

# Neenah Waterfront

Waterfront Design and Development Master Plan



November 2001

*prepared by:*



**Hitchcock  
Design Group**

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Hurtado Consulting, LLC  
Anderson Illustration Associates

*prepared for:*

City of Neenah, WI  
Future Neenah, Inc.



Mr. Ted Galloway and Mr. Jeff Buchta  
**Co-Chairmen**  
Neenah Waterfront Task Force  
c/o City of Neenah  
211 Walnut Street  
Neenah, WI 54957



Dear Messrs. Galloway and Buchta:

What an exciting time for the City of Neenah! From the time it was first settled, its abundant water resources have been key to the prosperity of the community. Now, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the waterfront, once again, is the key to a prosperous future.

The publication of the Neenah Waterfront Master Plan represents the culmination of a thoughtful planning process, spearheaded by the City of Neenah and Future Neenah, Inc. that started in the spring of 2001. The Master Plan summarizes the research, analysis, objectives and recommendations of the Waterfront Task Force, the Hitchcock Design Group team and dozens of other volunteer participants.

From the beginning, project participants have rallied around the concept of a lively waterfront that will become the cultural, recreational and economic centerpiece of the community. They have also recognized that, because of the magnitude and complexity of the waterfront, implementation will be challenging. The construction of the public improvements and the related private sector redevelopment will require the close cooperation of commercial land owners and public agencies, the tireless dedication of business and community leaders, and the investment of millions of dollars over many years.

At a time when the national economy is in recession, is this a good investment of Neenah's valuable time, talent and financial resources?

Absolutely! In fact, based on our experience, we believe that this vision, when implemented will become a powerful and distinctive attraction that will return a high level of economic benefit to the downtown and the entire community. Neenah's waterfront has always been an asset, but it has the potential to be so attractive, so comfortable and so compelling that people and investment dollars will be drawn to it like a magnet.

While this is the end of the Master Planning process, it is also the beginning of a multi-year implementation process. It will take a genuine partnership of public and private sector interests to achieve the ambitious goals established in the Master Plan. First, the City needs to adopt this plan as public policy. Next, an implementation team needs to start work on design, permitting, funding, public relations, and eventually developer recruitment. Once the first waterfront improvement project comes out of the ground, the public will see the potential and momentum will continue to increase. With a captivating vision, committed leadership and systematic investment, the Waterfront implementation team can overcome the most daunting challenges.

In order to sustain the momentum generated by the Master Plan, it is critical to construct a highly visible portion of the downtown waterfront walk as soon as possible. Even ardent supporters may grow skeptical if too much time elapses between the planning process and construction. Therefore, in order to demonstrate the City's commitment to the Master Plan, we recommend that construction of the proposed Shattuck Park improvements, in whole or in part, commence as soon as possible in 2003. We believe that an effective "demonstration" project at Shattuck Park could be constructed for approximately \$500,000. In order to break ground in the spring of 2003, final design and engineering will need to begin early in 2002.

The Task Force has done a great job, so far. And your future work will be demanding. But imagine how satisfying it will be, 10 to 20 years from now, to know that this Task Force had the vision and the energy to launch this important initiative. The waterfront, is indeed, more important to Neenah's future than ever.

On behalf of Ken Saiki Design, Coastal Planning and Design, Hurtado Consulting and Anderson Illustration Associates, thank you for the opportunity to serve your community.

Sincerely,  
**Hitchcock Design Group**

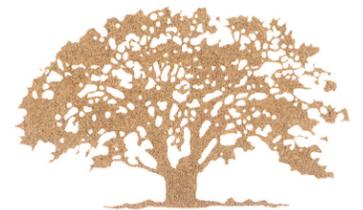
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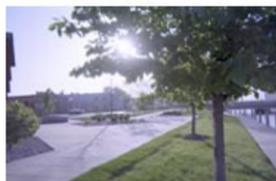
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so compelling*

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like a magnet. ”



# Acknowledgements

## Mayor & City Council

Ken Harwood, Mayor

George Scherck, Council President  
Michael Faulks  
James Hemes  
Mark Lange  
Tom Martin

Bruce Rhoades  
Todd Stevenson  
Donald Winter  
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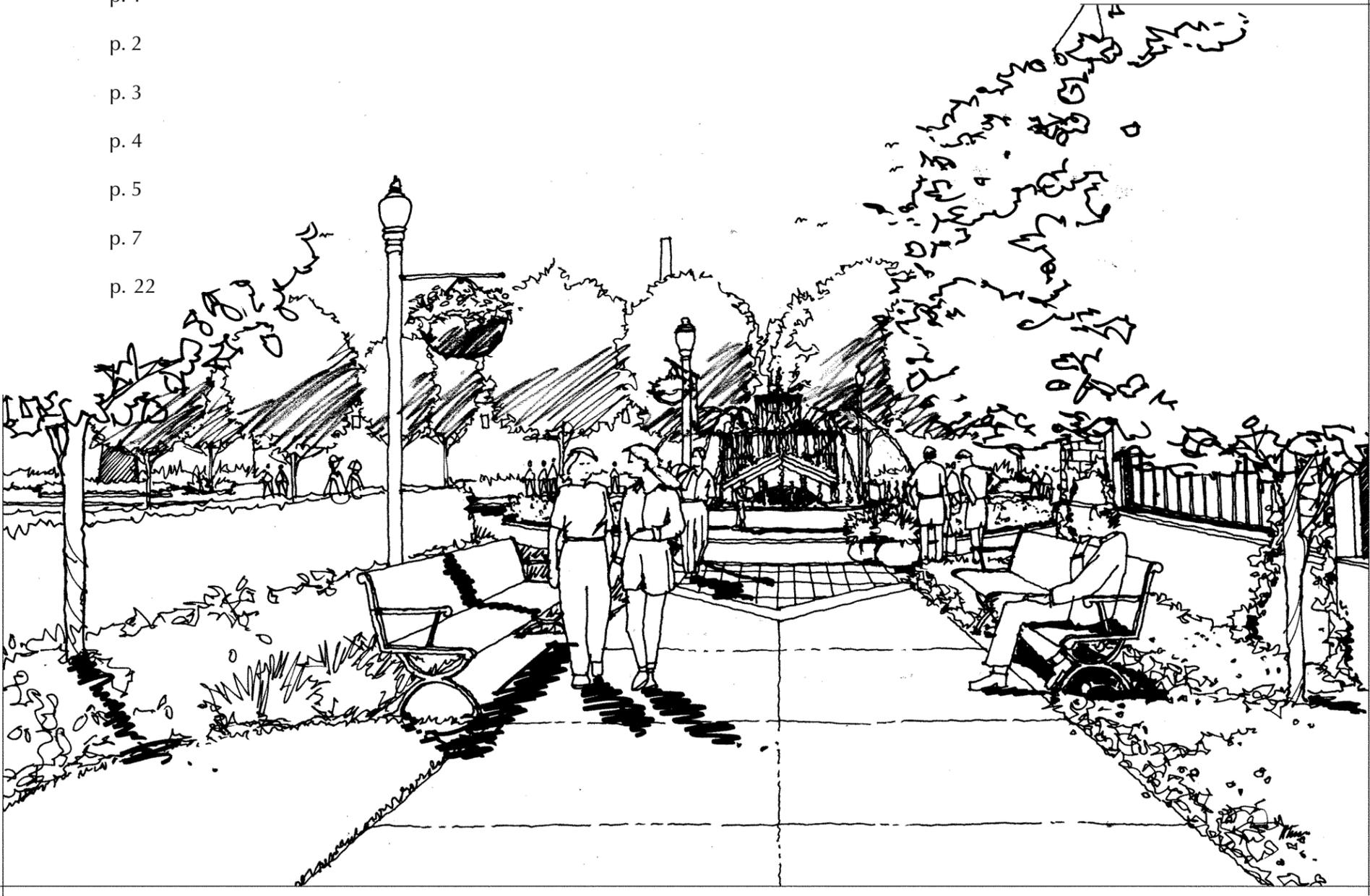
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# Foreword

The City of Neenah and Future Neenah, Inc. have ventured into many successful public-private partnerships over the years, but none may have greater impact and broader benefit to the community than the many opportunities available to improve our quality of life through waterfront development. The Waterfront Design and Development Master Plan presents a road map of waterfront projects that will promote recreational, cultural, and economic advancement.

The waterfront initiative has been done the right way, with broad based participation from the community and a variety of opportunities for input. With guidance from the Master Plan, we are in a unique position to:

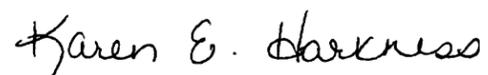
- Improve waterfront access for the community.
- Create memorable waterfront destinations that can become our landmarks of the future.
- Program waterfront spaces with activities that will appeal to a diverse group of residents and visitors throughout the year.
- Encourage growth of office, retail and entertainment uses at promising redevelopment sites in and adjacent to the downtown.

If we are to accomplish our goal of improving the use of our beautiful waterfront, the community partnership that has brought us to this point must stay committed. With leadership, cooperation, determination, and stewardship, we can succeed!

We have a huge challenge in front of us. The waterfront initiative will be a marathon, not a sprint, with many of the projects requiring multi-year commitments from many public and private partners. But, if we continue to believe in the vision and can imagine the benefits we will all enjoy as projects are completed, the results will stand for the enjoyment of generations to come. ***Let's proceed forward together!***



Robert L. Buckingham  
Community Development Director  
City of Neenah



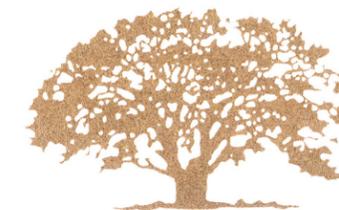
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“ . . . if we continue to believe in the vision and can imagine the benefits we will all enjoy as projects are completed, the results will stand for the enjoyment of generations to come. “

# Background

## Previous Study

In 1999, Future Neenah, Incorporated retained Ken Saiki Design and Hitchcock Design Group to lead a community visioning exercise that stimulated public interest and promoted discussion of the opportunities associated with the waterfront. As a result of the public's enthusiastic response, the City of Neenah and Future Neenah, Inc. partnered to retain a consultant team to advance the vision. In the spring of 2001, a Waterfront Task Force, that included representatives from the City and Future Neenah, Inc., interviewed consultants and subsequently selected an experienced planning, design and engineering team led by Hitchcock Design Group.

## Purpose

The purpose of the engagement was to validate and refine the 1999 vision, create a more comprehensive waterfront master plan and establish a systematic implementation strategy. The community was clearly eager to capitalize on its waterfront asset.

## Process

After establishing the study area limits and gathering extensive baseline data and maps, the consultant team interviewed 35 community leaders, property and business owners, elected officials, jurisdictional representatives and other interested individuals. The Waterfront Task Force members walked the downtown waterfront between the Commercial Street and Oak Street bridges, as a group, to gather first hand opinions and photograph the area. In addition, the consultation team facilitated a community planning charrette (an intensive, two day workshop) to quickly articulate the waterfront vision, and illustrate it in select artist renderings.

Interested citizens actively participated in the Task Force meetings throughout the engagement and a special public presentation was well attended by enthusiastic residents. Key jurisdictional officials were consulted throughout the process to better understand the feasibility of certain study recommendations.



“Stretch people’s imaginations!”

“Make the waterfront alive!”

“Neenah doesn’t spend weekends in Neenah.”

“Draw people to the water.”

“Promote History when possible.”

“Tell me how I can help!”

“There are programming opportunities throughout the waterfront.”

“Whatever we do, it should be done with quality in mind.”

“We need a safe link across the river to the library.”

“Connect our parks!”

“Promote multi-use development!”

Our water isn’t accessible...  
where do we eat  
and watch the sunset?”

“I’m interested in the average citizen being able to participate... this waterfront is for everyone.”

- comments from interviews and workshop sessions





# Analysis

## Existing Conditions

Neenah's rich history in the Fox River Valley has centered on the paper industry. Like most communities, downtown-based retailing has diminished over the last 30 years as stores moved to more spacious, drive-to facilities in outlying neighborhood and regional shopping centers. Consequently, the business community in downtown Neenah has had to work hard to maintain its competitive position. However, unlike many industrial downtowns, the paper mills are not abandoned or disfigured skeletons. Instead they are a stable and prominent part of the downtown waterfront, both visually and economically.

Theda Clark Medical Center, the new Public library, the Neenah Center office towers, and the Park Plaza Valley Inn Hotel all add to the stability of the downtown. In fact, based on a 1999 Downtown Parking Study prepared by Carl Walker, Inc., new and proposed industrial and office activity in the downtown may create term demand for over 600 additional parking spaces.

In addition to its sturdy business environment, Neenah is also blessed with a considerable variety of water resources. It enjoys extensive frontage on Lake Winnebago and Little Lake Butte des Morts, picturesque harbors that accommodate both sail and power boats, and industrial canals that serve the paper mills; all sewn together by the historic Fox River. The economic and recreational value of the water is significant, particularly when considered in context with the rest of the Fox River Valley.

