

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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RDG PLANNING & DESIGN



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INTRODUCTION

AN OPPORTUNITY IN WAITING

For more than 70 years, the City of Neenah has contemplated the best and highest use of the site currently known as Arrowhead Park. In 2023-2024, this master plan was authored to identify and clarify the many opportunities that could be offered to both residents and visitors alike.

VISION

Arrowhead will be a renowned waterfront destination where people gather to celebrate, play, learn and explore!

PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The Arrowhead Master Plan is an investment in and for the residents of and visitors to Neenah. This investment provides a road map for critical decision-making related to the level of development in this 30-acre property. The intent of this master plan is to guide community leaders in the prioritization, placement and quality of facilities.

The plan leverages the knowledge and understanding of the area's opportunities and constraints gained from the Framework Assessment, public engagement and a visionary Advisory Committee. It knits together the various planning efforts into one coherent vision.

GOALS

- Improve public access to the river
- Cultivate civic engagement in the community
- Develop and promote the Neenah brand
- Initiate year-round programming that helps people flourish
- Foster cooperation and kindness among neighbors and partners
- Improve physical connections to Arrowhead and the Fox River
- Apply design elements consistently
- Enhance nature-inspired landscape

OBJECTIVES

- Access to the water
- Water related programming
- Improved conveniences for boaters and park users
- Integrated Art
- Ongoing Education
- Improved Health and Wellness
- Conservation of Natural Resources



- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| ① ARROWHEAD PARK | ⑥ SINGLE LINE CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD | ⑩ GRAVEL DRIVE |
| ② LOOP THE LAKE TRAIL | ⑦ DOUBLE LINE CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD | ⑪ AT GRADE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING |
| ③ GATEWAY PARK | ⑧ CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD STORAGE YARD | ⑫ VEHICULAR ACCESS – MILLVIEW DR. |
| ④ THE PLAZA @ GATEWAY PARK | ⑨ EXISTING PARKING | |
| ⑤ PIER | | |



SITE CONTEXT

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Prior to this master plan, several planning initiatives have been undertaken for this property. Starting in 1950, the Bergstrom Paper Company recommended to the Neenah City Council that this property be converted into a park once they had finished their use of the site. Between 1985 and 2023, the City developed a number of studies to better understand the opportunities and challenges the site has to offer. From these studies, Arrowhead has benefited from several initiatives, including a multimodal trail that is part of the ‘Loop the Lake’ system, and the new pier that provides kayak and canoe access.

NEENAH NEXT – THE CATALYST

In 2022, the City developed a plan to evaluate Neenah’s downtown. As part of the plan, the Arrowhead Park site was identified as needing a master plan of its own, due to its adjacency to downtown and its potential for development of public waterfront recreation and access to the Fox River. RDG was asked to develop a completely new concept focused on connecting to downtown Neenah and taking full advantage of the waterfront. This new master planning effort is intended to guide the development of the 30-acre property for future decades.

NEENAH NEXT:

A DOWNTOWN PLAN THAT LEVERAGES THE AREA’S STRENGTHS BY SHOWING OPTIONS FOR A PREFERRED FUTURE.



