

WATERTOWN DAM REDESIGN



Public Engagement in Planning a Future Whitewater Park

The Crow River flows through the City of Watertown in northwest Carver County. There is a dam in the river, located adjacent to a city park, near downtown Watertown. Currently, the dam limits fish passage. The Carver County Water Management Organization is interested in the removal or redesign of the dam to improve the fishery. This presents an opportunity to explore how multiple benefits could be derived from redesigning the dam, including added recreational activities, such as a white water park. Our project proposed an engagement process that would provide information, facilitate discussion, and gather feedback relative to the prospects of developing a whitewater park in Watertown.

PROJECT GOALS:

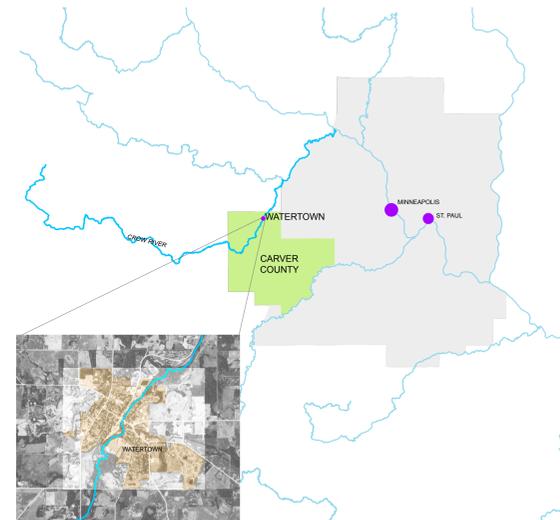
Design a public engagement process to get community feedback on a redesign of a Crow River Dam.

Gather public feedback on the design of multiple dam improvement strategies, including a development of a white water park.

Develop a multi-tiered engagement approach to involve a variety of stakeholder groups in the planning and design process

Educate stakeholders on the potential ecological, environmental and economic impacts of the proposed dam redesign strategies

SITE MAP



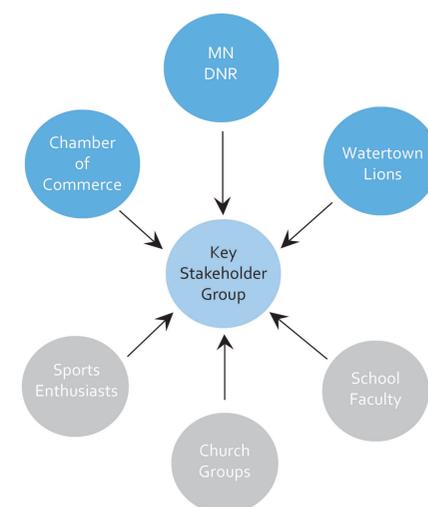
STRATEGIES FOR:



