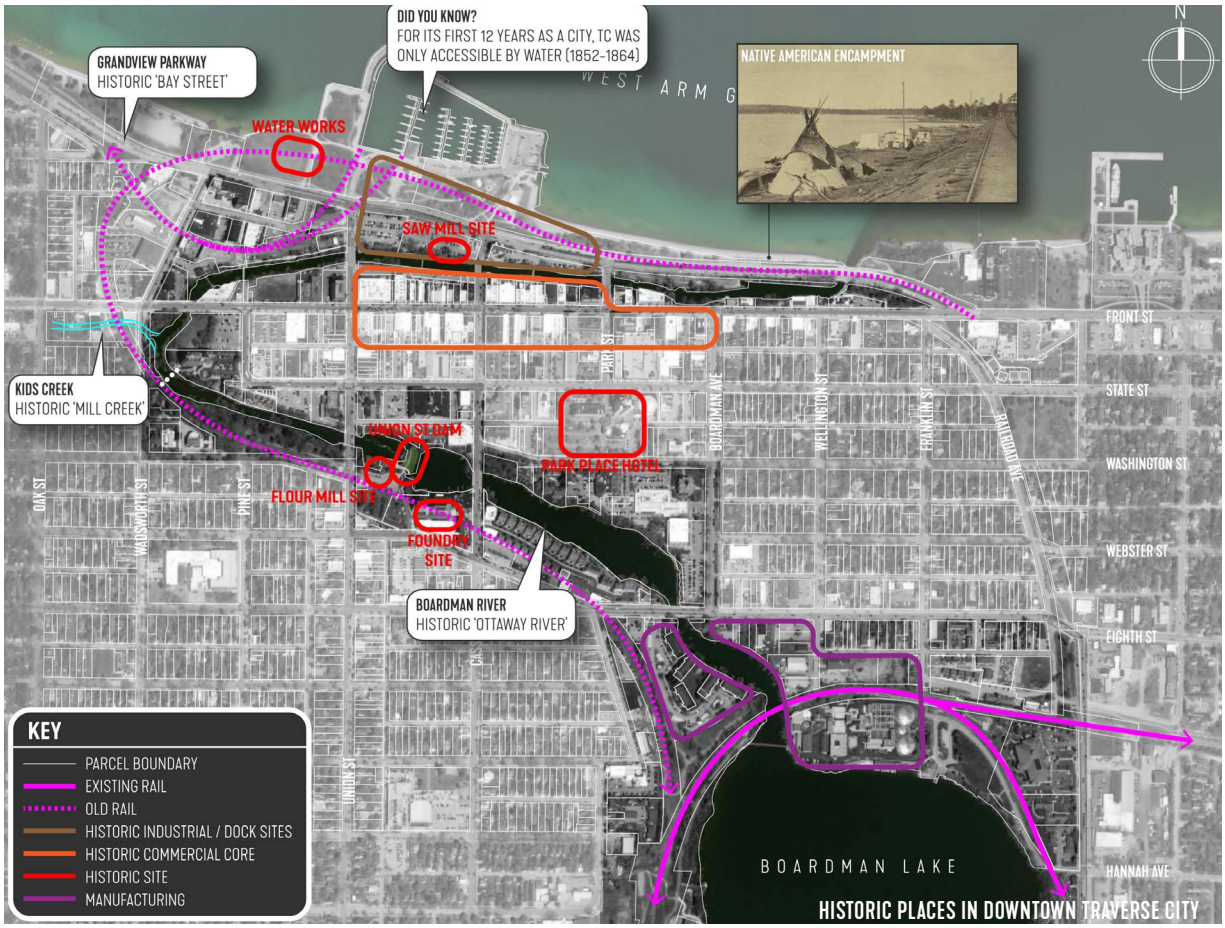
A detailed chronology of indigenous occupation of the Grand Traverse Region is presented by Helen Hornbeck Tanner (2009) which focuses on the history of cartography in Michigan and the Great Lakes. This work draws upon the accounts of Peter Dougherty that reveal the origins of the Grand Traverse Band stemming from the intermixing of Ojibwe (Chippewa) villages on the East Bay and Odawa (Ottawa) villages on the Leelanau Peninsula where it forms the west shore of Grand Traverse Bay. Tanner's work carries on to explain how this intermixing of tribal communities here and abroad occurred both as a result of and subsequent to a complex and fateful series of events beginning with the negotiation of the 1836 Treaty of Washington which led to the establishment of Michigan statehood in 1837 and culminated with the detailed surveying and mapping of the region in the period of 1838 to1852 when European settlement of the Grand Traverse Region began.

A historical synopsis of the Ottaway-Boardman River At Traverse City was prepared by the Conservation Resource Alliance in 2018, providing an excellent summary of the pre-settlement and early settlement time periods, documenting known use of the Lower Boardman-Ottaway by the Aanishinaabek people. The study also traces the European settlement of the area, the early logging and lumber processing activities, and the industrial development and damming of the river for power.

Based on early maps developed before the region was systematically surveyed and mapped in the late 1830's to early 1850's the Boardman River's name was described as the Ottaway, presumably based on pre-settlement contact with the Odawa (Ottawa) and Ojibwa (Chippewa) peoples at the time. In its earliest form, the segment of the river that we refer to as the Lower Boardman would have been a more sinuous and dynamic element of the natural landscape, winding through the sandy outwash landform and shifting location over time based on vegetative cover, storm events, water levels, and hydraulic flow characteristics.

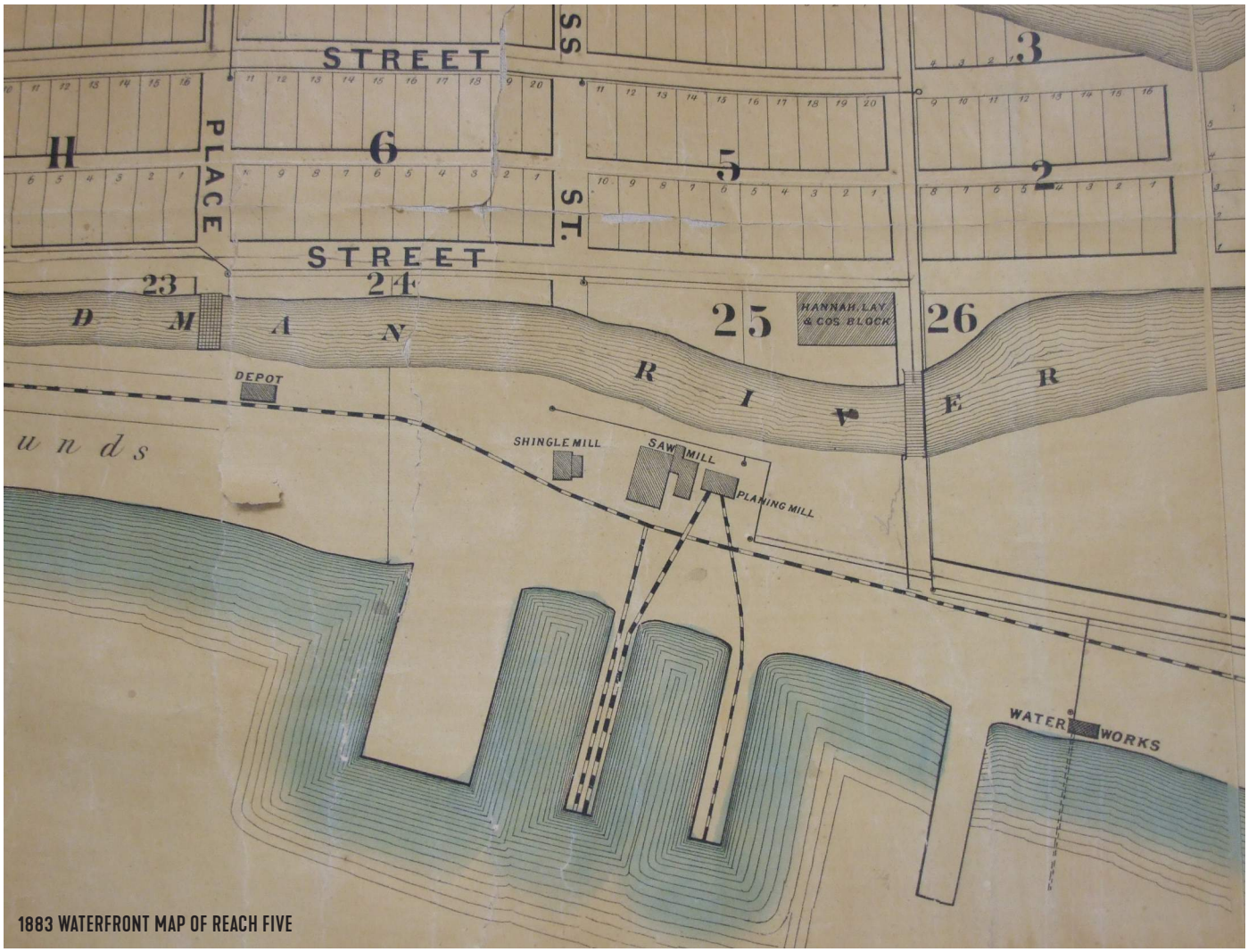


MICHIGAN TERRITORY. JAMES FINLAYSON, 1822



HISTORIC PLACES IN DOWNTOWN TRAVERSE CITY

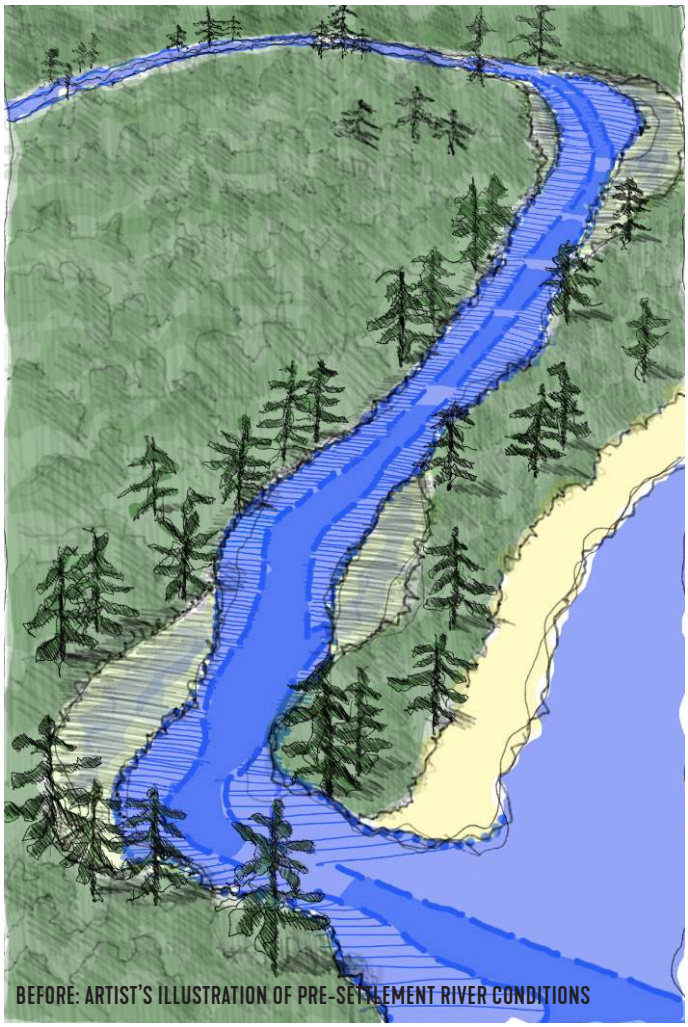
Based on the climate, soils, and geomorphology of the region, it has been documented that the area of the Lower Boardman was a White Pine-Red Pine Forest. This forest type was often found in areas of sandy and gravelly soils associated with glacial outwash plains. These lacustrine sand and gravel deposits are deposited sediments from the adjacent moraines that lie south of the project area and running east-west through the county. Evidence of this forest type is still visible in the larger white pines in the sandy upland areas adjacent to wetlands and shorelines of the Grand Traverse area. White Pine-Red Pine forests were highly sought after sources of timber in the late 19th century.



1883 WATERFRONT MAP OF REACH FIVE

The industrialization of the region altered the natural features of the river, its corridor, and its historic consideration as a sacred place. Key changes to the river include:

- Channelization of the river into a more limited space to expand the land available for commerce.
- Damming of the river to create power.
- Stabilizing the banks of the river to limit the lateral movement of the river to protect the investments made in the built environment.
- Construction of stormwater management systems to direct water from local streets, parking lots, and built areas into the river.



BEFORE: ARTIST'S ILLUSTRATION OF PRE-SETTLEMENT RIVER CONDITIONS

AFTER: DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

As a result of these changes, habitat and water quality were reduced due to the loss of filtering wetlands, untreated stormwater, sedimentation, the deposition of often contaminated soils to fill wetlands, and industrial use of the adjacent land and the river.

While the community has prospered due in part to the scenic beauty and natural resources of the region, the river has been impacted in terms of its environmental function. Much of these impacts cannot be undone; however, there are measures that can be taken to improve or recapture some of these important functions, while continuing to build on the economic value of the community.

The combination of a local commitment to environmental values, recent successes within the Boardman River watershed to restore environmental function, and the availability of federal, state, and philanthropic funding for such purposes have created momentum for further idea generation and implementation of improvements.

CURRENT USERS

AQUATIC AND RIPARIAN WILDLIFE

While the river corridor's environmental value has been compromised by the settlement and development of downtown Traverse City, there remains considerable diversity in the plant, mammalian, avian, and fish communities. This study does not include an assessment of existing populations, but observations and experiences from similar and analogous urban environments would indicate both existing habitat value, and the potential for significant enhancement of habitat in the corridor.

PEDESTRIANS AND NON-MOTORIZED TRAVELERS

The existing boardwalk and path system was established decades ago and has successfully created waterfront access for the public and was the first step in recognizing the post-industrial value that waterfronts can bring to a community. The boardwalk system has continued to expand and undergo maintenance and rehabilitation. The path and boardwalk system is not continuous from end to end of the Lower Boardman, and the system is not particularly clear for the new visitor to the community.

WATER- BASED RECREATORS

Water-based recreators include small power boats (south of the Union Street dam) and non-motorized watercraft that come in a variety of forms—kayaks, canoes, paddle boards and similar (throughout the corridor). With the removal of dams upstream, there has been a growing interest in non-motorized boating of the Boardman River, and several private rental providers have developed a business model that includes paddling through the Lower Boardman River out to Grand Traverse Bay. This increase in use has come with issues often cited by local residents, including noise, public drunkenness, and other poor behaviors.

STORMWATER

The land area of downtown has always drained into the Boardman River. The development of downtown sealed much of the surface so that today a higher percentage of the stormwater goes directly to the river (rather than absorbing into the landscape and groundwater), and at an accelerated speed. This accelerated rate of conveyance increases the potential for erosion, but more importantly to this segment of the river is the impact of the pollutants and sediments carried from parking lots and streets directly into the river and out into the bay, impacting water quality and connections to the Great Lakes and beyond. The city has adopted and implemented pollution control best practices in the community and on downtown streets and parking lots as they are improved but impacts to the river continue.

KAYAKERS PASSING UPTOWN

EXISTING CONDITIONS BY REACH

For purposes of characterizing the river, describing existing conditions and considering physical improvements, the UNIFIED PLAN categorized the river into six distinct segments, referred to as reaches. Each reach has a set of common elements in terms of river conditions, adjacent land uses, and bank conditions that make it unique from the other segments of the river.

The planning consultants mapped characteristics of each reach downtown that influence the water quality of the river and groundwater, including storm sewer outfalls, locations of parking lots, land uses, quality and location of existing buffers, steep slopes, and land ownership patterns.

The assessment of existing conditions is categorized into three key topics: River Conditions and Habitat; Access, Open Space and Recreation; and, Land Use and Development Systems.

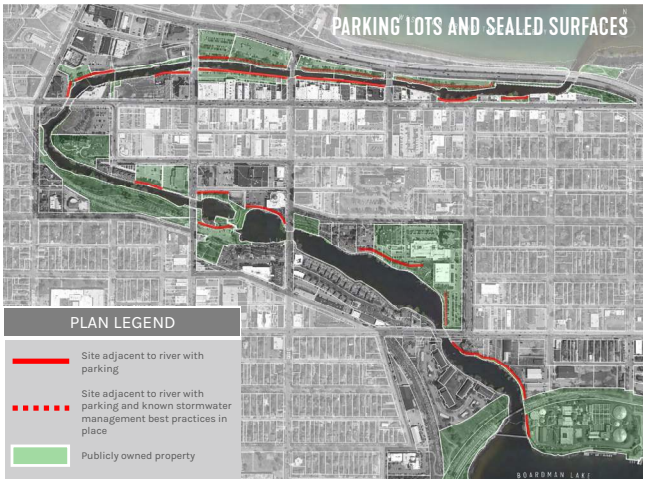
A series of maps that illustrate the existing conditions of the river and adjacent land are provided in Appendix 2 of this report.

RIVER CONDITIONS AND HABITAT

The study of River Conditions and Habitat includes river depth and velocity, bank conditions, floodplain characteristics, topography, land cover, fish species present, storm sewer outfalls, and vegetation. Three maps were prepared to summarize river and bank conditions and pollution threats, including Parking Lots and Sealed Surfaces, Lawns, and Steep Banks.

A detailed table and spreadsheet of conditions was prepared to summarize the conditions found in each reach (see Appendices). Also in the Appendices are detailed maps of each reach which illustrate the existing conditions of the corridor both for river conditions and habitat and non-motorized circulation and connectivity.

It is important to recognize that the banks of the Lower Boardman River were stabilized during the development of the community to provide for predictable behavior from the river and protect the economic investment of buildings and street infrastructure. As part of this process, the edges of the river were filled with a mix of soils, construction debris, and materials of unknown origin that were covered in vegetation over time, masking the manipulation of the shoreline. Today, these shorelines appear "natural" but are likely filled with materials that may be environmentally suspect. That said, many such shorelines across the state have been effectively rehabilitated to create valuable habitat and recreational access.



REACH ONE

This reach is located at the northern end of Boardman Lake, as the water body transitions into the Lower Boardman River. This reach is heavily influenced by the Union Street Dam and is essentially a slow-moving impoundment that is wider and deeper than other reaches, averaging a water depth of 7.1 feet. The riverbanks are low banks that include trees and shrubs that protect the banks of the river. Adjacent to the back is commercial and residential development that supports open lawns and parking lots, increasing the risk of pollution and sediments being contributed to the river.

Within this reach is land that is a public park, currently used for a non-motorized trail and informal park activities.

REACH TWO

Reach Two is similar in river conditions to Reach One but is more intensively developed. Nearly half of this reach has vertical walls at or near the waters edge, that inhibits the movement of mammals and reptiles from the water to the riparian lands. About one-quarter of the shoreline is characterized by a steep and high bank that is over 10-feet in height. Most likely much of this high bank is the result of fill materials placed to increase the buildable land near the shore. There are a number of lawn areas and parking lots that drain to the river in this reach.

Conditions within the river include fallen trees near and adjacent to the shoreline that are frequently used as basking logs by turtles and are likely cover for fish.

Reach Two includes the Union Street Dam, the area of which has been studied thoroughly as part of the FishPass project.

REACH TWO VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT CENTER

REACH THREE

Reach Three includes Hannah Park and the western bend of the river just south of Front Street. It is located down stream of the Union Street Dam and consequently, the velocity of the river picks up considerably while the depth of the river drops to an average of 3.1-feet. Kids Creek drains into this reach on the west bank of the river via a culvert that has been designed to exclude the passing of sea lamprey into the creek.

The river edges of Reach Three are the most topographically diverse containing extended floodplain zones, low and high vegetated banks, and vertical walls. The floodplain extends beyond the top of the bank in over 35% of the total linear shoreline of this reach. The northern banks of this reach are highly developed with several parking lots and eight street and parking lot outfalls into the river. The adjacent land of this reach is nearly 50% publicly owned land with naturalized edges buffering the river from adjacent lawns.

There is great opportunity for habitat creation at the park, particularly on the west end. The park could maintain its "English Park" character on the eastern half and have more intensity improved habitat on the western half. Fish tend to stage near the Kids Creek outfall structure and this area is a popular place to fish.

HISTORIC PHOTO OF HANNAH PARK

REACH FOUR

Reach Four marks a transition into the flatter land heading toward the mouth of the river, and the dominant edge characteristic is low vegetated banks, followed by floodplain edge. That said, about 20% of the bank in this reach is vertical wall. The velocity of the river in this area is the highest of the Lower Boardman River averaging 1.72-feet per second, while the river depth is at its shallowest at an average of 2.9 feet.

The land adjacent to the river in Reach Four is densely developed, and is nearly all sealed surfaces including development, proposed development, and parking lots.

Even with the density of development, there is river frontage behind the Traverse City Light and Power site that could offer opportunities for habitat improvement. A narrow strip of public land on the north side of the river provides opportunities for habitat enhancement and enhanced access.

This reach of the river is known as a good place to fish. The river structure, currents, and fish weir result in fish tending to stage in this area as they move upriver. Many anglers and observers congregate near the fish weir in the fall during the salmon run and in the spring for steelhead (rainbow trout.). Increasing fish access in this reach is important.

REACH FOUR VIEW OF FISH WEIR

REACH FIVE

Reach Five is the place where the river passes through the core of downtown and is the narrowest stretch of river in the Lower Boardman. 55% of the banks are vertical walls, while the remaining edges are either low vegetated banks or floodplain edge. The river velocity is slowing from Reach Four to an average rate of 1.13-feet per second, and the depth of the river averages 4-feet.

The south bank of the river is continuously developed with alleys and parking, while the north bank of the river is all publicly owned, being used for parking, the Chamber of Commerce, and farmers market. Reach Five (and Six) includes the most storm sewer outfalls at around 35 (per city records). While many of these outfalls are roof drains and do not contribute a great deal of pollution, many are from adjacent street and parking lots.

The public ownership of half of the riverbank creates an opportunity for habitat development in an area of high pedestrian activity.

REACH FIVE VIEW OF VERTICAL WALL ON THE 100 BLOCK

REACH SIX

The river continues slowing in velocity and widens slightly as it nears the mouth into Grand Traverse Bay. While the north bank of the river is fronted by parking lots, these lots have been improved in the last decade to include stormwater pollution control mechanisms. Approximately 65% of the riverbank is vertical wall, most of which is on the south bank to support adjacent commercial development.

The public land on the north side of Front Street near the end of Boardman Avenue has a stable bank; however, the public land near the end of Wellington Street is eroding under the existing docks. The existing coastal wetland at the mouth of the river is an excellent opportunity for habitat protection, enhancement, and learning.

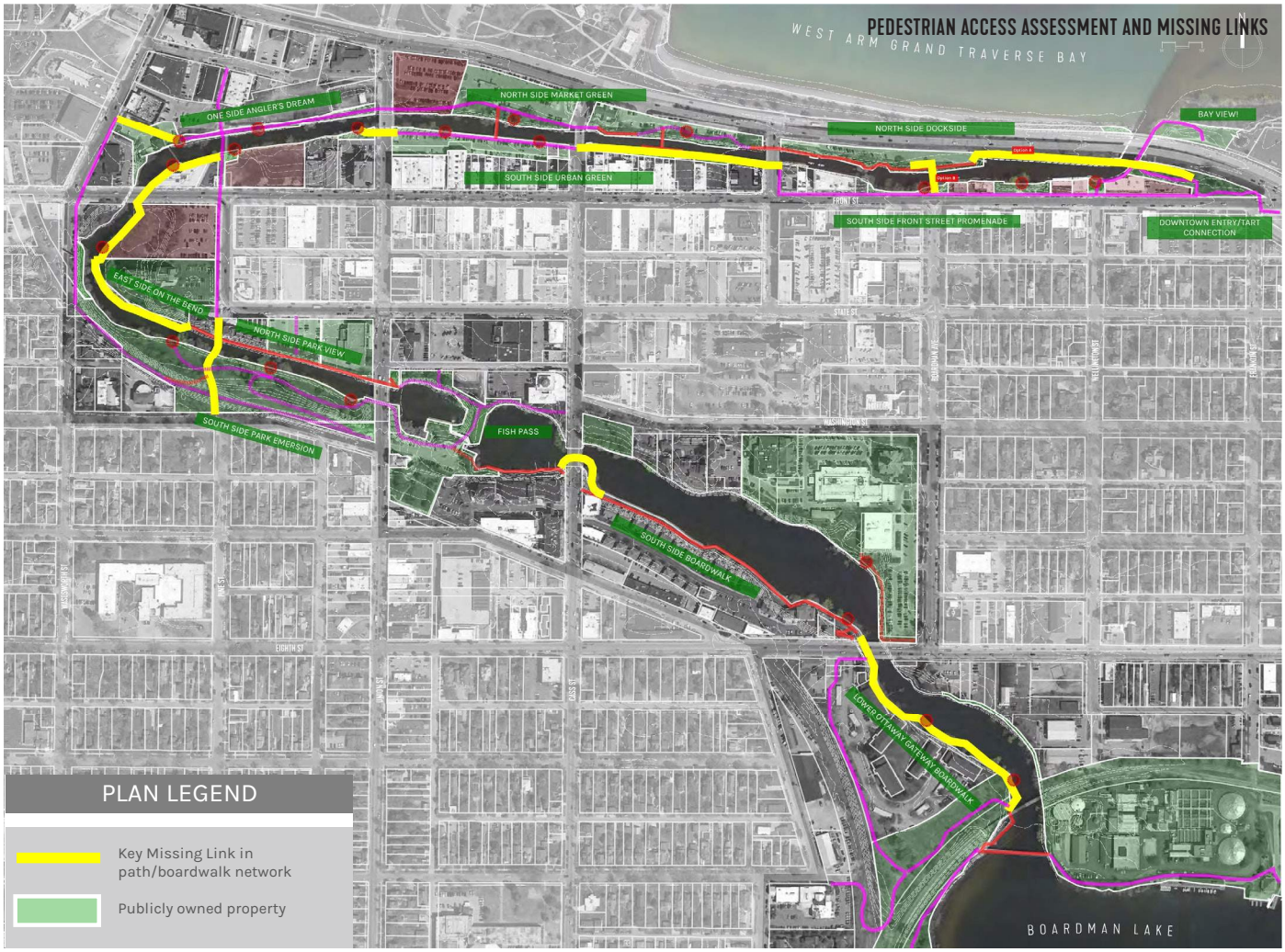
The improvements to the area could include helping to manage water quality from the Grandview Parkway (MDOT).