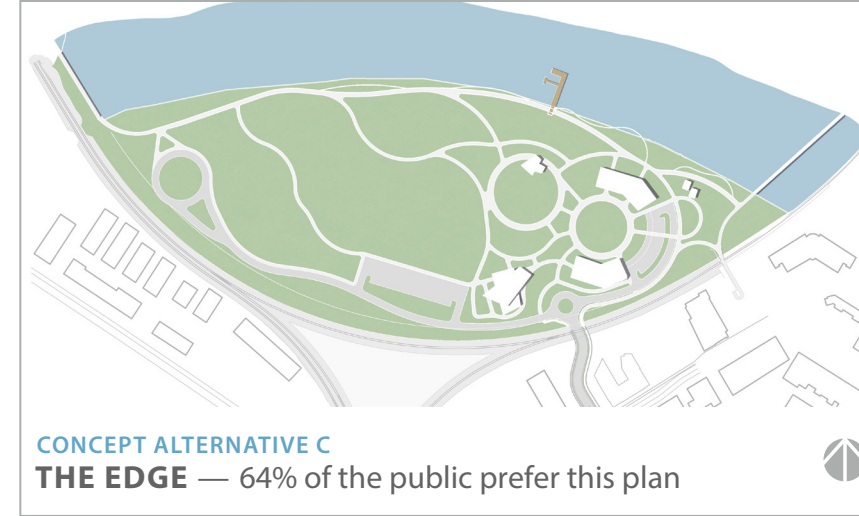
DESIGN PROCESS

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

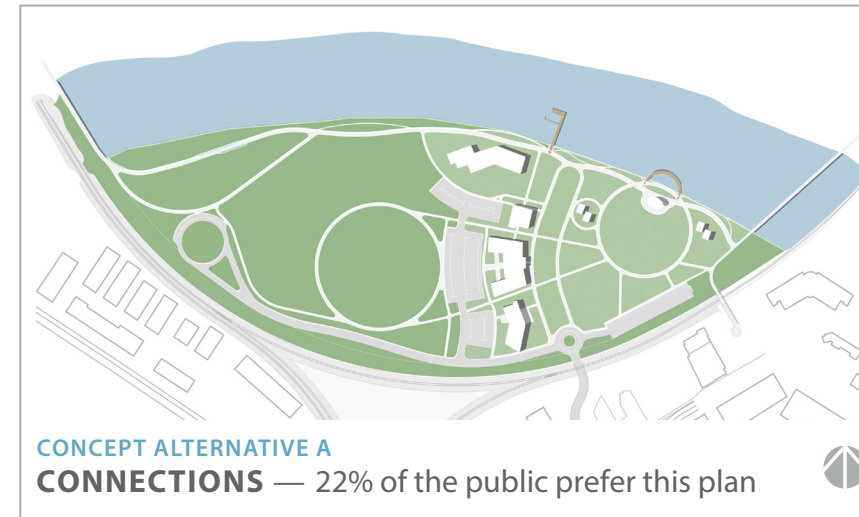
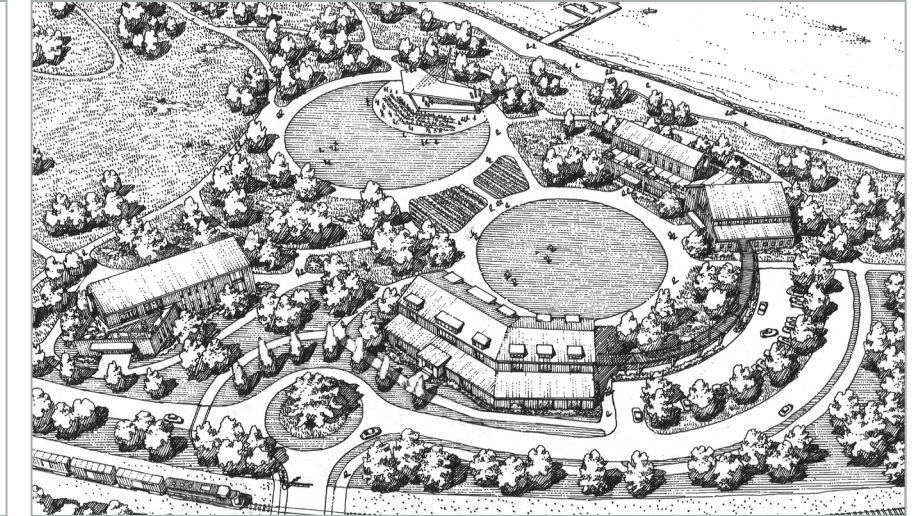
In 2023, an Advisory Committee was formed to guide the concept in this plan. Several concepts were considered and ultimately refined through input and feedback from surveys, interviews and open house events.

- **SEAMLESS CONNECTIONS.** Connections to water, nature, neighborhoods, downtown and each other should be prioritized in every aspect of the plan. It should be easy to navigate to and through spaces in an interesting way.
- **LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES.** Leverage and strengthen the opportunities found throughout the community to create a more vibrant waterfront experience. Do not needlessly duplicate facilities or services that can be found in the existing Neenah Park System or in Downtown Neenah.
- **DESTINATION NEENAH.** This design needs to “put Neenah on the map” and compel people to visit, stay longer, bring friends, come back, and move here.
- **WATERFRONT ACCESS FOR ALL.** Waterfront features should be a combination of active and passive options with consideration for all ages and abilities in a four-season environment.
- **UNIQUE PLACES AND SPACES.** Throughout the state and the region, there are plenty of things to do and places to visit. This master plan is meant to highlight and enhance what makes Neenah special. Events, activities and programming should attract both locals and tourists and provide memorable amenities.
- **DO NOT OVERDEVELOP (NEENAH NATURE).** Neenah is beautiful and this site has the opportunity to be something very special. The plan should enhance the natural beauty of the area and provide new opportunities for people to engage with Arrowhead Park and the Fox River in a way that makes them healthier and happier.

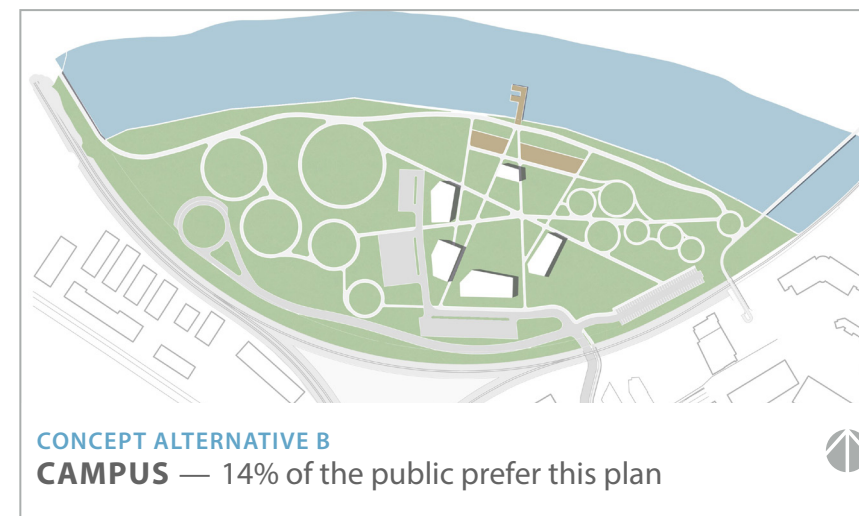
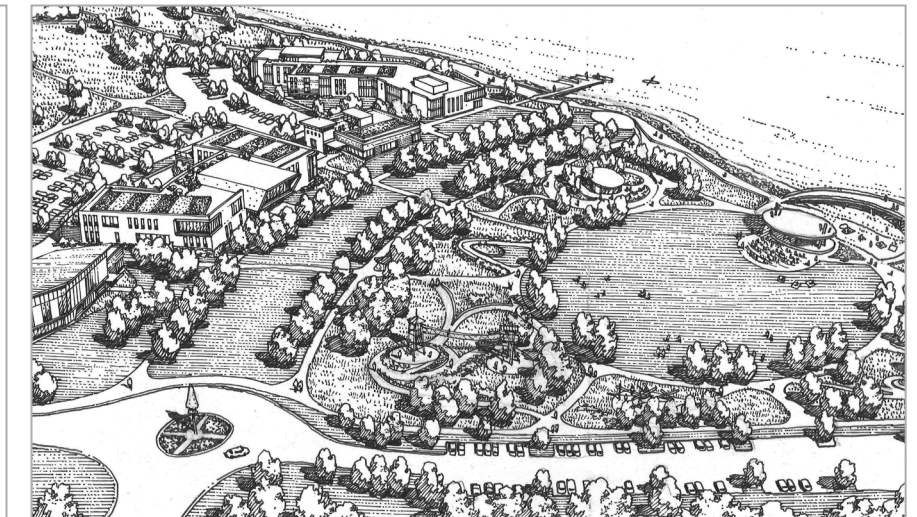
Themes of the engagement process that establish the Framework of the plan, include: Connection to Downtown, development to the east of the site, nature inspired to the west, value the waterfront.