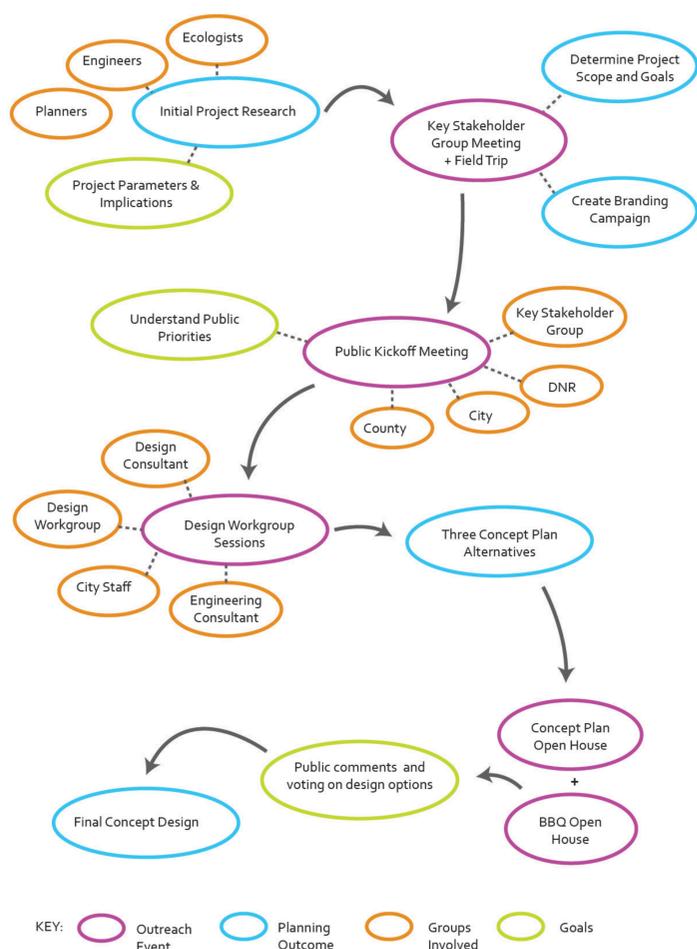
THE PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The goal of the participation process is to create multiple ways for a variety of stakeholders to contribute to the Whitewater Park planning process, to bring a diverse set of expertise and interests to the table to define the projects' multiple goals. The hope is that the stakeholders within the community will feel invested in the project, so that whatever final concept design is created, it will be felt as a community undertaking.

Public input will contribute to the development of the project in several ways. We aim to develop ways to capture both broad and deep public input. The Key Stakeholder group will provide guidance and input in the early stages of the project, prior to the larger public kickoff meeting, where a broader base of input will be sought. The Design Workgroup will contribute to more intensive input sessions to guide the development of three design concepts. These design concepts will then be presented gather broader public opinion and feedback through two Open House events.



PROJECT FLOW CHART



KEY: Outreach Event (pink circle), Planning Outcome (blue circle), Groups Involved (orange circle), Goals (green circle)

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Initial Project Research

Planners will work with a multidisciplinary team of experts to establish potential design options, limitations, and implications on topics that will frame the scope of the projects, including Ecological-(Fisheries and Wildlife), Environmental (Flooding and Erosion & Economic (Potential benefits for downtown and county).

Key Stakeholder Group Formation

A diverse group of key stakeholders representative of the community is formed, as a forum to create dialogue and build trust among influential community members and organizations, guiding project goals and future engagement efforts.

Charles City Field Trip

There is a model whitewater project in Charles City, IA (3 hours away). This field trip allows stakeholders a chance to envision how a similar project could be implemented in Watertown.

Public Kickoff Meeting

The initial public kickoff meeting is held to build excitement for the plan and public empowerment and involvement in its establishment. A presentation by the City and the DNR, is followed by a breakout session of facilitated conversation. Ultimately, we want to ask the public about the scale that they would be comfortable with in this project. We want to ask these questions: Do residents simply desire improvements to the dam? Is a whitewater park an appropriate intervention here?

Design Workgroup

The design workgroup meetings are an opportunity for a small group of community members to engage with design professionals and offer input through charrettes and a feedback process.

Concept Plan Open House

Initial design concepts are released to the public for comment and review. There will be a presentation to describe public feedback thus far, and outline the proposed design concept alternatives. Following a Q&A period, attendees will be invited to vote for their preferred concept, and submit comments in writing.

Concept Design BBQ Event

This is an informal open house event intended to reach a broad swath of the community than was able to attend prior meetings. Design concepts are presented, votes and comments are collected.

Final Recommendations

Results from the Concept Design open houses will be gathered and incorporated to create a Final Concept Design and Plan. There will be a public comment period and feedback will be incorporated into a final plan document. If there is broad public support, the plan can proceed into further design, fundraising and implementation phases.



Current dam, Watertown, MN



Whitewater park in Charles City, IA



Post-it note exercise



Public Workshop

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IMAGE SOURCES:

http://midwestwanderer.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/140602_IA_WhiteWater-8732.jpg
<http://ideaworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/0H7A4308.jpg>
http://communityplan.dublinohio.gov/ste/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Img_Community_work_shop.jpg

CREDITS:

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