

# Executive Summary



1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Figure 1.0-1

**1.1 INTENT OF RIVERFRONT DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The Fox River has long been recognized as a great asset of the City of Oshkosh; it is now time to celebrate the River. Until this time, Oshkosh’s revitalization efforts have predominantly focused on land-based improvements and redevelopment. With the successful opening of the Riverside Park Leach Amphitheater, increased developer interest in key riverfront redevelopment parcels, planned bridge replacement, and the pivotal reinvestment in downtown by businesses and the community-at-large, the focus of revitalization has now broadened to include the Riverfront. As momentum builds for riverfront revitalization, having a comprehensive riverwalk plan and design guidelines as a framework is essential.

The City has developed this riverwalk plan and associated design guidelines with the intent of providing a framework for:

- Developing a continuous Riverwalk on two sides of the river between Wisconsin Street and Lake Winnebago;
- Linking the downtown Riverwalk with the WIOUWASH State Trail and UW-Oshkosh to the northeast;
- Linking the downtown Riverwalk with neighborhoods and the Pioneer Resort area to the south;
- Crafting a unifying design vocabulary for public and private projects linked by the Riverwalk;
- Encouraging consistently high quality riverfront development;
- Creating a more beautiful, inviting riverfront in the downtown area;
- Improving infrastructure to make redevelopment opportunities more attractive;
- Locating improved facilities for recreational boating and fishing;
- Creating a wayfinding system and user amenities to promote the safe, easy use of the Riverwalk; and
- Establishing alternative transportation (e.g. boating, bicycling, pedestrian, etc.) connections between key destinations.

Having an overall framework for the riverfront will also improve the likelihood of securing grants for phased improvements.

The City proposed to implement the riverwalk plan on property currently owned by others, on property to be acquired (outright or through permanent easements, or in existing public right-of-ways).

**1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS OVERVIEW**

Existing conditions of the riverfront between Wisconsin Street and Lake Winnebago vary widely. The best river edge is the newly rebuilt steel sheetpile portion of Riverside Park east of Court Street. The vast majority of the balance of the riverfront on both the north and south banks is in poor condition; a small reach on the south bank is in medium condition. The treatments of the river edge include: sheetpile; wooden crib; and riprap.

The river elevation varies seasonally between 1 ½ to 3 feet. This fluctuation in combination with ice flowage, storm-driven waves, river flow rate, as well as user needs will all influence the design of river-based structures.

**1.3 DESIGN CHARACTER OVERVIEW**

Along the downtown length of the river (Figure 1.0-1), a major design tenet is to establish a strong, positive aesthetic character and identity for Oshkosh. The design vocabulary selected remains coherent and recognizable along the entire length of the study area. However, the family of design elements is combined differently to address the differing physical conditions of the river, user needs, and site-specific design intentions.

The Riverwalk provides continuous access along the downtown reach of the Fox River in Oshkosh. Connections with adjacent neighborhoods and destinations, as well as linkages to the regional WIOUWASH State Trail are also established. Cross-sections of each the different edge conditions intended to be developed along this downtown reach are illustrated in the Design Character section. Redevelopment opportunities adjacent to the Riverwalk are also addressed. The Design Character section also addresses Riverwalk design elements, signage, and river-based and land-based user amenities.

The family of design elements relies heavily on low-maintenance, vandal-resistant materials including: finished aluminum, light-colored painted metals, traditional concrete and bituminous pavements, and dense renewable wood (i.e. Ipe). The light selected for the Riverside Park Amphitheater will be used along the entire downtown portion of the Riverwalk; the river edge railing and other elements have been selected and designed to be light-colored and transparent. Separation between uses has been achieved using changes in elevation and low walls