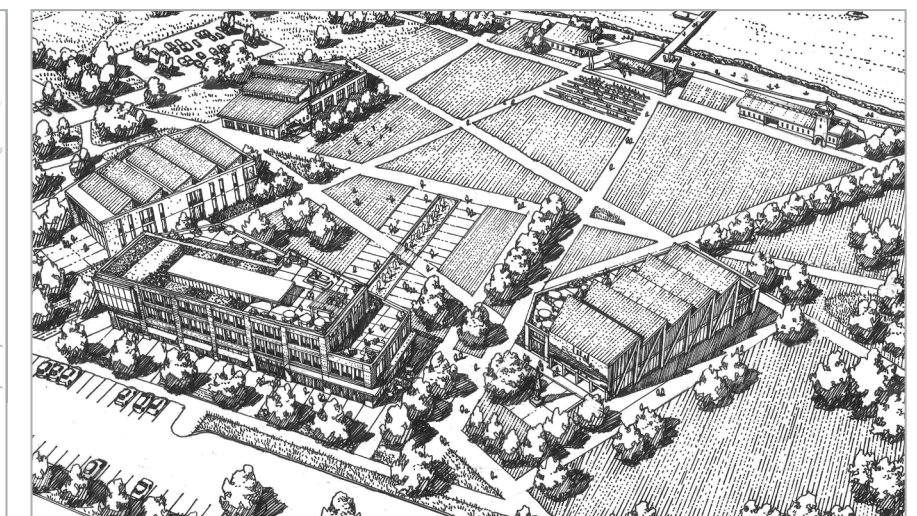
CONCEPT ALTERNATIVE C
THE EDGE — 64% of the public prefer this plan



CONCEPT ALTERNATIVE A
CONNECTIONS — 22% of the public prefer this plan



CONCEPT ALTERNATIVE B
CAMPUS — 14% of the public prefer this plan





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| ① NATURE-INSPIRED LANDSCAPE | ⑤ PARKING | ⑨ AMPHITHEATER (DUAL SIDED) | ⑬ BOARD WALK (BEACH) | ⑱ PRIMARY PLAYGROUND |
| ② NATURE-INSPIRED PLAYGROUND | ⑥ RAILROAD (1 LINE) | ⑩ RECREATIONAL LAWN | ⑭ OPEN AIR SHELTERS | ⑲ PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS |
| ③ NATURE-INSPIRED SHORELINE | ⑦ RAILROAD (2 LINES) | ⑪ CELEBRATION LAWN | ⑮ COMMUNITY BUILDING | ⑳ GATEWAY PARK |
| ④ PIER / WATER ACCESS | ⑧ TRAILS | ⑫ PRAIRIE WORKSHOP | ⑯ SCULPTURE GARDEN | ㉑ REALIGNED VEHICULAR ACCESS |
| | | | ⑰ WELCOME CENTER | |

ARROWHEAD MASTER PLAN

A FRAMEWORK

The initial framework of the Arrowhead Master Plan was a “big picture” study focusing on an inventory and connectivity assessment of Downtown Neenah’s public recreational, cultural and commercial amenities, places and events. The result of this effort gave planners a better understanding of the existing conditions: natural, river related, commercial, cultural and recreational infrastructure and resources.

THE NETWORK OF GREEN

Neenah is blessed with wonderful parks, trails and open spaces. The mission of Neenah’s Parks and Recreation Department is Creating Community through People, Parks & Programs by incorporating the following tenets:

- Strengthening community image and sense of place
- Increasing cultural unity
- Supporting economic development
- Protecting environmental resources
- Strengthening safety and security
- Facilitating community problem solving
- Promoting health and wellness
- Providing recreational experiences
- Fostering human development

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

The existing parks within the larger Waterfront and Downtown district include:

LOOP THE LAKE TRAIL. A 3.5-mile route that links three communities (the Village of Fox Crossing, Menasha and Neenah) around Little Lake Butte des Morts. This trail has been an overwhelming success and is frequently identified as one of the preferred amenities within the tri-city area.

THE PLAZA at GATEWAY PARK. A 0.7-acre amenity open to the public year-round featuring a winter skating rink, a summer terrace, a warming house with restrooms and a coffee shop, and an outdoor patio with gas fire pits.

SHATTUCK PARK. A 1.6-acre park directly adjacent to the shoreline of the Fox River. The amenities in the park include trails, boat stalls and fishing dock, restrooms and a performance plaza.