Incredibly, however, visitors traveling along Main Street/Wisconsin Avenue and Commercial Street, the main downtown arterial roadways, may not even know the water exists. Motorists passing through town only see a glimpse of the water as they cross the Commercial Street bridges sandwiched between the massive paper mills. Similarly, visiting boaters who venture into the harbor cannot see the downtown or dock nearby because of the spillway and the railroad spur. Access to the downtown retail area from the harbor is challenging and uninspired even for those boaters who are based in Neenah.

Residents can take advantage of several waterfront parks in the study area. Doty, Island, Shattuck, Riverside, Kimberly Point and Rec Parks account for about 10% of the 583 acre (excl. Arrowhead) study area. Shattuck Park is the closest open space to the downtown. The park is well maintained but the historic Shattuck Boat House needs to be rehabilitated and the park lacks connectivity to both the downtown and other adjoining waterfront properties. Island Park offers a wonderful view of the spillway, but while comparatively large, looks tired and is difficult to access.

Clearly, the greatest attraction for residents and visitors alike is the drive along Wisconsin Avenue, past the grand historic mansions, past the landmark lighthouse

on Kimberly Point, and returning through Riverside Park past the sailboats in the outer harbor. Those who doubt the magnetic power of water need only count the number of cars near the lighthouse, in the middle of the afternoon, on any day of the week.

## Opportunities

Almost 40% of the 28,500 foot project area shoreline (excl. Arrowhead) and 22% of the 7,080 foot downtown shoreline is publicly owned. Unfortunately, a number of natural and man-made barriers have conspired to make it difficult to access and use the waterfront as effectively as desired.

However, given the success of waterfront walkways in other communities, the consultant team and the Task Force believe that a striking, barrier free, continuous walkway around the downtown waterfront (between the Commercial and Oak Street bridges) would be a great asset to the community. They also recognize that improved access to, and utilization of the nearby waterfront open spaces would significantly strengthen this opportunity.

Commercial property owners with downtown water frontage have a particularly exciting opportunity to enhance the exposure and economic value of their properties. In close collaboration with the City, they could provide public access to the water that, if desired, could be directly connected to the businesses on their property. Property owners and businesses without direct waterfront access will also benefit from the investment in the waterfront. Increased visitation of the downtown waterfront attraction will bring new dining, retailing, and entertainment opportunities to properties within walking distance of the water.

By comparison, the Task Force has been clear that ***access along privately owned, single-family residential waterfront properties is not being considered as a part of this study.***





# V Waterfront Concept



Pedestrian Connection to Wisconsin Avenue from Valley Inn



The consultant team and the Waterfront Task Force recommend that the City of Neenah, in partnership with Future Neenah, Inc. commit over the next 20 years, as a matter of public policy, to:

## Construct a stylish, downtown waterfront walk

that provides a continuous pedestrian loop around the “inner harbor”, canal and spillway areas between Commercial and Oak Streets and access to adjacent public and commercial properties. Remodel Shattuck and Island Parks to substantially improve their utilization and appearance. Continue existing and build new coalitions of public and private interests that will actively program the waterfront for year-round activities.

## Construct lively, landscaped entry corridors

along Wisconsin Avenue and Commercial Street that welcome residents and visitors to the downtown waterfront.

## Actively promote the redevelopment of downtown commercial properties

in ways that will place additional employment, retailing, entertainment and residential land uses near the public waterfront improvements. Encourage commercial property owners to capitalize on the public waterfront improvements by investing in the accessibility and appearance of their businesses and by coordinating business activities with waterfront programming.

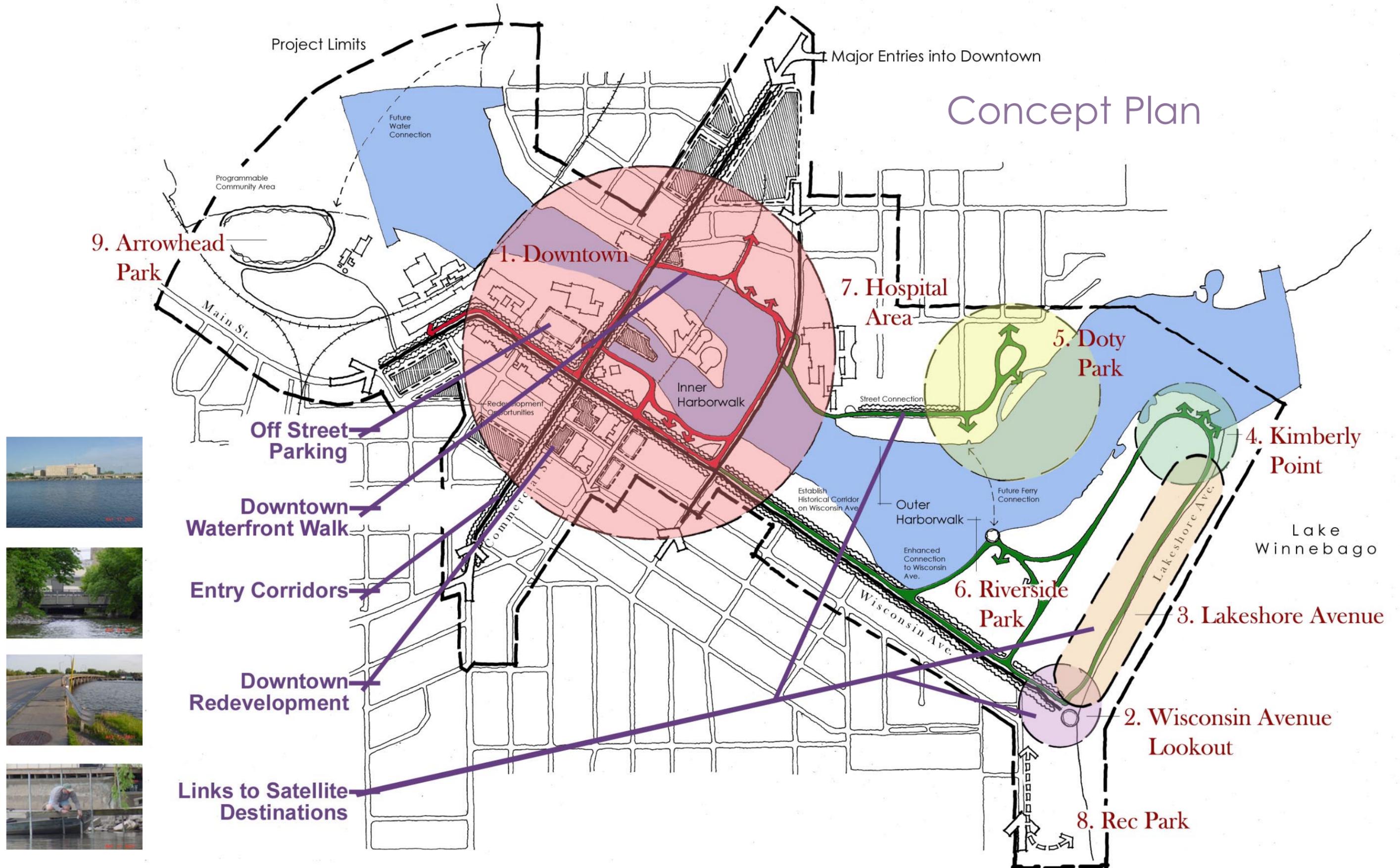
## Provide additional downtown off-street parking

by constructing a new parking deck at the West Canal Lot. This deck will help to satisfy existing demand for parking in the area, and it will also accommodate the expected demand for additional parking when the Kimberly Clark Experimental Mill expands. The deck could also be the catalyst that will facilitate the redevelopment of key waterfront commercial properties. Consideration should also be given to a potential partnership with the Park Plaza Valley Inn Hotel to eventually construct a parking deck at the site of their existing surface parking lot.

## Link the downtown waterfront to enhanced satellite destinations

such as Riverside Park, Wisconsin Avenue Lookout, Kimberly Point and Doty Park by providing a combination of shoreline and street-side routes that incorporate the waterfront theme. These routes will only occur on publicly owned property.

# Concept Plan

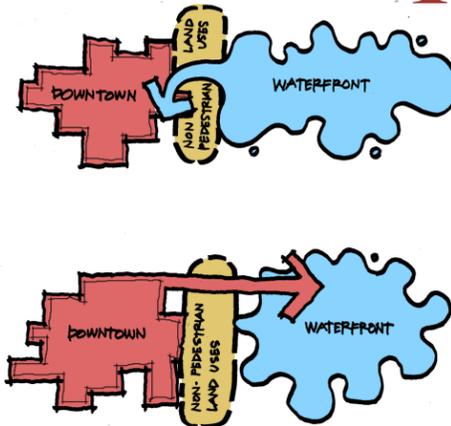


# Waterfront Master Plan

The Master Plan illustrates the conceptual recommendations in greater detail. The numbers associated with each circled area on the Concept Plan are for reference and do not imply any priority.

## Downtown

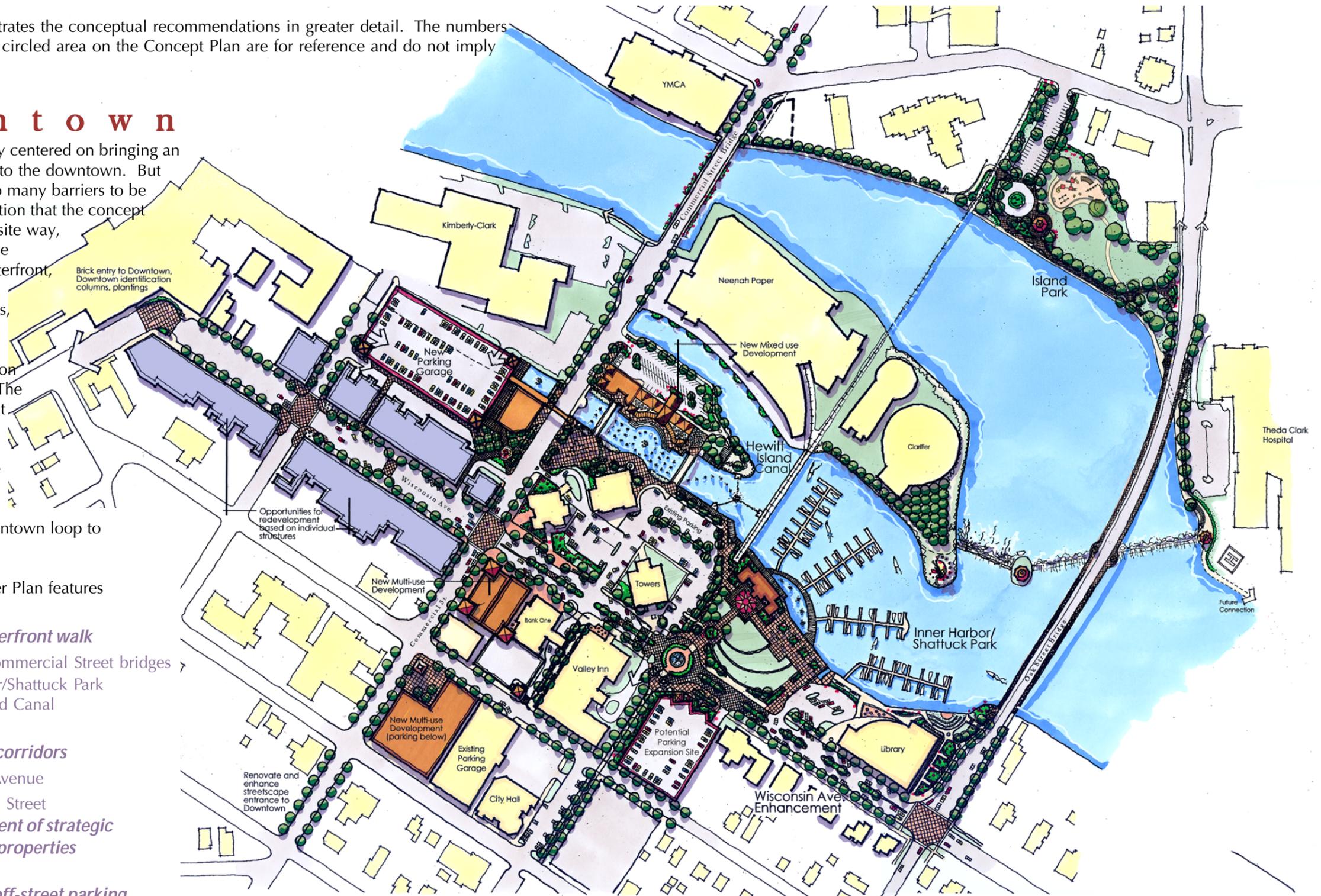
Instinctively, the study centered on bringing an exciting waterfront into the downtown. But there were simply too many barriers to be effective. The realization that the concept could work the opposite way, essentially bringing the downtown to the waterfront, opened the door to integration of business, recreational and cultural land uses - a powerful combination in an urban setting. The Downtown waterfront is the focal point for the entire plan. Its success will stimulate other improvements and the connections created from the downtown loop to outlying park sites.