REACH SIX VIEW OF MURCHIE BRIDGE

ACCESS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

The study of Access, Open Space and Recreation includes the presence of paths and boardwalks; connections to other walks, paths, neighborhoods, and downtown; known favorable fishing places; existing parks and related recreational amenities; boat launches and access points; pedestrian bridges and connections to vehicular bridges; gaps in pedestrian connectivity; and, conflict points between pedestrians and vehicles.

A map of the project area was prepared to identify the existing conditions, and to note where gaps in recreation access occur along the corridor. Below is a brief description of each reach relative to access, open space and recreation.



REACH ONE

The western side of Reach One includes a non-motorized trail that links downtown to a trail network that extends along the shores of Boardman Lake. This trail is not however, along the river, but on the west side of the Riverine Apartment complex just south of Eighth Street. There is a public access easement along the riverbank on the east side of the apartments, but a trail was never built in the easement.

A trail through the public park land south of the apartments links users back to the river near the rail viaduct. The parkland near the rail bridge could be upgraded and thought of as a gateway to downtown Traverse City. The Boardman Lake trails on either side of the lake meet at this point.

The design of the Eighth Street bridge allows for the construction of a path on the western side of the bridge, which would then link to a boardwalk and trail to the north.

There is a very narrow piece of city owned land on the east side of the river extending from the MDOT rail corridor north toward Eighth Street. This land does not connect to Eighth Street, so use of this strip would include challenges to connect at Eighth Street on the north, and to connect through the rail right-of-way on the south.

REACH ONE VIEW UNDER EIGHTH STREET BRIDGE

REACH TWO

There is a boardwalk on the east side of the river at the government center that, while being a dead end or cul-de-sac, does provide a quiet place to enjoy the river. Grand Traverse County is considering improvements at the government center which include barrier free access to the existing boardwalk area.

On the southwestern bank of the river there is a continuous boardwalk connecting Eighth Street to Cass Street. The boardwalk does not provide universal access up to Cass Street or under the bridge to the boardwalk west of Cass Street. Dealing with the grade change at the Cass Street bridge is a challenge due to the design of the historic bridge. Options should be explored that may include a tunnel under the road, boardwalk out into the middle of the river, and/or extensive ramping.

The southwestern boardwalk is not well used, which may be in part due to the perception that it is private property. Signage and wayfinding are needed throughout the corridor, and this could help with the private property perception noted above.

On the north bank, just east of Cass Street, is the American Legion Park. While public input indicated that this park should remain passive in nature, the plan should consider long-term uses and goals for the American Legion Park, even if in the short-term the park is going to be more active due to a potential temporary kayak launch related to the FishPass project.

The noise and energy from kayakers are especially felt in this reach due to the concentration of residents living along the waterfront.

REACH TWO VIEW OF ACCESS IMPEDIMENT

REACH THREE

This reach includes Hannah Park, which provides an unpaved path along the high bank to the southern edge of the park to connect Union Street to Wadsworth Street. The trail through the park, a former rail bed, is an official city trail. There are several overlook decks along the river in Hannah Park, but these decks are not universally accessible. Residents like the low intensity use of Hannah Park and green space character of the park. It is the most intact natural bank of the river in the project area. The park does get used throughout the year, being a great place to sled in the winter. The park is not used for a lot of community-wide events.

While there are paths that are in the park and on the north side of the river, there are a large number of dead ends in the trail, as well as several missed opportunities to connect the trail pieces together to create a clear, user-friendly system.

For example, while the new boardwalk on the north side of the river (near the Uptown development) provides universal access to an area that previously did not offer it, to the west of the new ramp the path is a dead end. Current plans for improving the Front Street bridge include an underpass on the east side of the river, which could become an important link in the overall pedestrian system if the new underpass can be connected to the dead end near Uptown.

Further, the public noted that a non-motorized connection over the river, connecting the two legs of Pine Street, would fit well within existing cycling and walking use patterns in this area.

The public parking lot on State Street is designated park land, but parking may not be the best use for this property.

REACH FOUR

On the southern bank of the river there is very little that is accessible by the public. In the north and western banks access is limited due to lack of public property and past efforts to remediate environmental concerns which created a cap that should not be disturbed. The northern shoreline has an existing path that connects from Union Street to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) fish weir, but then leaves visitors in a parking lot without clear direction of how to stay engaged with the river.

The community is very happy with the Pine Street pedestrian bridge - it is both attractive and useful, as it helps connect the path on the northern bank and the warehouse district to Front Street. There have been discussions related to the benefits and costs of pursuing public access on both banks of the river in this reach, and this question was posed to the participants in the second round of public engagement.

This reach of the river is very popular for anglers, and adequate access for this activity should be provided.

For river recreational boating users the fish weir poses issues getting through the weir, especially in times of high water.

REACH FIVE

The pedestrian paths and boardwalks through this reach provide some level of connectivity on the north side of the river, but do not provide universal access, and the boardwalk on the 200 block was recently underwater due to high water levels.

On the south side of the river a sidewalk directly adjacent to the 100 block parking lot/alley is provided, but it is narrow and subject to degradation related to the undermining of the retaining wall. On the 200 block there is limited room for both service and pedestrians; however, the alley is used by both.

The pedestrian bridges connecting the south side of the river to the north on both blocks are a function and visual feature. On the 100 block the bridge connects from the parking lots/farmers market to a pedestrian alley leading to Front Street. On the 200 block pedestrians are left in the alley, which does not give the sense that pedestrians are welcome there.

The issues with the wall and sewer undermining provide an opportunity to rethink this area to better serve both pedestrians and service vehicles. The 100 block along the river is the greatest opportunity for positive change, such as removing the wall, increasing landscape and habitat, and reducing parking directly adjacent to the river.

A memorandum report on the condition of the wall and recommendations for repair is included in Appendix 3 of this report.

REACH FIVE VIEW OF THE 200 BLOCK OF FRONT STREET

REACH SIX

Access in this reach of the water is limited to a boardwalk that connects Park Street to the boat launch and a pocket park and walk near the end of Wellington Street. This path connects to the bay and the TART trail via an underpass beneath the Murchie Bridge, which is limited in use during periods of high water. The boardwalk on the north shore doubles in use as seasonal boating slips.

On the south side of the river, Front Street acts as the river path, and there are four places where publicly owned lands give visual access to the river.

The public land near the real estate office tends to be underutilized due to the noise from traffic on Front Street and the Grandview Parkway. MDOT improvements to the Grandview Parkway are expected in 2023, and the design of the Front Street intersection includes some traffic calming measures.

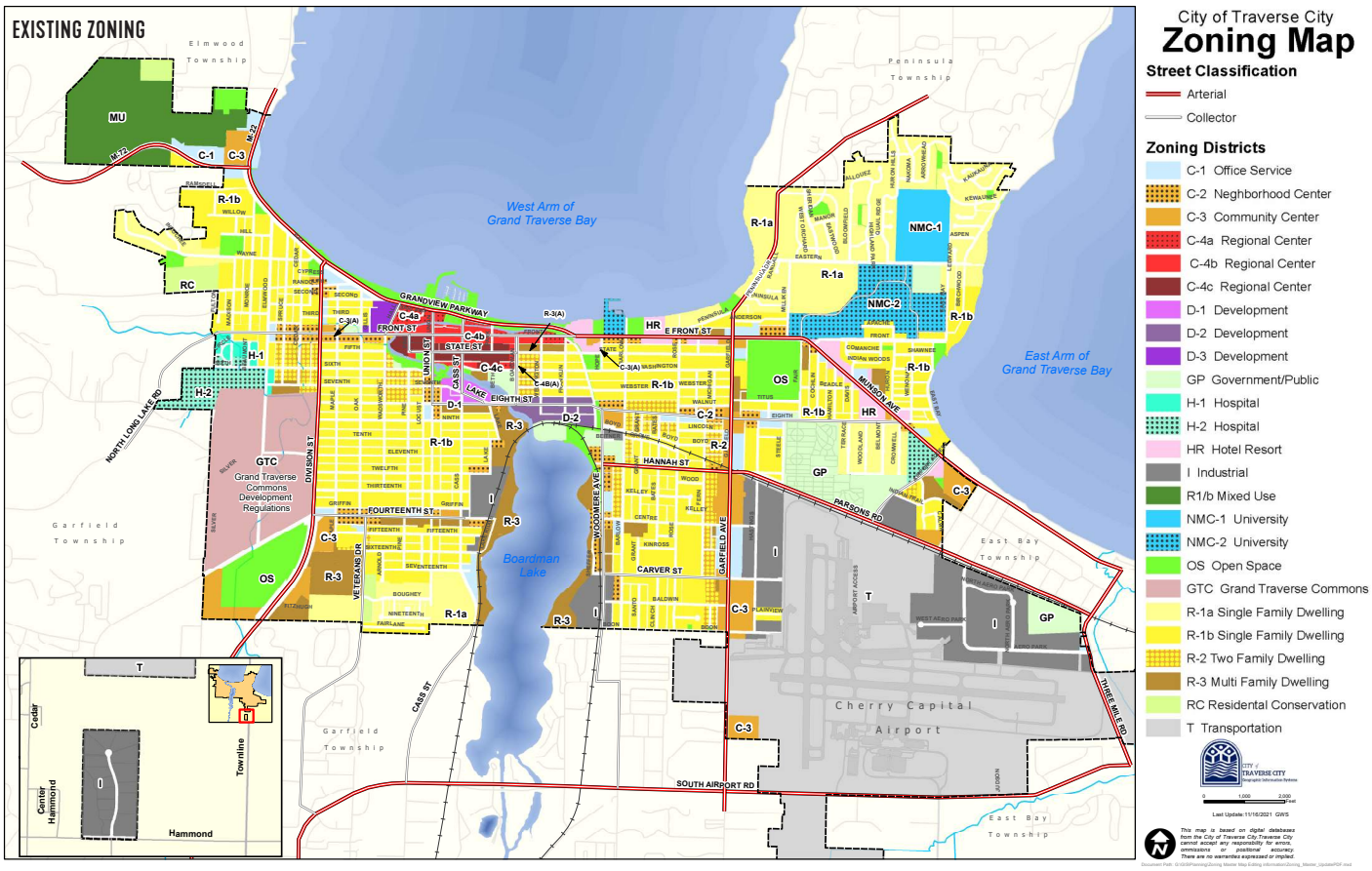
The boat launch on the north side of the river is well used, though periodic high water levels inhibit some boat traffic getting out to the bay under the Murchie Bridge. The launch is often used by kayakers, especially when the waves on the bay are high. The launch parking lot was recently improved; some hazardous fill material may exist under the lot, so the asphalt is serving to seal the surface.

Overall, this area could benefit from greater connection to the waterfront along the bay, the TART trail, and from the north side of the river to the south side.

PEDESTRIAN BOARDWALK-BOAT SLIPS IN REACH SIX

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS

The study of Land Use and Development Systems includes land use and development density patterns, zoning classifications, sense of place and architectural character, development setbacks, areas of increased or likely development pressure, existing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, and related land use and development policies.



REACH ONE

Land use in this reach is distinctly different depending on the side of the river you are referencing. To the west is the Riverine Apartment complex, built on land zoned R-3 Multiple Family Dwelling. This development is 2- to 3-story buildings set in a park like setting, with a 25-foot setback from the ordinary high water mark. Between the apartments and the railroad is a narrow public park.

On the east side of the river is a property developed for commercial and office uses, zoned D-2 Depot Development with a 25-foot river setback. This is more densely developed than the west shore, but the river acts as an effective buffer so that the two uses and scale do not appear incongruous. The Depot Development is still experiencing new investment as buildings are under construction as of the date of this report.

Significant changes to the land use and density are not anticipated in this reach.

REACH ONE VIEW SOUTH FROM EIGHTH STREET

REACH TWO

The south side of the river is home to a reasonably recent residential development that sets back 25-feet from the river and has an appealing visual character, though one that creates a solid wall of architecture along the riverbank. The north side is an eclectic mix of uses, with the local government center, a church, low scale residential development, and a small park. The buildings for the government center and church are not overtly oriented to the water, and the growth of trees and steep banks screen the parking and access drives from view. Each of these uses has a 25-foot river setback.

The wide nature of the river in this reach creates a passive ambiance. Significant changes to the land use and density are not anticipated in this reach.

REACH THREE

The southern and western shoreline of the river is primarily publicly owned property, with this largest parcel being Hannah Park. This shoreline is the most natural in character and least manipulated by the growth of the community.

The northern and eastern shore is a mix of uses, including the U.S. Post Office, public parking, the recent Uptown mixed-use development, Riverview Terrace residential high rise, and vacant land in the process of being developed. The privately held land on this side of the river is zoned C-4c Regional Center, a district within which buildings up to 100-foot in height could be allowed with a Special Land Use permit and voter approval. The C-4a district requires a 10-foot river setback.

The view of the post office from the river is dominated by a high concrete wall. Uptown, though architecturally attractive, is strongly visually present on the river. The 9-story Riverview Terrace tower is set back from the river amidst a park like setting. Together these uses and structures provide a great deal of visual variety along the river—appealing in places, but not well unified.

Preliminary site plans for the new development indicate a 25-foot setback from the river, and a potential pedestrian path along the river.

REACH FOUR

The southern shoreline of this reach is the western edge of downtown proper. Buildings include the Lake Michigan Credit Union (a contemporary 4-story building), the 1-story J and S Hamburg restaurant, the 1-story Traverse City Record Eagle, and the 4-story historic structure home to 5/3 Bank. This stretch of Front Street also includes a large vacant parcel of land (124 West Front Street) that is in the process of development approvals. These properties are all zoned C-4b Regional Center, a district within which buildings up to 68-foot in height could be allowed with a Special Land Use permit and voter approval). The C-4b district requires a 10-foot river setback.

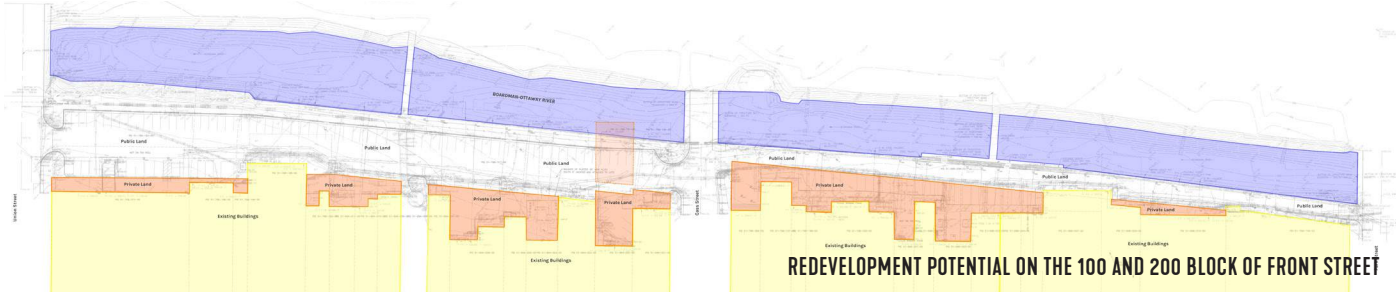
The north shoreline includes a range of use, including the 1-story TraverseVision, the DNR fish weir, parking lots, and the new Breakwater development. The properties are zoned C-4a and C-4b Regional Center and require a 10-foot setback. A long, narrow stretch of property rests between Breakwater and the river, effectively creating a 25-to 35-foot setback.

Significant changes to the land use and density are anticipated in this reach in the near-term as vacant land is developed.

REACH FIVE

The northern shoreline of this reach is publicly owned land; however, the parcel on Union Street is not designated park land and could potentially be sold by the city for private development. This parcel is zoned C-4a Regional Center which allows a 45-foot building height and a 10-foot river setback.

With the exception of a single parcel of land on the 100 block, all of the southern shoreline in this reach is publicly owned land and is currently used for building and business serving and for parking. The 100 and 200 block of Front Street is located in the core of downtown, and the privately held land fronting the alley and parking are a mix of 1- to 4-story buildings, many of which have a distinctly historic character. Given development market conditions in downtown, it would not be surprising if a number of the 1-story buildings were redeveloped in a denser fashion, and many of the lots are currently open land, providing opportunities for economic redevelopment.



REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL ON THE 100 AND 200 BLOCK OF FRONT STREET

REACH FIVE VIEW OF BUSINESSES AND RIVER

REACH SIX

The northern shoreline is public property, including the parking lot and boat launch on the western half and MDOT right-of-way for Grandview Parkway on the eastern half. Land development on the Front Street frontage is squeezed between the street and river on very shallow lots. The land is zoned C-4a Regional Center which allows a 45-foot building height and a 10-foot setback.

The quaint, low key, coastal village character of the development along the river gives this reach a unique character among other areas of downtown, almost "Fishtown" like. Recent construction of a larger scaled commercial office building indicates that although there are lot constrictions, the potential for redevelopment is strong on the east end of Front Street.

REACH SIX EXAMPLE OF DIVERSE CHARACTER

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CHAPTER 3

ACTION PLAN

INTRO

The Action Plan outlined in this report is based on the extensive public input gathered during the outreach efforts, the professional recommendations from the planning consultants, and the guidance of the Leadership Team. The Action Plan should be utilized to solicit further input from the community, key stakeholder organizations, and the governmental agencies that will ultimately be responsible for the plan's implementation.

As evident by the content of the public input gathered, the community is moving toward a "water centric" perspective of the river and downtown. The values expressed by the public have been integrated into this Action Plan. The plan provides for both the human use of the river and the potential for preserving and enhancing the natural habitat.

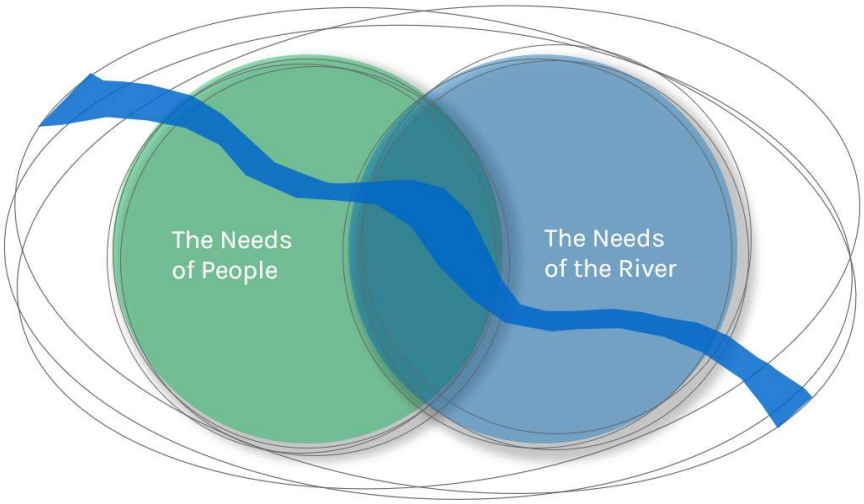
The Action Plan is based on the premise that the environmental value of the river corridor is central to the community; this value should be reflected and reinforced through the management of change in downtown. When the community considers all beneficiaries to the river (including nature) in the design process for future downtown and riverfront projects, then the Lower Boardman will reflect the value placed on water, land, nature, health, and wellness.

The "water centric" values, best practices, and development guidelines integrated into this plan will translate, over time, into better designs for public places, such as streetscapes, public park spaces, pathways, and transportation facilities, ensuring that new development creates a better interface between the urban fabric and the river.

Evolution of River

- Life Sustaining for culture, food, water, and navigation.
- Support for industry to transport logs and goods, convey storm water, and provide power.
- Recreational resource for boating, walking, and viewing, and a powerful economic draw.
- Re-centering the river as an ecological system

- Finding the Balance in the Urban Environment



RIVER CONDITIONS & HABITAT

The river conditions in the project area have been assessed as to their overall condition and relative habitat value. The project area includes the urban core of Traverse City where historic development patterns did not fully capitalize on the river's potential for recreation and access or recognize its environmental value. The impact of development has left a large percentage of the corridor with vertical walls and hardened, steep slopes but has also created some interesting urban places that the community values, such as the boardwalk, coffee shops, and restaurants that overlook the river.

The river corridor in the project area also includes some areas of natural beauty and value. Some of these areas have been impacted by community development in limited ways, while other seemingly natural areas are urban fill masked over by trees and vegetative growth.

Community feedback from online surveys and at public workshops has strongly supported the idea of "greening" the riverbanks through downtown to create riparian habitat and improve water quality of the river. While human access and use, and preserving and creating habitat are not mutually exclusive, most residents who have participated in the planning process are in support of habitat as a priority over public access. This bias has several contributing factors—environmental stewardship values, the desire to maintain a passive and quiet setting along the river, and relative beauty of trees and landscape over walls and paving (to name a few).

The section below outlines the basic direction for preserving and creating natural habitat in the project area.

CORE VALUES

The following Core Values, established at the outset of the planning process, most align with the preservation and restoration of the environmental assets of the river:

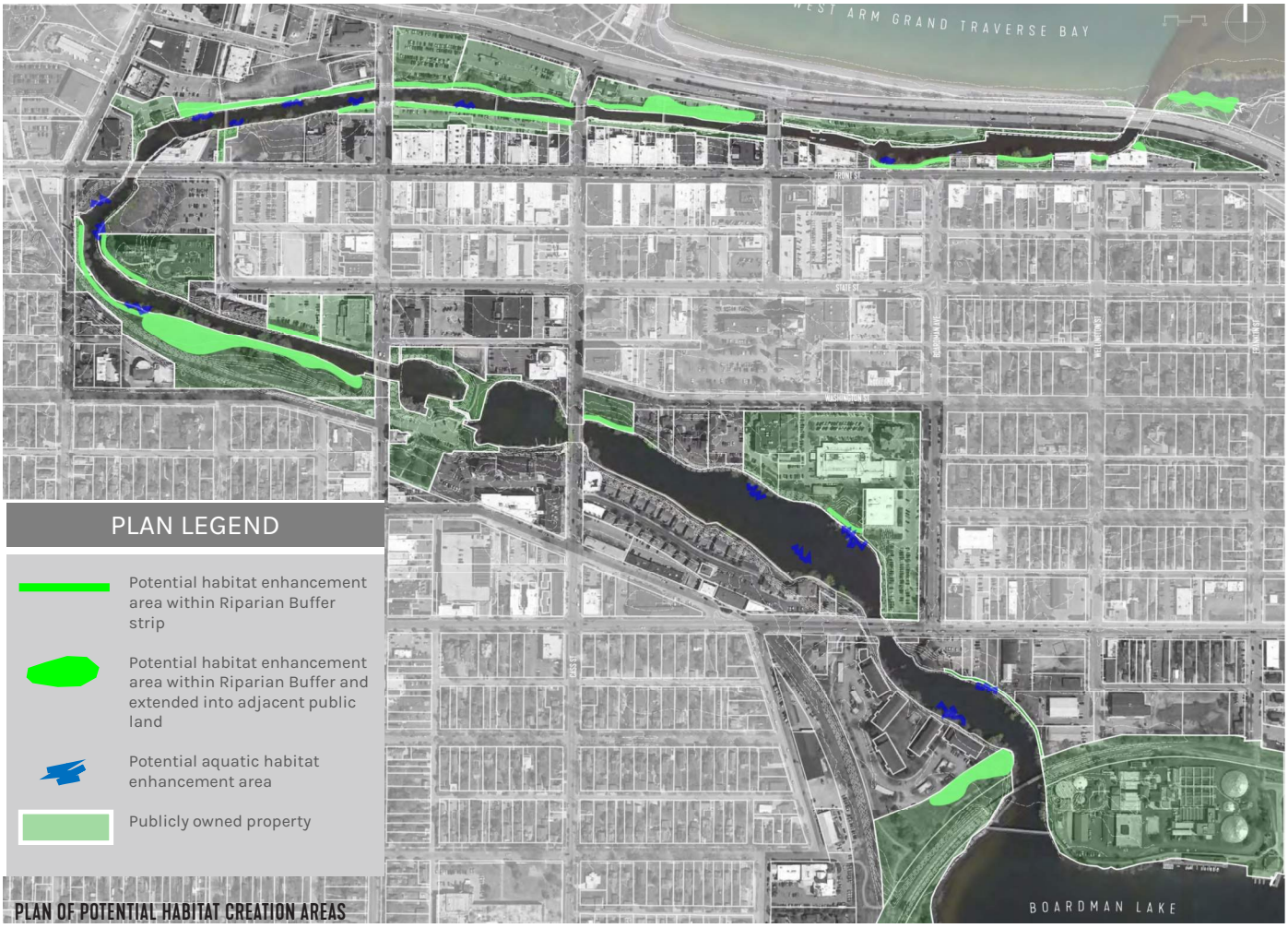
- Be consistent with best riparian and aquatic science, best water and land management practices, and be harmonious with the river.
- Be explicit to the commitment to improve, restore, and protect the health and integrity of the riparian ecosystem of the lower river.
- Manage invasive vegetation, protect and retain existing native vegetation, and add native vegetation where possible.
- Ensure that the natural flow of the river is enhanced and not curtailed or impeded by any element of the plan.

PROJECTS

The UNIFIED PLAN includes a physical illustrated plan that outlines public improvement projects within the project area, including both habitat and access/open space enhancements (this plan is described further in Chapter Four: The Illustrated Plan). Below is a summary of the broad categories of ideas recommended in the UNIFIED PLAN.

- Improve degraded and hardened riverbanks on public property with green solutions and enhanced riparian habitat.

  The illustration below identifies key opportunities along the corridor for habitat improvement based on slopes, bank conditions, flow and depth characteristics of the river, adjacent land uses, public activity along the river, and the general condition of the plant communities.



PLAN OF POTENTIAL HABITAT CREATION AREAS

As noted above, much of the existing riverbank, though covered in vegetation, is compromised in its value for habitat. Degraded banks of the river should be restored with bioengineering solutions where possible, and include consciously placed habitat structures, such as bird houses and hibernacula.

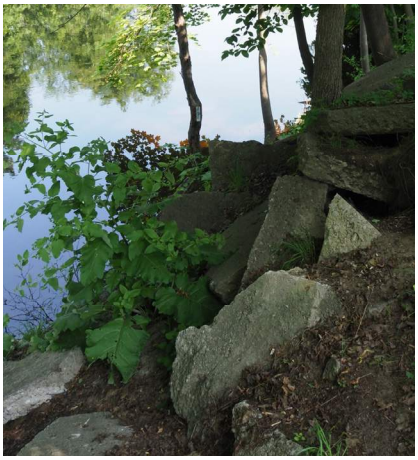
Other reaches, including existing floodplains and low slope banks, provide opportunities to create a diverse mix of habitat types (including wetlands).