RIVERSIDE PARK. Nearly 20 acres of waterfront parkland, paved trails and playground.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE PARK DESIGN

- River access (physical and visual)
- Health & Fitness
- River/water-based experiences
- Variety
- Conservation
- Accessibility & Design
- Partnerships
- Quality of Life



ARROWHEAD MASTER PLAN

A NEIGHBORHOOD OF DESTINATIONS

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

During the public engagement phase of this master plan, the need for a seamless connection to both downtown Neenah and surrounding neighborhoods was a priority. This focus helped drive the design of this project, promoting most of the development to the east of the site.

GATEWAY PARK & PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS. Redevelopment of the existing Gateway Park and the development of a new pedestrian overpass connecting Downtown Neenah with Arrowhead and the Fox River. ⑰ ⑳

WELCOME CENTER. Develop welcoming space with public restrooms, scenic views and concessionaire. ⑰

COMMUNITY BUILDING. Promote a community building with potential local or regional partners. ⑮

CELEBRATION LAWN AND SCULPTURE GARDEN. Create a flexible open space for passive recreation surrounded by gardens, pathways, and sculpture. ⑪ ⑯

AMPHITHEATER AND GREAT LAWN. Develop a dual-sided amphitheater with great views of Little Lake Butte des Morts. The Great Lawn will provide a large flexible open space for a variety of passive and active uses. ⑨ ⑩

SHORELINE. Develop a unique and accessible shoreline landscape along Little Lake Butte des Morts that provides passive recreation opportunities. ③

RECREATIONAL TRAILS. Promote and implement a network of recreational trails, sidewalks and pathways. ⑧

PRIMARY PLAYGROUND. Develop an artful and nature-inspired playscape that focuses on youth social interaction and physical development. ⑱

PARKING. Incorporate sustainable parking infrastructure with the development of each facility. ⑤

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ARROWHEAD MASTER PLAN

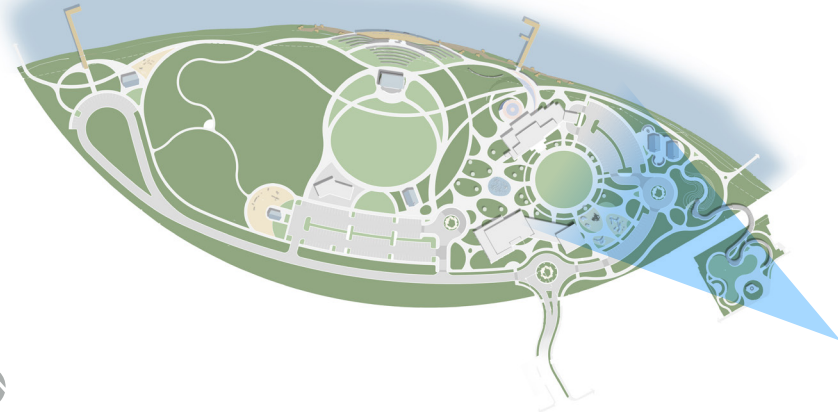
GATEWAY PARK & PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS

The redesign of Gateway Park and the addition of the pedestrian overpass is a critical component of the Arrowhead Master Plan. Connecting Downtown Neenah to Arrowhead and the Fox River in a seamless and accessible way will help enhance the visitors' ability to visualize and enjoy the Fox River and its connection to historic Downtown Neenah. The creation of the pedestrian overpass has the potential of becoming a "Must See" amenity in Neenah and the Greater Fox Cities Region, offering the public exceptional and unique views of the Fox River, Downtown Neenah, and Arrowhead.



"The pedestrian overpass will be a safe, quick and convenient way for residents and visitors to travel from downtown to Arrowhead and back. This pathway will completely eliminate the conflict between the Canadian National Railroad and the pedestrians, creating a seamless connection."

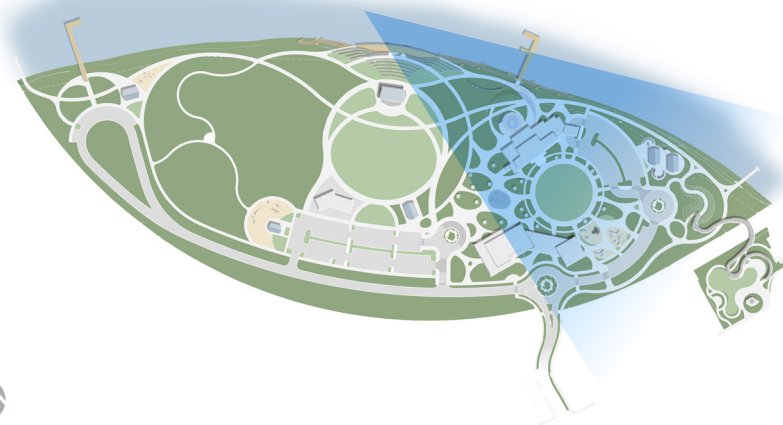
— Jane Lang, Mayor



The graphic above illustrates the important opportunity of visually and physically connecting Downtown Neenah, The Plaza at Gateway, and Gateway Park to Arrowhead and the Fox River. With the addition of the overpass, the Canadian National Railroad will no longer serve as a barrier, but as an amenity. The overpass has the potential to be an artful structure that is a destination itself.



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The Welcome Center, as illustrated above, will be an anchor development at Arrowhead. Located directly adjacent to Little Lake Butte Des Morts and within view from downtown Neenah, this structure will have a great view in 360 degrees.

“The waterways are essential elements of the destination experience and critical to development opportunities.”

