COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY PLANNING ON THE FOX RIVER, IL

Kate Evasic, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Fox River Summit
March 23, 2018
AGENDA

1. Project background
2. Overview of the Fox River Corridor Plan
3. Issues and opportunities
4. Next steps for the plan
PROJECT BACKGROUND
• Official regional planning organization and MPO for northeastern Illinois

• Adopted GO TO 2040 regional plan in 2010

• Developing ON TO 2050 regional plan
LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

VILLAGES OF ALGONQUIN AND CARPENTERSVILLE
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WATERSHED PLANNING
OVERVIEW OF THE FOX RIVER CORRIDOR PLAN
Establish a vision for the next 10 to 15 years.

Outline the steps needed to meet that goal.

Topic areas:
- Natural Resources
- Recreation and Programming
- Transportation and Connectivity
- Economic Development
- Climate Resilience
BENEFITS OF THE FOX RIVER CORRIDOR PLAN

- Builds on existing plans, water trail
- Recommends actions
- Helps set priorities, coordinate decision-making, and obtain grants
- Will not be set in stone; it is a long range guiding document
Collaboration between CMAP and McHenry County Planning & Development

Funding: Federal Highway Administration, Illinois EPA, NOAA, among others

Steering Committee:

Cary Park District
Environmental Defenders of McHenry County
Flint Creek and Spring Creek Watershed Partnership
Fox River Study Group
Fox Waterway Agency
Illinois DNR
Lake County
Lake County Forest Preserves

McHenry County
McHenry County Bicycle Advocates
McHenry County Conservation District
Village of Cary
Village of Fox River Grove
Village of Lake Barrington
Village of Oakwood Hills
Village of Port Barrington
Village of Trout Valley
Visit McHenry County

THE FOX RIVER CORRIDOR PLAN
THE PLANNING PROCESS
A Corridor Plan for the Fox River in the Counties of McHenry and Lake

The Fox River Corridor Plan Study Area
FROM BURTONS BRIDGE TO FOX BLUFF
- 2 counties
- 8 villages
- Unincorporated areas
- McHenry County Conservation Areas
- Lake County Forest Preserves
- State Nature Preserves
- Fox River
  Fox Waterway Agency
  Illinois DNR
  U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Riverfront restaurants, bars, entertainment

Riverfront parks, festivals

Marinas, boat launch

Protected open space, habitat, recreation

Transit-accessible downtown areas
ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES
EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

Community Outreach
Water Quality and Flooding
Open Space, Habitat, and Recreation
Transportation and Access
Economic Development
Climate Vulnerability (TBD)
COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

- Project Steering Committee
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Public Kickoff Open House
- Online Survey
- Cary Main Street Fest, McHenry County Fair
- Public Visioning Workshop
Broad themes:

- Preserve the scenic beauty and environment
- Balance a mix of activities
- Provide more public riverfront access, but no river trail
- Attract more family-friendly businesses and activities
Top five ideas from public visioning workshop:

1. Sediment management & dredging
2. Boater safety education
3. Water quality & environmental education
4. Stormwater management
5. Keep river as a local resource
Water pollution affects aquatic life and limits recreation

Many groups are working to improve water quality

Groundwater contamination and depletion are threats to water supply and aquatic habitat
FLOODING

- Causes property damage, reduces quality of life and business revenue, and water quality issues

Photo: Sarah Nader, Northwest Herald
WARMER, WETTER, AND MORE VARIABLE
Open space in the Corridor provides multiple benefits (biodiversity, flood control, water quality enhancements, recreation)
PARKS AND RECREATION

- Few public river access points exist
- Sedimentation limits access for boaters
- Need for paddling amenities
- Opportunity to expand recreational amenities and improve safety for all users
TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY

- Existing and planned trails to build on
- Provide safe connections across river
- Connect downtown/commercial areas to the river
- Improve wayfinding
Opportunity to expand business offerings and events

Some development opportunities exist and should protect natural resources

Capitalize on downtown reinvestment in Fox River Grove and Cary
NEXT STEPS FOR THE PLAN
• Balance the preservation and use of the Fox River and adjacent natural areas
• Foster a culture of appreciation and **stewardship**
• Create a **safe, clean, and accessible** river environment
• Preserve the area’s **rural and local character**
• Enhance the **vibrancy** of the riverfront and nearby commercial and downtown areas
• Protect high quality and diverse **habitats**
• Strengthen Corridor **resilience** to climate extremes
THANK YOU!

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http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/lta/fox-river-mchenry-lake