

River Vision Project Overview

What: The Ohio River Vision Strategic Plan is a *conceptual masterplan* for 50 miles of riverfront in three counties: Posey, Vanderburgh, and Warrick.

Why: This regional plan is designed to create a more attractive and healthier Evansville Region, to attract new residents and visitors to our region, and to leverage investments already made along our riverfront.

- Our riverfront is often referred to as an underutilized asset; this planning process was begun to find the highest and best use for our riverfront land.
- Documented calls for increased public access and development of the riverfront go back to the City of Evansville's first master plan written in 1928.
- Ongoing community demand for riverfront parks, trails, restaurants, and housing.
- The Indiana Economic Development Corporation's READI 1.0 program has funded the effort, showing the State's acknowledgement of the importance of the riverfront for our region and the whole of Indiana.

Who: Thousands of regional residents shared their visions for the riverfront through surveys and public sessions, and regional experts on streets, parks and the levee spoke into the plan as well. The plan is based upon these inputs, on the region's desired amenities and destinations along all 50 miles of the riverfront.

- Fun facts: the zip code with the most respondents was 47630, and the most requested amenity along river was eating and drinking places.

Where: The three downtowns along the Ohio River, Mount Vernon, Evansville, and Newburgh, are treated with different scales of planning with Downtown Evansville having the broadest planning efforts, due to its size, length of riverfront, population, and its role as a regional center.

- Plan suggestions impact a desire to "Stitch the City," to reconnect downtowns to the rest of their cities; "Hug the River" through an embrace of our riverfront; and "Main Street and More," a plan to spread our downtown's growth beyond their successful cores.
- Ideation for Downtown Evansville includes a new riverfront park, the Great Bend, filled with new trails, dining destinations, sports courts, places for play, and hundreds of units of housing.
- The Plan has region-wide suggestions to support investments and efforts along the riverfront.

Next steps include engineering, specifically "schematic drawing" known as SD. With completed SD, the region can begin application for federal and philanthropic support to move the plan towards completion. SD is scheduled to begin in Downtown Evansville later this year.

- The timeline for plan completion is long – 10, 15, or 20 years.
- Things will change between the plan shown and how outcomes will look. What won't change is the Plan's response to community desires – so while an amenity may end up in a different location the amenity will still be built for regional use.

Costs are unknown at this point, but transformative efforts aren't inexpensive. This plan will take the region, the state, the federal government, businesses, people, and philanthropies working together towards its completion. Sasaki was selected in part due to their ability to see projects from plan to completion, including funding models. This skill can be seen in the Chicago Riverwalk, and upriver in the Cincinnati riverfront.