West Canal and Parking Lot

The downtown Master Plan features four concepts:

- a. **A stylish waterfront walk**
  - Oak and Commercial Street bridges
  - Inner harbor/Shattuck Park
  - Hewitt Island Canal
  - Island Park
- b. **Lively entry corridors**
  - Wisconsin Avenue
  - Commercial Street
- c. **Redevelopment of strategic commercial properties**
- d. **Addition of off-street parking**



## a. Waterfront Walk

The downtown waterfront walk is the centerpiece of the Master Plan. The walk integrates all five of the objectives for the waterfront:

- \* **Better, equitable access to the water**  
by allowing people opportunities to interact or be close to the water at all points along the walk
- \* **Creating signature destinations**  
such as Shattuck Park, the Library Riverfront, plaza spaces along Hewitt Island Canal and across Commercial Street with interactive fountains and sculptures and the Island Park pavilion and playground
- \* **Stimulating activities**  
in spaces created to promote opportunities for programming and places to stroll, eat or fish
- \* **Leveraging public investment by stimulating commercial redevelopment**  
through promoting public improvements in coordination with private commercial developments
- \* **Quality before quantity**  
all of the way around the waterfront by creating consistently durable, distinctive and permanent improvements

This barrier-free walk also allows citizens and visitors alike to access four different types of water (canal, harbor, spillway and river). This is an experience very few communities have the opportunity to enhance.

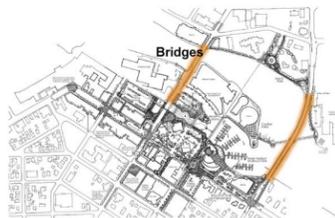
The intensity and style of the downtown waterfront is different from all of the rest of the study area. This is where the energy is, the place where the community can come together for all types of activities in all types of venues, from park to urban plaza to stylish waterfront pedestrian connections.

A waterfront walk such as this is an ambitious undertaking, having a potential construction cost of approximately \$20 million. Consequently, it must be completed in phases, coordinating public activities with private interests as opportunities arise. This is a multi-year investment with a dividend well worth the effort.



The waterfront walk integrates the downtown and the different types of water found in the community.





Location Map

## Oak Street and Commercial Street Bridges

Opportunity knocks right away for the downtown waterfront because of the scheduled rehabilitation of the Commercial Street bridge and the reconstruction of the Oak Street bridge by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation over the next three years. This offers the community the opportunity to tie the design of the bridges directly to the other waterfront improvements. Recommendations for these two bridges include:

- \* Coordinate the design with WDOT before the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the bridges begins
- \* Provide railings, lights, paving and other elements that match other waterfront improvements
- \* On Commercial Street, maintain design of existing columns as a reminder of the history associated with the existing bridge
- \* Add pedestrian street lights and bright, colorful planters with seasonal interest, hanging baskets and banners
- \* On the Oak Street bridge, coordinate the construction of overlook structures in the center of the bridge to give pedestrians the opportunity to move off the sidewalk and take in the vistas
- \* Construct gateway structures at the entrances of the bridges to draw attention to the water and facilitate pedestrian connectivity

Oak Street bridge leading to Island Park

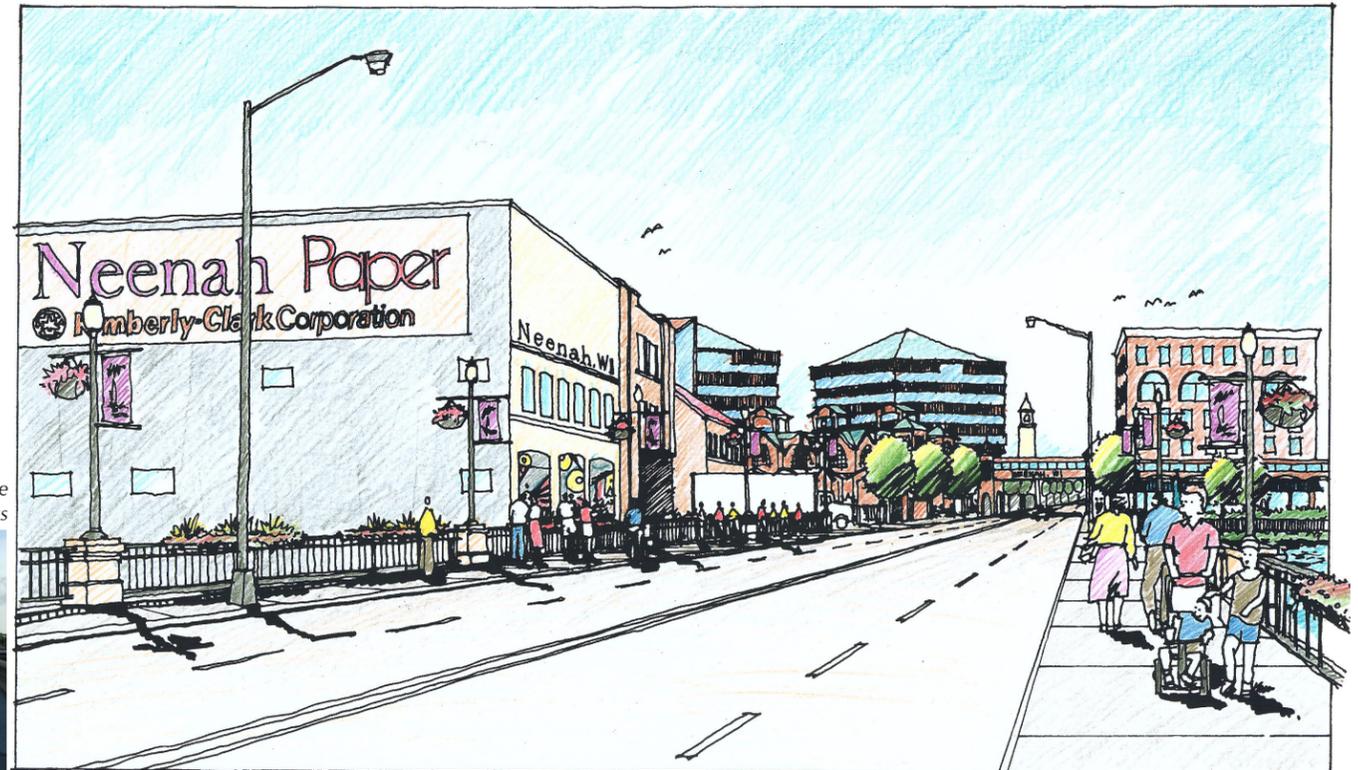


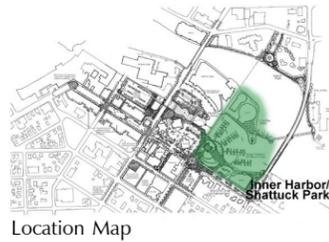
Oak Street bridge



Commercial Street bridge

Commercial Street bridge improvements





## Inner Harbor / Shattuck Park

Shattuck Park is the anchor for the downtown waterfront. All of the improvements in the Inner Harbor area need to improve accessibility and take advantage of the harbor, vistas, existing pavilion and waterfront space along the Library's shoreline. The improvements proposed include:

- \* Renovate Shattuck Pavilion (improve ability to host events, provide small catering kitchen, open windows, add usable space to water side of building)
- \* New docks for transient and permanent boats with fountains on the inside to animate the space
- \* History walk, sculpture park and brick waterfront promenade
- \* Concert lawn
- \* Stone entry wall identifying the Park and its history
- \* Boat launch ramp and loading/unloading area
- \* Additional outdoor library seating
- \* Library amphitheater
- \* Children's sculpture
- \* Children's gardens
- \* Multiuse venue areas
- \* Renovate needle gate structure
- \* Revegetate shoreline by clarifier with native plants and trees
- \* Extend clarifier point to create harbor for docking boats
- \* Construct large focal sculpture at the end of clarifier point
- \* Renovate railroad tressle with new paint, railings and lighting

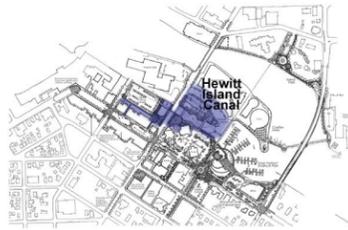


Library waterfront leading to Shattuck Park



View of the renovated Shattuck Pavilion and entry court





Location Map

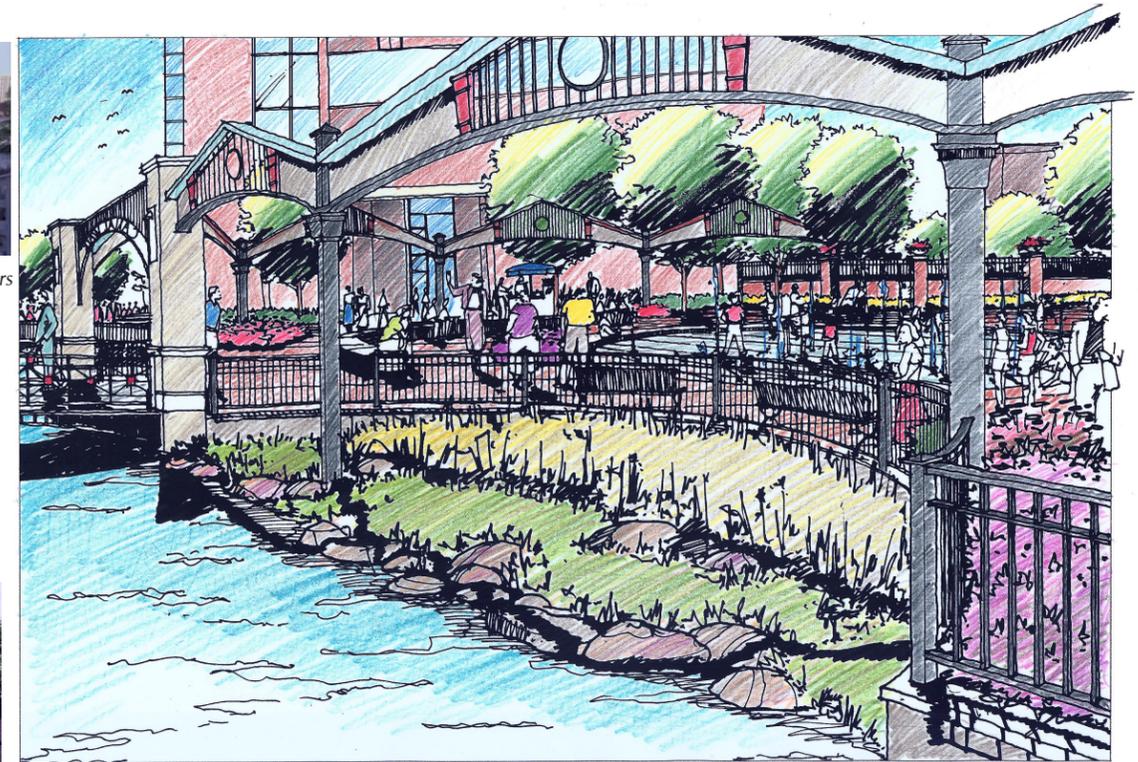
## Hewitt Island Canal

The Hewitt Island Canal offers the best opportunity to extend the existing downtown retail area toward the water, providing the kind of excitement you would expect to find in the best urban waterfronts in the country. The design features include:

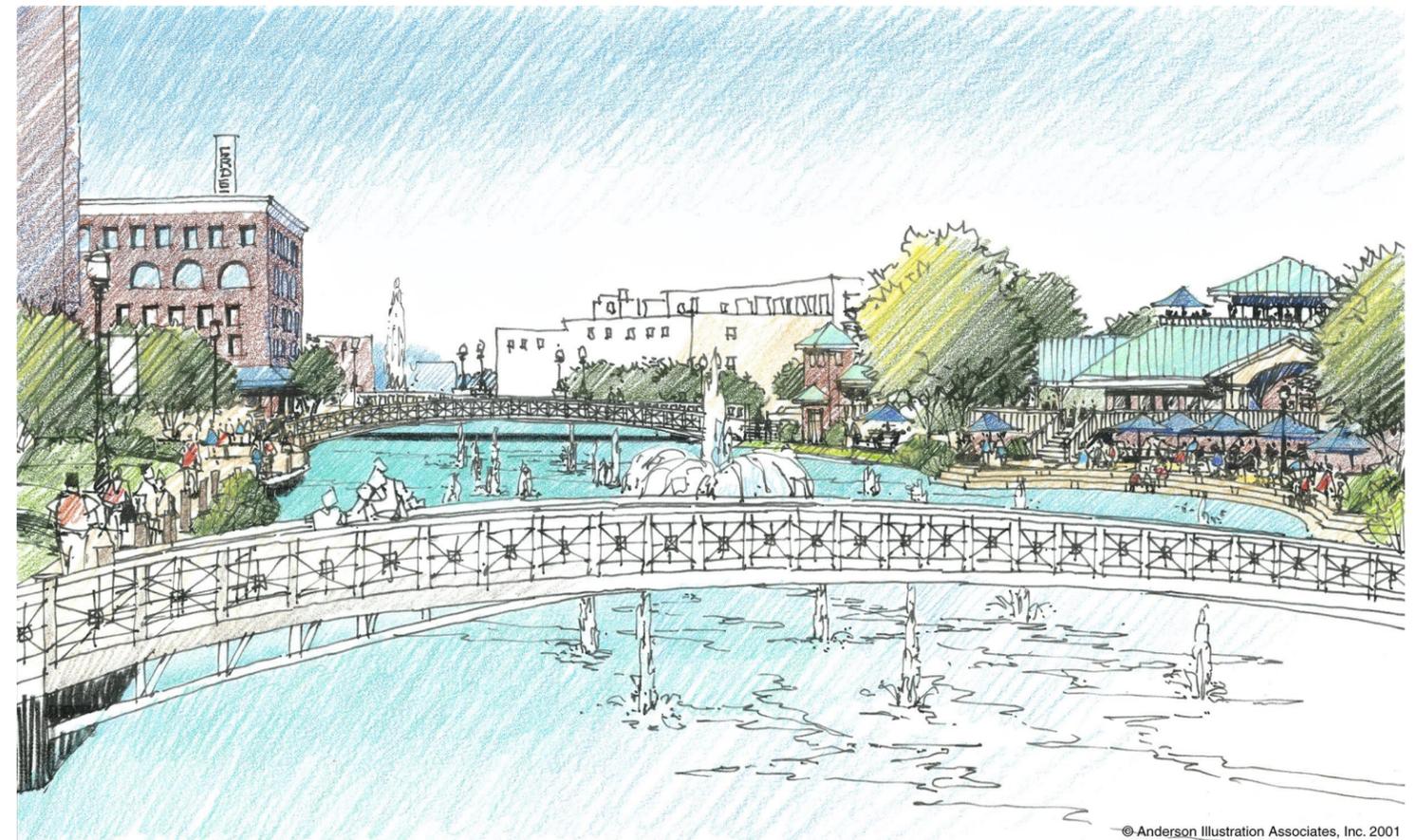
- \* Gateway structures at pedestrian bridge entrances
- \* Planters along Neenah Paper wall on north side of island
- \* Large, synchronized and lit fountain displays in the canal
- \* Pedestrian bridges across canal
- \* Commercial Street bridge overlook into canal area
- \* Interactive fountain in the Tower Plaza
- \* Overhead structure creating spaces for plazas, fountains and sculpture
- \* Sculpture at canal overlook by Two Neenah Center
- \* Exciting opportunity for private development of this existing parking lot into restaurant/retail
- \* Opportunity to tell the Kimberly Clark/Neenah Paper story
- \* Stairs to water to view fountain display on island side
- \* Water's edge walk around island with viewing decks on east side of the island
- \* Planted shoreline stabilization
- \* Lush, irrigated plantings throughout
- \* Connection to Shattuck Park along water
- \* Plaza spaces that cross Commercial Street into the area between Mutual Savings Bank and the Kellett Office Building that include sculptural features, interactive water fountains and open hardscape spaces for programmed events.



Plaza area by the Towers



Canal area redevelopment

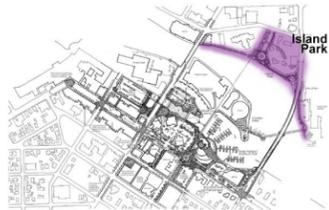


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Section through canal edge adjacent to Tower Parking lot



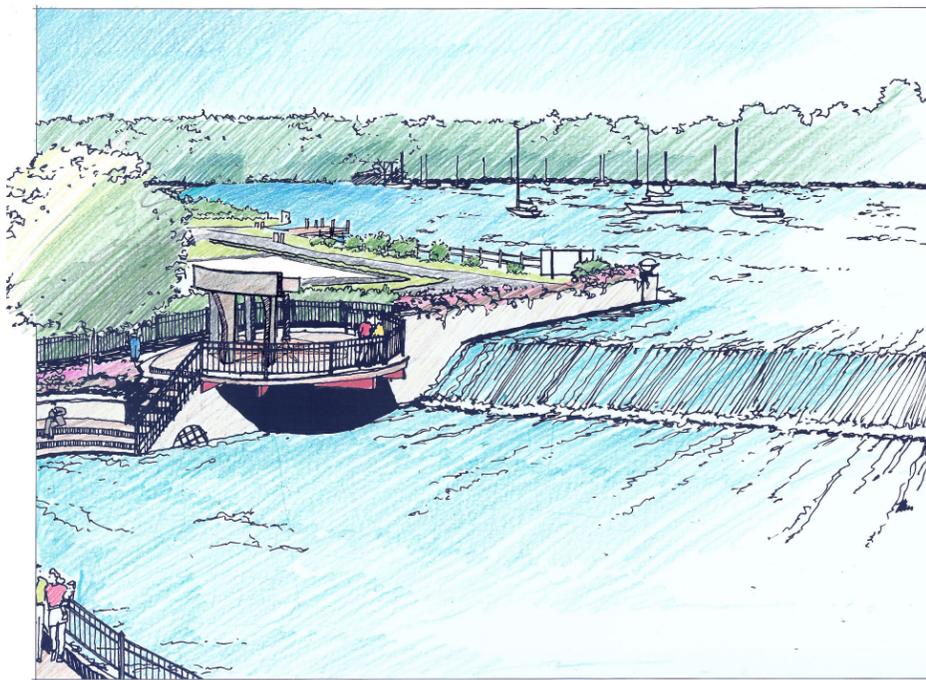
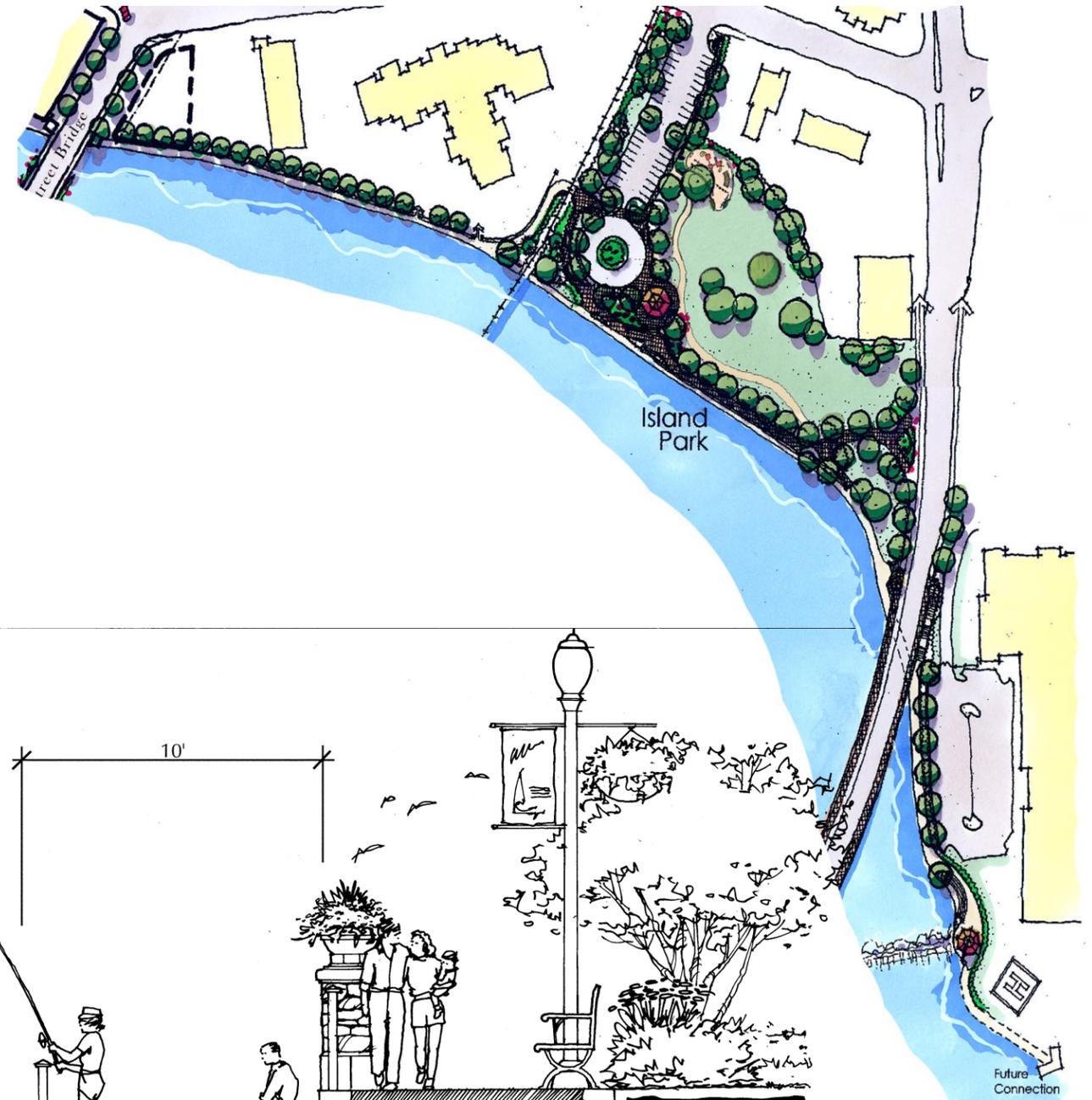


Location Map

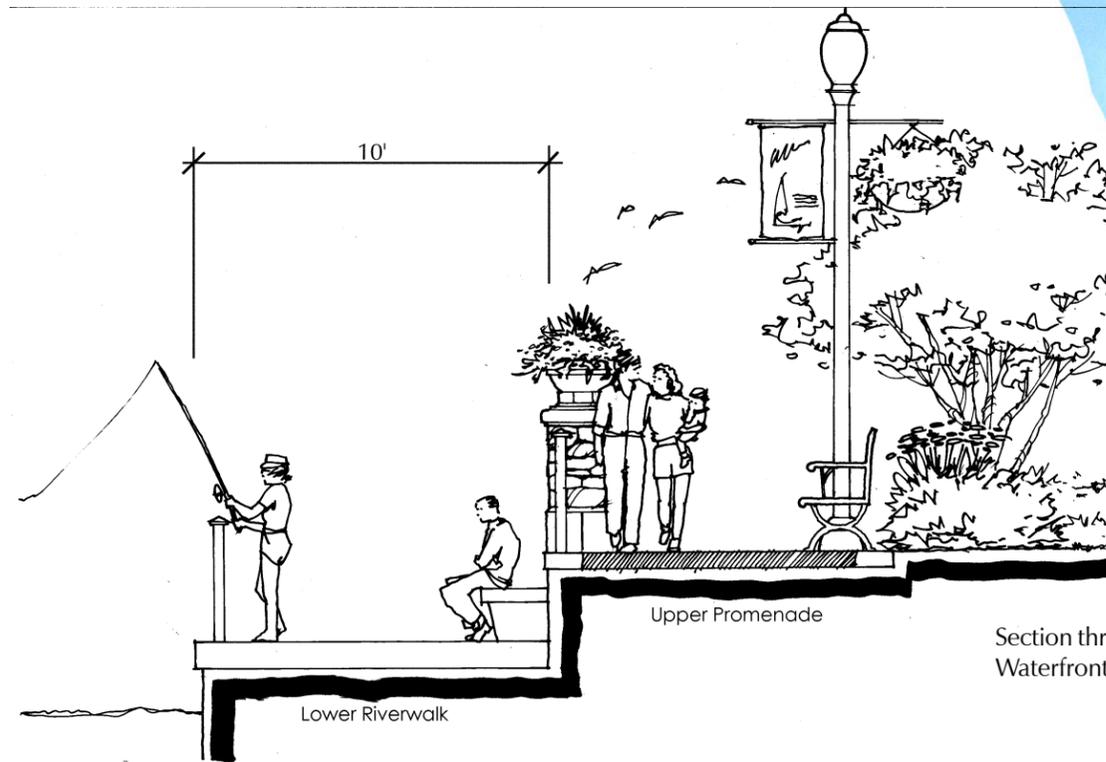
## Island Park

Island Park and its surrounding areas provide the integral northern link to the downtown waterfront walk. The suggested improvements include:

- \* Expand and renovate parking lot
- \* Entry columns at entrance to park
- \* Drop off/turnaround at Flag Court
- \* Gated access along riverwalk for private properties
- \* Continue riverwalk to Commercial Street
- \* Pavilion with restrooms
- \* Upper promenade
- \* Lower riverwalk at water's edge
- \* Stairs to water for fishing and viewing at Spillway Overlook
- \* Children's playground close to pavilion facilities



View of dam overlook pavilion and stairs to water



Section through Island Park Waterfront treatment





## b. Entry Corridors

Commercial Street, Wisconsin Avenue and Main Street are the gateways to the downtown and the waterfront. They are the first opportunity to welcome visitors and demonstrate the hospitality of the community. Currently, the roadways are superb, but the entrances into the downtown are not friendly. There is a lack of vegetation, color and people.