Vertical retaining walls are located throughout the project area, typically where space is limited or where past need for land uses (such as parking) were considered very important. In some places these walls are necessary to support existing buildings and are in good condition. In other locations the walls are in poor condition and are being undermined by the river. Finally, in some areas walls were installed to create more land (or for convenience) but are not particularly necessary. In each case, vertical walls (as designed) offer no real habitat benefit.

The ongoing assessment of the walls between Union and Park Streets should be expanded in the future to assess the condition and purpose of other existing vertical walls on public property in the project area.

The UNIFIED PLAN advocates for the removal of vertical walls, where feasible, replacing the walls with bioengineered riparian edges. In places where vertical walls are required, but must be replaced, there are innovative wall design techniques that retain soil while offering some habitat value.

- Holds soils in place with roots
- Stabilizes toe of slope to reduce scours and undercutting



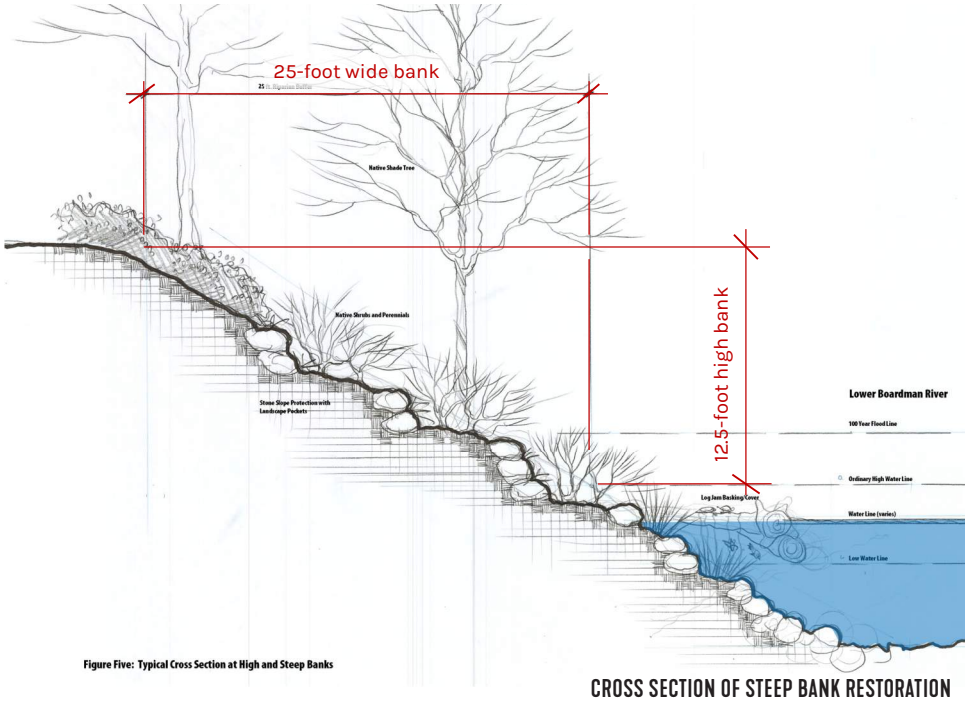


Figure Five: Typical Cross Section at High and Steep Banks

CROSS SECTION OF STEEP BANK RESTORATION

- Create more green space with enhanced habitat and sustainable landscapes where public land exists along the river corridor .
  The public strongly believes that surface parking is not as valuable along the river corridor as green space. While the need for parking to support the downtown and the bayfront amenities is clear, the existing parking lot sites are an excellent opportunity to create more natural riparian and wetland habitat.

  To implement a change in parking along the river, the DDA will need to collaborate with the city, local stakeholders, and the farmers market to consider the best and highest use for the land where parking lots exist along the river, emphasizing the value of creating habitat and protecting water quality. Further, the community should consider new parking facilities (not adjacent to the river) that could allow the development of more green space along the river.

  In the near-term, interim sustainable improvements to parking lots could be implemented to manage impacts of stormwater, such as enhanced landscape buffers.

  For all publicly owned river edges, the UNIFIED PLAN recommends habitat improvements including ideas for improving fisheries and aquatic resources, riparian bank improvements for birds, mammals and reptiles, and the potential for creating floodplain and wetland types likely present in pre-settlement times.

- Coordinate habitat enhancements with the FishPass (assuming implementation).
  The development of the FishPass project, assuming it is implemented, offers an opportunity to enhance aquatic species habitat within the river, up- and down-stream from the dam. These improvements should focus on the needs of the target fish species and contribute to the scientific research conducted by the FishPass. There is also an opportunity to improve riparian habitat between the Union Street and Cass Street bridges to balance any additional hardened edges built as part of the FishPass.

  The DDA and city should continue to coordinate efforts with the FishPass project team.

- Encourage private development to protect and create habitat.

- Provide for in-stream habitat improvements.
  Although the edges of the river are reasonably fixed compared to pre-settlement conditions, the river remains an ever changing environment based on changing water levels, flood events, falling trees, and other influences. With each riparian bank and recreational access project implemented, the projects should also consider and include in-stream habitat improvements such as rock vanes, managed log cover/basking structures, stone treatments of vertical wall bases, spawning beds, and related techniques to increase the desired populations of fish, reptiles, and macroinvertebrates.

GUIDELINES

- Use native landscape plants and habitat enhancement structures on new public projects.
  - Develop a plant palette of desired native plants, based on slope stabilization characteristics, urban conditions compatibility, aesthetic and cultural values, and habitat value (e.g. for pollinators).
  - Develop a list of target fisheries, aviary, mammal and reptile species and habitat structure types to be incorporated into the corridor (e.g., osprey nesting).
  - Incorporate native plants and habitat structures (where appropriate) into each project.
- Develop design and maintenance guidelines for riparian landscape for use in maintaining public sites and guiding private landowners.
  - Benchmark other communities' efforts to promote native landscape in the public and private realms.
  - Develop guidelines for design and maintenance based on UNIFIED PLAN and input from stakeholders.
  - Promote use of native landscape and guidelines through local advocacy organizations, garden clubs, and related organizations.

EXAMPLE OF PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT WITH NATIVE LANDSCAPE

ACCESS, OPEN SPACE & THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

There is a need to expand facilities on the river corridor to accommodate access, movement along the riverbank, and on-river recreation. However, actions to meet this need must be tempered within the larger desires to maintain a natural character of the river corridor (where it exists).

CORE VALUES

The following Core Values, established at the outset of the planning efforts, most align with providing public access and open space along the river:

- Identify/prioritize opportunities for multi-modal access to the river.
- Integrate existing riverwalks and pathways with new connections between sites and destinations that link the river to the city in ways that are physical, visual, aesthetic, and psychological.
- Enhance ecological and aesthetic river conditions, take advantage of, and integrate iconic structures, and identify new sites and structures that serve as destination or centers of programming to attract year-round access.
- Make nature-based stormwater BMPs a priority.

PROJECTS

The UNIFIED PLAN includes a physical illustrated plan that outlines public improvement projects within the project area, including access and open space enhancements. Several broad categories of projects evolved out of community input, including:

- Provide a clear, legible connected path system that allows users to find their way along the corridor, while providing for moments of discovery that feel unique.
  Currently there are gaps in the river trail system that dead end or leave the visitor confused as to how to continue their exploration of the river and community.

  The DDA has established a wayfinding/water-trail signage plan that provides the visitor guidance, as well as information about the community and its history.

  While wayfinding systems are an important component to a linear greenway, the path itself must be legible and clear, offering visual/physical clues that direct people to continue their exploration. The community is very clear in their desire to maintain contiguous stretches of the river that are not developed with paths but focus on natural habitat with limited human intervention. Having paths on both sides of the river would make the system very clear, but not as friendly to non-human species. In addition, such an approach would leave the river corridor looking excessively urban, which is not a community goal.

  The challenge is to develop a path system that allows some continuity along the river but may move from one side of the river to the other in an adjacent segment. Such a system should also provide some diversity in experience where a path is provided, allowing for areas that are boardwalk over the river, walks along the top of the bank, and places where the public street is integrated.

When designing a particular path segment, the UNIFIED PLAN considers the least impactful locations for new paths relative to riparian and aquatic habitat. This allows for the diversity of path experience noted above and honors the community's goal of providing meaningful natural habitat.

- Connect the river path system to adjacent neighborhoods, downtown, bayfront, TART trail, and BATA stops.
  The UNIFIED PLAN identifies key connection points along the river corridor that should be integral with a linear path system and develop strategies to improve connectivity to these community assets.

  As each segment of the river is improved for public access, the UNIFIED PLAN must provide physical/universal access to the river corridor from community linkage points (e.g. the TART trail) as part of each improvement project.

  The alley, service and parking area on the south side of the Boardman at the 100 and 200 block of Front Street is a critical segment where there is a need for vehicle use, as well as large volumes of pedestrians that desire access along the river and connection to Front Street. A creative solution that manages this blend of users, develops an interesting civic space and "greens" the banks of the river for habitat is required.

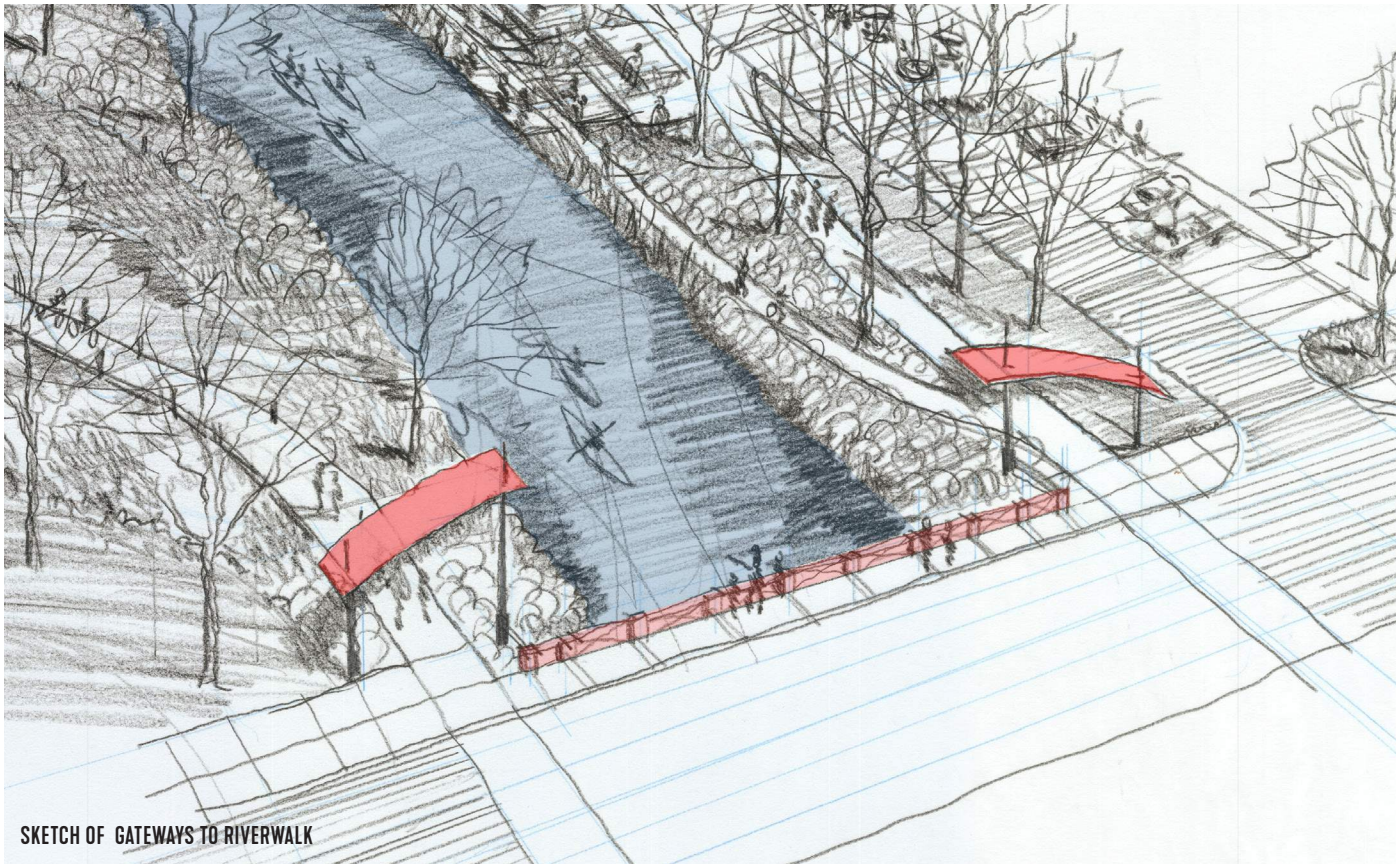
- Consider a range of open space nodes and amenities along the river corridors of varying sizes, purposes, and characters, including:
  - Water use amenities identified by the Boardman River Water Trail Study, such as accessible kayak launches, kayak racks (as needed), portage points (e.g., at Fish Weir) and marketing materials.
  - Site furnishings such as trash and recycling stations, lighting, drinking water and water bottle filling stations, bicycle parking and signs to provide a safe and clean environment.
  - Public restroom facilities along the corridor, and/or better wayfinding to publicly available restrooms at places like the Government Center and the Traverse City Visitor Center.
  - Fishing access points located at known places of angler activity. These places typically function the best when segregated from pedestrian movement along the linear path.
  - Resting and viewing places, spaced at key points of natural or architectural beauty, and where people watching is likely.
  - Small scale community gathering places where groups can gather for photos, lunches, small performances, etc.
  - Art installations at bridges and other key public areas along the river.

- Improve streets and bridges to create a more pedestrian friendly downtown and improve access to the river.
  The DDA has coordinated with the City Engineering Department to review and collaborate on planned bridge improvement projects, and the projects have considered the need for pedestrian access. For example, the proposed bridge at Front Street will include a pedestrian underpass on the east side of the river, and the Eighth Street bridge will have an underpass connection on the west side of the river.

The downtown bridges that cross the river north of Front Street are limited in their ability to provide consistent underpass access due to the low bridge and road grades, which cannot be amended due to existing buildings and related constraints.

As the planned bridge improvements are made, the city and DDA should consider pedestrian access improvements in the area of the bridges as a priority to gain efficiencies in construction and phasing and enhance connections at-grade with the street and the available underpasses. This coordination should occur during the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) planning process to ensure adequate funding is allocated.

The design of the streetscape at the bridges could use best practices such as a speed tables and other traffic calming devices to enhance pedestrian safety and call attention to the presence of the river and the available recreation access. In addition, the city and DDA should consider the potential for creating sculptural gateways at the bridges to highlight the presence of the river and the removal of parking on bridges to increase pedestrian space. The sculptural gateways would not need to be directly attached to the bridge to be effective.



SKETCH OF GATEWAYS TO RIVERWALK

The planned reconstruction of the Grand View Parkway by MDOT provides a great opportunity to work with MDOT to make pedestrian safety, access, and crossing the corridor prominent features of the project.

GUIDELINES

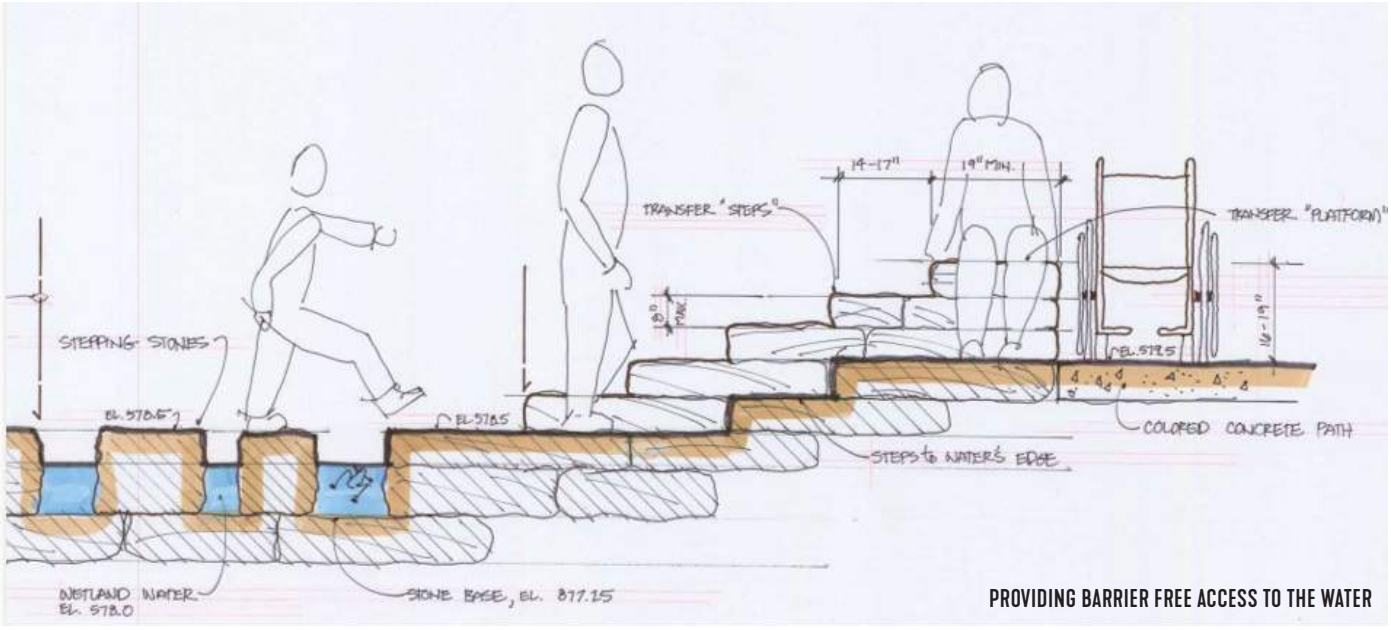
- Ensure universal access and consciously designed experiences for a range of abilities and aptitudes. Universal access to facilities and experiences on the river is a baseline assumption.

  Several facilities which offer access to the riverbank do not meet current guidelines for universal access, some of which is due to the significant constraints of land area and grades. As new (universal access conforming) facilities are put online, attention must also be paid to retrofitting existing paths, bridges, access points and overlooks.

  Projects must consider universal access needs at all stages of the work, from the beginning of design to the final installation of railings. Even before design work is starting, the cost implications of universal access must be included in establishing project budgets.

  In addition, the goal of universal access goes beyond providing safe and easy access but includes providing facilities that engage all users and abilities.

- Establish design guidelines for public path facilities. The linear path and public spaces along the river corridor currently include segments that are asphalt path, concrete walks, unit pavers, gravel, and wood boardwalks. Further, several different light fixtures and site furnishing styles exist along the river. The intent of the UNIFIED PLAN is not to impose strict conformity over the use of materials; however, some basic standardization is important to create enough

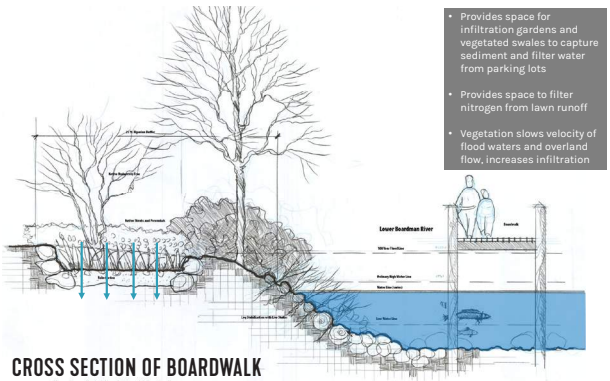


PROVIDING BARRIER FREE ACCESS TO THE WATER

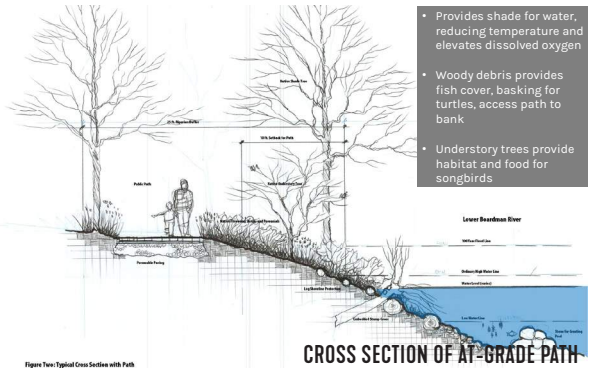
consistency to provide visitors with the visual clues necessary to follow the corridor.

- Establish pavement material standards and width requirements. Pavements within 25-feet of the original high water mark should be pervious or installed with specific measures to treat stormwater (such as vegetated swales). With the goal of minimizing paved space, we recommend using a range of path widths (6- to 10-feet) that respond to the site condition and anticipated volume of users. Please refer to Riparian Buffer Ordinance description in this chapter for additional details.
- Identify typical locations where safety railings should be assumed, such as stairs, ramps, high volume walks along the water, intersections of paths, where fall potential exists over 30 inches.
- Consider the potential impacts of climate change and water level fluctuation in the design of new facilities. Examine the feasibility of floating docks, where possible, to provide flexible access and connections. Design walks and related facilities that are at a fixed elevation to include additional design freeboard than typically has been considered.
- Incorporate public launch/portage facilities that accommodate contemporary forms of non-motorized watercraft.
- Incorporate night sky lighting best practices into public and private improvement projects. The UNIFIED PLAN recommends that the city and DDA consult with lighting designers to create guidelines for required light levels for both private and public improvements in the river corridor and identify fixture types for typical locations.
- Consider value of trees and leafy vegetation to reduce heat island effect and in carbon sequestration and provide for human comfort.

■ Coordinate efforts to contribute to the Boardman River Water Trail system.
The Boardman River Water Trail Development Plan (2016) outlines strategies for creating a river recreation trail that encompasses the entire Boardman River, from Union Township to the Grand Traverse Bay. The plan outlined operational recommendations, site specific improvements, and water trail identity and development guidelines. The Lower Boardman River should be considered as one element or segment of the larger plan and refer to the recommendations of this plan to ensure continuity of the river improvements.



CROSS SECTION OF BOARDWALK



CROSS SECTION OF AT-GRADE PATH

POLLUTION CONTROL BEST PRACTICES

The city and DDA should continue to manage stormwater volumes and point source pollution on new projects consistent with current best practices to protect the water quality of the river and the bay. There are two key documents that currently regulated and/or guide stormwater pollution, including:

- The Traverse City Ground-Water Protection and Stormwater Control Ordinance currently requires a range of best practices to control point and non-point source pollution, manage the runoff of stormwater volumes, and protect stormwater and groundwater quality including:
  - Retention ponds and detention basins
  - Infiltration trenches, and basins, such as rain gardens
  - Stormwater quality treatment chambers
  - Vegetated swales and filter strips
  - Wet basins and drainage wells
  - Soil erosion and sedimentation controls
  - Hazardous substance storage and containment controls
- The TIF 97 Stormwater Management Plan was recently developed for the DDA and recommends improvements to the management of stormwater and pollutants in the primary downtown district. The study examined a range of potential pollution sources, including roofs, streets, parking lots, outdoor dining, dumpsters, and expanded the current list of best practices to include:
  - Green roofs
  - Tree and planter boxes
  - Bioswales
  - Cisterns
  - Underground stormwater storage
  - Street sweeping
  - Dumpster covers
  - Permeable paving

EXAMPLE OF RAIN GARDENS IN URBAN ENVIRONMENT

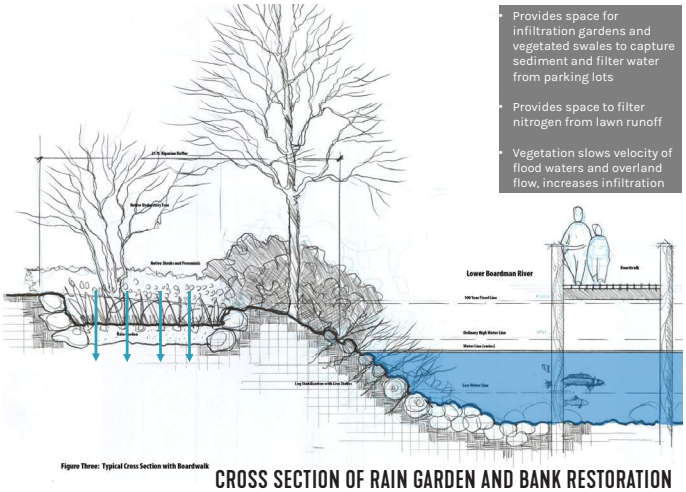
The UNIFIED PLAN embraces these concepts as a means of improving water quality within the river and bay and provides for specific applications of best practices along the river corridor as illustrated below.

- In the limited space of a riparian buffer there remain opportunities to improve stormwater quality prior to its release into the river, including rain gardens and infiltration beds
- Use of native plants that are left unmown
- Vegetated swales
- Pervious paving

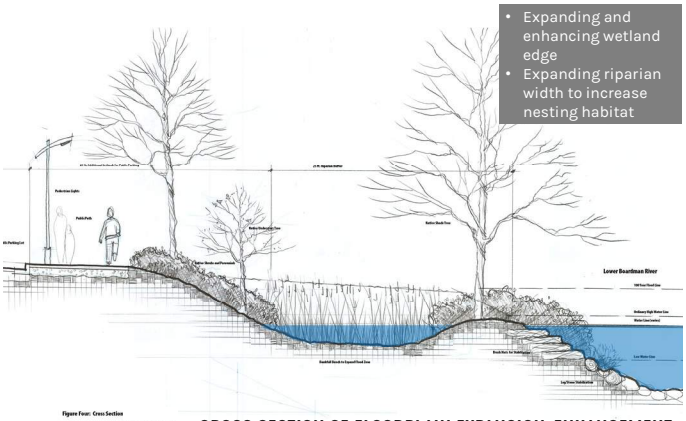
Where a wider area is available, based on the public ownership of land, there are additional opportunities to expand pollution control measures and habitat creation.

Simply put, all private and public developments should be designed to eliminate direct stormwater flow into the river and be required to use best practices to cleanse and filter stormwater such as rain gardens, stormwater treatment structures, pervious pavements, and landscape buffers.

A key element to achieving this directive is to follow the guidelines in the *TIF 97 Stormwater Management Plan* for all projects within downtown.



CROSS SECTION OF RAIN GARDEN AND BANK RESTORATION



CROSS SECTION OF FLOODPLAIN EXPANSION-ENHANCEMENT

For public improvement projects, the standard should be higher than "do not increase impervious surfaces and stormwater volume;" public projects should include best practices to avoid, where possible, point source contributions to the river, in favor of groundwater infiltration and filtered overland flow to improve water quality and reduce the velocity and volume of water released to the river.