— Pam Seidl, Executive Director,
Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau

ARROWHEAD MASTER PLAN

A PLACE FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS

WELCOME CENTER - EVENT INFRASTRUCTURE

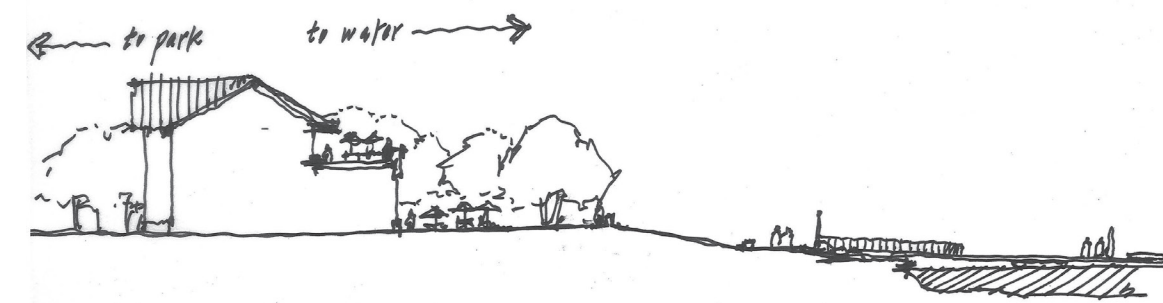
This Welcome Center will serve as a gathering space for visitors to Arrowhead Park by hosting special events, festivals and celebrations. This gathering space is the centerpiece of the park.

Also proposed is a concessionaire space with scenic views of the Fox River, as illustrated to the right. This building is meant to have full access to the water and surrounding sculpture garden and lower terraces.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CONNECTION

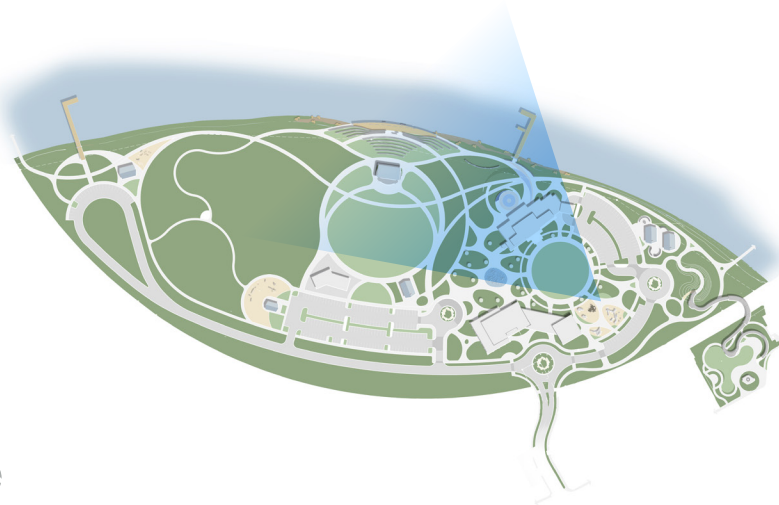
A network of recreational trails, sidewalks and pathways are proposed throughout the parks. The Waterfront promenade will accommodate highly active recreational trails and shoreline pathways, providing moments of quiet contemplation. Included in this shoreline network of trails will be the following design elements:

- 12’-14’ wide recreational trails
- 6’ to 8’ wide sidewalks and pathways
- Wooden decks
- Overlooks
- Places of quiet contemplation
- Unique Lighting
- Active and passive water access





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The illustration above depicts a variety of amenities, including beautiful gardens, scenic trails, a pavilion with concessionaire, and a dual-sided amphitheater.

“As the City of Neenah continues to offer a variety of festivals, events, and cultural opportunities to its residents, the proposed sculpture garden presented in the Arrowhead Master Plan will add to the quality of life and help make this community a regional attraction for the arts.”

— **Tammy Erickson**, Alderman and Chairman of the Neenah Arts Council

ARROWHEAD MASTER PLAN

CELEBRATION LAWN AND SCULPTURE GARDEN

WELCOME CENTER

The 1-acre Welcome Center provides opportunities for unique events directly adjacent to the Destination Building, the Arrowhead Sculpture Gardens and the Primary Playground. This lawn is surrounded by beautiful gardens unique architecture, lighting, art and places to gather and enjoy the splendor of the park.

SCULPTURE GARDEN

The sculpture garden is a public green space located adjacent to the Welcome Center, the Celebration Lawn and the Community Building. Sculptures may be private, owned by an individual or museum and accessible to all. In this sculpture garden, there is an interactive water feature for children and adults.

PRIMARY PLAYGROUND

This is a half-acre inclusive playground directly southeast of the Celebration Lawn. The nature-inspired play space is designed to provide inclusive and engaging experiences for all park visitors.



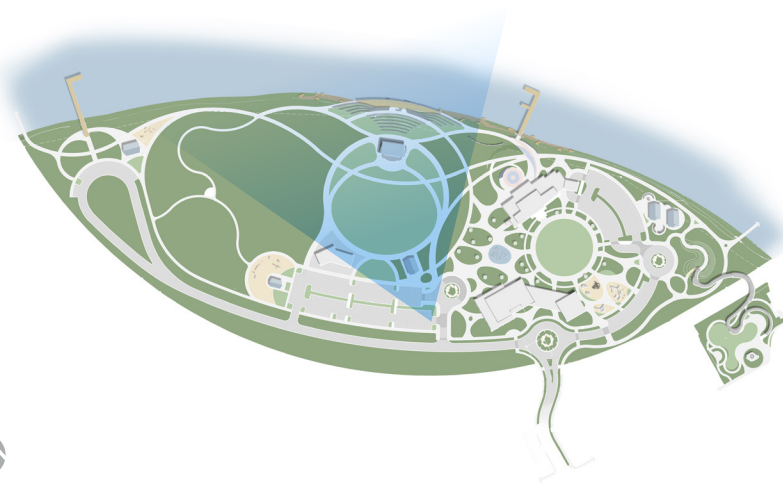


ARROWHEAD MASTER PLAN

A PLACE TO GATHER

GREAT LAWN

The 2-acre lawn area will host a great range of recreational activities and become a popular destination for picnicking, sunbathing, relaxing, playing, and enjoying the waterfront scenery.