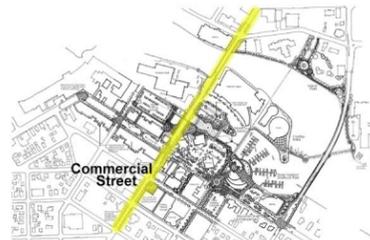
These corridors deserve to be grand entrances into downtown, letting everyone know that they have found the Neenah Waterfront. Well landscaped corridors will guide people to the water through coordinated sign graphics and punctuate where the water is located. This integrates the streetscape with the waterfront and brings more of downtown to the water.

The improvements to the Commercial Street and Wisconsin Avenue corridors have a potential construction cost of approximately \$4.1 million.

### Commercial Street

Commercial Street is Neenah's front door. It serves as a connecting highway through the southern end of the Fox cities and it comes right through downtown Neenah. Improvements suggested along the Commercial Street corridor include:

- \* Construct gateway structures to celebrate the water areas and welcome people to downtown.
- \* Enhance streetscape features on both sides from Winneconne Avenue north to Nicolet Boulevard, including trees, benches, specialty paving and irrigated plantings.
- \* Optimize opportunities to place new development facing the street to carry streetscape character from Wisconsin Avenue.
- \* Improve the pedestrian quality of the spaces with small plazas, public art and other pedestrian scale amenities.
- \* Screen parking areas and increase the use and quality of wayfinding signage, locating important city features as visitors and residents come into the downtown area.



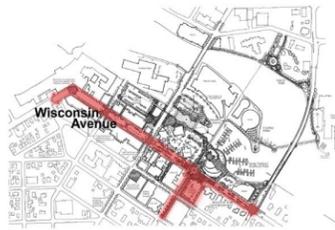
Location Map

New streetscape treatments along Commercial Street



Gateway Structure and new development on Commercial Street





Location Map

## Wisconsin Avenue

Wisconsin Avenue is Neenah's retail 'Main Street'. From the new Main Street bridge to Oak Street, everything about Wisconsin Avenue has to be the best Neenah can offer in order to attract more people to the downtown and the waterfront. Linking the retail district with the offices and the waterfront east of Commercial Street, as well as with the broader downtown business district, is a challenge. Improvements suggested along the Wisconsin Avenue corridor include:

- \* Provide a spectacular new entrance to Shattuck Park with a new brick traffic circle and fountain
- \* Create a landscape boulevard
- \* Increase bumpouts on downtown streets to provide more room for activities such as outdoor dining, etc.
- \* Improve pedestrian connections to Wisconsin Ave. with well-appointed walks and alleys
- \* Enhanced brick intersections and crosswalks
- \* Add colorful flowers and banners on the lightpoles
- \* Work with store owners to enhance their on street presence whether with outdoor dining or colorful displays and sidewalk sales

View of Wisconsin Avenue fountain from Commercial Street



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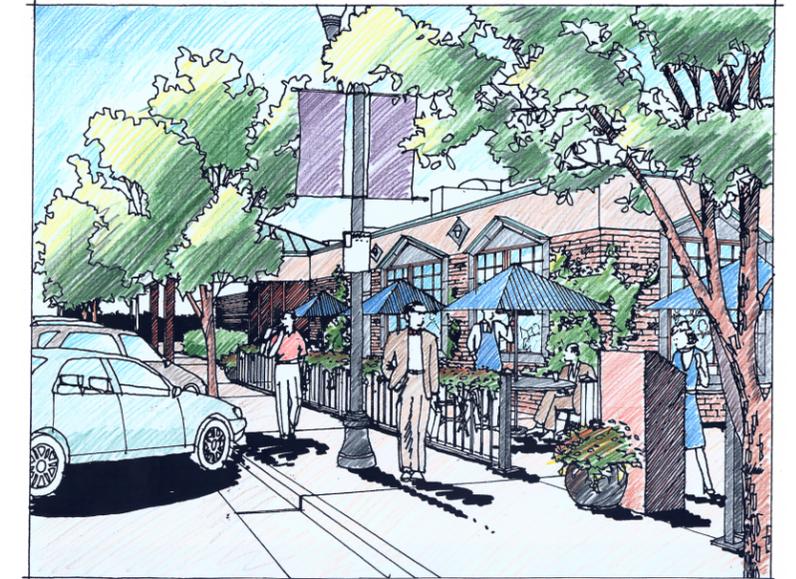
Brick entry to Downtown, Downtown identification columns, plantings

Wisconsin Ave. Enhancement

Outdoor cafe at the Valley Inn with windows for inside/outside interaction



Pedestrian Walk at the Valley Inn



### c. *Redevelopment Opportunities*

In addition to making the downtown waterfront an accessible, stimulating destination, the Waterfront Task Force believes that public investment in downtown should stimulate commercial re-investment in the area. Based on a limited analysis that included discussions with local brokers, landowners and developers, the consultant team concluded that there is an opportunity to develop new employment, retailing, entertainment and residential land uses near the waterfront.

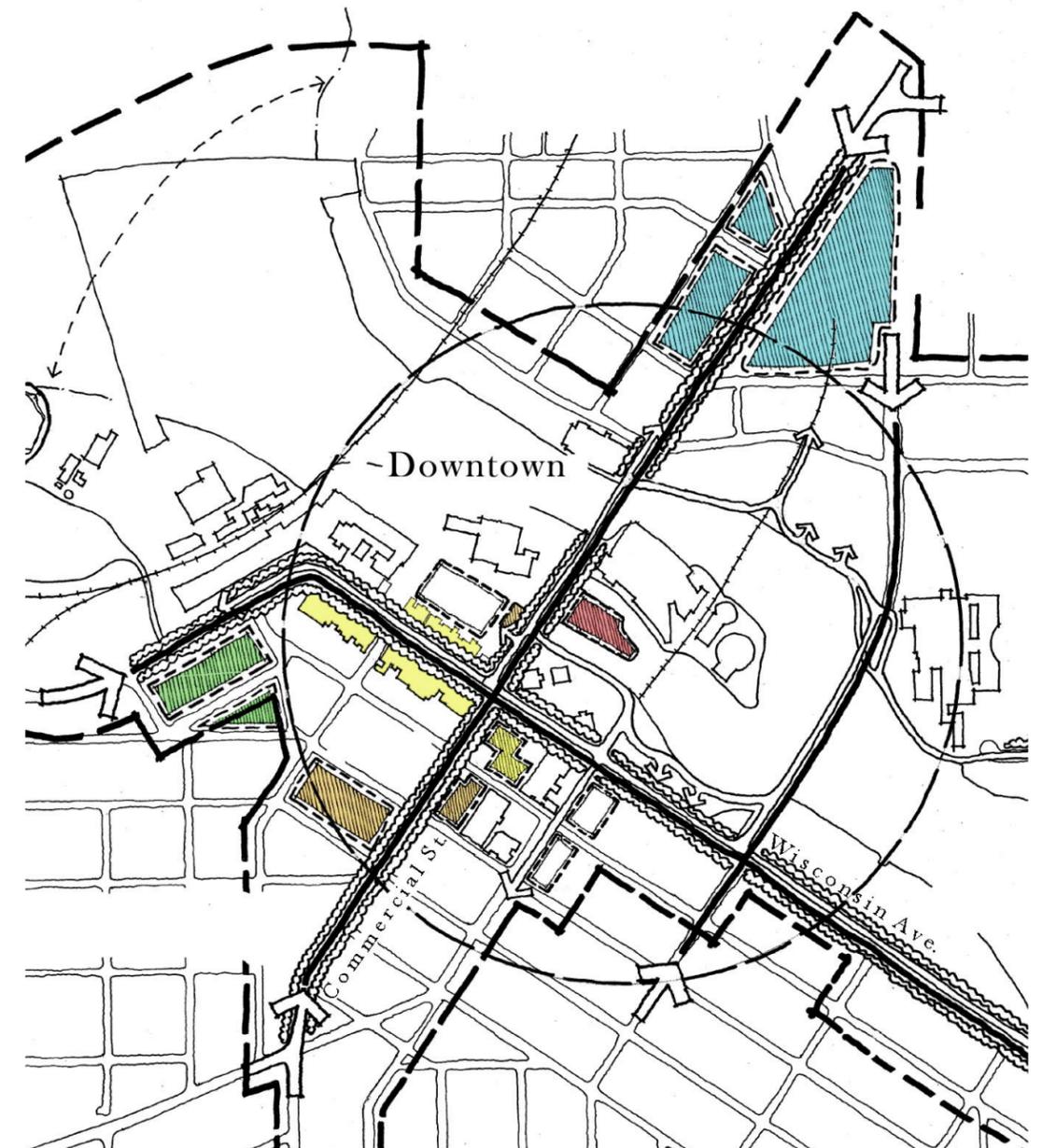
Currently, there is some demand for additional office space in Neenah. Once the Inner Harbor walk is started and a commitment is made to construct additional, convenient off-street parking, the downtown waterfront area should become an increasingly viable and attractive workplace. However, attracting employees to drive-to employment destinations is only a start.

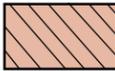
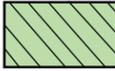
Nationally, and regionally, downtown waterfronts have proven to be very attractive places for people of all ages to live. Owner occupied and rental condominiums are solid investments that will help populate the downtown after most of the daytime workforce has gone home. Currently, there are not any waterfront sites that are easily converted to multi-family residential development. But, there are several locations within 3 blocks of the waterfront where residential units could be built above ground floor retail or office uses.

Entertainment and restaurant operators are particularly interested in high profile, downtown waterfront destinations. But in the short term, these and other leading edge urban pioneers will need to be aggressively recruited and probably supported with some combination of public and private sector incentives. But, once people start coming to the waterfront, additional dining and retail opportunities will follow.

The Master Plan illustrates the potential for an additional 133,000 square feet of retail, office and restaurant uses within 3 blocks of the downtown waterfront. It also presents the opportunity to place approximately 160 multi-family residences above the ground floor uses within the same area. In just this area alone, property values could increase, over time, by almost \$16 million. More importantly, as the vitality of the downtown waterfront becomes apparent, the re-investment in, and the value of most of the downtown properties should begin to increase. Other redevelopment opportunities are illustrated within a short walk of the waterfront.

When the redevelopment potential of the downtown waterfront is considered in addition to its intrinsic recreational and cultural value, it makes both public and private sector investment even more attractive.



-  Hewitt Island Redevelopment Site  
*mixed use: office, restaurant, entertainment*
-  Commercial Street Redevelopment Sites  
*mixed use: office, residential, retail*
-  Wisconsin Avenue Redevelopment Sites  
*mixed use: office, residential, retail, restaurant*
-  Main Street Redevelopment Sites  
*mixed use: office, residential, retail*
-  Doty Island Redevelopment Sites  
*office, entertainment, commercial*

## d. Off-Street Parking

While not nearly as glamorous as the other waterfront improvements, additional off-street parking spaces are a critical component of a waterfront concept that integrates pedestrian amenities and commercial development. The Waterfront Task Force recognizes that adequate, easily accessible off-street parking is one of the keys to unlocking the redevelopment potential of the downtown waterfront. They also understand that, by itself, the new waterfront will attract increasing numbers of visitors who will need to find convenient places to park. This will place an additional burden on a parking system that is apparently nearing capacity.

In the 1999 Downtown Parking Management Study prepared by Carl Walker, Inc. (CWI), the consultant indicated that parking occupancy was at approximately 74% of supply (1538 spaces), suggesting that supply was adequate at the time of the survey (85% to 95% occupancy is what the public perceives as capacity according to CWI). They went on to suggest that future parking space demand could increase by more than 600 spaces with the expansion of the Kimberly Clark Experimental Mill, the completion of the Library and other development activity in the downtown. This additional demand exceeded the capacity of the parking system as it existed in 1999. One recommendation was to consider a parking deck at the West Canal Lot.

The mixed-use developments closest to the waterfront in this Master Plan could generate an additional parking demand of approximately 500 spaces. In addition, there are more than 300 existing parking spaces displaced by that potential redevelopment.