As public projects reconstruct the riverbanks and adjacent areas, existing roof drain outfalls into the river should be intercepted and treated. Projects should also consider the potential for storage and reuse of stormwater for irrigation.

EXAMPLE OF FLOODPLAIN ENHANCEMENT

HISTORY, CULTURE & LEARNING

The development of a cohesive path system and improved habitat along the river is an incredible opportunity to engage the community and visitors in history, culture, and learning, focused on the downtown and the Lower Boardman River. The potential for learning and highlighting the uniqueness of the community should be integral into the early design stages for each reach of the river, so that the historic, cultural, and natural assets drive the location of the improvements made, when appropriate.

These efforts need to go beyond typical interpretive signage approaches and include thoughtful displays and landscapes that engage the visitor in an active way and create a more exciting place to experience.

CORE VALUES

The following Core Values, established at the outset of the planning efforts, most align with recognizing the history and culture of the region and encouraging education about the river's natural and cultural resources:

- Reflect the city's commitment to the river as a public resource and asset to be passed to residents and visitors in perpetuity.
- Use the natural and cultural values of the river as a guide for decisions about the commercial, economic, or utilitarian values to be leveraged for the public good.
- Serve to foster and sustain partnerships with shared responsibilities among public and private stakeholders who share the value that the Boardman is a "common resource" that connects everyone.

PROJECTS

As the UNIFIED PLAN is implemented the projects described below are recommended:

- Honor the Aanishinaabek (First People) heritage and cultural legacy through meaningful interpretive experiences throughout the project area.
  The first effort is to build on the existing knowledge base about the the unique relationship the Aanishinaabek share with the air, land, water and the vastly complex and irreplaceable interconnections all living beings share with their environment—exemplified here along the Lower Boardman River. Current sources of data should be reviewed, as well as developing an inventory of existing sites where the history and culture of the Aanishinaabek has been recognized. Cultural resource specialists can assist in identifying additional sites of significance within the project area, and further defining the historic use of the area.

HISTORIC PHOTO OF NATIVE AMERICAN ENCAMPMENT

Once the study and data gathering are complete, the city and DDA should create a thematically linked interpretive system, consistent with the recent water trail signage plan, located at sites of cultural significance.

A more ambitious goal to celebrate the presence of the Aanishinaabek in the Traverse City area is to create a Tribal Cultural Center within the project area. The UNIFIED PLAN identifies a potential location for a cultural center; however, the actual site selection will require further consideration by tribal and local officials.

The city and DDA should coordinate with local tribal groups to develop the architectural, educational, and funding program for the center, and locate and obtain an appropriate site.

- Note and interpret key sites of European settlement, and the role of the river for industry and transportation.
  Maps and related historic resources tell us much about the community through the early years of European settlement and industrial growth. As part of a comprehensive interpretive learning program, the city and DDA should coordinate with local historians to identify high priority sites for learning and interpretive messaging.
- Provide interpretive theme about geology, the formation of the river, and the connection to lake levels.
  As noted elsewhere in this UNIFIED PLAN, one of the key steps moving forward is the full assessment of the current conditions related to aquatic and riparian habitat. For purposes of developing an interpretive learning program, this natural features inventory would provide data on specific locations of rare and endangered species, and habitats of notable interest.

  Knowledge of existing conditions will help guide future habitat goals and plans and assist in the development of design ideas for displaying information and encouraging hands-on learning.

  Other key goals in the learning program are to integrate water literacy into the public education outreach and provide interpretive themes about water stewardship and the impact of water quality on human and environmental health. In addition to discussing the Boardman River's impact on safe and accessible drinking water, the interpretive education program can highlight measures the city has taken to promote water quality, e.g., the Wastewater Treatment Plants' membrane system.

GUIDELINES

- Include cultural resource investigations into each publicly funded construction project.
  A Cultural Resources Assessment should be prepared as a baseline understanding of the potential sites where it is likely that encampment areas and places of cultural significance to the Aanishinaabek exist. This study will be helpful in developing the interpretive learning program previously discussed, and it can be used to flag key areas of concern along the river where historic artifacts may be uncovered by projects that involve excavation of soils.

  During the design and planning for projects being built, future project teams can identify potential construction impacts on historic cultural artifacts, determine where further investigation is required prior to construction, and monitor construction for potential discovery of cultural resources.

- Continue to integrate the provision of art along the river corridor as it is improved.
  During project planning, future design teams should consider art in suitable locations based on the attributes of the project area.

  Efforts to place art should be coordinated with the Traverse City Arts Commission.

- Engage the local learning community in using the Lower Boardman River and FishPass for research and learning.
  Given the great opportunity to use the Lower Boardman River as a source of learning, the city and DDA should create an outreach campaign to local educational institutions that encourages visits to the river and collaboration on learning objectives and curricula. Outreach partnerships could also include research, cultural resource investigations, and habitat monitoring that could be performed by, or with, local learning institutions.

- Actively manage the interpretive system of the district to reflect new information and special programs and meet the needs of all users.
  Interpretive learning systems are most effective when they are flexible and change over time to reflect new data and understanding of the subject matter. We recommend a regular assessment of the efficacy of interpretive displays and facilities, and the use of interpretive learning systems that can be modified or adapted to new learning objectives and curricula, in addition to more permanent displays.

COMMUNITY & DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Recognizing an explicit commitment to the principles of public trust in the protection of the river as a community commons, regulatory policies that guide building and development in the downtown area should be amended to reflect the vision and values of the Lower Boardman River UNIFIED PLAN.

Modifying public policy will impact private land development, as these are the regulations and guiding documents that shape the use of the land in the community. However, the intent in modifying these regulations and guiding documents is also to establish standards by which public improvements must abide.

Specific language is proposed as part of this chapter to provide a guideline in modifying existing and proposed ordinances; however, each of these amendments will need additional effort and conversation with the city planner and planning commission prior to adoption.

CORE VALUES

The following Core Values, established at the outset of the planning efforts, most align with the management of private and public development along the river:

- Ensure that new or rehabilitated developments along the river are compatible with the city's renewable energy goals.
- Establish that development sites, destinations, and structures must protect the health, aesthetics, accessibility, and health of the relationship between the river and residents/visitors.
- Use the natural and cultural values of the river as a guide for decisions about the commercial, economic, or utilitarian values to be leveraged for the public good.
- Prohibit further hardening of the shorelines that are inconsistent with the UNIFIED PLAN.

RIPARIAN BUFFER ORDINANCE

The Traverse City Planning Commission has proposed a new Riparian Buffer Ordinance to help manage the use, development, and maintenance of the edges of Grand Traverse Bay, Boardman Lake, the Boardman River, and Kids Creek. The Leadership Team is proposing changes to the draft ordinance to address specific conditions of the Lower Boardman segment of the river.

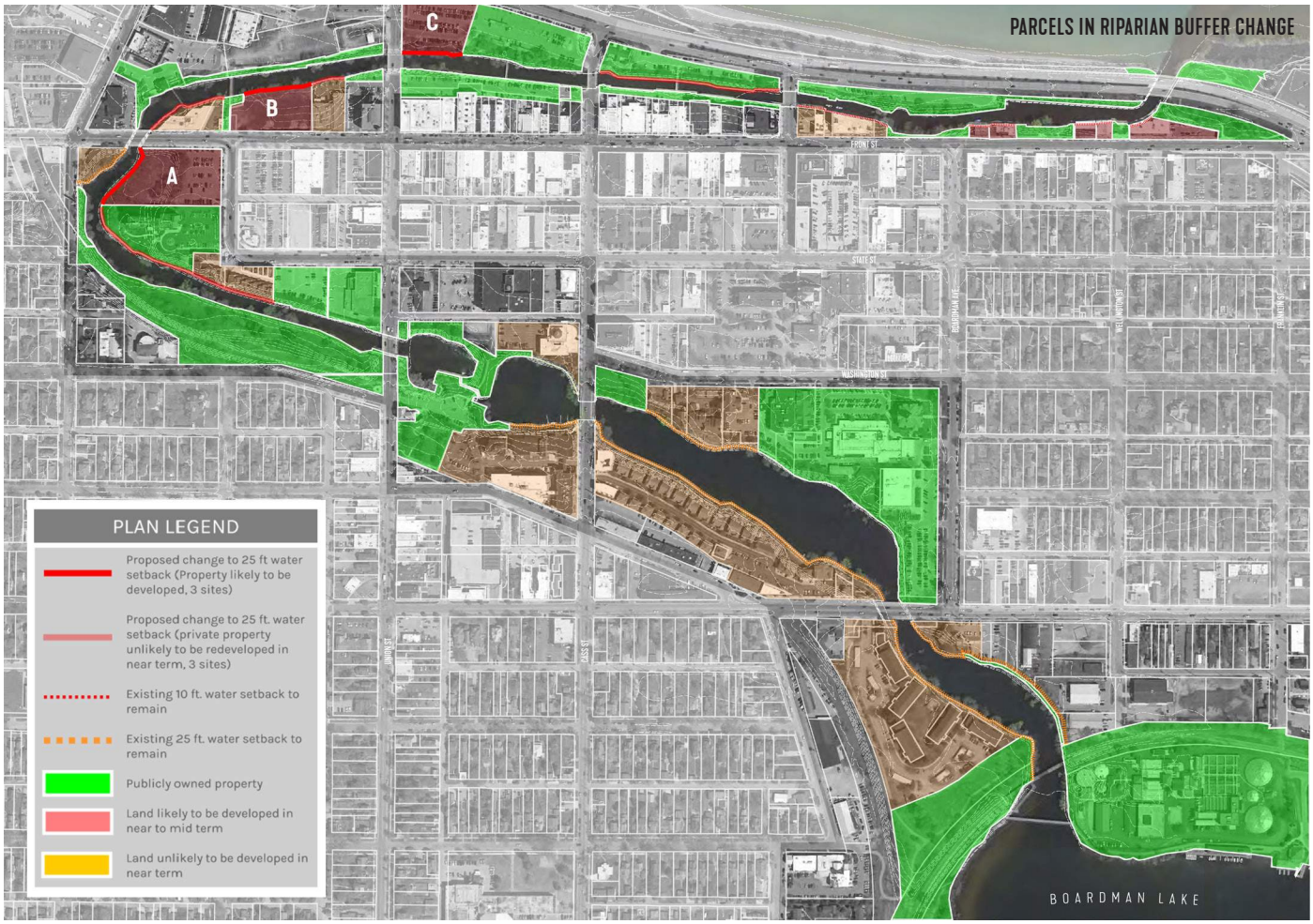
The importance of the Riparian Buffer Ordinance to fulfilling the goals and value of the UNIFIED PLAN and addressing the primary concerns expressed by the public cannot be overstated. The ordinance should be aspirational in its charge and supported by the community.

The intent of the draft ordinance is to:

- Conserve, protect, and restore natural riparian resources through scientifically supported processes.
- Preserve and enhance areas that intercept and filter surface water runoff and improve water quality.

- Protect shoreline and floodplain areas critical for flood attenuation and soil loss.
- Conserve near-shore aquatic habitat for fish and invertebrates and shoreline and stream bank habitat crucial for birds, insects, and mammals.
- Provide community scenic, cultural, and recreational values of watercourses and water bodies.
- Preserve natural deep-rooted vegetation critical for stable shorelines and stream banks.
- Provide for the establishment of natural vegetation buffers on all sites adjacent to water bodies to promote public health and safety and protect land values.

The proposed ordinance is an opportunity to promote a "river first" approach in the protection and enhancement of the river consistent with the values expressed in this UNIFIED PLAN and through the public input and engagement. The UNIFIED PLAN recommends adoption of the Riparian Buffer Ordinance, and the



Leadership Team has proposed a series of amendments to the current draft, which are described in detail in Appendix 4. In broad terms these amendments include:

- Establish a 10-Foot riparian buffer for properties east of Park Street (matching current setback) and a 25-foot riparian buffer for commercial properties west of Park Street (10-foot water's edge setback currently required). In the C-4 Regional Center district, there are six properties that the recommended ordinance proposes to have a 25-foot buffer, which is larger than the current 10-foot requirement. Of these six sites, three are likely to be re-developed in the coming decade, and these sites are noted as A, B, and C (see Parcels in Riparian Buffer Change map on page 74). Of these three sites that could be impacted in the short-term, developers of two of the parcels have agreed to 25-foot water's edge setbacks to accommodate utilities and stormwater, and the other site is currently owned by the city. All other properties in downtown will retain their existing water's edge setbacks, which are 25-feet per current ordinances
- Add guidance on tree preservation, landscape maintenance, new landscaping, and bank and slope protection. The draft ordinance proposes to restrict manicured lawns and tree removal, while requiring the use of native plant for erosion control and habitat value. The proposed language also encourages the use of plantings that have specific function and meaning to the Aanishinaabek culture.
- Regulate vertical wall construction as shoreline stabilization treatment. While the proposed ordinance contains language to address this concern, the Leadership Team has offered clarifying language and additional detail on acceptable approaches to shoreline stabilization.
- Restrict the development of parking lots in the water's edge setback and the direct flow of adjacent parking lots from entering the river untreated, in concert with existing stormwater regulations the city has adopted and uses.

OTHER ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES

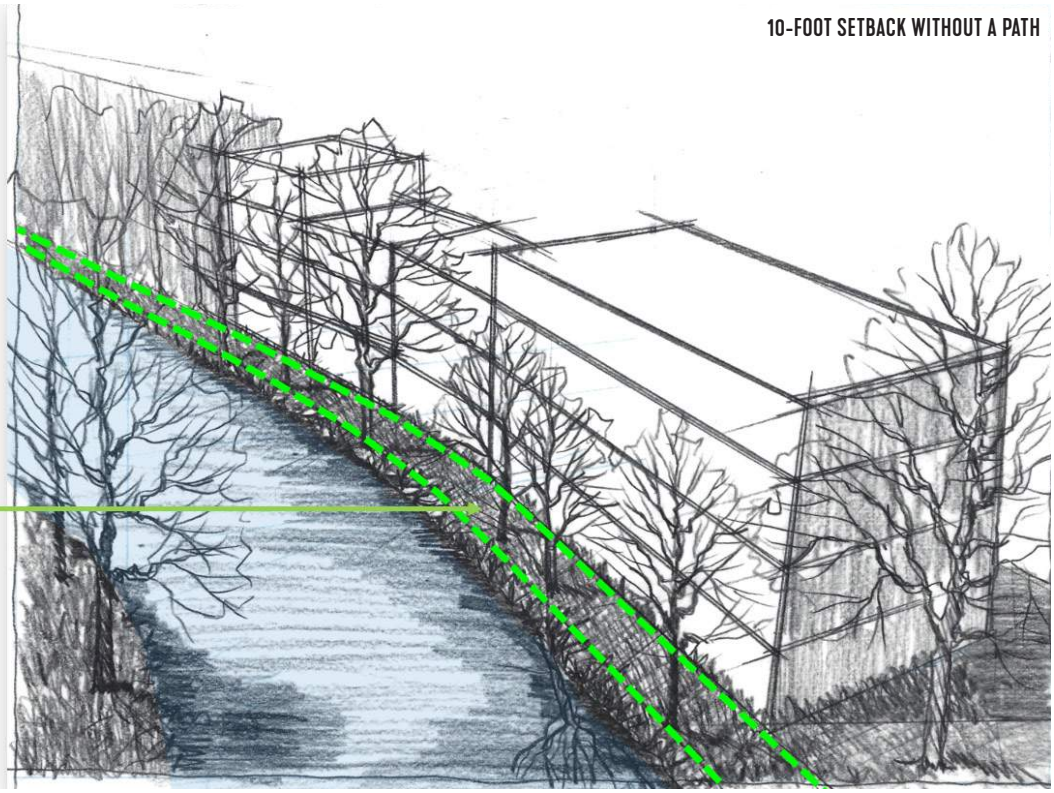
The UNIFIED PLAN supports the modification of zoning ordinances to manage the scale, placement, and site improvements of new development consistent with the Core Values of the UNIFIED PLAN. These proposed changes to existing ordinances are, for the most part, intended to support and further codify the proposed Riparian Buffer Ordinance.

Amendments may be made to the applicable zoning district including OS Open Space, R-3 Multiple Family Dwelling, C-3 Community Center District, C-4 Regional Center District, and Development Districts D-1 Ironworks and D-2 Depot. To the greatest extent possible, all new approvals shall be administrative or departmental reviewed unless already part of a planning commission review process in accordance with Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Best Practices.

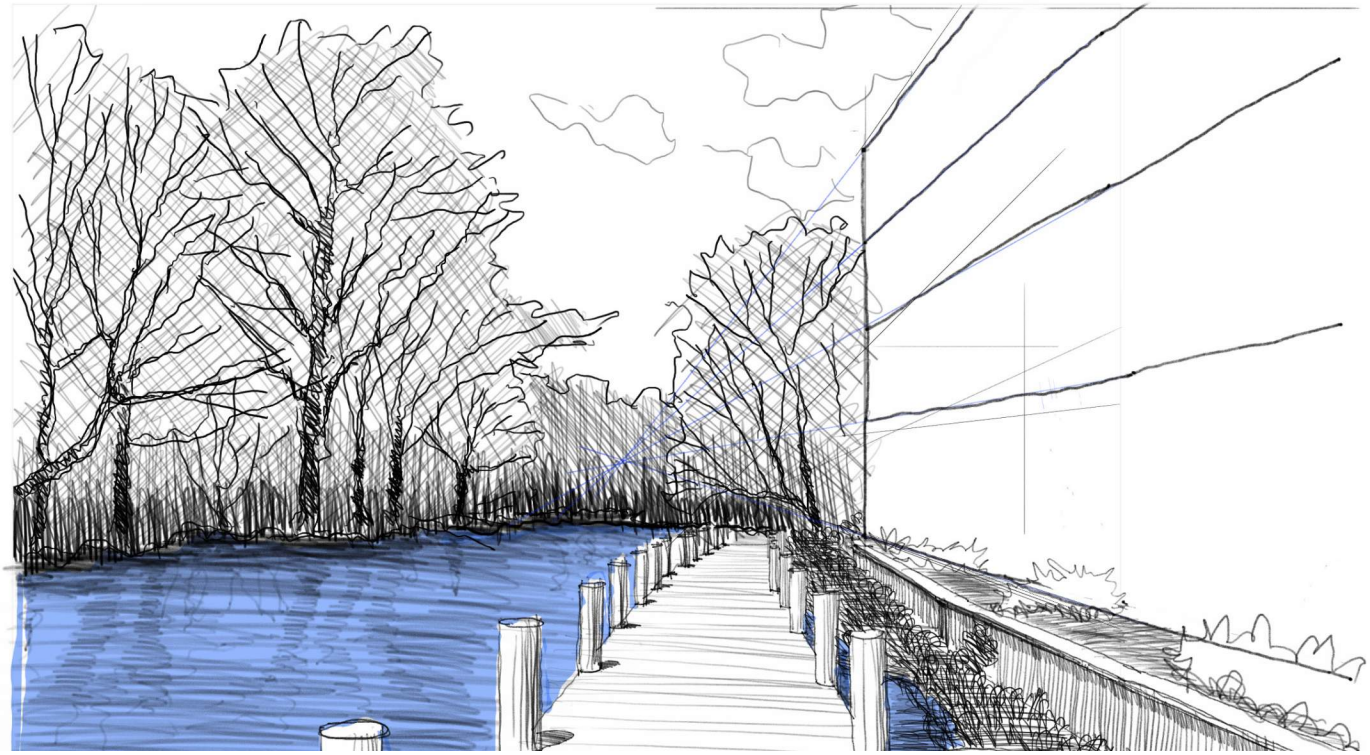
- 10 FT. RIPARIAN BUFFER
- Matches current setback
- Applies EAST of PARK STREET, on south side of river (25 ft on north side)

Critical Riparian Protection Area

10-FOOT SETBACK WITHOUT A PATH

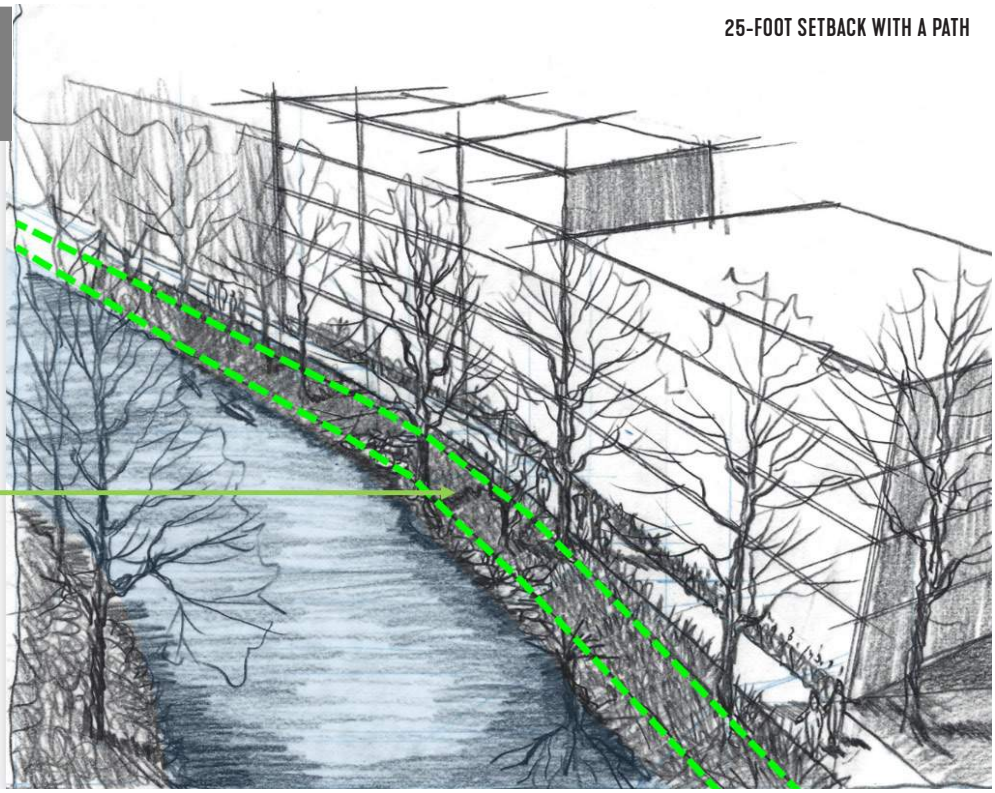


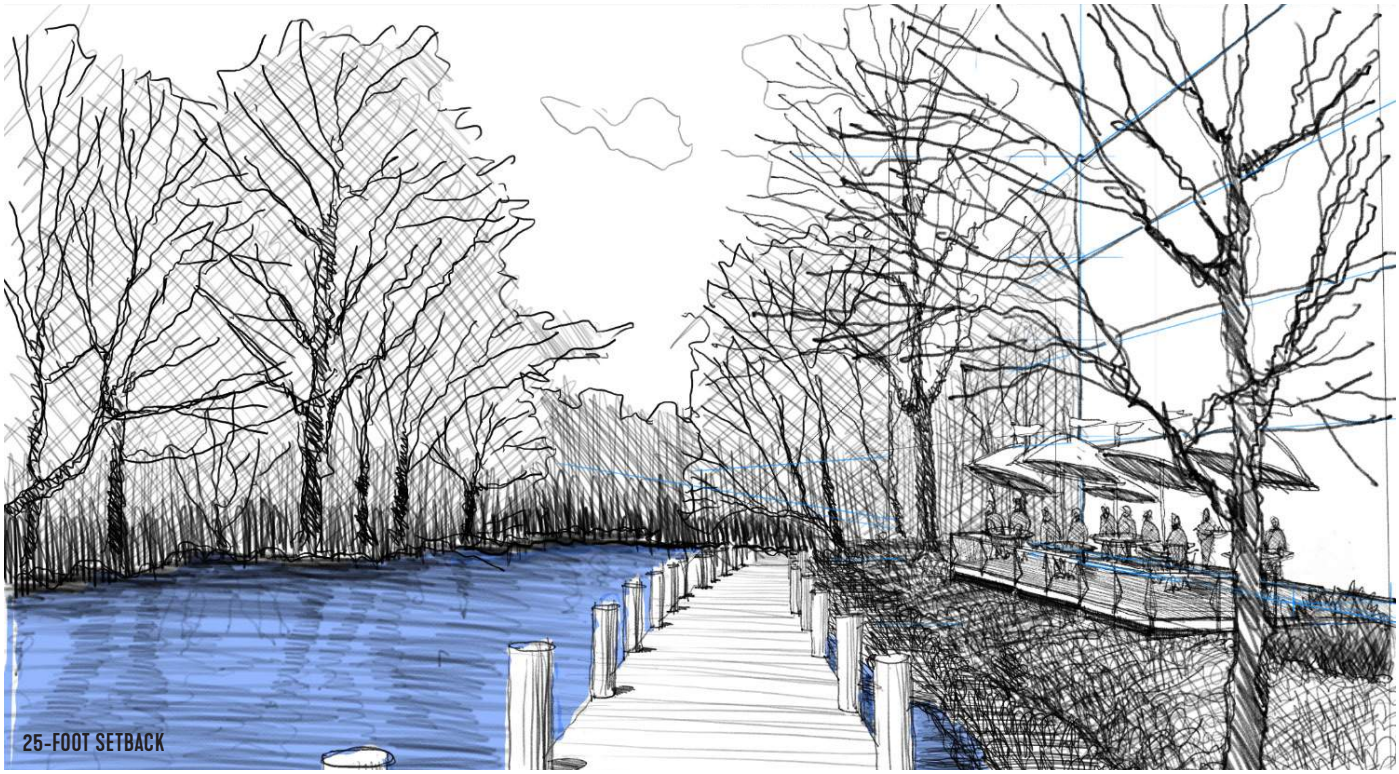
10-FOOT SETBACK



- 25 FT. RIPARIAN BUFFER
- ALL OTHER LOWER BOARDMAN/OTTAWAY REACHES

25-FOOT SETBACK WITH A PATH





- Create additional setback for parking from the original high water mark.
  - Adopt the Riparian Buffer Ordinance, which says "No development, permanent structures (including fences) or parking area(s) shall be allowed within the riparian buffer zone."
  - Amend ordinance 1374.03 Motor Vehicle Parking, subsection (c) Location of parking areas, as follows: "(6.) Parking is not allowed within the Riparian Buffer, pursuant to the Riparian Buffer Ordinance."
  - Amend Ordinance 1346.04 C-4 District, subsection Setbacks, as follows: (g) Parking is not allowed within the Riparian Buffer, pursuant to the Riparian Buffer Ordinance."
- Restrict the creation of public and private parking within the river corridor.
  Parking is not required in C-4 Districts, which is most of downtown. Ordinance 1364 C-4 Districts states "No parking is required in this district, however, if parking is provided, it must meet the standards contained in Chapter 1374, circulation and parking and restrictions of this chapter."

