



Meeting Minutes

Riverwalk Planning, Design and Construction Committee

Tuesday, September 30, 2025

7:30 AM

NEU

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Shields called the September 30, 2025 Naperville Riverwalk Planning, Design and Construction (PDC) Committee meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. The meeting was held in the Naperville Employee University (NEU) at the Municipal Center, located at 400 S. Eagle St., Naperville, IL.

B. ROLL CALL:

Present: Grant Cowen; John Cuff; Andy Hynes; Seth Michael; Leslie Ruffing; Johnna Shields, Chair; Mike Sullivan

Absent: Hanna Brauer; Jan Erickson; Ian Holzhauer; Tiffani Picco; Greg Sagen; and Carl Wohlt

Also Present: Tim Ball, Gary R. Weber Associates (GRWA); Rebecca DeLarme, City staff; Mike DiCristina, Naperville Park District; Rick Hitchcock, former Riverwalk Commission Chairman; Jeff Martin, Naperville Riverwalk Foundation; Peggy Motta, Naperville Park District; Stephanie Penick, Naperville Riverwalk Foundation; Carl Peterson, GRWA; and Mary Lou Wehrli, resident

C. PUBLIC FORUM:

Public comment and written statements were provided under item E.3.

D. PROJECT UPDATES:

1. Riverwalk Project Updates - Andy Hynes

Receive the update on various ongoing Riverwalk projects

Attachments: [Riverwalk Project Photos](#)

Hynes provided an update on the following three projects on or adjacent to the Riverwalk.

Eagle Street Gateway: Construction continues and various retaining walls, staircase components and landscaping have been installed over the past few weeks. Completion is expected in mid-October. The only outstanding item is a question on delivery of the hand railings. Hynes will continue to update the group on the progress.

Fredenhagen Park Fountain Repairs: The contractor has installed the conduit and Park District staff have restored the brick pavers. The next step will be the application of the new waterproof liner pending appropriate weather conditions. The project is expected to be completed in October with activation of the fountain to follow.

Fredenhagen Park Miscellaneous Repairs: The cleaning and staining work on various features within Fredenhagen Park is complete. Photos of all three projects were included in the agenda packet. The improvements to Fredenhagen Park were noted and appreciated by the group.

Hynes reported that the Grand Pavilion Questionnaire is currently online and encouraged the group to take the survey which can be found on the City's webpage at
<https://www.naperville.il.us/projects-in-naperville/riverwalkgrandpavilion/>.

Hynes advised that the September 29th budget workshop with City Council was held and noted that some CIP items were shifted due to staff resources and the department's budget. The South Extension project will still begin in 2026 but will be bid towards the end of the year.

Cuff requested that a representative from the Park District be included in the final walkthrough for the Eagle Street Gateway project with Hynes and DiCristina advising they have been involved and Picco attends the bi-weekly progress meetings with the contractor.

E. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Approval of Minutes - Johnna Shields

Approve minutes from the September 2, 2025 Planning, Design and Construction Committee meeting

Attachments: [25PDCMinutes0902](#)

A motion to approve the September 2, 2025 Planning, Design and Construction Committee meeting minutes was made by Sullivan and seconded by Hynes.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Park District Report - Mike DiCristina for Tiffani Picco

DiCristina reported that staff is busy watering due to no rain and hot weather.

New plants have been planted behind the Horse Trough Fountain which completes the three projects proposed in spring and funded by the Naperville Riverwalk Foundation.

A donor through the Conservation Foundation provided funding for 1,100 native plugs that were added between the Centennial beach and the river in Section 3.

The Park District partnered with Max's Mission to create murals adjacent to the Rothermel Family Skate Facility. The grand opening is scheduled for October 1st at 5:00 p.m.

Cowen inquired if the trees, specifically maples, were showing stress with DiCristina advising that the dry weather conditions have been the main factor.

3. Riverwalk 2031 Master Plan Update - Johnna Shields

Continue to review potential edits and updates to the Riverwalk 2031 Master Plan

WRITTEN COMMENT

James Sterzinger (Naperville) - The Riverwalk Commission should not increase bicycle use on the Riverwalk. The use of signs is ineffective and this has not reduced bicycle incidents on the Riverwalk or any of the DuPage Parks/Forest Preserves where bicycles and pedestrians mix. Master Plan states "Improvements near Hillside Avenue to increase exposure and accommodate cyclists".

