

Onalaska Waterfront Master Plan

Public Vision Forum No. 1

Exercise 1: Individuals write on a notecard:

...Three things that they like about Onalaska's Waterfront—things they feel make downtown Onalaska a special place that should be preserved and enhanced.

...Three things they dislike about Onalaska's Waterfront—three concerns or issues they have about the downtown (physical concerns, social issues, etc.)

Table 1	
Likes	Dislikes
Love looking at river	Traffic
Natural beauty of waterfront in area below the RR Tracks	RR Tracks
Access to the area by boat. The boat ride up the Black River from LAX is one of the nicest in the area	Cost of the project
Very nice central location and proximity to North LAX, Onalaska, Holmen	Close proximity of heavily used railroad tracks
Should attract tourists	Old concrete block on stucco buildings present an eyesore
Will enhance downtown Onalaska	lack of variety of businesses
I haven't been there so I don't know what is there to preserve	Lack of "destinations" in current downtown (i.e. business, restaurant)
New development in recent years along Main St (i.e. City Hall, Pertszeh, flowers, sidewalks, landscaping, etc.	Money?
Bike trail access	RR Tracks?
Natural, unspoiled green area along water	Mosquitos?
Historical significance of area (i.e. Native American, French Traders)	Ugly buildings block current view of Lake Onalaska and green areas
Lots of space	Train traffic poses hazard to vistors
Keep plenty of (public) open access to water	Flooding (seasonal)
View	Access - railroad
Public use	Flooding
Planning for future	Highway pedestrian crossing
Developing trail systems	Restrictions (not allowing snowmobiling)
Water access for boats	RR Crossings
Park area within City	Connecting the various trail systems
Parking area for picnicing, boating, fishing, walking trails	Can't use it at all now
	RR Tracks
	Place is small - can it be made larger for fishing, boats, picnics

Table 2	
Likes	Dislikes
Progressive Community, acceptance of change	Apathy
Natural setting - beauty of area	Will area be good enough for everyone
Pride in area - friendliness	What if Downtown people confuse it with Center 90
It's improving (Downtown)	Parking
It's in a natural state	The buildings on the first block of Main should be improved
I like what has been done on and near the City Hall - especially how the Pertzech School facade has been improved	The current disorder and need for improvement that is under discussion - i.e. the area beyond 2nd (the part by the river
I like the fact tht the City borders on the Black River which actually is a huge lake	No Centralized Main Street
Some new buildings on 2nd have improved the looks of the area	RR Tracks
Convenience	Access to river
Managable size	The ugly buildings need to be gone and the power lines
Compactness	We don't have a real Downtown to show people
That we have started with a great Main Street	We don't have something "neat" to show off
We are starting to put some beauty in Main Street - flowers, lights	Waterfront access (not there)
The fact that we could have a great water draw to the area for tourism	Community pride lacking
Onalaska Bike Trail	Waterfront access
Lake Onalaska - fishing	RR Crossing (opportunity ont detriment)
Easy Access	
Waterfront - pristine beauty, natural setting, sunsets	

Table 3	
Likes	Dislikes
Waterfront - protection of some of the habitat for birds and wildlife - minimize homes impact in designated portions	Overall neighborhood mix of area. Each segment should complement and flow to the next rather than conflict.
Hwy 35 as a main artery, this brings more people through the center of this area	Fast traffic from Downtown to waterfront and car traffic in waterfront area
Natural beauty and central location	Complementary specialty retail
Save waterfront for fishing, and boating	Safe crosswalk of Hwy 35
Make Hwy 35 appealing for tourist and business	Crossing railroad tracks
Make Downtown a place you can walk around	Cost of up-keep
Wildlife in waterfront	Parking
Small business	Safety in access
View	Flooding
The clean appearance of streets and properties adjacent to them	We need to open up the lake viewing from Hwy 35
The overhead planted baskets	We will need to address the access problem to lakeside because of the tracks
Traffic flow helps bring people to this area	More environment control for wildlife
Wildlife	Traffic safety
Trees to be saved as much as possible	Safety of children
Keep fishing available	Where fees will be involved, make them feasible for families
Preserve or enhance natural quiet scenery	Access by water to Lake Onalaska from Downtown
Art shops, restuarants, bars, thriving economy, create busy atmosphere	Traffic - Parking
Eagle nests and beauty	Keeping it classy - not the dells
Tritions	Traffic on Hwy 35
Wildlife	Pedestrian Traffic
Water fowl portion of marsh	Access to waterfront
Edward property - bike trial	Parking
Shops (specialty)	