PHOTO OF PARKING ADJACENT TO RIVER

This ordinance is, coupled with the proposed changes to the ordinances noted above, effective at discouraging and managing the design of private parking in downtown, and restricting all parking from locating directly adjacent to the river.

- Establish and maintain appropriate building setbacks for development along the river in response to public input.
  - Amend Ordinance 1346.04 C-4 District, Setbacks, subsection (e) Water Setbacks.
    - C-4a: 10-foot setback from ordinary high water mark per current ordinance
    - C-4b and C-4c: 25-foot setback from ordinary high water mark
  - Amend Ordinance 1368.02 Size and Area Requirements, subsection (b) Setbacks Required with same language.
  - For C-4a sites, strongly encourage a larger buffer; consider incentives to increasing buffer to 25-feet, including transfer of development rights, and rezoning of public lands.
  - Maintain current water setback of 25-feet in zoning districts OS-Open Space, R-e Multiple Family Dwelling, D-1 Ironworks Development, D-2 Depot Development, and GP Government Building.
  - Establish a 25-foot building setback and riparian buffer in all zoning districts where property is adjacent to Kids Creek
- Adopt incentives to encourage the use of sustainable building materials, energy efficiency and production, habitat creation, bird safe windows, creation of public access, and reuse of building water.
  Increasing building height and development density is often used as an incentive to induce developers to create public benefits such as green building techniques. Based on current laws, development over 60-feet in height is discouraged due to the need for a public vote; however, sites in the R-3 and C-4a districts could still benefit from height incentives since the current ordinances in these districts limit building height to 40 and 45 feet, respectively. Other incentives that could be considered include allowing administrative review of site plans, and/or adopting a broader green building requirement for downtown construction.
- Integrate lighting guidelines into the appropriate sections of the city zoning and regulatory ordinances.
  No immediate action is required, as Chapter 1375 Outdoor Lighting ordinance has clear guidelines to encourage dark sky compliance. All new public projects should conform to ordinance when improving downtown and riverfront public spaces.
- Encourage businesses that have both a street frontage and a river frontage to activate the waterfront side of their business.
  Chapter 1346, C-4 Districts includes "Buildings along Boardman River should be designed to integrate with both the sidewalk and riverwalk systems."

  To strengthen this intent section 1346.09 (1) of this ordinance should be amended as follows:

  "The predominant building wall and entryway shall face the public or private street. Where adjacent to the Boardman River, or to public land that is adjacent to the river, the building shall have a public entrance and architectural features denoting a public entrance facing the river."

AMEND REGULATORY ORDINANCES

A great deal of the public input gathered during the planning process supported ideas that are best implemented through changes to the Codified Ordinances of Traverse City. These ordinances are considered "regulatory," since they are local laws enacted to regulate activity or set standards for the use and development of public facilities such as streets. These ordinances are adopted by the City Commission and are outside of Zoning Ordinances which are focused on regulating the use of land.

Recommended regulatory ordinance modifications for consideration include:

- Integrate lighting guidelines into the appropriate sections of the Codified Ordinances of Traverse City, under Part 10-Streets, Utilities and Public Services, and Part 14-Building and Housing Code.
- Consult with City Attorney, Clerk, and Manager on the alternative approaches to regulating river use. Propose and conduct a fair and open process, working in cooperation with licensees. Propose and adopt changes to the Codified Codes of Traverse City, Part Ten Streets, Utilities and Public Services Code, Chapter 1064 Parks, and related codes. Code changes could include volume limitations placed on licensees, Quiet Zones along the corridor, limitation on the use of alcohol, hours of operations, and disorderly conduct.

AMEND THE COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN

When adopting or modifying new ordinances, it is critical that the Community Master Plan supports the values and guidelines that are reflected in the new ordinances and the UNIFIED PLAN. This can be accomplished in one of the following ways:

- Adopt the UNIFIED PLAN as a "Sub Area Master Plan" as provided by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008.
- Integrate key findings of the UNIFIED PLAN into the next update of the Traverse City Comprehensive Plan, and incorporate the UNIFIED PLAN by reference.
- Create a new Downtown Plan as a Sub Area Master Plan, integrating the UNIFIED PLAN.

AMEND THE COMMUNITY RECREATION PLAN

Funding grants through the DNR are available for many of the projects outlined in the UNIFIED PLAN. To be fully eligible for these potential grants, the planned projects should be reflected in the Recreation Plan for Traverse City. Per DNR guidelines, the Recreation Plan is updated every five years, which in Traverse City's case would be in 2021.

The Recreation Plan should include the UNIFIED PLAN recommendations to improve public parks in the project area and proposed trail connections. The city and DDA will need to coordinate Recreation Plan changes with the Parks and Recreation Commission.

PUBLIC INPUT

The policy changes reflected in the Riparian Buffer Ordinance and other ordinance changes were included in the second round of public engagement (described in more detail in Chapter Four: The Illustrated Plan).

In both the public workshops and online survey, participants were given the opportunity to indicate support for policies and best practices. The two groups of participants demonstrated strong support for the policy ideas and proposals presented for including:

- **RIPARIAN BUFFER** and **GREEN RIVERBANKS**, including the removal of vertical walls where appropriate and increasing building setbacks in key zoning districts west of Park Street.
- Amendments to the **REGULATORY ORDINANCES** of the community to manage behavior of recreational river users.
- Land development **BEST PRACTICES** for managing stormwater and pollution of the river.
- Many commentors from both the workshops and online survey indicated that they supported the removal of **PARKING** along the river shoreline, but that the replacement of this parking needed to be implemented in conjunction with the removal.

This input was consistent with that gathered from the first round of community engagement, and the direction preferred by the Leadership Team.

IMPLEMENTATION & MANAGEMENT

The city and DDA should establish a strategic plan to pursue the implementation of the UNIFIED PLAN, manage development of the public river corridor, monitor river conditions and development, and maintain the river corridor.

CORE VALUES

The Core Values established at the outset of the planning efforts that most align with the implementation and management of the UNIFIED PLAN include:

- Foster and sustain partnerships with shared responsibilities among public and private stakeholders who share the value that the Boardman River is a "common resource" that connects everyone.
- Provide that the recommended initiatives contained in the UNIFIED PLAN will account for the impact of those initiatives on residents, habitats, and the ecological status of the river.

ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

One of the most important set of decisions to be made in the planning process is the assignment of responsibilities for the future development, management, and maintenance of the Lower Boardman River district.

The city and DDA will need to collaboratively review the anticipated needs of the district and designate which government entity or sub-entity will provide management and maintenance oversight and assist in the funding of projects and maintenance. Considerations include:

- Who will define issues and establish criteria for managing and adapting the plan going forward?
- Who will "own" the plan and the responsibility for its implementation, adaptation, and success?
- How will decision-making responsibilities be distributed and coordinated?
- How will enduring and adaptive structures for stakeholder involvement be established and ensured?

As a starting point for discussion, we should consider the existing governmental structures in place to complete this work, as follows:

- DDA
  - Parking
  - Farmers Market Advisory Board
  - Traverse City Arts Commission
  - Lower Boardman River Leadership Team (or its potential successor)
- City Planning
  - Zoning and Development Regulations, guiding land use, building and site development, and parking
  - Economic Development
- Department of Municipal Utilities
  - Storm Sewers
  - Water
  - Sanitary Sewers and plant
- Traverse City Light and Power

- Department of Public Services (management and maintenance)
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Streets
  - Sidewalks
- City Engineering (Design and Construction)
  - Street, Parking, and Bridge Design and Implementation
  - Parks Implementation Administration
  - Traffic and Multi-jurisdictional outreach
- City Police-public safety and emergency response
- City Fire-public safety and emergency response

ESTABLISHING A GUIDING ORGANIZATION

From the start of the public engagement process the community has expressed concern that the river corridor be effectively managed and maintained. As the UNIFIED PLAN has developed, the Leadership Team explored this topic and recommend that the DDA and the city collaborate in the establishment of a governing and management structure for the Lower Boardman River. The purpose of this structure is to advocate for the river in the development of downtown and riverfront, to guide decisions and set priorities for the river corridor, and lead in the implementation of the UNIFIED PLAN.

There are a number of ways to organize the management of an open space and the implementation of plans and policies, including:

- Utilizing the Existing Structure: The existing governmental units listed above can continue to each take a part in the Lower Boardman as noted. This decentralized model may adequately manage the various aspects of implementing this plan, but it leaves a leadership gap in advocating for new improvements and policies, and would likely result in much slower and ineffective progress.
- Create an Advocacy Group: In this model a "Friends of the Lower Boardman River" could be formed of interested community volunteers that would act independently to advise the city and the DDA in each of the topical areas on an ad hoc basis. The "Friends" group could be a focal point for community input, and could play a substantive role in organizing events that benefit the river corridor, including regular clean-up activities, community based fund raising, and social gatherings that celebrate the river. These groups can be effective, but without any decision making authority can be less effective than other models. Also, the reliance on volunteers and lack of specific charge from a governmental agency can make it more difficult to sustain interest and long term impact.
- Form an Advisory Board: An Advisory Board could be established that is chartered by the city and/or the DDA. This approach establishes some level of authority in the making of decisions and management of priorities. An Advisory Board becomes the first stop in advising the city and DDA on matters of interest for the river corridor, and would report directly to the City Commission and/or the DDA board. This group could be (at least partially) funded by the city or DDA, maintain a small staff, and have a role in the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) process, such that projects can be given a voice at the funding table. This assumes that

the such local governmental funding would not completely support ongoing projects and initiatives, but could be relied upon to develop matching funds for grants and other outside funding. In this model, actual projects and initiatives would, for the most part, remain the responsibility of city and DDA staff. Locally, there are two organizations that fit this model (with some variations), including the Hickory Hills Advisory Committee (along with Preserve Hickory) and the Brown Bridge Advisory Committee.

- Establish a Riverfront Conservancy: A conservancy could "take ownership" of the river corridor (through the authority granted them by the city and DDA) and act as the recognized authority that directly manages the maintenance of the public assets, organizes and promotes events and capital improvement projects, and play a meaningful role in guiding policy changes. This type of group is often supported by philanthropic funding, and is capable of managing grants and implementation of projects. The Detroit Riverfront Conservancy is a great model of this type of organization, and has effectively transformed the riverfront along the Detroit River, a public asset that is regularly named the best river walk in the United States.

Whichever guiding organizational structure is put into place, there are a number of roles which need to be filled to successfully implement the UNIFIED PLAN. The sections below outline these roles and responsibilities.

FUNDING AND MANAGEMENT OF IMPROVEMENTS

The guiding organization will need to engage sources for funding the construction and maintenance of improvements to implement the UNIFIED PLAN. There are three important tracks for this pursuit.

Track One. The guiding organization will need to monitor potential grant sources and the related criteria for selection and applicability to proposed projects, and then match these potential grant sources to the priority projects for implementation. Sources of grants may be non-profits, federal and state programs, community donations, or philanthropic individuals and organizations. To successfully implement the projects outlined in the UNIFIED PLAN, there will be a need for multiple grant sources and to manage the application for, and use of, the grants on an ongoing basis. Refer to Chapter Four: The Illustrated Plan for a more thorough discussion of potential funding sources.

Track Two. Following the adoption of the UNIFIED PLAN, the guiding organization will need to determine how the Lower Boardman River project will move forward in terms of financial and management responsibilities, as noted elsewhere in this report. As part of this process, the DDA will need to consider how TIF funding can be used to fund improvements and management.

Track Three. Each year the Planning and City Commissions develop a CIP which outlines anticipated budgetary spending for Traverse City. Some of the projects may be funded, at least in part, through the city, and so there needs to be effort invested to coordinate as the CIP is prepared each year.

MAINTENANCE

The community is concerned about how the river corridor facilities and landscape will be maintained, citing two concurrent ideas—not wanting to burden government services and taxpayers, while also ensuring a safe, clean, healthy, and welcoming Lower Boardman River. Recommendations for maintenance include:

- Provide for regular and timely maintenance to manage waste and cleanliness.
  Significant interest exists for the development of an "Adopt a River Reach" program to encourage public and private partnerships to keep the riparian district clear of trash and otherwise well maintained. Organizations like this have been implemented in many communities to reduce the impact on city services, while creating a civic presence of active citizens on the riverfront.

  Even with the assistance of active volunteers, the guiding organization may remain responsible for maintaining general trash, waste management stations, and bathrooms; the cost of providing these services needs to be considered.

  To assist in managing trash in the corridor, the guiding organization should consider public outreach to promote responsible visitor behavior and take measures such as the prohibition on the use of plastic bottles within the Lower Boardman River district.

- Maintain landscape plantings to provide shade, thriving plant communities, invasive control, recreation use, and views of the water.
  The community is ready to accept a native landscape along the river, (in lieu of manicured lawns.) and this approach shifts (albiet reduces) maintenance means and methods. The guiding organization should develop maintenance procedures and protocols consistent with community expectations and determine who will be responsible for this work. In some communities, maintenance of native landscapes is completed through volunteer organizations as discussed above, in other communities the work is completed through merchant associations by trained professionals.

  Trees blocking access through the river corridor for kayaks and related craft can be an issue, particularly in the spring. In collaboration with kayak licensees, the guiding organization should set basic parameters which can guide tree maintenance to allow recreational use of the river without losing the value of shaded water and downed snags that enhance aquatic habitat.

  Whether the landscape is maintained in partnership with volunteer organizations or managed by the city and/or DDA, we recommend that the services of a trained arborist be retained to provide emergency services, as well as regular tree assessment, trimming, and maintenance.

- Maintain the condition of boardwalks and related facilities on a regular basis and ensure ADA compliance.
  Like trash, cleaning, and landscape maintenance, the city and DDA must establish or assign an entity to be responsible for facility maintenance and should consider partnerships with private and non-profit community focused organizations.

The goal is to develop maintenance procedures and protocols so that repairs are completed on a timely basis and facilities remain universally accessible.

Other communities have established a long-term, reliable, and consistent funding stream for maintenance, based on steady governmental funding or endowments, or through a combination of sources.

- Implement snow and ice maintenance plans which limit the impacts on water quality and habitat. Visitors and community members are expected to use the walks and facilities along the river on a year-round basis. The city and DDA should identify current practices for maintaining walks and streets in downtown and along the river, review the efficacy of current practices, and establish priorities for the future. As part of this assessment, the city and DDA should consider and test alternative means of snow maintenance, alternative locations for snow storage, and logical limits for winter maintenance on paths and boardwalks.

  Priorities for establishing future snow practices include pedestrian and user safety and the impact to water quality and the river environment. Consideration of planned maintenance practices should be considered and integrated into each improvement project for the river corridor.

ENCOURAGING POLICY CHANGE

Within the Action Plan (outlined earlier in this chapter) there are a number of key land use, maintenance, best practices, and river use policy amendments and guidelines discussed which are critical to ensuring the protection and enjoyment of all beneficiaries to the river. The guiding organization will need to be responsible for monitoring and guiding changes to policy, and initiating policy amendments where appropriate.

EXTENDING PUBLIC OUTREACH

Community members have been actively engaged in the planning process and continue to guide the outcomes of the UNIFIED PLAN. As the plan is implemented, each key project and milestone should be completed with the expectation that community engagement is a critical part of a successful project and community.

Community engagement should include an invitation to participate in the planning and design of future improvements; however, a public engagement strategy can go beyond involvement in specific projects, as outlined below.

The guiding organization can collaborate with existing education efforts in the local community in terms of best practices (e.g., not dumping fall leaves and

parking lot snow in river, adopt a catch basin program.) In a similar educational vein, a website for the Lower Boardman River should be maintained to promote open communication and information sharing with the public. The website should be utilized to regularly post technical data from the monitoring of habitat and water quality efforts on the river.

Successful urban places often focus on encouraging community engagement with their waterfront through the programming of civic activity. Program activities along the river corridor can encourage appropriate use of the river, offer educational instruction, entertain visitors in creative ways, and promote the civic value of the space. A good first step is to establish a policy for events and activities along the river, bearing in mind the community value of the river as a quiet respite.

Moving forward the guiding organization could collaborate with existing event organizations to further integrate the river corridor into the events. Also, the guiding organization that assists with activities and programming for the river should be explored, further expanding the role a volunteer organization could play.

Finally, the guiding organization should consider the use of enforcement officers or river guardians to help visitors orient to the community and manage inappropriate behavior.

CHAPTER 4

THE ILLUSTRATED PLAN

THE PLANNING PROCESS & PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The UNIFIED PLAN is broad in scope, covering public policy, physical improvements, and implementation strategies. Broad master plans by definition and typical practice do not represent specific designs that can be implemented literally, but rather they point out areas where existing conditions should be improved and establish key objectives that such improvements should strive to address.

The site-specific designs presented in this plan are intended to catalyze the discussion around how different elements of the Lower Boardman River can be improved; they are not the result of a focused design process which culminates with the construction of a built project. Rather, they are intended to illustrate potential improvements that could enrich and enliven downtown.

Once the UNIFIED PLAN is adopted, the DDA and city can determine which of the site-specific recommendations ought to be pursued in the short-term and/or long-term. Once an idea becomes a priority, a funding strategy for the project can be identified and final design plans should be developed within a process that further engages the community.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ROUND TWO

A second round of public engagement was conducted in the summer of 2021. Specific focus during this round of engagement was on gaining input regarding ideas and options for physical improvements in the public corridor and for the draft recommendations in public policy, especially the proposed Riparian Buffer Ordinance.

In July and August the public outreach and engagement included:

- Project Updates for Elected and Appointed Officials and Staff
  - Downtown Development Authority
  - Planning Commission
  - Parks and Recreation Commission
  - City Commission
- Stakeholder outreach within the 100 and 200 Block DDA staff met with individuals owning businesses and property in the 100 and 200 blocks of Front Street to update them on the status of the project and the findings of the wall and sewer stabilization study.
- Online Mechanism to Provide Feedback
  A project website was created and maintained to provide an update on the project and outline specific recommendations and plan alternatives. An online survey was created to allow people to participate in the second round of engagement who were not comfortable with a face-to-face meeting or otherwise found the online method more workable.

  The online survey reached more than 200 people, who were given the opportunity to participate in parts or all of the engagement. The online survey was paired with a website that provided reasonable detailed descriptions of the policy ideas and project alternatives being discussed. Just under two thirds of the survey participants were residents or business owners in the city, and the remaining participants were typically residents of the region interested in the Boardman River and/or downtown.

  Positive support for the project was a clear takeaway from the overall engagement including:

  - Based on the public on-line survey, the lowest amount of support for one the projects or ideas presented was 70%, which is to say, the key elements of the UNIFIED PLAN are highly supported by the community.
  - The majority of input was consistent with the results of the initial public engagement in the summer of 2019, including support for restoration of the river, reasonable regulation of development along the river, increased (and more continuous and accessible) access to the river for the public, and better maintenance and management of recreational river users.

- Focus Group Sessions: In-Person at City Opera House
  Attendees and organizations were specifically invited, but each meeting was open to the public. The focus groups were organized into four meetings as follows (consistent with the 2019 sessions):
  - Meeting #1: Recreation Groups, Community Event organizers
  - Meeting #2: Sustainability, Fisheries, and Natural Resource Focused Organizations
  - Meeting #3: Business and Property Owners
  - Meeting #4: Community and Economic Development, Business Focused Organizations
- Open Public Work Sessions
  With a similar approach and agenda as the Stakeholder meetings, a series of three open public sessions were held on a single day in July. The morning session and evening session were facilitated by the planning consultants, while the mid-day session was structured like an open house where people provided feedback on boards displayed around the room.
- Open House
  The SmithGroup team summarized the results of the engagement sessions and conducted an open house style meeting where participants met face-to-face with the team to review the results of the engagement to-date and identify priority projects that they support.
- Pop-Up Workshops
  In July, a series of Pop-Up workshops were organized and attended by DDA staff and the Leadership Team in downtown.

ALTERNATIVE IDEAS

Both the workshops and online survey participants were given the opportunity to indicate support for policies and projects (or lack thereof). The two groups of participants reached consensus for the policy ideas and alternative projects presented for most of the project areas, as described below.

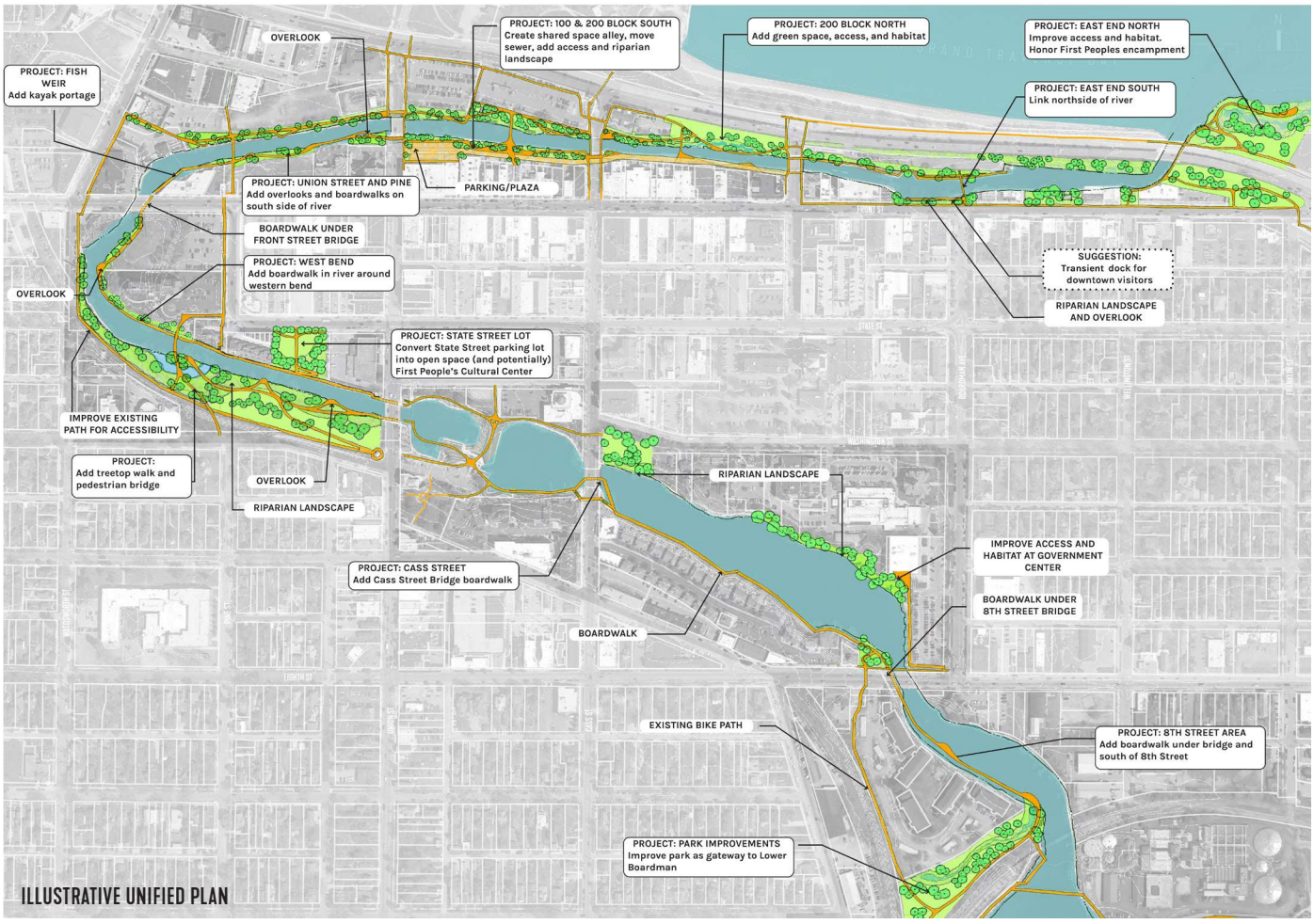
The illustrations from the workshops and survey offered a series of alternative ideas to improve access and connectivity along the river. The purpose of the second round of public engagement was to gauge the community's preferences and general support for the ideas, as well as to gather new thoughts and concepts. A summary of the results from the second round of public engagement can be found in Appendix 5.

The following paragraphs describe the illustrated UNIFIED PLAN reach by reach and the public input that shaped the plan components.

THE UNIFIED PLAN

The primary themes of the UNIFIED PLAN for physical improvements are **CULTURE**, **CONNECTIVITY**, and **HABITAT**.

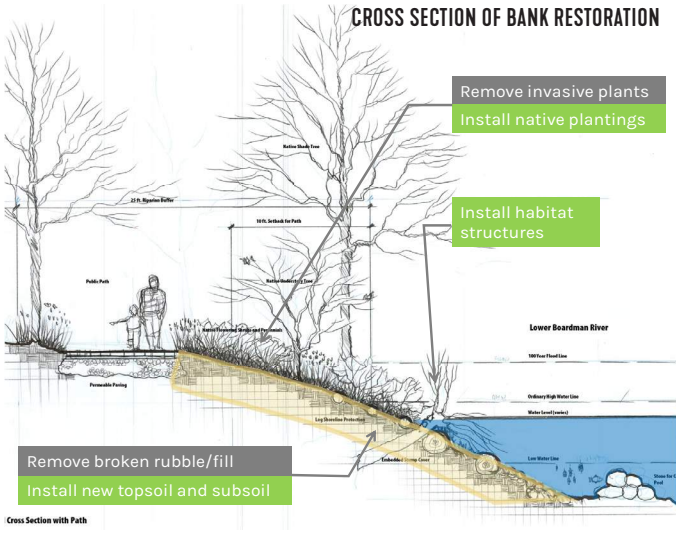
- **CULTURE** focused learning and art to educate and inspire people about the Aanishinaabek and their history in the region.
- **CONNECTIVITY** for people to recreate along, celebrate the value of, and learn about the Boardman River.
- **HABITAT** preservation and creation for aquatic, riparian, and avian communities to increase native species diversity and improve water quality.



Please note that a copy of this map file is provided in Appendix 6.