Considering the probable popularity of the waterfront, additional, convenient off-street parking is extremely important. Fortunately, the existing West Canal Lot is a strategic location for additional parking spaces given its proximity to the waterfront, the Kimberly Clark Experimental Mill and the potential redevelopment sites. A 4 floor structure that spans the canal could accommodate almost 900 cars. Despite its size, it would not compromise the important Wisconsin Avenue and Commercial Street entry corridors because of its location behind the existing retail buildings.

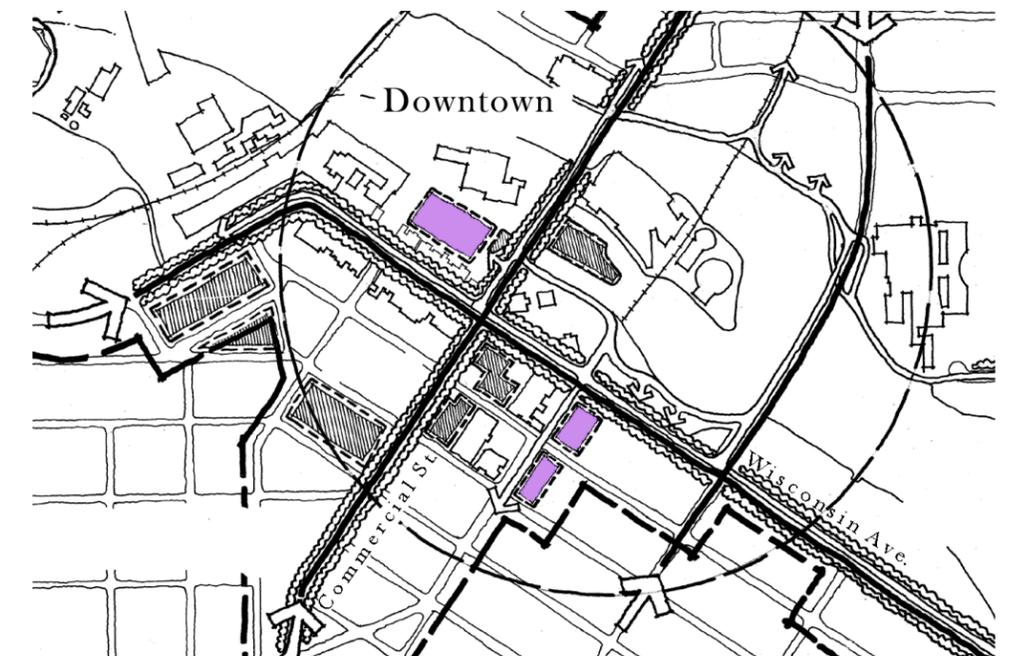
The Glatfelter Co. paper mill relies on the canal to provide water for operations. So, decking over, rather than filling, the canal is required. However, decking over the canal may be met with some regulatory challenges.

The potential construction cost for the deck is approximately \$7.7 million. Considering the size and importance of this investment, this parking deck deserves considerable additional attention.

Long term, there is another potential parking deck opportunity east of the Park Plaza Valley Inn. In partnership with the City, this existing surface lot could be converted into a 300 to 400 space parking deck, with approximately 100 spaces reserved for hotel use.

Downtown Waterfront Parking Supply / Demand  
(within three blocks of the waterfront)

New Demand per Master Plan		Rate	
	Sq. Ft.	/1000	Spaces
Retail	36000	4.0	144
Office	91000	3.3	300
Restaurant	6000	10.0	60
<b>Total Net Demand</b>	<b>133000</b>		<b>504</b>
Existing Supply lost due to Master Plan			
Island Lot			154
Tower Lot			39
Canal Lot			131
<b>Total Lost Supply</b>			<b>324</b>
New Supply proposed in Master Plan			
Canal Deck			898
<b>Total New Supply</b>			<b>898</b>
Net Increase in Parking Supply			70

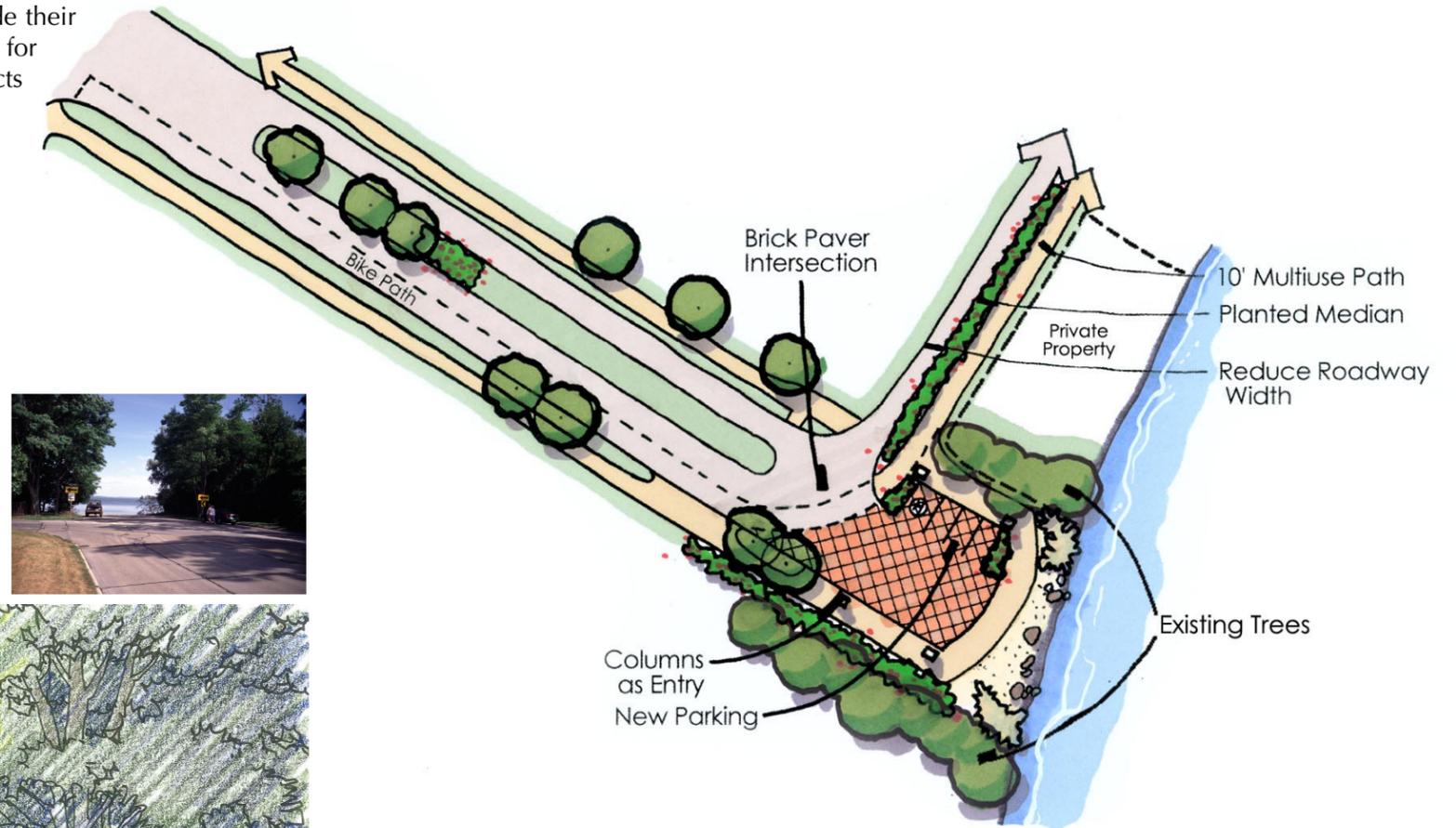


# 2 Wisconsin Avenue Lookout

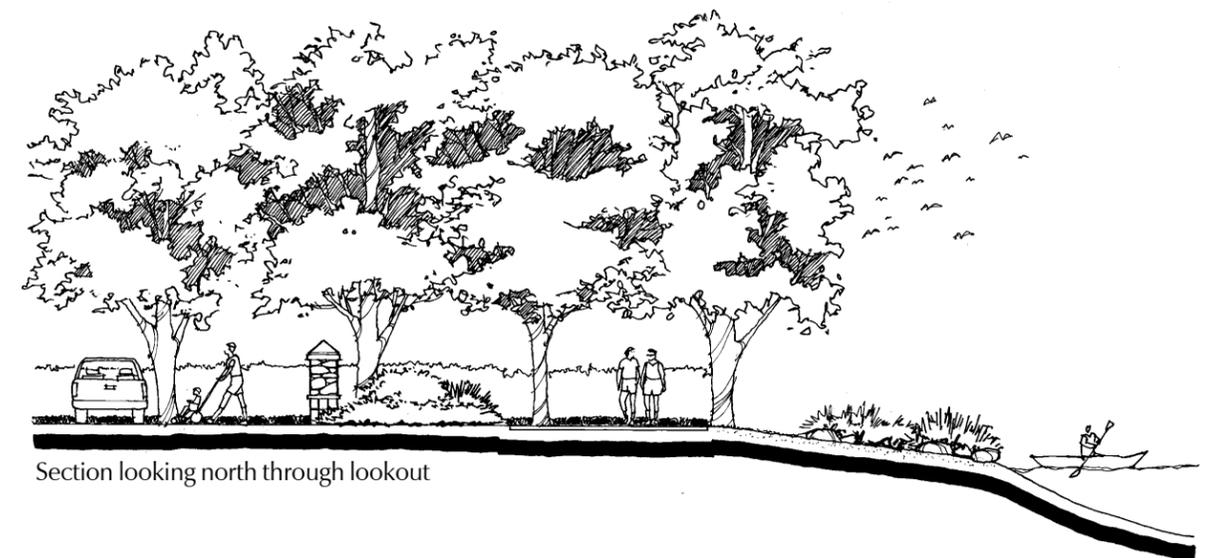


The Wisconsin Avenue Lookout frames the view as people drive, walk or ride their bicycle east on Wisconsin Avenue. Currently, there is no designated parking for those accessing the water for recreation and boating. The Master Plan respects the surrounding private property and organizes the cars, increasing the functionality of the space as well as enhancing the look with quality materials that compliment the existing view. The approximate construction cost for the following features is approximately \$600,000.

- \* Paving links lookout to waterfront
- \* Multi-use path runs alongside roadway
- \* Designated parking spaces
- \* Access to shoreline
- \* Access maintained for kayak, sailboard and other small craft launching