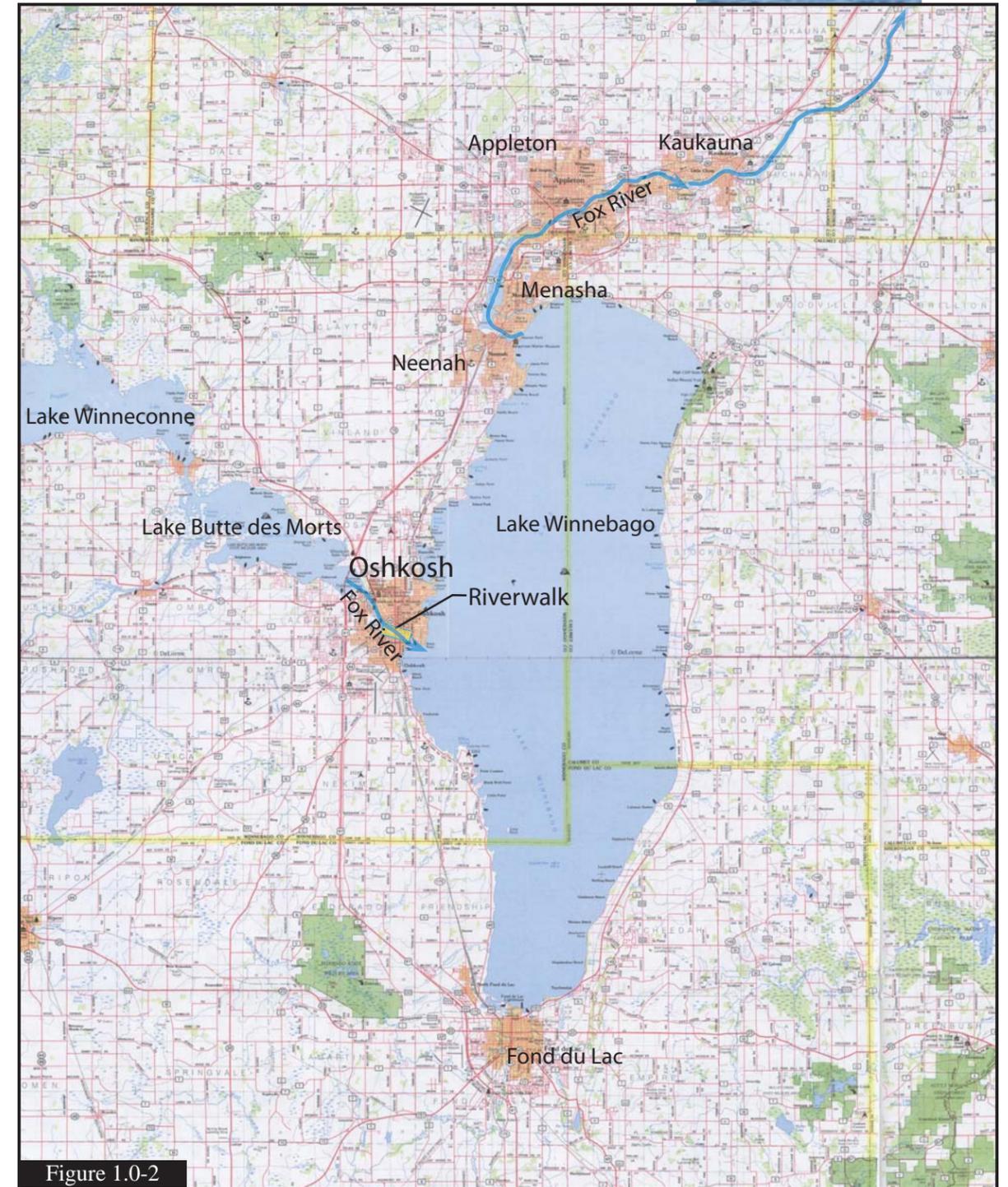


Figure 1.0-2

Oshkosh and the Greater Fox Valley as shown in the Wisconsin Atlas and Gazetteer (Figure 1.0-2).

that seek to separate users while maintaining river views; and planted berms where space allows, to screen parking and industrial uses from the river.