



Section 1:

Introduction

Riverwalk Foundation: Celebrate the Riverwalk Every Season!

Photo by: Jo Lundeen

Purpose:

On January 8, 2003 the City of Naperville and Naperville Park District adopted a Resolution approving an Intergovernmental Agreement and Lease for the Naperville Riverwalk (RW). This Agreement identified responsibilities for the continued, cooperative effort to construct, improve and maintain the Riverwalk. A key component of that Agreement was the preparation of a Riverwalk Master Plan. As defined in the agreement, the Master Plan should be ... “A concept Plan setting forth a 20 year program including the general goals and objectives of the parties concerning the existing and future development and use of the Riverwalk.”

Planning Process:

In August 2003 Signature Design Group was hired by the City of Naperville to prepare the Riverwalk Master Plan. At the initial meeting with City and Park District staff, Signature was directed to prepare a 20 year plan, divided into two periods of 1-5 years and 6-20 years, and use the Riverwalk Commissioners’ *field notes* as a general guide. These *field notes* were generated during two walks in June of 2003 at which the Commissioners identified their collective ideas for maintenance, construction, expansion or renovation of the existing Riverwalk. Signature was also instructed to make the final Plan format narrative, not graphic, in its design recommendations. Given this direction, the following steps were used to prepare this final document:

- Preparation of detailed, large-scale Riverwalk base maps.
- Field survey, inventory and analysis of Riverwalk layout and all physical improvements.
- Interviews with City and Park District staff, other local officials and Riverwalk patrons.



- Review, consolidate and edit RW Commissioners’ *field notes*.
- A Riverwalk walking tour and discussion with RW Commissioners and RW Foundation to clarify goals and discuss opportunities.
- A joint workshop with RW Commission and RW Foundation to review projects, priorities and processes.
- A final project list was evaluated, weighted and ranked. A draft 20 year plan was prepared.
- Three Open House Workshops were held with presentations to:
 1. RW Foundation, Century Walk, DNA, Chamber of Commerce, Naper Settlement & Township
 2. Riverbend and Riverbank Homeowner’s Assoc. and general public
 3. Naperville Area Homeowner’s Confederation
- Prepare a final draft Plan for RW Commission review and acceptance. RW Commission forward Plan to City Council and Park Board for review.
- A joint workshop with City Council and Park Board to review final draft Plan.
- Plan was finalized and returned to City Council and Park Board for final approval at which time the “Master Plan” portion of this document’s original title was officially eliminated.

RIVERWALK DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Goals and Objectives:

The goal of this document is to provide a comprehensive guide to development on the Riverwalk for the next 20 years. These Guidelines should establish the criteria, rationale and a framework on which current planning decisions are based; and on which future decisions can be made. The Guidelines must insure the current success and appeal of today's Riverwalk continues to expand, adapt and grow with the City in the future.

The Guidelines must also strike a balance between new development, and the Park District's ability to manage and maintain that development. This is important to insure all capital investments are safe, and well-preserved, throughout their useful life.

And finally, at the heart of these Guidelines are the River - and its related quarries, shorelines and ecosystems. These areas must be steadfastly managed, protected and enhanced to insure the legacy of the Riverwalk is not only recreational. . . . but also environmental. The goal for all future generations should be to pass on a river which is cleaner and healthier than the one which they inherited.

To accomplish these goals the following objectives have been established:

- Improve safety and ADA accessibility through renovation or new construction.
- Reduce the number of vehicle- pedestrian conflict points along the RW corridor.
- Improve the *function* and enhance the *experience* for RW patrons through better orientation and flow, increased capacity, more facilities and well designed signage.

- Provide more opportunities for sitting areas and gathering points.
- Provide more informational / educational opportunities.
- Provide more cultural opportunities to explain Naperville's history.
- Provide more passive recreational opportunities such as fishing, canoeing, hiking and photography.
- Provide for future generations through areas set aside for expansion, future facilities, or acquisition.
- Develop, program and sign the RW for the mutual benefit of the entire Downtown Community (includes shops and restaurants, Naper Settlement, Century Walk, North Central College, NCHS, Naperville Township and Municipal Center).
- Reduce maintenance levels through the renovation of existing facilities, careful design of new facilities, and discretion in the selection and placement of plant material.
- Provide ongoing environmental enhancements to improve water quality, the fisheries, shorelines and adjacent native vegetation.
- Protect and maintain all current and future, views and vistas.
- Consider logical sequencing of all construction activities to maximize cost-effectiveness while minimizing collateral damage.
- Establish a framework within the Guidelines for objective analysis, monitoring and periodic revision.

The following sections will set forth in detail an analysis of where we are today and the many opportunities which lay ahead.