Wisconsin Avenue Lookout enhancements



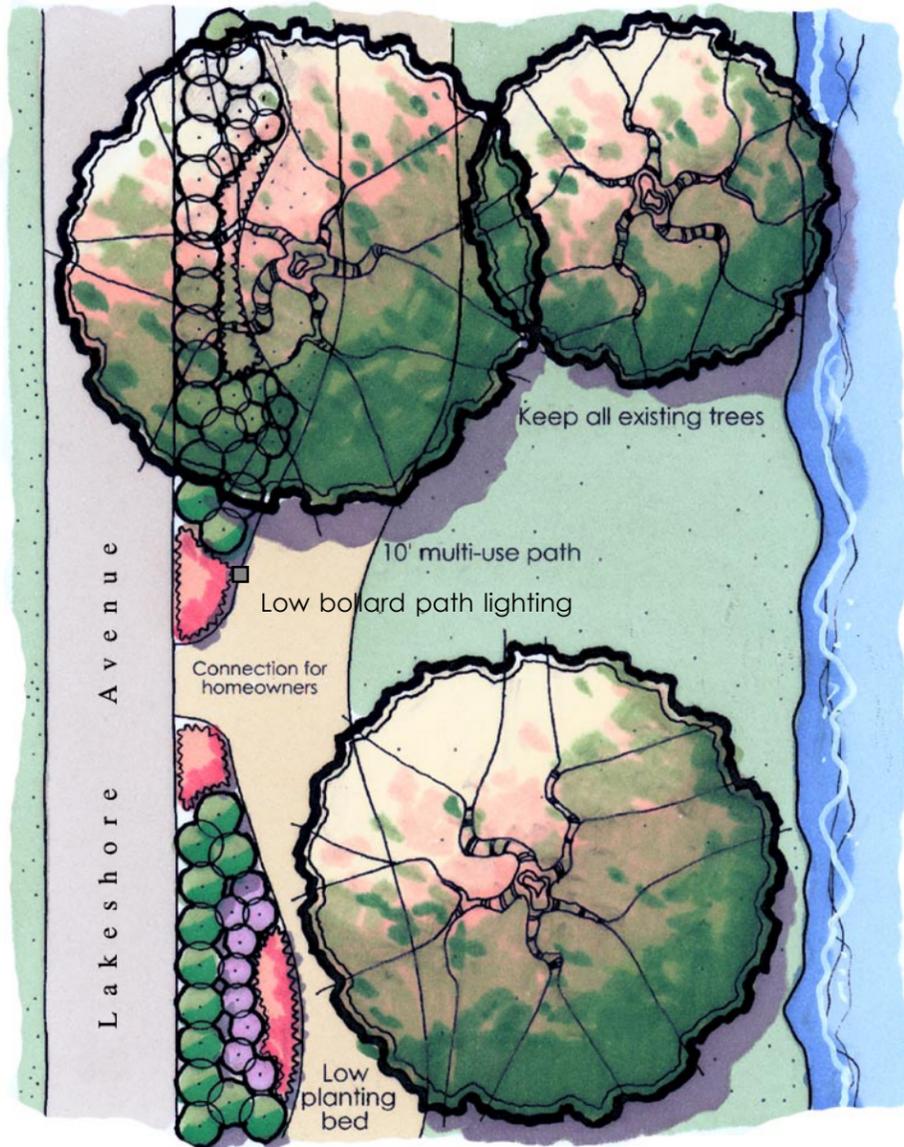
Section looking north through lookout

# 3 Lakeshore Avenue Path

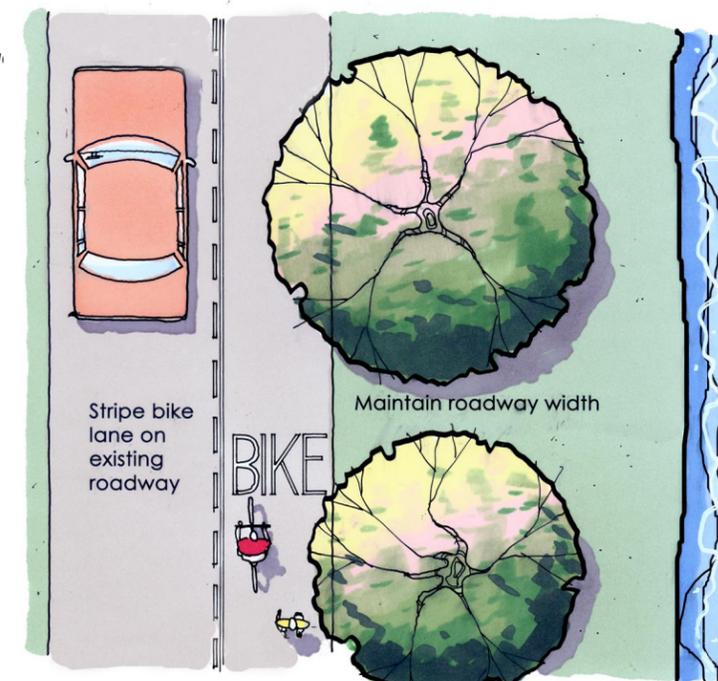


Considering the popularity of this spectacular area, a rehabilitated, multi-use Lakeshore Avenue provides the safe, pleasant walk, ride and drive this area needs. There are many options to get a path along the road, but it is important to provide a safe, efficient pedestrian route from the Wisconsin Avenue Lookout to Kimberly Point.

- \* Reducing the width of Lakeshore Avenue would slow vehicular traffic and provide the opportunity for a separate path alongside the road
- \* Striping the existing road lane for bicycle and pedestrian traffic is another option to complete the connection
- \* Respect adjacent properties and include residents in the design and layout of any potential project in this sensitive residential area



Alternative pathway solutions possible along Lakeshore Avenue.



Before and after on Lakeshore Avenue



# 4 Kimberly Point

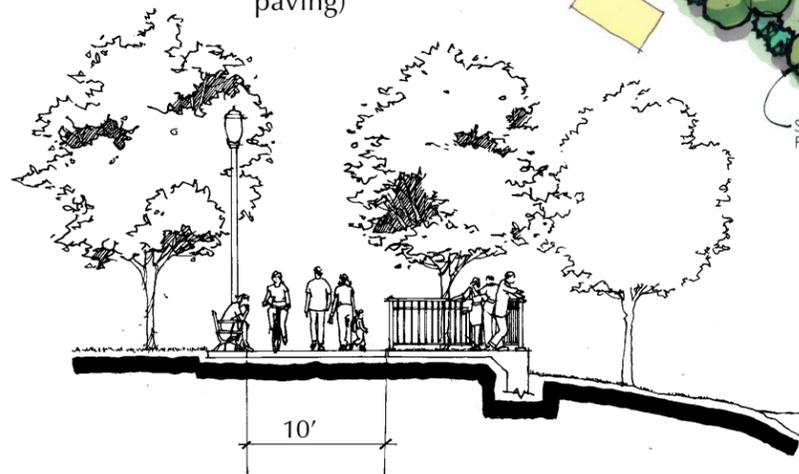


Kimberly Point is a popular destination for many people in Neenah. The improvements on the Point are designed to enhance the already serene, picturesque beauty of the site while providing some improved amenities to create a sense of place. The approximate cost for the improvements shown is \$1.3 million. The improvements include:

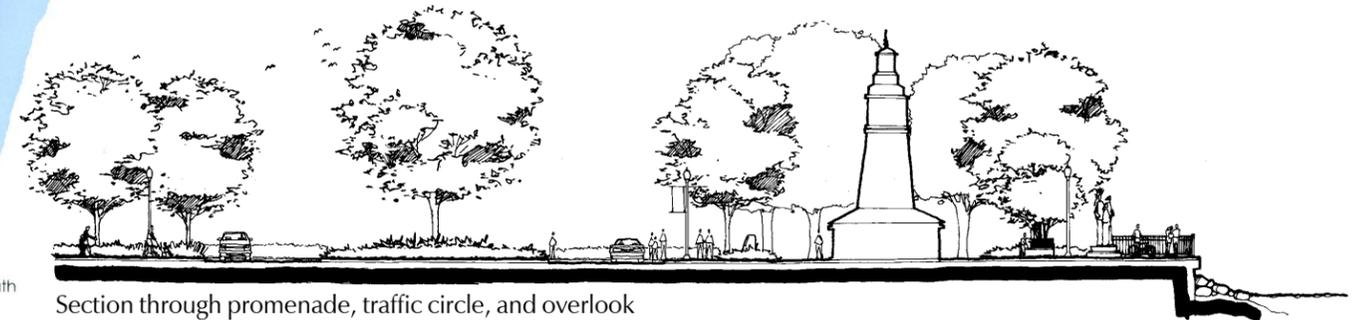
- \* Enhanced "Welcome to Neenah" signage at harbor entrance
- \* New playground
- \* Picnic areas with grills
- \* Continuation of lakeshore multi-use path
- \* Paving to tie in with waterfront
- \* Plaque denoting lighthouse and Council Tree history
- \* Overlook
- \* Sculpture
- \* Access for fishing
- \* Parking is rearranged to allow for area near lighthouse to remain uncluttered
- \* Brick circle drive
- \* Promenade from parking to the lighthouse (incl. benches, lights, plantings and specialty paving)



Kimberly Point enhancements



Section through overlooks along path leading to Lighthouse



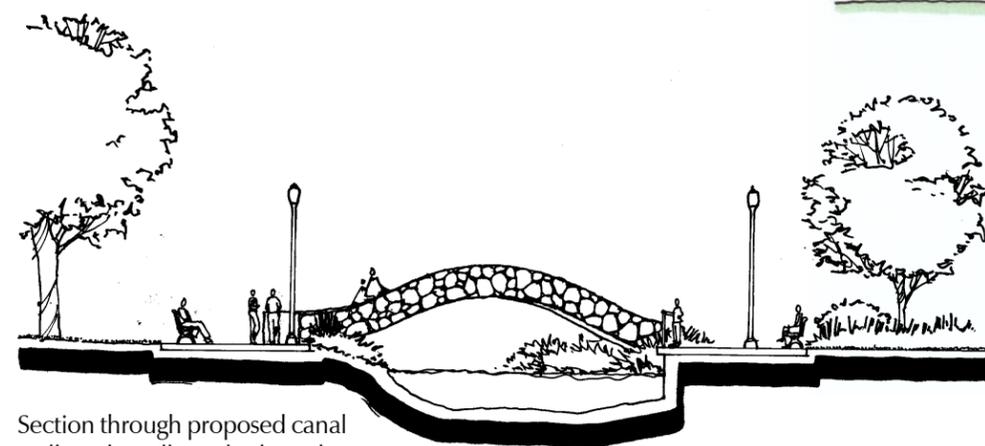
Section through promenade, traffic circle, and overlook

# 5 Doty Park



Doty Park is an open space with enormous potential. The existing structures and bridges provide the framework for a garden setting in the park's urban surroundings. There is the opportunity to provide direct access to the water in a variety of ways in the park as well as expand and enhance the launching capabilities near the Whiting Boat House. The approximate construction cost for the recommended improvements is \$2.8 million.

- \* Renovate existing buildings
- \* Large and small gathering spaces
- \* Formal garden with focal structure
- \* New parking and entry court
- \* Prairie and wetland plantings
- \* Overlooks along canal walk
- \* New gardens at Whiting Boat House
- \* Move existing boat launch, add another
- \* Improve and expand parking for the Whiting Boat House for both events and trailer parking



Section through proposed canal walk and small overlook on the island





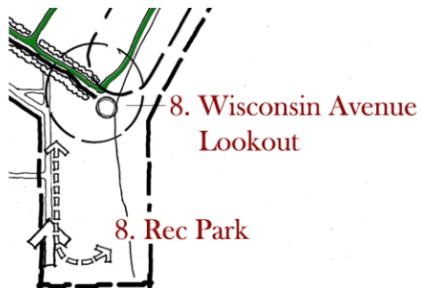
## 6 Riverside Park

Riverside Park already has a wonderful ambience from previous work and the recent expansion to the pavilion for musical engagements. The improvements we felt necessary were some pedestrian connections within the park to outside routes as well as designing an entrance space at the waterfront walk where it connects to Wisconsin Avenue. Amenitizing the waterfront walk with benches, lights and plantings consistent with the other waterfront improvements would carry through many of the themes as people walk around the peninsula.



## 7 Hospital Area

As a matter of long term policy, the consultants believe in completing the connection between the dam overlook and Clark Street along the water, realizing the difficulties associated with the heliport and hangar building. Coordinating the north side of Clark Street with other streetscape amenities found in the other waterfront areas would also provide the visual link for pedestrians walking between the hospital and Doty Park.



## 8 Rec Park

Connecting Rec Park north to Wisconsin Avenue with amenities that echo the streetscape improvements along Commercial Street or Wisconsin Avenue provides the visual connection for residents and visitors looking to use the pool or boat launch. It also provides a pedestrian friendly atmosphere for walkers or cyclists who include that stretch in their walks on Wisconsin Avenue and Lakeshore Avenue. If the opportunity arises to connect the Wisconsin Avenue Lookout to Rec Park along the water, a walk along there with the lake vistas would be a solid addition to the waterfront experience.



## 9 Arrowhead Park

Long term policy and the possibility of environmental cleanup will dictate how Arrowhead Park is utilized. Future uses could include a dog exercise area or a special events space.

# Waterfront Implementation



The Master Plan for the Neenah Waterfront is an ambitious initiative and represents a significant investment of resources for the community. Because of its scale, complexity and potential construction costs, getting started and sustaining momentum may seem overwhelming, at first.

Be assured, however, that other mid-western communities have successfully implemented equally ambitious plans by using a proven, systematic implementation strategy. It starts with adoption of the plan by the City as a matter of public policy and ends with the celebration of your accomplishments and repetition of the design, permitting and construction cycles. *Like any important initiative, the success of this Master Plan depends on the tireless commitment of community leaders and steady progress toward your goals.*

Neenah has a history rich in success stories where the community has risen to challenges and accomplished great things for the benefit of all. Given the expected reward to the entire community, implementation of the Waterfront Master Plan should be no exception.

## Establish the Master Plan as Public Policy

The first step toward successful implementation of the Waterfront Master Plan is its endorsement by the Neenah City Council. Without a clearly defined statement of public policy, it will be impossible to allocate valuable resources toward implementation.

Given its role in advancing this initiative, the Board of Directors of Future Neenah, Inc. should also endorse the Master Plan. This will send a strong signal that the business community and private sector are fully committed to the plan.

## Establish an Implementation Team

The success of the Neenah Waterfront relies upon the cooperation and determination of public and private sector leaders. Neither group can do this alone. Ideally, the Waterfront Implementation Team will be established immediately and include partners who have experience in design, construction, real estate development, public relations, fundraising, marketing and organizational leadership. The team should also include leaders in private sector fundraising and government relations.

The team should meet regularly and have broad authority to recommend yearly work plans, consultants and budgets to the City Council. An executive committee of the team should work closely with staff, consultants, Future Neenah and other stakeholders to advance the implementation at a steady pace.

## Establish a Phased, Funding Strategy

The Waterfront Implementation Team and City staff should establish a capital improvement plan for the next 10 years that considers the potential costs of prioritized waterfront improvements and the potential sources of revenue, both public and private.