As discussed in Chapter Three: Action Plan, the UNIFIED PLAN recommends the following general facilities and considerations:

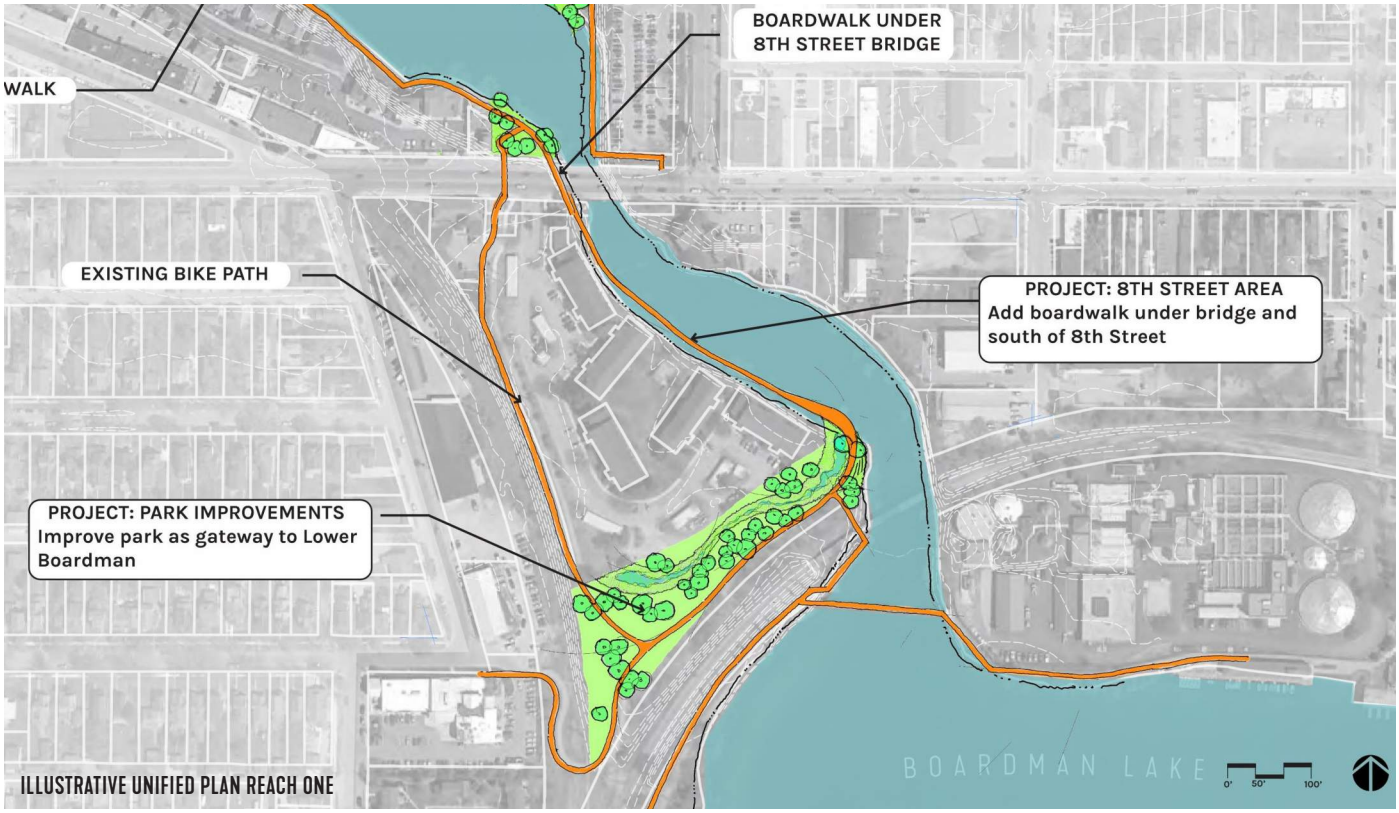
- Consider floating docks to adjust to the variable water levels (since the river does not typically freeze over).
- Provide publicly accessible bathrooms.
- Ensure universal accessibility throughout the river corridor to the extent possible.
- Add public art, seating, wayfinding signs, lighting throughout the river corridor.
- Integrate interpretive learning based on the natural resources and cultural history.
- Further develop parking replacement/increases in other parts of downtown in conjunction with plans to remove parking spaces along river.
- Provide ongoing maintenance to the boardwalks and paths that already exist.
- Rehabilitate filled riverbanks that have been the subject of fill from past stabilization efforts (where feasible) to increase the quality of the soil and plant community. Provide for stormwater infiltration and erosion control, and provide habitat structure for riparian species.



REACH ONE

EIGHTH STREET BRIDGE

Build a pedestrian underpass on the west side of the Eighth Street bridge to connect the boardwalk to the north along the Midtown development to the proposed boardwalk south of the bridge. The design of the bridge allows for such a walk along an existing sheet pile wall.



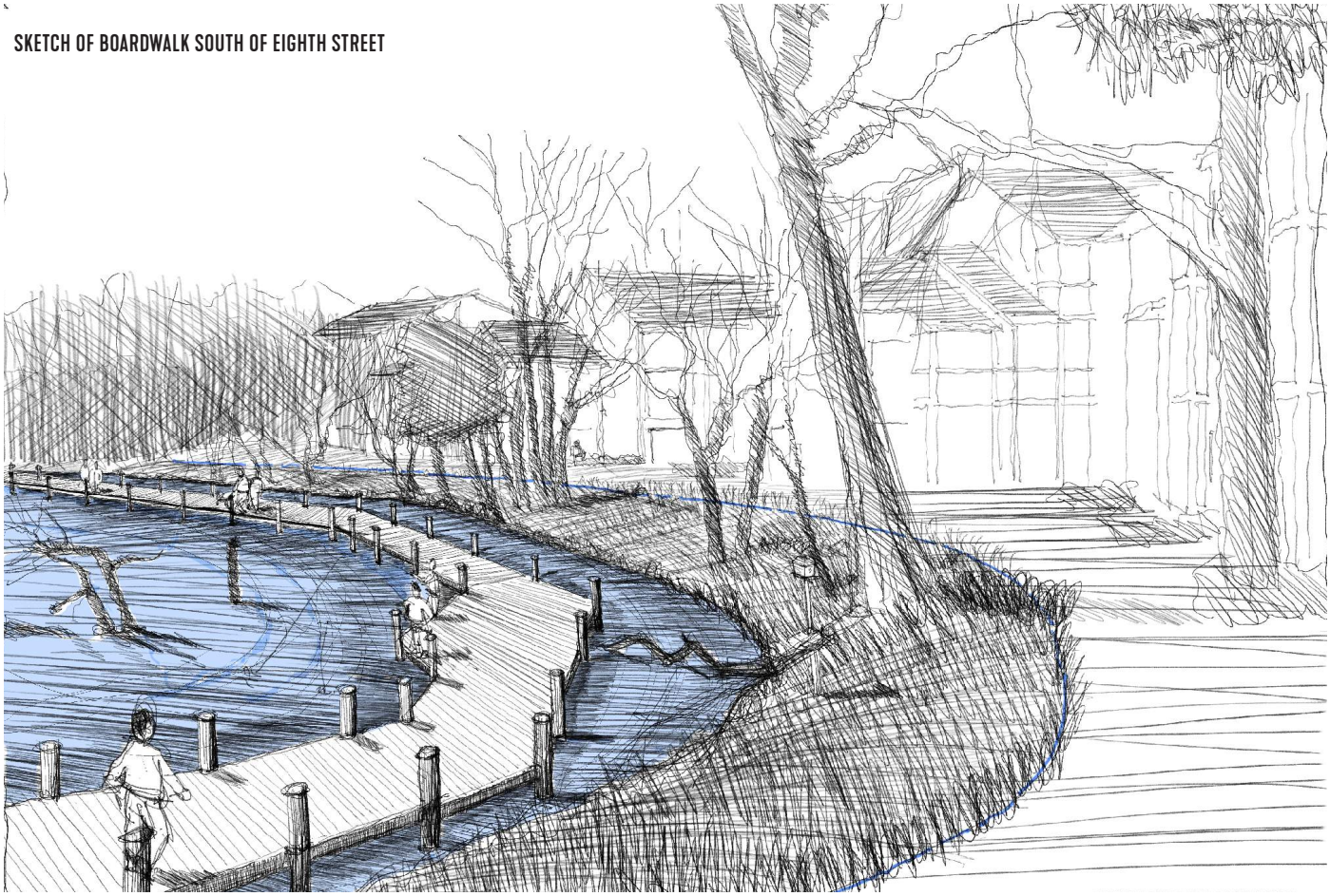
BOARDWALK SOUTH OF EIGHTH STREET

There is an existing easement that allows for pedestrian connection south of Eighth Street along the river's edge, but using the easement would mean the removal of a number of trees, putting the path very close to the residences. The concept shown builds a boardwalk in the river to address these issues and preserve the bank. This concept would also create a continuous waterfront connection to Boardman Lake, Hull Park, and other recreation trails.

The design of the boardwalk should include widened areas to accommodate seating and fishing. In conjunction with the boardwalk construction, there are opportunities to enhance the fisheries habitat with cover and spawning areas, as well as enhancing the riparian bank with plants that support songbirds, butterflies, and riparian mammals and help filter runoff from adjacent lawns.

This boardwalk idea was included in the Public Engagement Round Two and received strong support.

SKETCH OF BOARDWALK SOUTH OF EIGHTH STREET



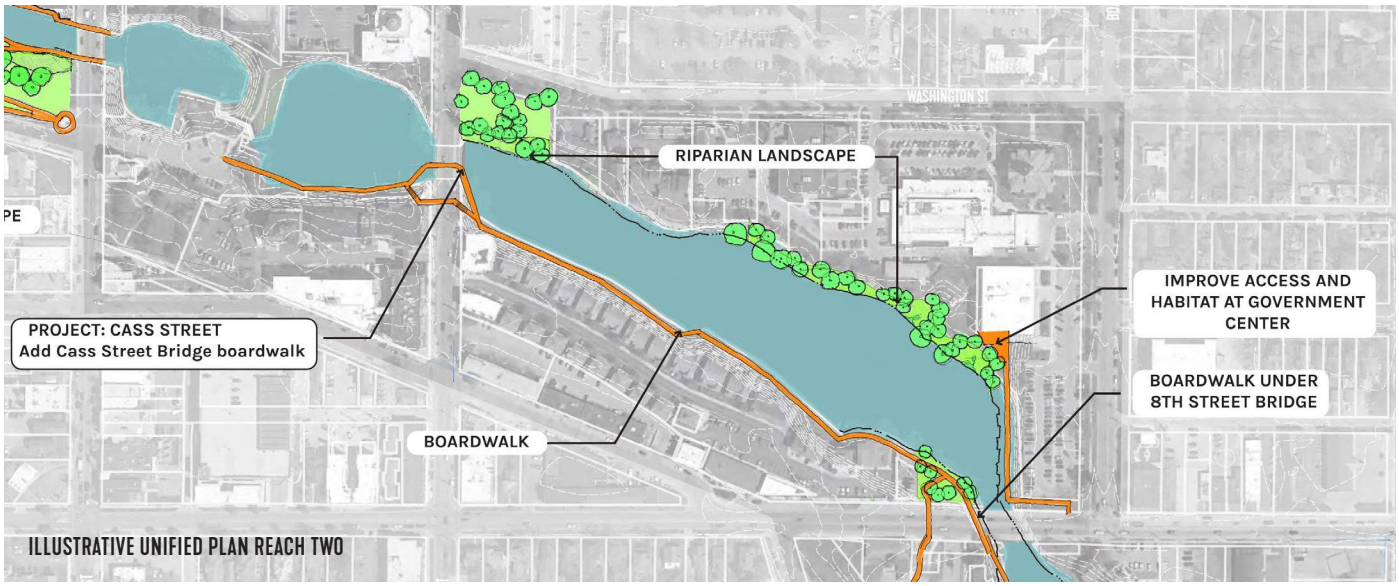
LOWER BOARDMAN GATEWAY PARK

The existing park land should be enhanced to create a wetland or wet meadow habitat to enhance the aesthetic and environmental value of the land. The parcel is one of the few in the river corridor that have the depth and location in which more significant habitat benefits could connect from the river into the neighborhood. The park could also become an excellent setting for public art, with a special focus on creating a gateway feature as river users transition from Boardman Lake into the Lower Boardman River and downtown.

REACH TWO

NORTH SHORE LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS

Much of the north shore in this reach is publicly owned which provides opportunities to enhance the fisheries habitat with cover and spawning areas, as well as enhancing the riparian bank with plants that support songbirds, butterflies, and riparian mammals and help filter runoff from adjacent lawns. The county has developed a plan for enhancing the boardwalk adjacent to the government center and improve the connection from Eighth Street to the boardwalk with a universally accessible path. The DDA has coordinated with the county to ensure that the improvements limit manicured landscape adjacent to the water.

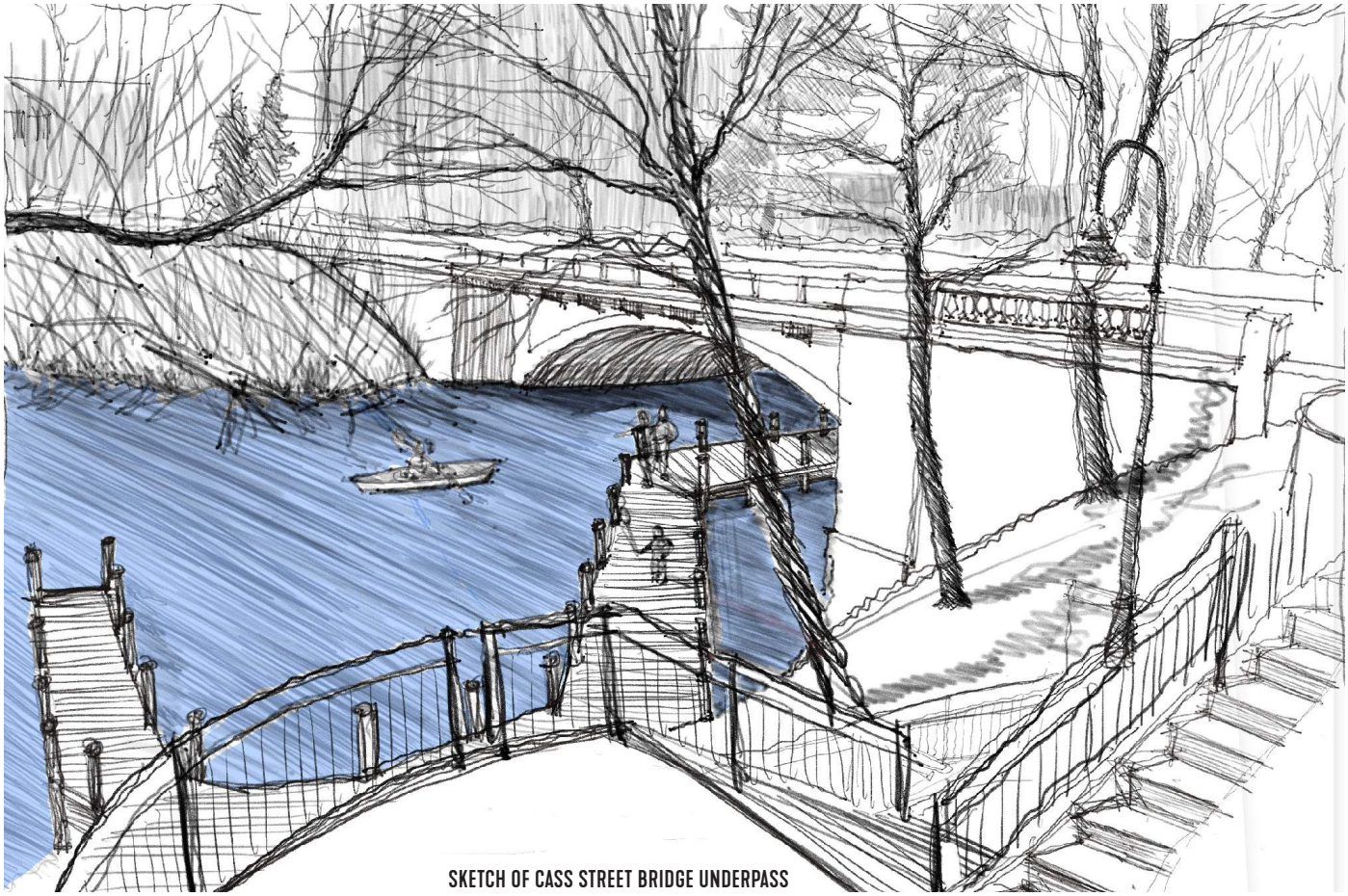


ILLUSTRATIVE UNIFIED PLAN REACH TWO

CASS STREET BRIDGE BOARDWALK

The South Cass Street bridge design poses some difficultly in making a universally accessible connection from the existing boardwalk to the dam area. Alternatives considered during Public Engagement Round Two include a floating boardwalk or a semi-submerged walk.

Public engagement participants indicated a preference for the floating boardwalk, which is the less expensive alternative.



SKETCH OF CASS STREET BRIDGE UNDERPASS

FISHPASS

The FishPass project proposes, among other things, significant upgrades in river-based amenities, learning opportunities, habitat, and accessibility and connectivity of riverfront walks between Union and Cass Streets. Further, the plan included the replacement of the Union Street Dam (which has significant issues related to its condition and longevity) and new technology and design approaches to managing the movement of invasive species in the river system. Specific program elements of the project include:

- Pedestrian access connecting Union Street to Cass Street on the north side of the river.
- New universally accessible paths on the south side of the river.
- Future access potential under the Union Street bridge on the south side of the river linking FishPass to Hannah Park.
- A pedestrian bridge connecting the north and south sides of the river.
- Interpretive overlooks and an outdoor classroom.
- Kayak portage around FishPass and universally accessible launches.
- Stream habitat improvements to riparian bank and riverbed.
- Rain gardens for stormwater treatment.
- Removal and replacement of the dam with new structures to improve fish management.
- Landscaping, seating, lighting, and related park amenities.

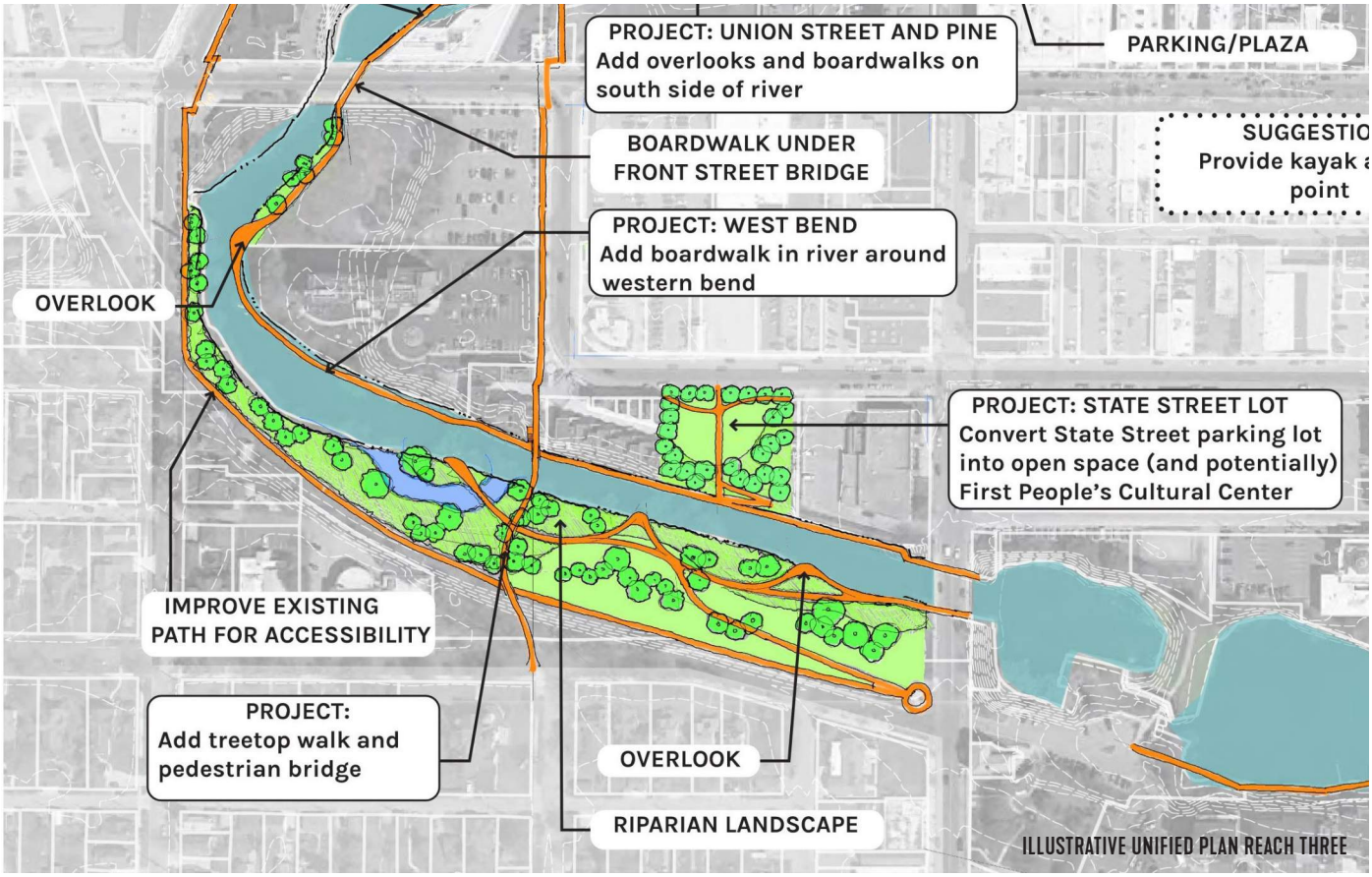
While FishPass is the subject of ongoing litigation, it is important to consider how the goals of universally accessible pedestrian connectivity, habitat improvement, kayak access, fish access management, and dam stabilization could be addressed should the FishPass project not be implemented. Given the high cost of addressing the dam stabilization issue, it is clear the city will need to pursue outside finding sources and partnerships to support this effort. The DDA could become one of those partners in the planning, design, and construction of the improvements as an element of the overall plan for the Lower Boardman River.

REACH THREE

HANNAH PARK

First and foremost, Hannah Park should retain its pastoral character. To improve accessibility, the existing path along the former railroad should be paved and improved and a second trail installed parallel to the riverfront providing a link to some riverfront overlooks, while connecting under the Union Street bridge to the FishPass site. The landscape treatment between this second trail can build on recent work to plant native materials and create habitat in the east half of the park. There is considerable depth of open space in the park to create a wide range of habitat enhancements and link the river, floodplain edge and upland together.

The western half of the park offers great potential to enhance the floodplain and create some open water as a small oxbow, enhancing fish nursery spawning areas as well as habitat for reptiles and amphibians. A path/boardwalk could provide access to this area in a way that does not inhibit the environmental connectivity to the river channel.



TREE TOP CANOPY WALK/PINE STREET PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

The idea of an elevated tree top walk provides for a unique perspective of the river and a great place to observe and learn about river shaping processes, habitats and wildlife (especially birds). This idea could be incorporated into a proposed pedestrian bridge from the railroad grade to the easement adjacent to the Uptown development, connecting the two segments of Pine Street.

The tree top canopy walk idea was included in the Public Engagement Round Two and received strong support.

EXAMPLE OF A TREE TOP WALK, WHITING FOREST, MIDLAND, MI

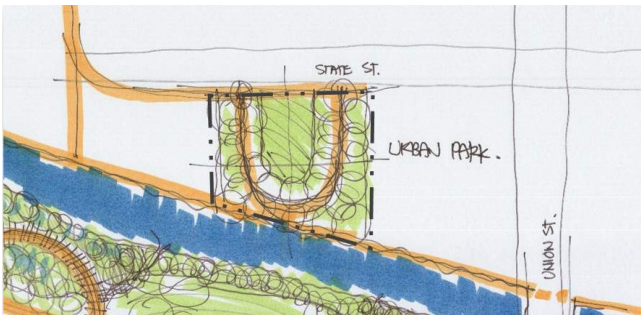
STATE STREET PARKING LOT

Parking Lot E on State Street provides an opportunity to create an enhanced connection to the Lower Boardman River and create more urban open space amidst a part of downtown experiencing development and change. Alternatives considered by the public range from:

- **Alternative A** creating a new urban park on the river.
- **Alternative B** enhancing the parking lot to connect the existing boardwalk to State Street.
- **Alternative C** creating park space with a Aanishinaabek's Education Center.

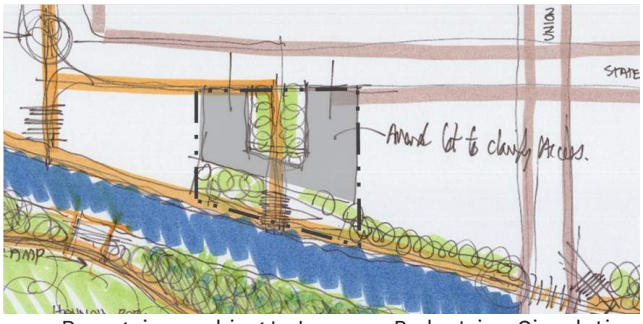
Participants from the workshops and the online survey did not support the same alternative, with workshop voters preferring Alternative C, while survey voters preferring Alternative A. The UNIFIED PLAN recommends that both approaches be considered as this project moves forward, and that the public engagement specific to the future design process establish a direction.