Mary Lou Wehrli (Naperville) - The core strength of Naperville's celebratory success and Permanent Memorials to its milestones, Centennial Park and Sesquicentennial Riverwalk, lies in its people.

As dedicated in 1931, the Permanent Memorial of Centennial Park is "of inestimable value to posterity, emblematic of the spirit of our forebears, and symbolic of our confidence in what the next century holds in store for this community."

The beautifully crafted and written Riverwalk 2031 Master Plan advances worthy goals, HOWEVER, it is NOT THE PERMANENT MEMORIAL of Naperville's 2031 Bicentennial. Only the people of Naperville will imagine, suggest, and determine what that might be. With this in mind, as well as the importance of caring for our assets, I offer suggestions of minor changes to the language of the current draft document.

Page 3

Under "Creating a Path Forward"

Consider adjusting the last sentence of the first paragraph

Today, Centennial Park and the Riverwalk, heralded as the crown jewel of Naperville, stand as testament to the can-do momentum of engaged citizens whose vision inspires today's emerging possibilities for the celebration of Naperville's Bicentennial in 2031. Riverwalk champions are poised to grasp this celebratory opportunity to further shape its mighty future.

Consider adjusting the second sentence of the second paragraph.

This plan defines compelling goals, measurable objectives, exciting projects, and a thoughtful implementation process that when complete, will enhance and maintain the Riverwalk's extraordinary cultural, environmental, and economic impact on Naperville's success.

Under "Riverwalk Evolution"

Consider adjusting the first sentence of the second paragraph.

In the grip of the 1980 recession, community leaders were determined to create the Sesquicentennial Riverwalk in much the same fashion as their 1931 depression-era predecessors conceived, privately purchased and constructed the 45-acre Centennial Park (including the Beach) using significant contributions of donated cash, in-kind gifts, Works Progress Association and volunteer labor.

Page 4

Under "2031 Riverwalk"

Consider adjusting the first paragraph.

In 2031, we will simultaneously celebrate the 200th anniversary of our city's establishment, and milestone anniversaries of Centennial Park and Sesquicentennial Riverwalk. We will continue to be captivated by the Riverwalk's familiar, existing features, and we will delight in its on-going care and exciting new attractions. This Riverwalk 2031 Master Plan describes those new attractions - along with an actionable implementation process that will advance our stewardship of the Riverwalk.

Page 21

Under "Implementation"

Consider adjusting the first sentence.

Riverwalk Evolution describes how enterprising citizens over generations captivated community spirit to create and implement incremental cultural, recreational and environmental investments uniting residents and businesses in shared well-being. Decades of sustained efforts to enhance Centennial Park and Sesquicentennial Riverwalk demonstrate their value.

Consider adjusting the last sentence.

This Implementation section describes how the Naperville Riverwalk Commission and other community leaders will execute a series of correlated engagement, endorsement, funding and construction initiatives to accomplish these ambitious and worthy goals.

SPEAKERS

Mary Lou Wehrli - Wehrli reviewed highlights from her written comments regarding the Master Plan. Chair Shields thanked Wehrli and advised she would review the language further with the consultants and Riverwalk Commission Chair Erickson regarding updating when the Chair's message is added to the document.

Rick Hitchcock - Hitchcock thanked the group for adding the Eagle Street South Bank Improvements project to the Master Plan. He asked that the Riverwalk Commission also consider adding the reimagination of the Riverwalk parking lot at Main Street and Jackson Avenue.

Peterson reviewed the most recent edits made to the Master Plan based on suggestions from the September 2nd PDC Committee meeting. The additional updates and discussion were noted as follows:

Page 7 - Grand Pavilion - The survey is currently available, and this will be updated based on the results.

Page 8 - Prairie Nature Garden - The project is updated. Peterson will discuss the annual maintenance costs with Picco and may include a statement regarding the Park District's master plan for the overall area.

Page 9 - Riverbank Ecological Restoration - Chair Shields noted that she met with Motta who identified five areas of shoreline in need of restoration that can be completed in four phases. She will share this information with the consultants to include for next month's review.

Page 10 - Netzley Overlook - The cost has been updated to \$475,000 to reflect the information in the CIP. The scope and costs still need to be defined. Peterson plans to discuss with Picco.

Page 12 - Eagle Street South Bank Improvements - This project was added to the Master Plan and further discussion needs to be held regarding quantifying and cost estimating.