Table 4	
Likes	Dislikes
Vistas	Getting down to waterfront
Aesthetics - flowers in hanging baskets, lights, coordination of area, wildlife viewing	Opening views
Local feel - small shops, friendly owners, trail, etc.	Getting access Hwy 35 maybe we should repeat the "Big Dig" and put Hwy 35 underground.
Close proximity to river is big	Heavy highway traffic and railroad make safety a priority
Beautiful scenery that we take for granted	What kind of businesses/activities can survive and prosper?
Core/beginning of old buildings	What impact will seasonal high water have?
Enhanced waterfront	RR Crossings
View	View
Bike trails	Access - to development
Walking trails	Access to waterfront (RR)
Cross country skiing	Flooding problems
Easy to get to Downtown	Traffic

Table 5	
Likes	Dislikes
View	Trains
Tourism - trail system	Commercial domination
Water Access	Water depths for boating
Center for Downtown (logical)	Safety for foot and auto traffic because of roads and railroad - how will access to park work?
Highway connections	Is highway wide enough to handle expected (hope for) traffic
City buildings	At present, lack of eating places, stores, etc in area
Natural ambience of waterfront area	Current traffic patterns make Downtown area a speedbump - need people to slow down and appreciate area on foot/bike/chair, etc
Accessibility of waterfront eventually (central location, good road, etc)	Safe access across Hwy 35 and RR Tracks
Historical impacts - logging, native people, exploration, Hamlin Garland, etc	Don't degrade naturalness of waterfront by removing trees to create view, etc.
Natural habitat to be preserved	Access over RR
Nice streetscape downtown if extended to areas to be developed	Aesthetics of RR (noise, view)
Proximity to waterfront	River access - too shallow at this time for anything larger than fishing boat
Walkable - albeit with care	Safe pedestrian/bike passage throughout area
Educational opportunity	Maintenance of natural areas
Access to water (safety)	Safety, safety, safety
Economic potential	Current visual blight
That Onalaska appears to be concerned about maintaining it natural areas and preserving its habitat	Access across railroad
That the City is willing to listen to its citizens	Floods/freezing
That Onalaska is growing the idea of being a tourist attraction (natural tourism)	That the waterfront and downtown area will be a hodge podge of building designs
Waterfront beautification - possible marina - Yes	That overly tall buildings will be constructed that detract from its natural setting
Hwy to Fr. Island - interesting (?)	That large business will get to weigh in on the land use and determine its use. Selling off the waterfront as LAX did
	Would hwy to Fr. Island be cost prohibitive?

Table 6	
Likes	Dislikes
Easy access to LAX - Holmen and mall area	Increase in traffic
Neighborhood feeling, business, school, homes, government together	Parking for all involved
Safe - mostly - easy access	Safety - highway traffic, railroad, spillway area,
Historic feel/quaint	Pedestrian access to downtown
Wildlife viewing capability	RR
Access to water - not wall off	Trailhead connection (make more visible/accessible parking)
I like the waterfront and refuge areas. The river and marsh are very beautiful, they change all year, and they give a unique feel to our city	Concerned about access to the entire area, both economic and transport-wise. If it's too expensive to do anything there, fewer people will go there
I like the mixture of uses/buildings in the downtown area: homes, bed and breakfasts, City Hall, school, stores, restaurants.	Concerned about going to "commercial". Don't want another Wisconsin Dells
I like the history associated with the downtown and waterfront areas - the building "Traditions" is in for example	Safety
Outdoor/wilderness	Over building/commercialization
River	Too much for the area
Wildlife	Lack of environmental concerns
Large natural area	Making it a "Concrete" area/taking away nature
Close proximity to "Downtown", my house, and work. "Easy Access" from bike trail	Too close to RR Tracks
Owned by the City, on a "Main Drag" - Hwy 35	Under used resources
The bike trail is great but it can be improved	How much of Lois Rinikers's front lawn will be lost if the Hwy is widened? (Hwy 35 & Locust St)
We have a waterfront, but it isn't see by many people	How will people using the new area safely get across the railroad tracks?
People seem to enjoy fishing near the spillway	Potential that area will not draw desired population number
Access to large population - clientel	Possibility that it will not draw enough appropriate business
Potential for an ecological "show case"	Where is the funnel to get people to the area - the natural draw as a destination?