

As a major component of this Plan, the recommendations (or management options) reflect public opinion regarding how the riverfronts and the river corridor should be used, conserved, and enhanced. The recommendations have been assigned to categories along with lists of potential responsible partners, potential funders, and priorities for implementation. The goal of this Conservation Plan is for these recommendations to be implemented. Those entities listed as potential partners (those who may implement the recommendations) are able to apply to DCNR for funding (see the list of grants available on page vii and viii of the Executive Summary).

Over 50 recommendations were developed during the public process. For organizational purposes, they were sorted into 11 categories: river access, amenities, biology, culture, education, land use, litter, planning, recreation, transportation, and water. The potential recommendations were circulated among several key individuals - including municipal managers, representatives from non-profit organizations, academia, business, developers, and government - to refine them and eliminate those that were impossible or beyond the scope of the study. These individuals then were asked to rank the recommendations according to when each item should be initiated: 1) first year after completion of document, 2) two to four years after the completion of the document, or 3) five years and beyond the completion of the document. Where appropriate, they also offered a project cost estimate of low, medium, or high.

During the spring of 2003, five public meetings were held to prioritize and refine the recommendations. Participants were asked to rank their most important recommendation in each category and their overall five most important recommendations, with the option of distributing those five votes however they wanted (e.g., the same or different from the original picks, as well as multiple votes for a particular recommendation.). The five overall votes were weighted in the final calculation of votes for each recommendation.

The following table lists each recommendation by category; they are then listed in order of popularity according to public votes (last column). The priority column is the timeframe that the action should be implemented (see description in the second paragraph above). The cost estimates range from low to medium to high. These have been assigned arbitrary dollar amounts: low = less than \$100,000; medium = \$100,000 to \$500,000; high = greater than \$500,000. (Recommendations without public votes (e.g. a blank box) were added to the Plan after the public meetings.) The lists of potential partners and funding sources are based on past involvement of these organizations and agencies and should not be considered an exhaustive list.

Following many of the action items is a reference to a chapter where that particular topic is discussed, and helps to clarify how the recommendation was derived. For example, 1-D-3 refers to Chapter 1, Section D, number 3.

Based on the rankings, the top recommendations illustrate the public's desire to have access to the amenities that the region has to offer (e.g., the rivers, the trails). Although the City of Pittsburgh and surrounding communities are developing an extensive trail network, there is a desire to see an expansion of those trails to the neighborhoods, thus eliminating the need to drive to the trails for recreation and possibly using the trails as a means for commuting into the City. However, making the City of Pittsburgh bike-friendly does have many obstacles including topography and climate. For recreational purposes though, the region may be able to connect land-based trails, and along with water trails, develop a major attraction for the region. The top recommendation overall focused on establishing tourism-based businesses along these trails:

bike rentals, boat rentals, restaurants, etc., thus combining environmental enhancement with economic development.

Another strong public opinion focused on the litter problem that affects the region. While organizations and government agencies are working in the region to promote litter awareness and river clean up days, the problem of littering – and in some cases dumping large quantities of refuse – along our waterways, trails, highways, and ravines, negatively affects the public’s enjoyment of the amenities and natural resources of the region. The public expressed a desire for more frequent clean ups and a more aggressive campaign against littering.

In addition to public comment, many of the major riverfront landowners and developers commented on what their visions were for the corridor. Their major recommendation focused on the possibilities of expanding the borders of the Riverlife Task Force.

The Riverlife Task Force has been working for several years to develop guidelines for Pittsburgh’s Three Rivers Park. These guidelines appear in the Three Rivers Design Handbook, published in October 2002, and found in Appendix B. The Handbook “does not replace existing zoning, district plans, or ordinances, but is intended to establish optimal planning goals and to enhance and coordinate the requirements set forth in the land use tools already in place ...”. Many of these guidelines are applicable for the entire river corridor and should be considered by municipalities to enhance their riverfronts.

How to get Started on Implementing Projects

If, after reading through the recommendations, you are interested in implementing a project, there are several things you can do (note: you need not be listed as a potential partner to implement a project):

1. Gather thorough ideas of how you might implement the project, what the need is for the project, and how it will benefit the river/riverfront and the communities affected.
2. Contact the other potential partners, including local municipal officials, to find out if there is a way to collaborate on the project. Also, make sure that no one else is working on the same, or a similar project.
3. Seek potential funding sources, some of which are listed in the recommendations matrix. If you choose to apply to DCNR or DEP, follow these guidelines:
4. DCNR provides grants for *technical assistance, implementation, development, and acquisition* (see pg. x). DEP, through its Growing Greener program, offers grants that address non-point source pollution. Visit these websites to familiarize yourself with the grant programs: www.dcnr.state.pa.us, www.dep.state.pa.us. (Take note of grant application timelines.)
5. Contact the local agency representatives for DCNR and DEP to discuss the potential for your project. DCNR: 412-880-0486 DEP: 412-442-4184.
6. Secure grant applications online or from the local contacts (see #4, #5).
7. Call the Pennsylvania Environmental Council for assistance in putting together your ideas and contacting potential partners.