Page 13 - Eagle Street Gateway - The project is almost complete. The existing graphic may be replaced with a completed photo due to timing of the project completion and the finalized refresh of the Master Plan.

Page 14 - 430 South Washington Street - Peterson shared a draft version of the graphic that shows the North Central College sign but still needs updates.

Page 19/20 - South Gateway - The consultants are still working on finalizing this information. It was noted that the scheduled construction timeline should remain as 2026.

Chair Shields inquired if there were any other additions and discussion followed on Hitchcock's suggestion of including possible changes to the Riverwalk Lot.

Cuff discussed the lot's current ADA parking and noted concerns with removing existing parking. Penick discussed the availability in the parking lot by Centennial Beach and suggested posting parking signs after summer that direct Riverwalk visitors to this area. DiCristina advised that the Park District is currently reviewing their existing parking signs. Chair Shields inquired about updates on the Nichols Parking Deck with Hynes noting the project was in the CIP for engineering in 2027, a sub-committee of the Downtown Advisory Committee is currently reviewing, but there is no formal direction from City Council at this time.

After further discussion, Chair Shields reminded the group that the Riverwalk 2031 Master Plan is a fluid document so this project could be revisited and possibly added to the Master Plan at a later time. A motion to table adding the Riverwalk Lot as a project for the Riverwalk 2031 Master Plan and possibly improve the surrounding area within our normal operating budget was made by

Sullivan and seconded by Cuff. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

This item will be included on next month's PDC Committee agenda for further discussion and review.

F. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Annual Asset Management Plan Walk Review - Johnna Shields

Review follow-up items from the May 7th and May 15th Annual Asset Management Plan (AMP) Walk summary

Attachments: [AMP WALK 2025- v9.18.25](#)

Chair Shields reviewed the 2025 AMP Walk Summary that was included in the agenda packet. All MP 2031 status items are being addressed in the Master Plan. The banner poles will be discussed by Picco at the November PDC Committee meeting. Open Items for discussion include signage for the Labyrinth and relocating the plaque for the Mr. and Mrs. Naperville statue as the current plaque is located behind the statue. Wehrli suggested including an interpretive sign along the Riverwalk that could provide more information about Harold and Margaret Moser. These items will be discussed further at an upcoming meeting. The Walk Your Wheels campaign and possible need for additional signage was discussed. Wehrli inquired if the Jefferson Avenue traffic calming striping could help guide the bike trail in the area with Hynes advising he would review. This will also be addressed at an upcoming meeting.

2. ArtForum Update - Johnna Shields

Receive the update on the 2025 Spring Renewal Lightscape project and discuss the request for the Light Anemones at Paddleboat Quarry installation project for October 2026

Attachments: [ProjectBrief_LightAnemonesatPaddleboatQuarry](#)

Chair Shields advised that Naperville ArtForum is no longer requesting to utilize the Riverwalk for the Spring Renewal Lightscape installation this year as they will be doing another project in Downtown Naperville. They are asking for approval from the Riverwalk Commission (and the Naperville Park District) for a new art installation that would run approximately two to three weeks in 2026 at the Paddleboat Quarry.

Discussion followed with Chair Shields sharing comments from Wohlt suggesting that the promotional name include "Naperville Riverwalk" and possibly highlight and promote a loop path around the quarry to better enjoy the experience.

A motion to recommend the Light Anemones at Paddleboat Quarry for approval by the Riverwalk Commission at their next meeting was made by Sullivan and seconded by Cowen. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

G. MEETING SCHEDULE:

Riverwalk Commission, October 8, 2025, 7:30 a.m.
Municipal Center NEU, 400 S. Eagle St., Naperville, IL

Riverwalk Planning, Design and Construction, November 4, 2025, 7:30 a.m.
Municipal Center NEU, 400 S. Eagle St., Naperville, IL

Riverwalk Commission, November 12, 2025, 7:30 a.m.
Municipal Center NEU, 400 S. Eagle St., Naperville, IL

Riverwalk Planning, Design and Construction, December 2, 2025, 7:30 a.m.
Municipal Center NEU, 400 S. Eagle St., Naperville, IL

H. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Cowen and seconded by Michael. The meeting adjourned at 8:34 a.m. MOTION CARRIED by voice vote

/S/ Rebecca DeLarme
Rebecca DeLarme
Program Assistant
Transportation, Engineering and Development Business Group