The Great Lawn will also provide near-water seating opportunities for concerts and a wide range of festivals and other opportunities to celebrate. Adjacent to the Great Lawn will be important destinations including:

- Prairie Workshop
- Nature-Inspired Landscape to the West
- Open Area Shelter
- Waterfront Promenade
- Network of Trails





ARROWHEAD MASTER PLAN

SITE RENEWAL

Natural landscapes including lands that have been renewed are important to communities because they contribute significantly to the residents' well-being and quality of life. Visiting largely restored landscapes enables people to reconnect with nature, refresh their minds and bodies and gain a greater appreciation of their natural heritage. Arrowhead will provide Neenah residents with such a landscape. The western side of this site will be renewed, and all design features will benefit from a nature-inspired theme, including landscape, accessibility to the Fox River, playgrounds, structures, and other site amenities. This renewal will play an important role in increasing the quality of life for residents and visitors alike by creating an enjoyable natural waterfront and near-shore environment for all to enjoy.





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| ① NATURE-INSPIRED LANDSCAPE | ④ PIER / WATER ACCESS | ⑧ TRAILS | ⑫ PRAIRIE WORKSHOP |
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| ③ NATURE-INSPIRED SHORELINE | ⑦ RAILROAD (2 LINES) | ⑩ RECREATIONAL LAWN | ⑭ OPEN AIR SHELTERS |

ARROWHEAD MASTER PLAN

NATURE-INSPIRED

TRAILS

Each trail needs to be designed for specific users. Considerations that influence the trail design include topography, tree cover, water patterns and other factors. However, there are best practices to use for the development of all trails that navigate through parks and greenways.

PRIMARY TRAILS

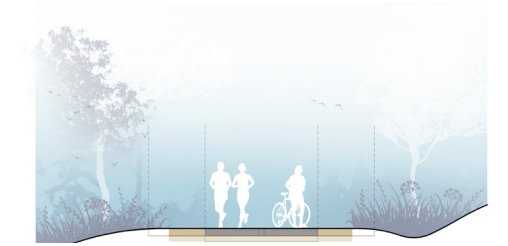
Primary trails accommodate walkers, runners, cyclists, rollerbladers and more. The overall width of the section supports safe interactions between diverse groups of users. The trail will meander through the park, providing a variety of experiences both near and far from the edges of waterways or other natural features. Also, it offers horizontal and vertical clearances to give a safe views for users. The primary trail must be technically sound and a beautiful and scenic route.

SECONDARY TRAILS

The secondary trails are designed to connect to the primary trails, leading to community spaces and park destinations. They stitch the primary trail into the park and facilitate connectivity to the natural park spaces. Like the primary trail, this secondary trail system will be ADA-compliant and have designated clear zones to maintain strong visual corridors for trail users.

TERTIARY TRAIL ZONES

The tertiary trails occur in key areas that can provide a more “off the beaten path” experience. These trails will feel much more natural and be either a mown path or crushed limestone. The tertiary system is designed for areas that support a more passive audience: people who desire exploration in a quieter setting.



PRIMARY



SECONDARY



TERTIARY



ARROWHEAD MASTER PLAN

NATURE-INSPIRED

This site was created for the paper companies in the 1950s to deposit paper-making by-products. Since the late 1970s, the site has been capped with clay and topsoil creating what is now known as Arrowhead Park.

This master plan recommends the area be converted to a prairie landscape with small patches of prairie / Oak Savanna. To incorporate this landscape, the City will be required to work closely with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

NATURE-INSPIRED PLAYGROUND

Natural play is based on the idea that children should be able to play in an environment that is as close to nature as possible. This means using natural materials and avoiding or limiting anything that is man-made or synthetic. It also means creating spaces that encourage physical activity and imaginative play. The goal of this master plan is to place nature-inspired playgrounds in areas that directly connect to a larger natural landscape. As the child matures, the natural landscape beyond provide and expanded play experience.

OPEN AIR SHELTER

Attractive park open-air structures with restrooms and or gas fireplace, enhancing the park experience for both the boating and non-boating public.

NATURE-INSPIRED SHORELINE

Ease the severity of slope along the shoreline, improving access to the water, and provide a more natural planting with areas for shoreline fishing and places of quiet, serene, contemplation. Improve near-shore wildlife habitat, augmenting the public's opportunity to view the natural scenic beauty of the Fox River.





ARROWHEAD MASTER PLAN

TOURISM AS A DESTINATION

PEDAL/ PADDLE TOURISM

Whether you come to Arrowhead to start your Sunday morning run or are with your family and friends beginning a Saturday kayaking adventure on the Fox River, Arrowhead will be a major trailhead for active living. Biking and kayaking are just two examples of the future opportunities that Arrowhead has to offer. As Arrowhead develops with the proposed facilities and amenities, it will become nationally recognized by both pedalers and paddlers as a destination.

CONCERTS

The river-side amphitheater is a dual-sided facility that can accommodate up to 600 people on the north seating area, 4,000 on the Great Lawn to the south, and countless others on the river itself. The Amphitheater has exciting potential to be a local and regional icon that attracts visitors up to several hours' drive time to Neenah's riverfront.

