



Kinnickinnic River Corridor Planning
Community Engagement Program
Oct. 25, 2016

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Kinnickinnic River Corridor Planning Community Engagement Program

I. OVERVIEW

The community of River Falls is embarking on a planning process that will decide the future role and physical appearance of the Kinnickinnic River. This is a complex issue, and one that will shape the future of the community for decades to come.

Our public and agency involvement approach is focused on inclusive and creative engagement that will bring all voices to the planning table and ensure meaningful consideration of all stakeholder interests. Our process is designed to include a range of experience levels and perspectives in exploring possibilities and building consensus in decision-making.

We will create a robust, inclusive, engaging, integrated, and transparent process that will engage, inform and empower community members to be part of this historic process. In order to allow every voice to be heard, we will employ multiple tools and activities that range from in-person, face-to-face meetings to online activities.

II. PROGRAM GOALS

- Welcome, encourage and value participation by all River Falls citizens
- Value divergent viewpoints
- Offer multiple, targeted engagement opportunities for citizens, partners, and stakeholders
- Provide information that is timely, transparent, factual, and reliable
- Present technically-rich details in accessible and easy to understand formats
- Create fun and engaging outreach tools
- Build and maintain momentum during the process
- Encourage volunteerism to increase community buy-in and ownership

III. OBJECTIVES/ACTIVITIES

A. The team will create, coordinate, and facilitate a Community Kick-Off event Dec. 8, 2016.

The event will include Committee, staff, and consultant introductions; interactive activities and give-a-ways; website launch; project update; exhibits; and refreshments. The team will promote the event through various means including Facebook, posters, utility bill insert, partner promotion, a Journal announcement – and more.

B. The team will develop, coordinate, and facilitate two full- to two-day Community Workshops. These intensive Community Workshops will be held before the decision about relicensing the dams, in Fall 2017, and after the decision, in Fall 2018. The latter will immerse residents in conversations and activities that will inform the Corridor design phase.

C. The team will develop, coordinate, and facilitate up to six “Tech Talks” in 2017. The “Tech Talks” will address technical topics about the river and river corridor. In addition to being presented live at a public venue, the Tech Talks will also be video-recorded and posted on the project website for community members to review at their convenience throughout the course of the process. A preliminary list of potential Tech Talk topics is included in the program calendar (p. 5). The list may change depending on input from community members.

D. At least three “formal” surveys and multiple informal surveys will be conducted during the length of the project.

The “formal” surveys will be conducted in conjunction with the Community Kick-Off event, and each of the Community Workshops (see above). The surveys will be especially important for residents unable to attend the workshops.

In addition to these surveys, the team will solicit community input in a variety of other settings including, but not limited to, major community events (State of the City and other Chamber gatherings, River Falls Bluegrass Festival, River Falls Days, Bacon Bash, Community Appreciation Day, etc.); conversations with small gatherings at local restaurants or neighborhood events; presentations to service clubs, classrooms, faith-based organizations, river activists, and other organized groups.

E. At least 10 Ambassadors will be trained to deliver presentations and solicit input from the above-mentioned groups.

These Ambassadors will include staff, River Corridor Committee members, and other community volunteers.

F. The team will investigate additional opportunities to work with other City departments and community organizations to share information and solicit input from residents.

These activities might include informational displays in City buildings including the Library Gallery as well as other partner organizations and local businesses. We will also seek out opportunities to share programming activities around Kinni Corridor issues and updates.

Marketing and communications activities

G. Branding will be developed for the project to encourage community connectedness and public awareness.

A community focus group was assembled Oct. 13 to work with graphic designer/training facilitator Robyn Lingen to brainstorm ideas around project branding and logo creation. A final version of the logo will be presented to the Core Staff Committee by Nov. 10.

H. The team will use all digital media at its disposal to share updates, events and information with the public on an ongoing basis.

1) Website

The project website will serve as the home base and repository for all things related to the corridor planning process. A separate, dedicated website will be the warehouse of all project communications, exhibits, technical studies, announcements, and project milestones. The website will be updated frequently with new content throughout the process.

In addition, the website will utilize web format capabilities and/or engagement software to host interactive conversations and feedback sessions with residents. The website will also provide a forum for residents to share ideas and concerns with one another.

2) E-Newsletters, email blasts and (potentially) a blog

After the team has collected a critical number of email addresses through signups at community events and via the City and project websites, it will distribute a monthly e-newsletter or blog documenting progress and sharing upcoming engagement events and opportunities. The team will engage partner organizations in email collection, too.