A



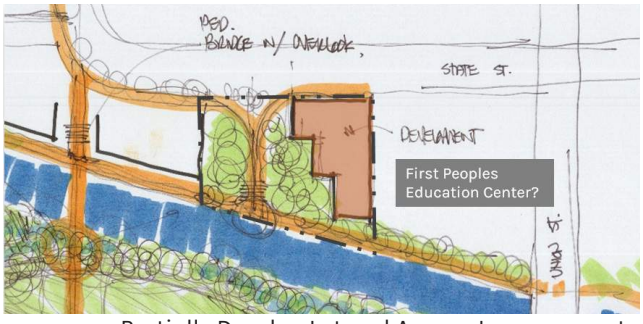
Create Passive Urban Park and Demonstration Gardens

B



Recognize parking to Improve Pedestrian Circulation

C



Partially Develop Lot and Access Improvements

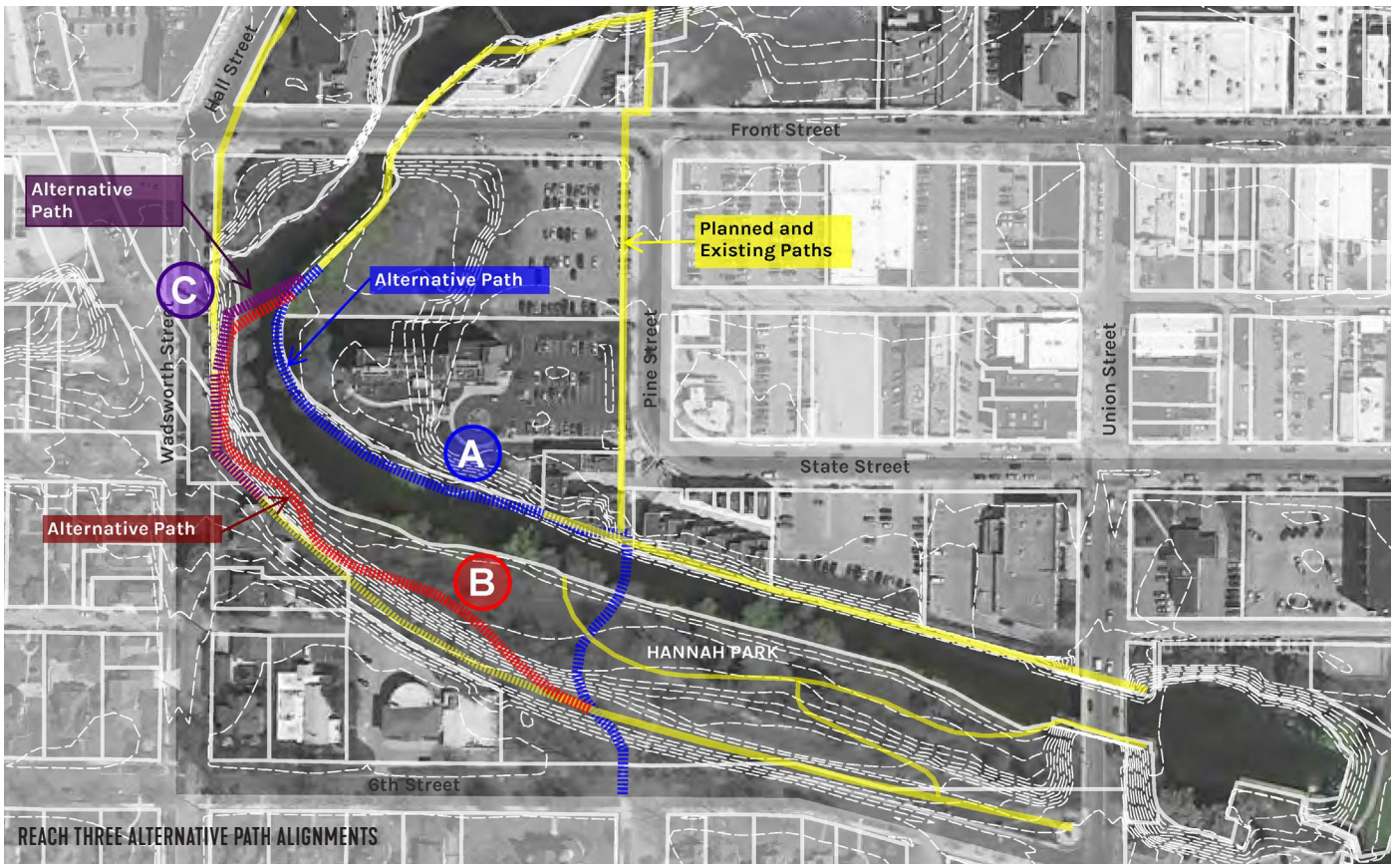
STATE STREET PARKING LOT ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

WEST BEND

The western bend of the river near Hall/Wadsworth Streets is one of the more challenging sections of the river to provide access. The area includes a mix of housing types and the highly valued Hannah Park. Previous public input suggested a pedestrian river crossing in the western bend of the river and connections to the proposed pedestrian underpass at Front Street. The goal of access improvements in this area is to connect the north and south banks of the river, take advantage of the proposed underpass under Front Street, protect the privacy of residents, and preserve the character of Hannah Park.

Alternatives considered during Public Engagement Round Two include:

- **Alternative A** creates an elevated bridge across the river near Pine Street and a boardwalk in the river on the eastern bank.
- **Alternative B** connects along the former railroad line but swings the path out over the bank with an elevated treetop boardwalk. Crossing the river occurs just south of Kids Creek Park.
- **Alternative C** follows directly along the former railroad line and then crosses the river just south of Kids Creek.



REACH THREE ALTERNATIVE PATH ALIGNMENTS

Public engagement participants indicated strong preference for Alternative A.

Development of this boardwalk would need to be sensitive to the desire of the residents of Riverview Terrace for privacy. The development of this walk should also consider the popularity of the area near the Kids Creek Park outfall for fishing and include an overlook for such purposes.

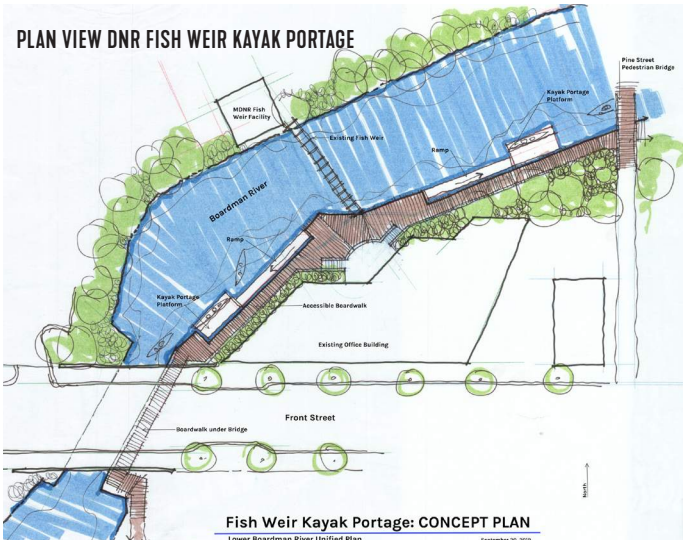
On the western side of the river the sidewalk along Wadsworth should be "branded" through lighting, signage, paving, and other materials to clearly indicate that this walk is part of the riverwalk system. This type of branding could also connect visitors to the walk along Kids Creek Park near the fire station on Front Street, west of Oak Street. The high bank of fill along Wadsworth is covered in large slabs of concrete rubble that hare partially hidden by vegetation. This bank should be rehabilitated to offer a greener solution with more habitat value.

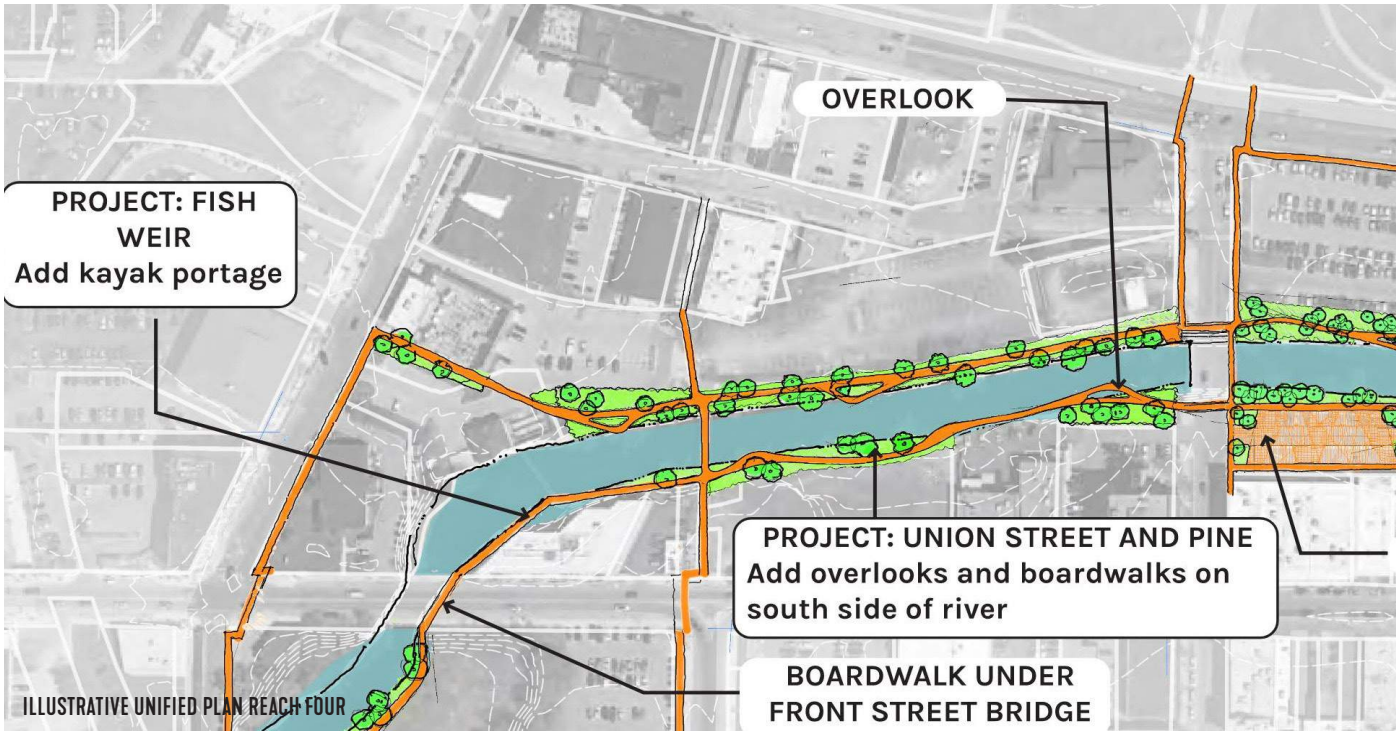
REACH FOUR

FISH WEIR KAYAK PORTAGE

The variability of water levels has led to difficulty traversing the fish weir. One idea that has been considered and illustrated is the installation of ramps that allow kayakers and others to portage around the weir along the south side of the river.

The kayak portage idea was included in the Public Engagement Round Two and received strong support.





UNION STREET OVERLOOK AND CONNECTING WALK

This small parcel of land east of Union Street offers an opportunity for a river overlook and for businesses to take advantage of river views.

- **Alternative A** offers a modest overlook of the river. The plan also illustrates the potential for redevelopment of the adjacent private property.
- **Alternative B** features a larger deck suitable for small performances or gatherings and space for a food truck vendor.
- **Alternative C** provides for a curving walk that widens into an overlook.

The community supports the opportunity to create access and connectivity on both sides of the river between Union Street and the Pine Street pedestrian bridge. As this stretch of river is quite popular for anglers, the illustrated plan shows a number of overlooks for fishing and visual access to the river

Public engagement participants indicated preference for Alternative C, and strong support for a path on the southern bank of the river between Union Street and the Pine Street pedestrian bridge.

REACH FOUR SOUTH SHORE PATH AND BOARDWALK

CONNECTING THE WEST SIDE

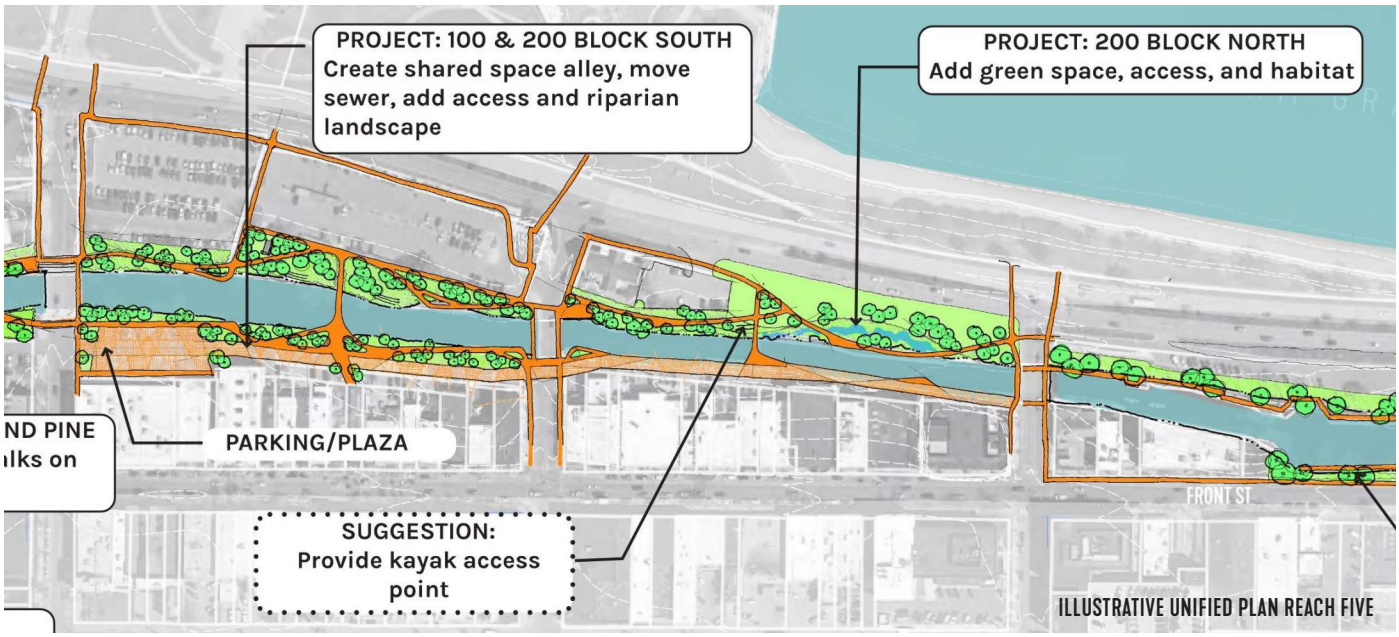
Currently the path on the north bank of Reach four dead ends at the DNR fish weir. The plan recommends that a sidewalk be created to link the fish weir to Hall Street through the public parking lot. This walk, as well as Hall Street sidewalk (going south to Front Street), should be branded as part of the riverwalk as discussed above regarding Wadsworth Street.

REACH FIVE

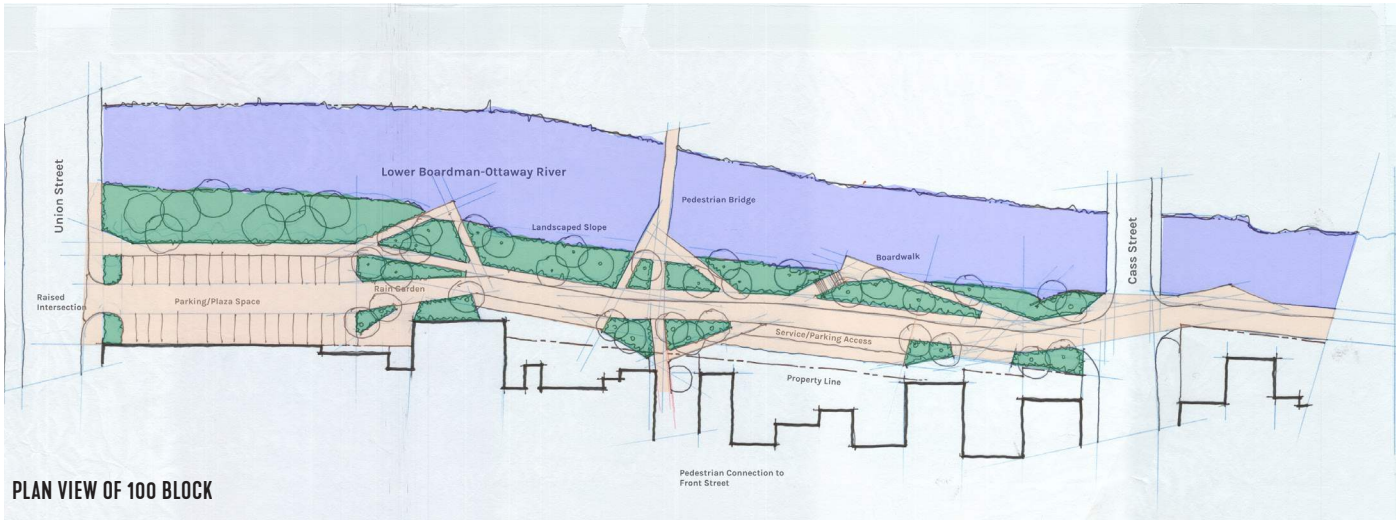
100 BLOCK OF FRONT STREET

The area between the 100 block of Front Street and the river is public land, and there are infrastructure issues with the stability of the sewer, pavement, and the river wall. Fixing these issues offers an opportunity to "green" the bank of the river and create a space shared by service, parking, and public recreation.

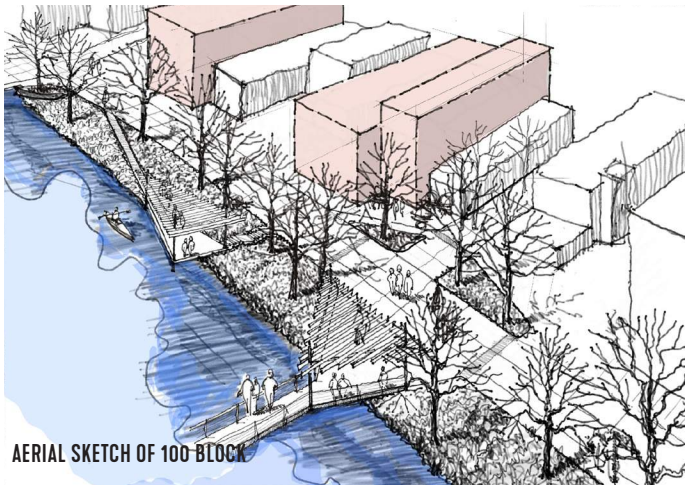
This series of alternative concepts range in their intensity of public access to the river, and in the amount of space that is open to flexible use during events and gatherings. Each assumes that part of the parking along the river would be removed to facilitate stabilization of the sewer and increase pedestrian and green space. The alley would remain open for service and deliveries and access to private (and public) parking. The alley would be designed to be pedestrian friendly through lighting, paving, traffic calming, and landscape improvements.

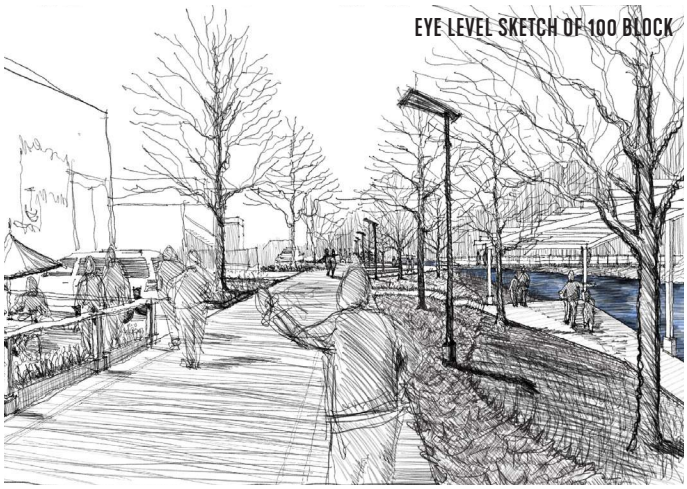


Alternative A proposes a series of overlooks on the river that connect back to the primary walkway/alley. This approach leaves more of the shoreline "green" for habitat and water quality filtering. The sketch illustrations of this alternative also highlight the potential for redevelopment of sites on Front Street to increase density.

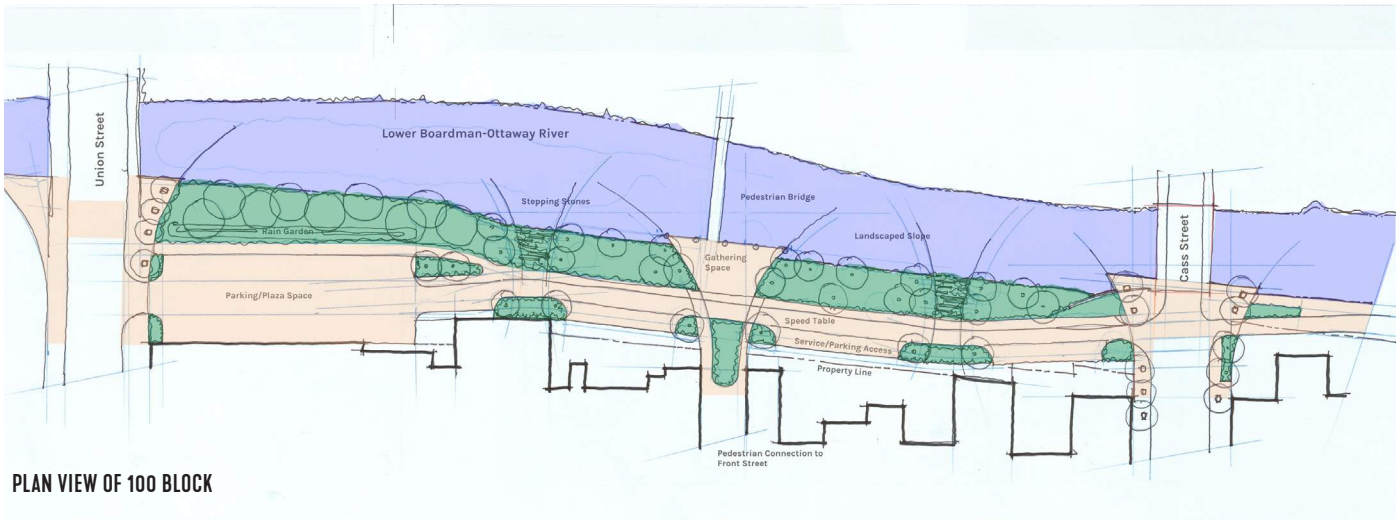


PLAN VIEW OF 100 BLOCK

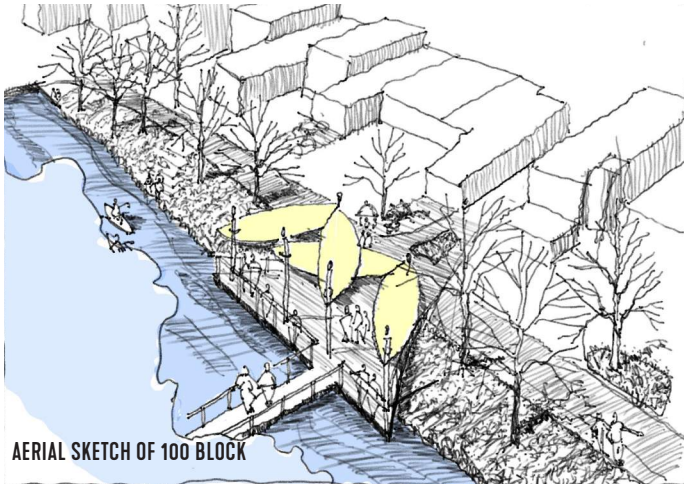

AERIAL SKETCH OF 100 BLOCK


EYE LEVEL SKETCH OF 100 BLOCK

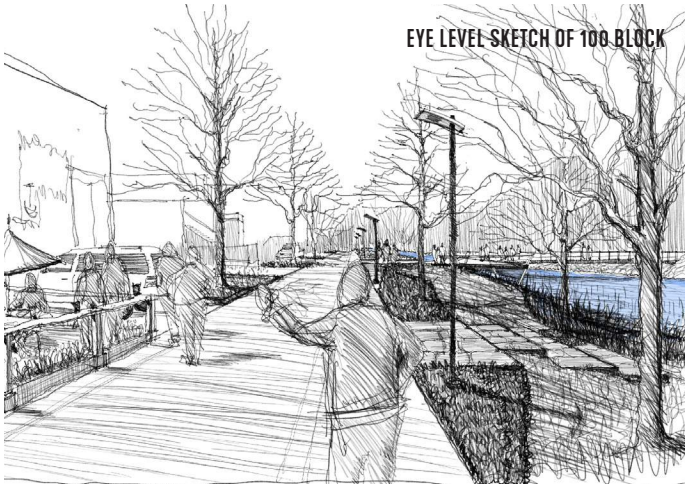
Alternative B celebrates the bridge crossing the river with larger overlooks and gathering areas. Between these overlooks are two stepped stone access points allowing anglers and others more immediate access to the water.



PLAN VIEW OF 100 BLOCK

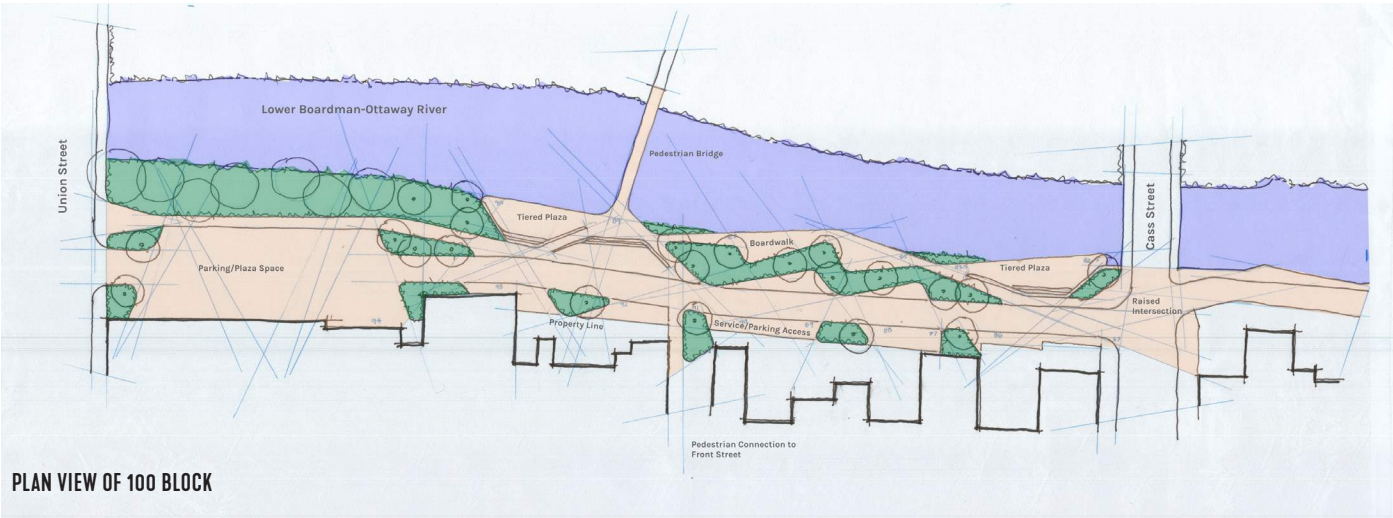


AERIAL SKETCH OF 100 BLOCK

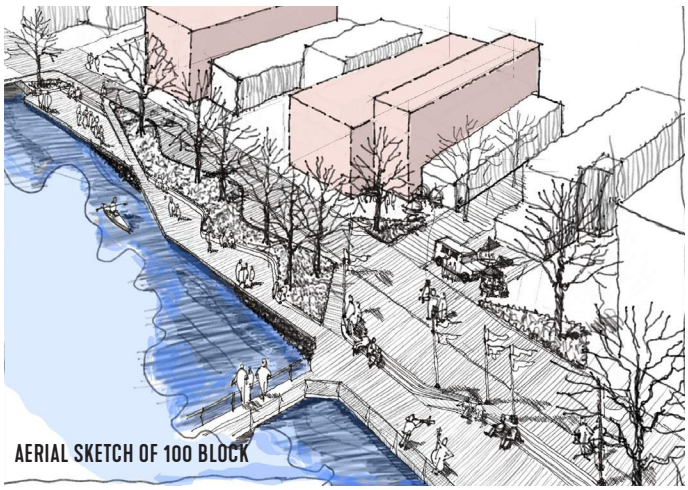


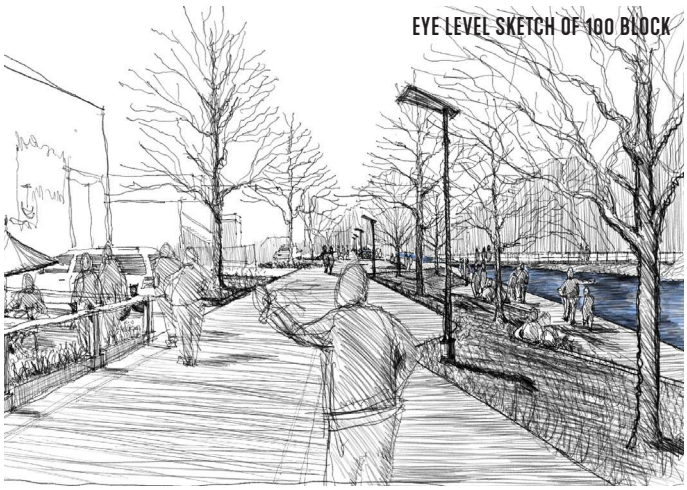
EYE LEVEL SKETCH OF 100 BLOCK

Alternative C provides more continuous boardwalk along the river's edge, several areas for seating and socializing, and two plaza spaces for small performances and events. The sketch illustrations of this alternative also highlight the potential for redevelopment of sites on Front Street to increase density.



