



*Office of Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey
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PRESS RELEASE

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Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Celebrates Opening of the Riverwalk-Museum Campus

ROCKFORD – July 20, 2012–The City of Rockford will conduct a ribbon cutting ceremony Friday to officially open the Riverwalk – Museum Campus (RMP) to the community. The completion of this first significant section of the Riverwalk brings the City one step closer to constructing a multi-use path system that will make it easier for citizens to take advantage of one of the Rockford community’s most under-utilized assets – the Rock River.

A Riverwalk Vision Plan was completed in early 2006 and subsequently the City received a \$1.75 million grant from the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) grant program managed through the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). The funding allowed for the design development of the first section of the Riverwalk located at the Riverfront Museum Park (RMP). The City subsequently received additional ITEP grants totaling \$1.65 million for the project.

The City retained the services of Hitchcock Design Group (Naperville, IL) and McClure Engineering to serve as the design team. The design process has included an extensive community involvement process that eventually led to a design concept focusing on several objectives, including:

- Improving connectivity between the RMP/Burpee and the downtown core
- Creating an improvement with a “wow” factor that would build on the momentum of the RMP/Burpee campus
- Building a recreational improvement to enhance future economic development opportunities
- Increasing the community’s ability to interact with the Rock River

“The community’s vision to create improvements of quality that allow us to take advantage of the Rock River have taken a big step forward by the completion of this first section of Riverwalk,” stated Mayor Morrissey. “A lot of the credit has to go to the community, our City Council, and our partners – the Rockford Park District, Burpee Museum, IDOT, and the RMP. This project symbolizes that when we work together to create something of value, something that enhances our community in so many ways, we can get it done.”

“From the beginning, this project has been about collaboration and creating a community driven improvement,” said City Administrator Jim Ryan. “We are excited to finally get it open so our citizens can begin to enjoy the River in way they haven’t been able to in the past.”

“The City has done a wonderful job of bringing all parties to the table to create a wonderful amenity for the community,” said Tim Dimke, Executive Director of the Rockford Park District. “The Rockford Park District is proud to be a partner in the development and we look forward to creating future opportunities to make interaction with the River available to everyone in the region.”

The final design includes a 2,200 linear foot multi-use path that is supported by two independent bridges. One of the bridges is an 80-foot high, 235-foot long cable-stayed structure that serves as a place where citizens can interact with the river, enjoy the RMP / Burpee campus, and overlook an expansive view of the Rock River Valley. “The use of bridges in the project is actually a constructability issue,” stated Patrick Zuroske, Capital Program Manager. “The bridges actually saved considerable cost, as we did not have to incur extensive site work immediately adjacent to the river. Plus, the use of a vertical element allowed us to achieve the ‘wow’ factor the community desired.”

“The impact to our campus footprint has been dramatic,” said RMP executive Director Holli Connell. “The completion of our expansion in 2010 and the Riverwalk development will solidify our campus as not only a local destination site, but will also give us regional, statewide, and even national recognition as complex where as citizens and families can go to experience the best of Rockford.”

The City is currently in conceptual design development on the section between Beattie Park and the State Street Bridge and has also evaluated the feasibility of additional Riverwalk on the east side of the river along Madison Street. “We have a Riverwalk system that loops the inner circle of the downtown core,” stated Mayor Morrissey. “It is our objective to continue development of future sections, whether they are done by the development community, through public-private partnerships, or by the City and our agency partners.”

The Riverwalk – Museum Campus project construction contract totaled approximately \$5.5 million, \$3.4 million of which was funded through ITEP grants. The City also funded an additional \$2 million that was required for design and construction management. The improvement also includes an amphitheater that is connected to Burpee Terrace system that affords panoramic views of the Rock River corridor.

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