3) Facebook, YouTube, and other social media

The team will create a Facebook page for the project and post regularly, linking to relevant information on the project website or to the project's event postings on Facebook. The team will post short and engaging videos about the project on the City's YouTube channel and embed in the City and project websites. Digital advertisement opportunities will be explored and utilized as appropriate.

I. The team will also use traditional media to inform and engage.

Printed collateral will be developed to support project engagement and may include:

- City Newsletter
- Informational brochures
- Event posters and signage
- Invitation and informational postcards
- Give-a-ways (T-shirts, hats, pens, etc.)
- Print advertisements
- 3-D diagrams (SEH)
- Large-form maps and renderings (SEH)
- Etc.

J. The team will create a media plan to engage local, regional, statewide, national, and international news media as well as relevant trade publications in covering aspects of the project.

Story "pitches" will be targeted to appropriate outlets with specific features on issues/topics of interest. The project website will include links to online and print stories, as well as press releases sent from the team. A media packet available on the website will give reporters/producers information and visuals to be used in story development.

K. Working with the City's Media Service Department and others, the team will capture all or part of major engagement events and multiple other engagement activities.

Tech Talks will be taped in their entirety and made available on the website. Highlights will be used on Facebook and YouTube to engage and inform in shorter segments.

In addition to sharing short video updates and engaging clips throughout the process, the team hopes to procure funding to produce a feature-length documentary that illustrates the community's journey over the two-plus year planning process. Besides creating an attractive and broadly viewable record of the process, the video could ultimately be used as an educational tool for other municipalities facing a similar project.

IV. PROGRAM CALENDAR

(Major project milestones and community engagement events)

2016	
Oct. 13	Community Focus Group on branding
Oct. 25	City Council presentation
Mid-Nov.	Corridor Committee and Stakeholder Group kick off meetings (<i>create vision, mission and goals; review committee roles and responsibilities; confirm Tech Talk topics</i>). 12 quarterly meetings.
Nov. 10	Branding and printed items for kick-off event finalized
Dec. 2	Website complete
Dec. 8	Kinni Project Community Kick-Off event and online survey
Unknown	Friends of the Kinni Dam Removal Feasibility Report released
2017	
January	Tech Talk #1 (Tentative Topic: River Corridor Planning 101)
March	Tech Talk #2 (Tentative Topic: Recreation, Tourism, and Economic Development)
May	Tech Talk #3 (Tentative Topic: Dam Relicensing 101)
Fall	Community workshop #1 (<i>pre-hydro decision</i>) and online survey
July	Tech Talk #4 (Tentative Topic: River Ecology)
September	Tech Talk #5 (Tentative Topic: Dam Removal and Alternatives to Dam Removal)
November	Potential Tech Talk #6 (Tentative Topic: TBD)
December	Hydroelectric Feasibility Report available for review
2018	
January	Review Hydroelectric Feasibility Report (available December 2017); discuss upcoming licensing decision by Council (Feb. 2018)
Feb. 27	Final Council decisions on hydro (<i>relicense or surrender</i>). Notification due in six months.
June	Draft Corridor Plan available for review
Aug. 31	FERC notification due
Fall	Community workshop #2 (<i>post-hydro decision</i>) and online survey
Fall/Winter	Review draft of corridor plan
2019	
Summer	Adopt final corridor plan

The team is crafting a detailed engagement strategy including dates, assignments, content, platform, and outcomes for all activities included in Section III. This comprehensive and integrated plan will serve as a guide for the team; however, the plan is fluid and will morph and grow as community input is received.

V. Program Partners

A. Project planning teams

The Engagement Team will work with the Core Staff Team, Kinni Corridor Committee, and appointed working groups to share and glean information about the project, especially as regard to citizen feedback. Members of these groups will be recruited to serve as project Ambassadors.

B. Engagement and Communications Committee

The team will develop an Engagement and Communications Committee to provide advice and guidance, and assist in developing and directing engagement activities

C. Community partners

The team will work with a variety of groups and organizations likely to assist in developing and enhancing Engagement Program activities. These organizations will include, but not be limited to:

- City Departments
- Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau
- University of Wisconsin-River Falls and Chippewa Valley Community College
- River Falls School District
- Economic development entities
- Graphic designers/photographers/videographers
- Service clubs
- River stakeholder and environmental groups
- Community organizations
- Faith-based communities
- Local media

D. Volunteer and in-kind collaborations

At the heart of the engagement process is the spirit of community and volunteerism. The City and planning team will strongly encourage residents and businesses to find ways to volunteer their time, skills or goods to advance the planning process and increase the reach and effectiveness of our engagement activities.