

# MISSISSIPPI RIVERFRONT TRAIL PHASE I



## Opportunity Winona: Why the Mississippi Riverfront Trail

The history of Winona is tied to the river as major industry operates on the riverfront and the dike was built to protect these businesses, but the dike has also kept people from accessing a valuable and beautiful resource in our backyard: the mighty Mississippi River.

Opportunity Winona is a coordinated partnership to energize downtown by capitalizing on recent investments. The partnership of the Port Authority, City of Winona, Downtown Main Street and the Winona Area Chamber of Commerce kicked off “Opportunity Winona” as an effort to concentrate development efforts in our downtown. As a result of those efforts, between the years of 2015 and 2020, a modest City investment of perhaps \$5 million leveraged roughly an \$80-million-dollar private investment in Winona’s downtown.

The City wants to ensure the recent and future investments support new and existing jobs, all businesses, and residential activity. The Mississippi Riverfront Trail is our chance to once again make downtown Winona the jewel of Southeast Minnesota. The Winona Port Authority is managing the Mississippi Riverfront Trail project, and the leadership team consists of the City of Winona, Winona Area Chamber of Commerce, and others from the business, education, and healthcare communities. The Mississippi Riverfront Trail is a project that reimagines how the river is used by blending recreation and industry to create a mixed-use riverfront.

- Over 45% of sales in Winona are from non-residents
- Over 80% of the employment base in Winona County is in the City of Winona
- Over 85% of retail sales in Winona County occur in the City of Winona
- Winona is a regional employer: over 20,000 with major employers including Fastenal, Winona Health, Gundersen Health Care, WinCraft, RTP Company, & Bay State Milling

Many young families moving to a community consider recreational opportunities available to them. While Winona has begun to make investments such as the Gateway to Levee Park, Ice Climbing Facility, Bluffs Traverse Trail, work remains to improve our regional center by creating more recreational amenities. Recreational amenities are a driver of economic development and diverse recreational amenities are important while recruiting a workforce for the future. The Mississippi Riverfront Trail, will make Winona an even more attractive place to call home for those graduating, people who grew up in Winona and are considering moving back “home”, and those that work and live in neighboring communities.

## Intentional Investments

The Port Authority and the City of Winona has made intentional investments in Arts and Culture, Outdoor Recreation, Entrepreneurship, and Opportunity Winona. These investments have improved our City and have created a city ripe for recreational development and investment. Winona competes with neighboring Wisconsin communities to find and keep workers which is very competitive as the economy continues to improve.

While we've made progress, significant work still remains including path connections for residents, tourists and our workforce. The Mississippi Riverfront Trail – Phase I lies along the Riverfront and begins under the bridge on Riverview Drive and ends at Lions Park. The Mississippi Riverfront Trail will be a connection point from the Mississippi Bluff travel to the Flyway Trail and the Mississippi River Trail in Wisconsin.

An over-looked aspect of this project is highlighting the businesses that line the riverfront of the Mississippi River. The Mississippi Riverfront Trail will provide the opportunity for residents and visitors to enjoy the vibrant beauty the river and bluffs provide and take in the rich heritage our riverfront businesses have on Winona. This project will show case the natural beauty of our community and will be a catalyst to future development to provide more options for people to live, work, and play in Winona.



## Summary Points of the Mississippi Riverfront Trail

- Winona is featured as one of the top 100 climbs by US Bicycling Magazine

State funds are requested for engineering design and construction of a riverfront path connecting Levee Park to Lions Park in Winona, Minnesota and safety/lighting improvements at the path starting point.



Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail going around industry, under a conveyer, and around silos.

Winona will not be the first to invest in the revitalization of the riverfront. Many other communities, such as Red Wing and Dubuque have made the commitment and are having great success in attracting new and existing residents, along with visitors to their communities because of the riverfront.