FESTIVALS

The economic boom triggered by festivals stimulates various sectors, from retail and hospitality to tourism and new infrastructure. Arrowhead and more specifically the Great Lawn associated with the surrounding facilities proposed in this plan has great potential to make Neenah a preferred festival destination. By harnessing the potential of Arrowhead, festivals could leverage cultural celebrations to foster economic growth, support local businesses, preserve cultural heritage, and heighten the public's awareness, and appreciation of the natural beauty and recreational value of the Fox River.

WELCOME CENTER

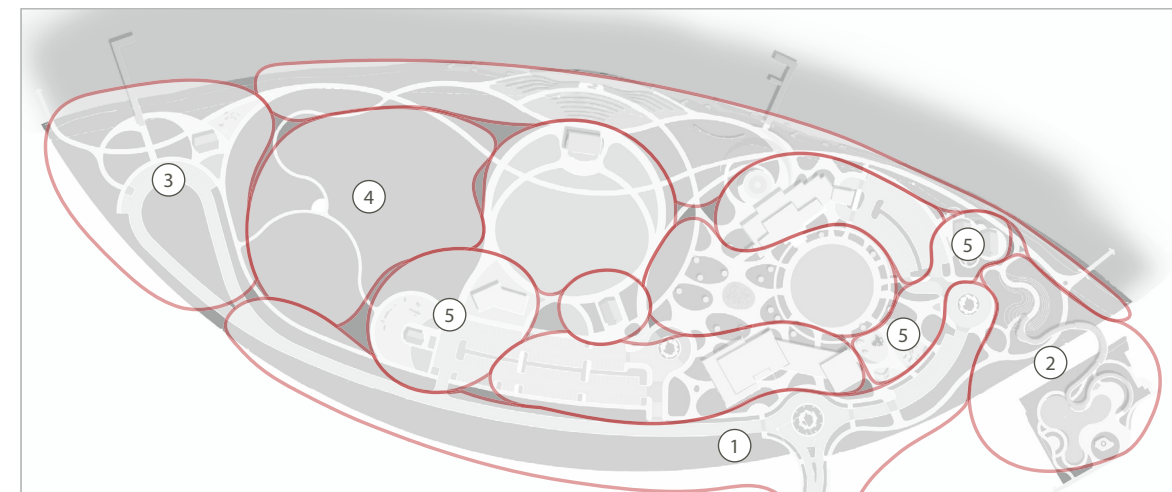
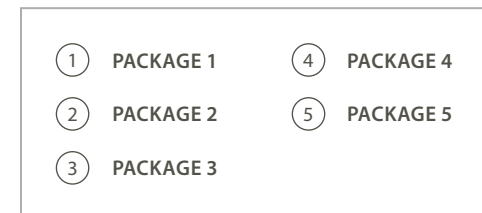
Location, location, location! The Welcome Center at Arrowhead will be a regional attraction set in a beautiful park with amazing views of the lake and surrounding park. Floor-to-ceiling windows and a rooftop observation area will give the feeling of being outdoors. As an indoor facility and year-round venue, users will be sheltered from inclement weather while experiencing the seasonal variation of the Fox River.



PLAN PHASING

PHASE IMPLEMENTATION

A phased implementation approach for the Arrowhead Master Plan is required based on the magnitude of the development necessary. Being flexible is critical within the implementation strategy. While this plan does recommend initial development packages, projects are often developed based on funding availability and community interest. The following packages are recommended for consideration:



PACKAGE 1: VEHICULAR ACCESS & PARKING

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Realign the current access drive from Main Street to the southern boundary of Arrowhead Park.
- Develop an alignment for the primary park drive along the southern boundary of the park.

PROJECT ACTION PLAN

- Coordinate access point with Canadian National Railroad. Request reconfiguration of the property boundary where the proposed access drive crosses the rail line.
- Coordinate the proposed realignment of the access drive with the City of Neenah Engineering Department, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources staff and representatives from the Canadian National Railroad.
- Develop preliminary design drawings for package number one.

PACKAGE 2: GATEWAY PARK & PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Develop a pedestrian overpass that provides an accessible pathway for pedestrians and bicyclist connecting downtown Neenah from Gateway Park to Arrowhead and the Fox River. This concept plan as illustrated on pages 16 and 17 has been referred to as the Ribbon with three overlooks along the pathway.

- Redevelop Gateway Park to accommodate the overpass and provide recreational benefit within the reconfigured park. This revised park plan should prioritize the view from Wisconsin Avenue to the Welcome Center, and the Fox River. This plan should also take under consideration of any past action to mitigate any unsuitable soils east of the rail line.

PROJECT ACTION PLAN

- Develop a feasibility study to further investigate engineering requirements and associated construction cost to design and construct the pedestrian overpass.
- Coordinate code requirements, alignment and access points with City of Neenah Engineering Department staff, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources staff and representatives from the Canadian National Railroad.
- Develop preliminary design drawings for package number two.

PACKAGE 3: NATURE-INSPIRED RECREATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Develop a hub for nature-inspired recreation that would include the following facilities:
 - A pier extending into Little Lake for fishing, water access and environmental education.
 - A shade structure for 20 to 40 people with restroom
 - A nature-inspired playscape.
 - Improved access to the adjacent pedestrian bridge
 - Enhanced parking
 - Primary and Secondary trails
 - Native Landscape
 - Access to the Fox River

PROJECT ACTION PLAN

- Coordinate code requirements, pier placement and alignment layout plan with City of Neenah Parks Engineering Departments staff and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources staff. Stormwater management and previous mitigation for undesired soils will be critical factors in the layout of this package.
- Develop full design and engineering drawings for package number three.