Since the success of the first segments of the waterfront will communicate volumes to potential public and private sector partners, it is important to consider these important factors when selecting the first segment for construction:

- \* land ownership and accessibility
- \* permit processes
- \* construction complexity
- \* funds availability
- \* public relations benefit
- \* proximity of private sector initiatives

Using these criteria, Shattuck Park and the Doty Park boat launch present exciting, viable opportunities. Shattuck Park is the centerpiece of the downtown waterfront, and improvement of the Doty Boat launch enhances deep-water launching capabilities. Both are significant, highly visible components of the Master Plan that should generate excitement and support in the community. The potential construction cost of Shattuck Park is approximately \$4,700,000. The potential construction cost of the Doty Park boat launch is approximately \$700,000.

Since other sources of funding have longer lead-times, the City will need to fund a significant portion of the cost to construct the first segments. In addition to the general or capital improvement fund, other sources of local revenue, such as TIF funding, should be considered.

Based upon the experience of other communities, implementation of the balance of the master planned improvements will be most successful if they are funded through a combination of government and private sector sources. Given the broad appeal and economic benefit of the master planned improvements, the State and even the Federal government should also be considered for outright appropriations. The legislative representatives for Neenah need to be drawn into the process as early as possible to explore this potential.





Establish master plan as public policy

Establish implementation team

Establish a phased, funding strategy

Complete design, engineering and permitting of Phase One project

Construct Phase One project, design next project

Celebrate!

Repeat, and look for special opportunities

There are also several State and Federal grants that may provide funding for portions of the Master Plan. They include, but are not limited to:

- \* *Waterways Commission Grants* (transient docking, renovating/relocating existing boat launches)
- \* *State Stewardship Grants* (recreation proposals)
- \* *Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)* (non-nature based outdoor recreation activities)
- \* *Urban Rivers Program* (shoreline enhancement, riverfronts for economic development, nature based outdoor recreation, preserving/restoring urban rivers)
- \* *Coastal Management Grant Program* (public access grants, coastal access, educational signage, redevelopment of under-used/deteriorated waterfronts)
- \* *Brownfield Grants*

Grant funding from most agencies is only available in specific appropriation cycles. Therefore, once the initial funding and phasing strategies are identified, the Waterfront Implementation Team should meet with representatives of several agencies to identify the upcoming opportunities and submittal requirements. Please remember that when you receive grants from other agencies you may need to abide by design, construction and administrative standards that are different than yours.

Private sector contributions can also play a significant role in funding the construction of the waterfront improvements. Business and individual contributors are often attracted to high profile community projects and there are plenty of opportunities to commemorate private sector participation on the Waterfront. We strongly recommend that a well planned and organized fundraising campaign be considered a vital part of the Waterfront implementation strategy. Future Neenah, Inc. has stated its interest in coordinating such an effort. This group is an experienced community fundraiser and could efficiently mobilize the resources needed to conduct an effective private donor campaign.

As your community leaders know, private sector fundraising can be a source of pride, positive public relations and leverage that is hard to appreciate until it has been experienced first hand.

## Designing, Engineering and Permitting the First Projects

Once the first construction projects are budgeted, their design and engineering needs to be finalized for permitting, bidding and construction. Under normal circumstances, the design, engineering and permitting process takes about 6 to 9 months. Agencies that have a jurisdictional interest in the Neenah Waterfront include, but may not be limited to:

- \* *City of Neenah*
- \* *Winnebago County*
- \* *WDNR*
- \* *USF&W*
- \* *Army Corps of Engineers*
- \* *ECWRPC*
- \* *WEPA*
- \* *WDOT*
- \* *Library Board*
- \* *Park and Recreation Commission*
- \* *Harbor Commission*
- \* *Neenah/Menasha Water & Power Company*

Once construction begins on the first project, the design and engineering of the next project should commence in order to maintain public relations momentum.

## Construct the First Projects

The waterfront can be constructed using a General Contractor or a Construction Manager. Either approach can be successful and is usually based on City preference and the availability of experienced staff. If local contractors wish to donate time or materials to the project, the Construction Manager method will allow for greater purchasing and sequencing flexibility. Remember to keep the public aware of the "latest and greatest" news concerning construction of the current project in order to maintain the public's interest.

## Celebrate

A coordinated and energetic public relations program is important to the success of the waterfront. We recommend that the public relations committee of the Waterfront Implementation Team take every opportunity to celebrate victories large and small, particularly in the early stages of development. Public relations and private sector fundraising should be closely linked.

## Repeat and Look for Special Opportunities

Once the first projects are underway, future revenue sources need to be confirmed. Since many grants and appropriations have long lead times, it is important to get candidate projects in front of the appropriate decision makers as soon as possible. We recommend that one person from the Waterfront Implementation Team be responsible for coordinating and researching funding opportunities.

Whenever possible, the construction of the waterfront should be coordinated with other public and private sector redevelopment. Large and small-scale commercial property improvements provide great opportunities to integrate the waterfront into the downtown. Large-scale public works projects, such as the scheduled renovation of the Commercial and Oak Street bridges, are natural opportunities to advance the waterfront concepts. Coordination of the "grand opening" of a waterfront project with another special event or holiday can bring special meaning to the project.

## The First Construction Projects

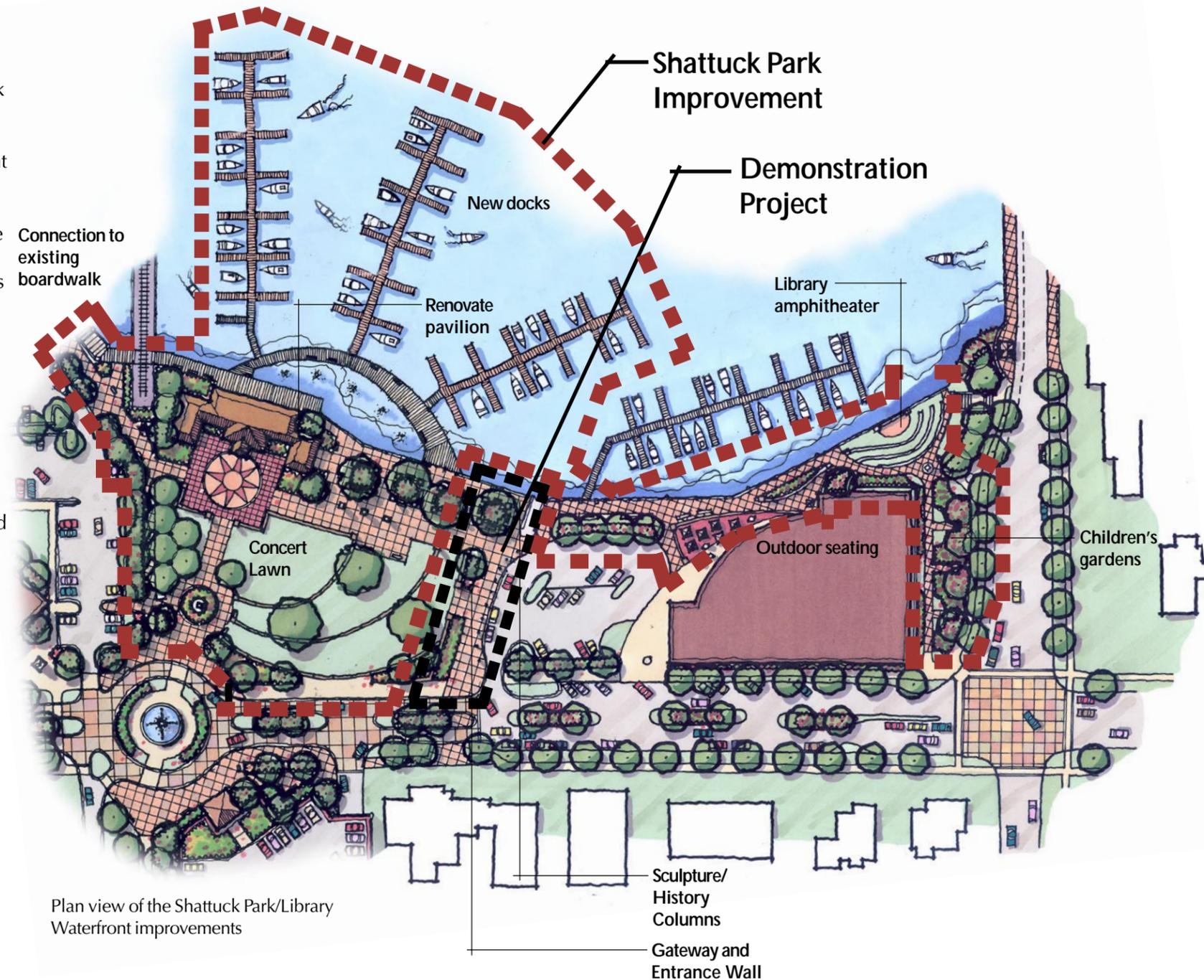
Two separate areas of the Master Plan should be given the highest priority when the long range phasing strategy is developed. One is Shattuck Park; the other is the Doty Park Boat Launch. Shattuck Park is the gateway to the downtown waterfront. Its size, strategic location, visibility and history make it the best candidate for the first waterfront improvement project constructed in early 2003. The Doty Park Boat Launch deserves strong consideration as a 2004 construction project because it will significantly expand the community's deep-water boat launch capability and dramatically enhance the Whiting Boat house area which is an underutilized community asset.

The Shattuck Park improvements may need to be phased in over several years because of their scale, cost and complexity. However, a small "demonstration" project could be built for about \$500,000 that would help confirm the City's commitment to the Master Plan and build public enthusiasm for the project.

Design, engineering and permitting for Shattuck Park should begin early in 2002 in order to send the project out for competitive bidding during the winter of 2002/2003, the most desirable time to bid large, public projects.



Plan view of the Doty Park Boat Launch improvements



Plan view of the Shattuck Park/Library Waterfront improvements



**Shattuck Park demonstration project**  
(see previous page for location)

- \* Starts the anticipation for the rest of the Shattuck Park improvements
- \* Creates a new entrance for the Park in coordination with the new Library parking lot
- \* Allows construction of the major improvements to occur the following year without being in the way

*Conceptual Cost Opinion*  
*Shattuck Park Demonstration Project*

Removals	\$10,000
Earthwork	\$10,000
Paving	\$80,000
Concrete	\$32,300
Site Elements	\$146,000
Utilities	\$10,000
Irrigation	\$1,700
Landscape	\$5,000
Electrical	\$35,000
<i>Subtotal:</i>	<i>\$330,000</i>
<b>Other Project Costs and Contingencies</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Design, Engineering, and Construction Costs</b>	<b>\$70,000</b>
<b><i>Grand Total:</i></b>	<b><i>\$500,000</i></b>



Perspective of the Waterfront improvements behind the Library and into Shattuck Park

**Shattuck Park/Library Improvements (2003)**

- \* Design can be completed while the demonstration project is being built
- \* Site is publicly owned
- \* Shows the commitment of the city to the waterfront initiative
- \* Sets the standard for quality and materials
- \* Connects the existing boardwalk behind Neenah Center Towers, providing both a connection to the water and between the bridges
- \* Provides quality transient docking that gets boaters access into the downtown
- \* Coordinate with the redesign of Oak Street bridge by WDOT

*Conceptual Cost Opinion*  
*Shattuck Park Improvement*

Removals	\$20,000
Earthwork	\$15,000
Paving	\$630,000
Concrete	\$60,000
Site Features	\$854,000
Pavilion	\$1,092,000
Utilities	\$25,000
Irrigation	\$40,000
Landscape	\$122,000
Electrical	\$215,000
<i>Subtotal:</i>	<i>\$3,093,000</i>
<b>Other Project Costs and Contingencies</b>	<b>\$930,000</b>
<b>Design, Engineering, and Construction Costs</b>	<b>\$645,000</b>
<b><i>Grand Total:</i></b>	<b><i>\$4,668,000</i></b>

**Doty Park Boat Launch (2004)**

- \* Relieves Rec Park congestion with double launch
- \* Creates larger parking area for both boat trailers as well as overflow from the Whiting Boat House
- \* Expands the capacity for deep water launching
- \* Enhances the accessibility to the waterfront

*Conceptual Cost Opinion*  
*Doty Park Boat Launch*

Removals	\$10,000
Earthwork	\$25,000
Paving	\$136,000
Concrete	\$106,000
Fencing and Railings	\$36,000
Utilities	\$20,000
Irrigation	\$16,000
Landscape	\$32,000
Electrical	\$60,000
<i>Subtotal:</i>	<i>\$441,000</i>
<b>Other Project Costs and Contingencies</b>	<b>\$170,000</b>
<b>Design, Engineering, and Construction Costs</b>	<b>\$89,000</b>
<b><i>Grand Total:</i></b>	<b><i>\$700,000</i></b>