PLAN VIEW OF 100 BLOCK


AERIAL SKETCH OF 100 BLOCK

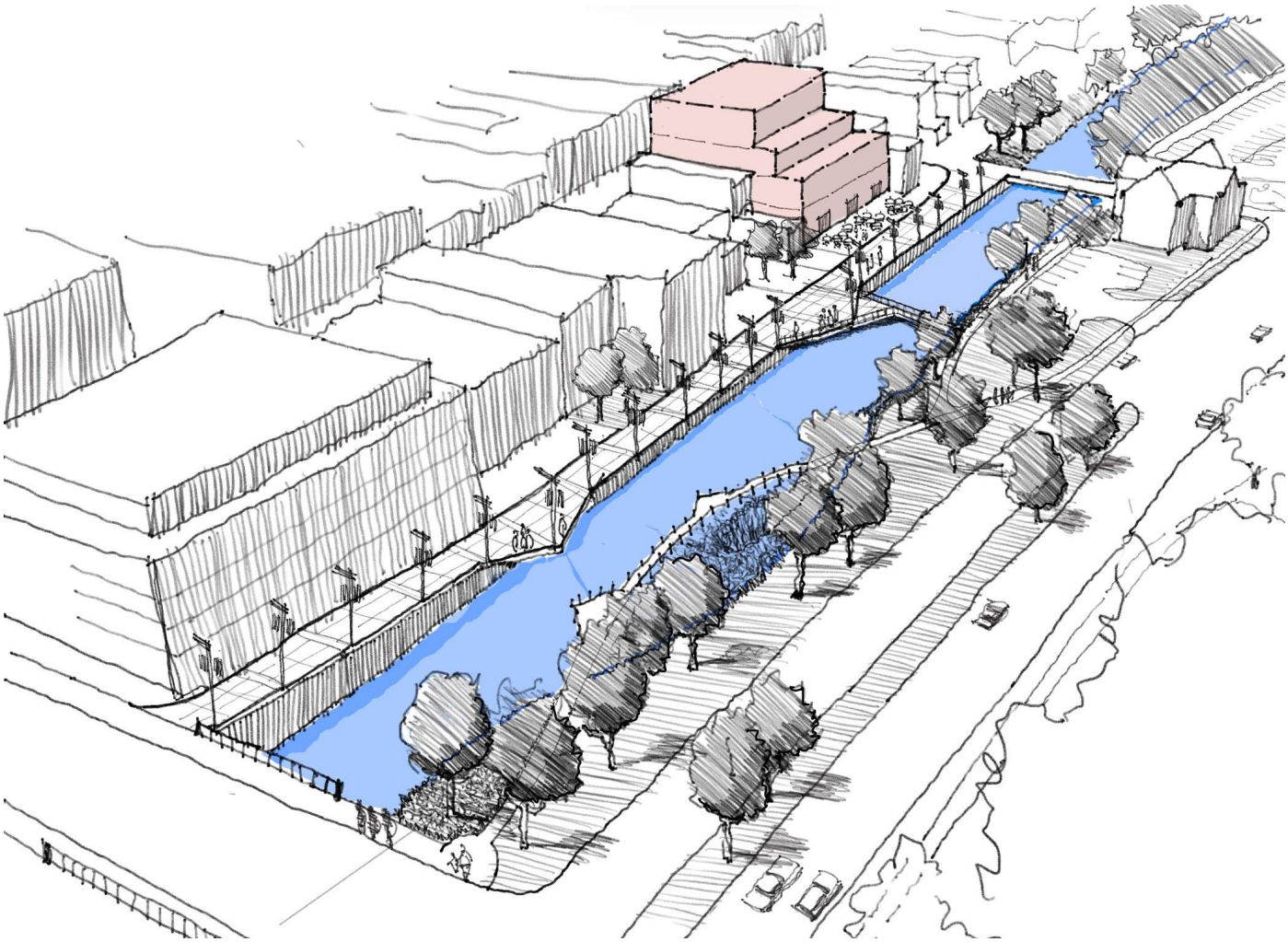

EYE LEVEL SKETCH OF 100 BLOCK

Participants from the workshops and the online survey did not support the same alternative, with workshop voters preferring Alternative C, while survey voters preferring Alternative A. We recommend that both approaches be considered as this project moves forward, and that the public engagement specific to the future design process set a direction. The illustrated UNIFIED PLAN shows a hybrid between these two potential scenarios.

200 BLOCK OF FRONT STREET

The 200 block of Front Street has a thinner band of property along the river than the 100 block, but there are still opportunities to create a more engaging pedestrian friendly space. The illustration also shows reconstructing the northern bank of the river to reduce parking and create recreation space, habitat that filters stormwater pollution, and public access to the river. On the south bank of the river the sketch shows overlooks,

SKETCH OF 200 BLOCK OF FRONT STREET



a new pedestrian bridge, new lighting, and decorative paving, all of which will help create a more pedestrian friendly, shared space character. The sketch also shows the potential for redevelopment of private property to increase density and take advantage of the riverfront.

The ideas described above for the 200 block were included in the Public Engagement Round Two and received strong support.

Some concern was expressed during the public engagement that the proposed changes to this area may impact the use of the area for the Boats on the Boardwalk event, a classic wooden boat show, and this should be taken into consideration as plans for this area move forward.

This part of the reach is a good location for a kayak portage point on the north side of the river, so that recreational river users could disembark and visit downtown.

CONNECTING ACROSS GRANDVIEW PARKWAY

Currently the pedestrian walks along Grandview Parkway on the downtown side of the road are discontinuous through this reach, and the UNIFIED PLAN illustrates one approach to connecting from Union to Park Streets. With the ongoing efforts by MDOT to redesign the parkway the city and DDA should advocate for these walks, as well as for improved pedestrian crossings at Union and Park Streets to better connect downtown to the waterfront.

REACH SIX

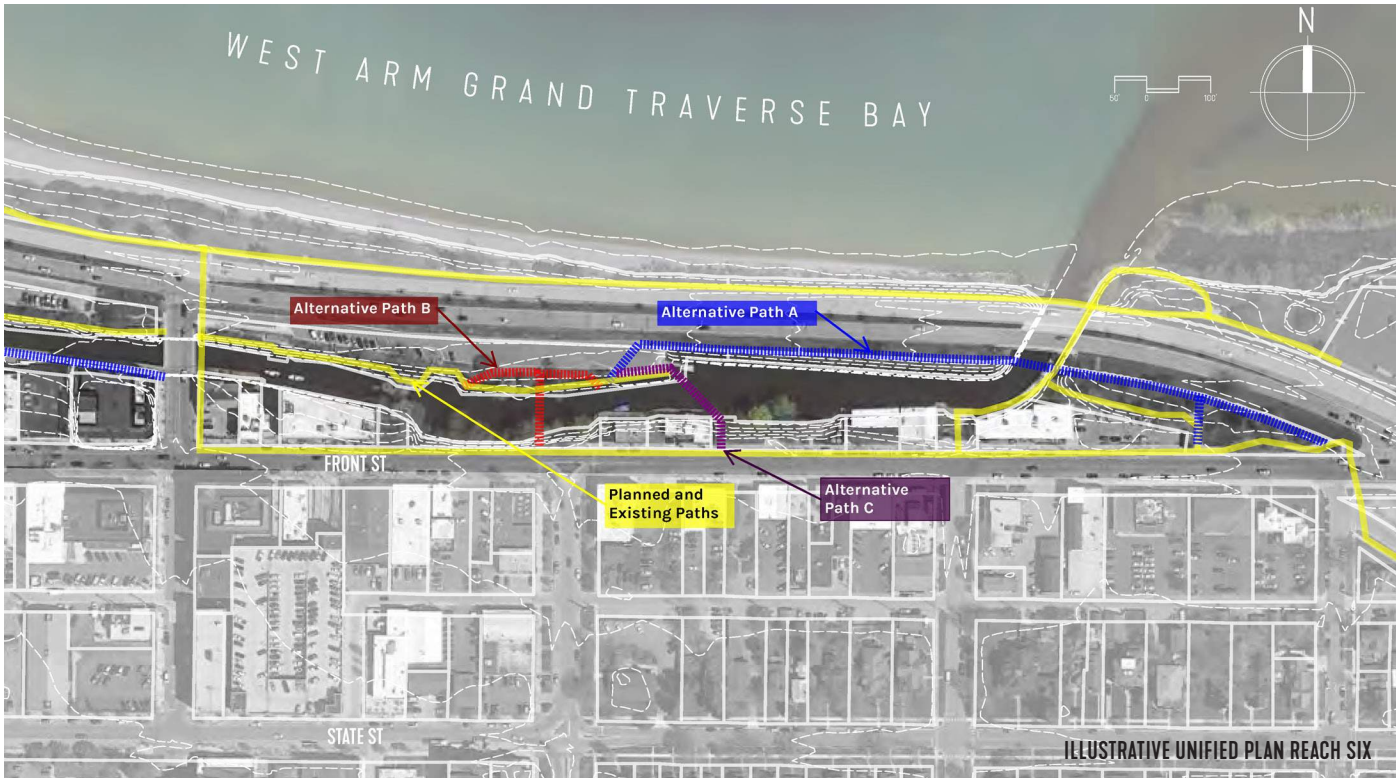
EAST END OF FRONT STREET (SOUTH OF GRANDVIEW PARKWAY)

The east end of the river corridor has a unique character and value. Unfortunately, from a pedestrian use perspective, the existing condition creates a pedestrian dead end that limits access and connections to the bay and East Front Street. This stretch of the river is home to boat slips, so any new crossing of the river will need to accommodate boat traffic.

The ideas shown below test different approaches to creating a looped system for the path.

- **Alternative A** connects to the TART trail where Front Street meets Grandview Parkway, providing a new pedestrian bridge over the river and a boardwalk along the north side of the river.
- **Alternative B** connects across the river at the base of Boardman Avenue, and then ramps down to the existing boardwalks.
- **Alternative C** bridges the river near the boat launch.

Public engagement participants indicated strong preference for Alternative A. After a review of the technical challenges, potential costs, and potential pedestrian conflicts with the boat launch, the Leadership Team determined that Alternative B is more feasible and desirable, and safer.



ILLUSTRATIVE UNIFIED PLAN REACH SIX

EAST FRONT STREET

Four points exist along East Front Street where public property includes river frontage. These parcels provide visual access to the river and large trees that shade the river and sidewalk. As with many stretches of the riverfront downtown, the banks are stabilized by concrete rubble, and should be rehabilitated where feasible using green solutions that increase habitat value.

The westernmost of these three parcels is at a point where the river widens. This location could be home to a transient boat dock that encourages visitors to downtown. While this idea is recommended for further consideration, there are a number of logistical issues that require further study, including how the dock will be managed and policed, if there is adequate space in the river to allow for safe navigation, how a ramp could be used to allow access to the dock, and if the loss of turning space for boats in the river would be detrimental.

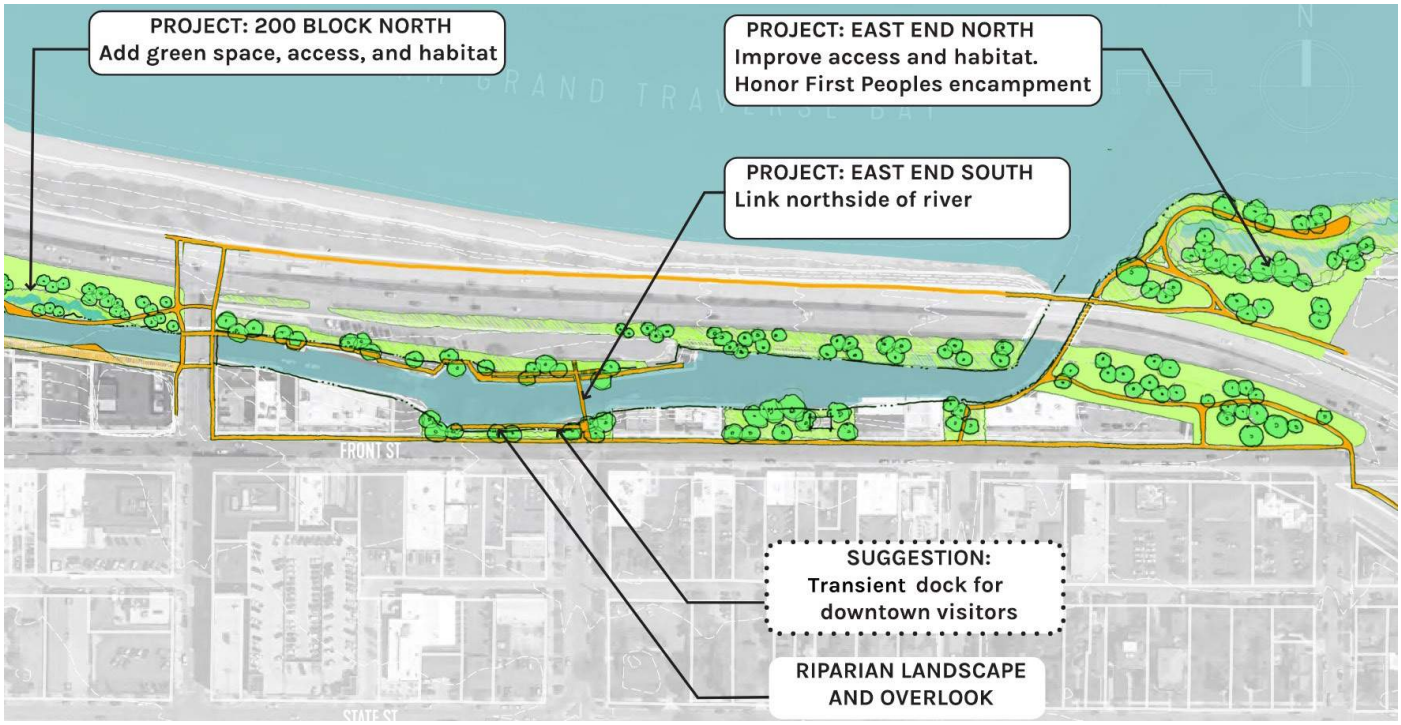
The parcel at the base of Wellington Street was improved decades ago as a pocket park and access to a walk along the river. This facility is showing signs of wear on the decking, rust on the metal railings and light poles, and is being undermined by high water. The plan recommends reconstructing this pocket park to provide clearer visual access to the water and universal access to the walk along the river.

EAST END OF FRONT STREET (NORTH OF GRANDVIEW PARKWAY)

The experience of the Lower Boardman River culminates with arrival at Grand Traverse Bay. The publicly owned land on the east side of the river mouth provides scenic views of the bay, a complex natural system, and a rich history of use by the local tribes as an encampment. The UNIFIED PLAN illustrates enhanced habitat and boardwalks to provide access to the bay and connections to the TART trail.

CONNECTING ACROSS GRANDVIEW PARKWAY

The reconstruction of Grandview Parkway is a fortuitous chance to make the pedestrian crossing between downtown and the bay safer and more convenient. The city and DDA should continue to advocate for intersection improvements at Front Street. One idea that came out of the second round of public engagement (and worth further consideration) is to provide a mid-block crossing between Park Street and Front Street near the boat launch.



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

ANTICIPATED INVESTMENT AND PROJECT PHASING

The UNIFIED PLAN outlines an ambitious program for improving recreation access, pollution control, environmental restoration, learning, and habitat creation along the Lower Boardman River. Large scale plans such as this are rarely, if ever, accomplished as a single project, but are implemented over time in multiple phases as priorities and potential funding become clear.

This study assessed (in a general way) the potential costs associated with constructing the plans on a reach-by-reach basis. Construction costs of a project can vary significantly based on the assumptions made relative to the level of improvements. For instance, lighting can be designed to provide pools of light at key turns of a boardwalk, stairs, and gathering places, or it could illuminate the entire path system consistently. The cost difference between these two approaches can be 100% higher for the more consistent lighting. Similarly, assumptions about path materials can be dramatically different; for instance, a raised wooden boardwalk is significantly more costly than an at-grade paved path.

At this level of planning, we are estimating at the "order of magnitude" level of detail given that the design is not finalized, detailed site topographic and utility surveys have not been performed, and it is uncertain what year the project(s) will be built and what the prevailing costs will be at the time. What cost estimates at this level of planning do is provide an overall sense of relative costs between reaches, and some guidance for the preparation of future budgets and CIP projections. The estimate is summarized by reach below:

Reach One	$2,600,000
Reach Two	$1,400,000
Reach Three	$6,600,000
Reach Four	$2,900,000
Reach Five	$9,500,000
Reach Six	$4,200,000
TOTAL PROJECT	$27,200,000

Basic assumptions made in the estimate are as follows:

- The estimate is based on 2021 construction costs, without escalation for future years.
- The construction costs are based upon the pre-design conceptual ideas and as such reflects the current level of design detail.
- The estimate includes construction costs, and a 20% contingency that would include a 10% contingency for minor items discovered during the design process and 10% for construction period additions to the work. The estimate does not include soft costs associated with a construction project (i.e. items such as construction inspections, construction management, agency review/permitting, testing, general administration costs, and design/engineering fees). Together these soft costs are typically valued between 25 to 40% of the estimated construction cost.
- The estimate includes site preparation, grading, known utility work (for the 100 block), storm sewers, bank restoration, lighting, site furnishings and amenities, paths, boardwalks, railings, landscaping, habitat structures, and erosion control.

- The costs for utility improvements are included for known project specific improvements only. Additional utility modifications and improvements may be required. The completion of a utility survey may identify additional utilities.
- The costs associated with land acquisition, easement/lease procurement, and other land rights have not been included.
- The removal of contaminated/hazardous soils and materials, underground obstructions, and other unknown conditions may exist within the project limits and as such are not included.

As referenced above, projects like those recommended in the UNIFIED PLAN are typically implemented in a number of phases. As part of Public Engagement Round Two the online survey inquired as to the public's sense of which projects to prioritize. Participants of the August 17, 2021 public workshop were asked to prioritize projects as well. Finally, the Leadership Team reviewed the public input and themselves weighed in on project priorities, taking into account the need to address immediate health and safety concerns as well as the established project values.

HIGHEST PRIORITY PROJECTS

- The south bank of Reach Five (100 and 200 blocks of Front Street) is clearly the highest priority project from all groups, given the health and safety concerns related to the existing retaining wall and sewer.
- In Reach Three, upgrade the existing gravel path through Hannah Park along the former rail road bed, and extend the existing boardwalk on the north and east sides of the river to, and under, Front Street.

MODERATE PRIORITY PROJECTS

- In Reach One, construction of a boardwalk on the west side of the river and improvements to the existing public space south of Riverine Apartments.
- In Reach Three, improvements for habitat and access in Hannah Park and along Wadsworth Street.
- In Reach Four, installation of a boardwalk and kayak portage around the fish weir.
- In Reach Five, habitat and access improvements on the north side of the river.
- In Reach Six, landscape and access improvements in existing pocket parks and boardwalks.

LOWER PRIORITY PROJECTS

- In Reach Two, landscape and habitat improvements on the north side of the river, plus the addition of a boardwalk under Cass Street.
- In Reach Three, construction of a new pedestrian bridge and tree top walk over the river.
- In Reach Three, improvements to the State Street parking lot.
- In Reach Four, landscape and access improvements along the river, and along Hall Street.
- In Reach Six, habitat and access improvements to the public land along the shore of the bay.

This list of priorities should be used as a guideline for future discussions by the city and DDA to plan future project and funding pursuits.

There are a number of small but visible improvements along the river corridor that could be completed by volunteers or small contractors. These "low hanging fruit" type projects do not necessarily rise to the top of the project priority list above; however, they can

have a big impact on the public perception of the river and create momentum for change. These projects could include creating small rain gardens, hosting river cleanup days, management of invasive trees and shrubs, planting of native trees and flowers, adding benches and resting places, and basic repair of existing pedestrian boardwalks and related assets to "spruce-up" the riverfront.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Below is a list of potential grant sources for funding the implementation of the Lower Boardman River UNIFIED PLAN. The primary focus of these grants is to encourage recreation/fishing access to waterways, enhance water quality, or enhance and create wetland and fisheries habitat. All these elements are needed in the proposed project area. Our experience is that projects typically need to rely on multiple sources for grants. This is not an exhaustive list, and we need to evaluate each of these to determine the specific applicability to the project, timing of the grant cycle, and where you can get the most return for the effort to pursue.

DNR GRANTS

- The Fisheries Habitat Grant supports a variety of activities to benefit fisheries, aquatic resources, and the public, including fish habitat conservation, dam removal and repair, and access to recreation.
- Recreation Passport Grants provide funding to local units for the development of public recreation facilities. This includes the development of new facilities and the renovation of old facilities.
- The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) provides for natural resource protection and outdoor recreation. (e.g., trails, regional significance, public access to lakes and rivers, wildlife habitat, hunting access).

EGLE GRANTS

- Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Grants: Federal Clean Water Act Section 319 provides funding to implement nonpoint source activities identified in EGLE-approved watershed management plans. Implementation activities must address specific sources of nonpoint source pollution identified by Michigan's Nonpoint Source Program Plan. The goal of these grants is to restore waters impaired by nonpoint source pollution and protect high quality waters from degradation. This funding source provides for the implementation of physical improvements as well as information/education strategies, land use planning, the installation of easements, and related activities.
- Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Grants: Clean Michigan Initiative provides funding to implement the physical improvements in approved watershed management plans intended to restore impaired waters and protect high quality waters. Practices must address specific sources of nonpoint source pollution identified by Michigan's Nonpoint Source Program Plan. Physical improvements are structural and vegetative BMPs. The goal of these grants is to restore waters impaired by nonpoint source pollution and protect high quality waters from degradation.
- Coastal Management Planning and Construction Grants assist in the protection, preservation, restoration, and enhancement of the nation's longest freshwater coastline, the Michigan Coastal Management (MCM) Program provides grant funds to promote vibrant and resilient coastal communities.

NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION (NFWF)

- Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL): Green Infrastructure; Aquatic connectivity; Shoreline habitat; Wetland habitat; Stream & riparian habitat, Invasive Species.
- Coastal Resilience Fund: Living shorelines community protection and habitat.
- Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program: Wetland, riparian, in-stream, and coastal wetland habitat restoration.

THE GREAT LAKES FISHERY TRUST (GLFT)

Provides funding to non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and government agencies to enhance, protect, and rehabilitate Great Lakes fishery resources.

The GLFT pursues its mission and vision through investments in three broad categories:

- Access to the Great Lakes Fishery
- Ecosystem Health and Sustainable Fish Populations
- Great Lakes Stewardship

ECONOMIC RECOVERY/INFRASTRUCTURE

Recent and anticipated bills from the federal government are aimed at providing local relief from the Covid-19 epidemic, offering an opportunity for financial support to offset economic and health impacts, as well as for projects that build community resiliency. This effort is ongoing and should be monitored closely to determine if there is an application of these funds for the projects and initiatives outlined in the UNIFIED PLAN.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGETING

The U.S. Congress has amended their practices for budgeting to allow for the annual budget to include project specific funding for each congressional district and state. This practice now includes provisions to make such funding more transparent and each congressperson and senator is required to publicly indicate the projects they support are included in the annual budget.

This practice is well suited to funding projects like those included in the UNIFIED PLAN, which do not fit into a specific category of existing funding sources but which also meet an important public need for local communities.

MOVING FORWARD

Moving forward will necessitate the development of key partnerships within local government agencies, non-profits, advocacy groups, other key public stakeholders, and the greater Traverse City community. The DDA and the Leadership Team (or their successors) will continue to build partnerships through an open and transparent public planning process, and ongoing connections with stakeholders of all types. The planning process will continue to engage the community and take direction from their input and guidance.

At the conclusion of this initial study the Leadership Team and DDA will lead the charge in the adoption of the UNIFIED PLAN and the practices and values it promotes. As the plan moves into the implementation phase, the DDA and its partners will continue the process of measuring needs, identifying new opportunities, and establishing priorities for moving forward. Given the strong participation by the community in the UNIFIED PLAN, the community will be pleased when all new projects on the river reflect these values and considers the value of natural habitat, as well as human use!

Ultimately, this process is about implementing a unifying plan for the Lower Boardman River. With the engagement and unity of all interests, the city and DDA will be in a sound position to achieve implementation and celebrate the results together.

The work does not end with the completion of the plan. The DDA and Leadership Team recognize that a willing and supportive community is critical to the implementation of the UNIFIED PLAN.

APPENDICES

Design a Better Future

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