PACKAGE 4: NATURE-INSPIRED LANDSCAPE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Rehabilitate the area for native landscapes that will be prairie and Oak Savanna with primary, secondary, and tertiary trails connecting adjacent facilities, wildlife habitat, and the Fox River. This area should not be over-developed and is an excellent location for the following elements:
 - Pollinator plantings
 - Habitat zones
 - Interpretive signage
 - Places for restful quiet contemplation
 - STEAM education sites
 - Best practices for stormwater management
 - Bird blinds
 - Native landscape

PROJECT ACTION PLAN

- Coordinate DNR mitigation requirements, trail alignment and layout plan with City of Neenah Parks and Engineering Departments staff and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources staff. Stormwater management and previous mitigation for undesired soils will be critical factors in the layout of this package.
- Develop full design and engineering drawings for package number four.

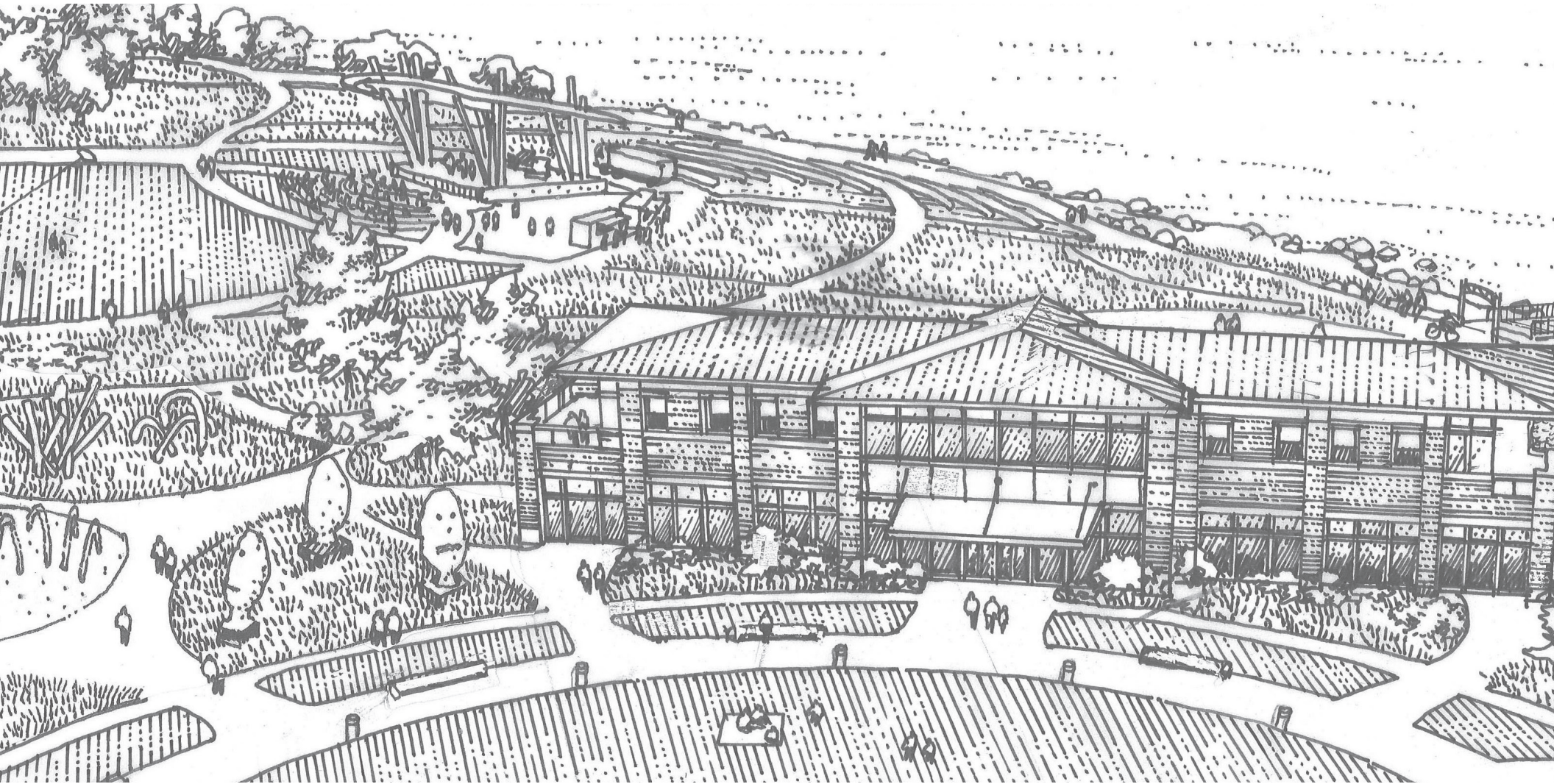
PACKAGE 5: NATURE-INSPIRED PLAY AND TRAILHEAD

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- This destination playground will feature unique and accessible play structures designed for all ages and all abilities. Art and nature will be driving design factors for this play experience. This playground is proposed directly east of the Community Building a southeast of the Celebration Lawn.
- A secondary nature-inspired playground will utilize climbing on logs, playing in water, and navigating through topography.
- Regional Trailhead is a unique area for pedal and paddle enthusiast to gather and enjoy. This site will have shelters accommodating up to 100 people, grills, gas fire pits, and other site amenities for boating and non-boating users alike.

PROJECT ACTION PLAN

- Coordinate layout plans with City of Neenah Parks and Engineering Department staff and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources staff. Stormwater management and previous mitigation for undesired soils will be critical factors in the layout of this package.
- Develop full design and engineering drawings for package number five.



RDg...
PLANNING • DESIGN

ADDENDUM

ARROWHEAD MASTER PLAN

February 5, 2025

The following drawing replaces the Master Plan depicted on Page 12 of the Arrowhead Master Plan as well as other affected portions of the associated plan:

