THE VISION

The Flint River is a vital resource that is accessible to all and the heart of a growing, connected community.

REIMAGINING THE FLINT RIVER ...
The Flint River has been the lifeblood of the city for two centuries, supporting Native American villages, fur traders, logging, wagon wheel production and automotive manufacturing. A three-phase effort to reimagine the river will make the historic waterway a focal point that reconnects the community, instills pride and transforms Flint.
**BENEFITS**

**Improved Safety**
Removing the Hamilton and Fabri dams eliminated safety hazards and reduced flooding risks. Future upgrades will improve access to the river and make it safer to use, and the waterfront will be revamped using design principles that help to prevent crime.

**Healthier River**
Removing the two lower-most dams in the watershed, repairing over 70 stormwater outfalls and excavating contaminated sediment upstream of the former Hamilton Dam already have improved stream function. Naturalizing the river by removing the concrete channel and utilizing natural stone is expected to improve water quality, while maintaining levels that are sufficient to provide an emergency backup water supply for the city of Flint.

**More Recreational Opportunities**
A naturalized stream channel will improve habitat, which will in turn improve fishing. Removing dams also will allow water enthusiasts to safely paddle the downtown stretch of river for the first time in a century. New play structures along the waterfront will connect nearby neighborhoods to the river and create more opportunities for children to be active.

**Economic Development**
A healthier river and vibrant waterfront will attract more people to Flint, increase property values on adjacent lands and spur economic growth.

**Increased Connections**
The Flint River and adjoining trails will link downtown Flint to several parks, universities and cultural institutions, including Chevy Commons, Mott and Kearsley parks, the University of Michigan–Flint, Kettering University, the Flint Farmers’ Market, the Flint Cultural Center Campus and the Iron Belle Trail.

**Health Benefits**
Improving water quality and recreational opportunities will encourage residents and visitors to spend more time outdoors, which could reduce stress and the risk of contracting chronic diseases.
PHASE 1

GOAL

Restore a two-mile stretch of the river and upgrade several city blocks along the waterfront. The recent removal of the Hamilton and Fabri dams, as well as the conversion of a brownfield into a park known as Chevy Commons, were part of this first phase of work.
An area known as the Fountain Block will be converted into a waterfront park with safe access to the river.
A 60-acre site where General Motors manufactured cars in the 20th century has been transformed into Chevy Commons. The $173 million project is an example of how restoring the waterfront will create a new image for the community.
A healthy river lined with parks and trails will attract Flint residents, as well as some of the 3.2 million people who live within a one-hour drive of downtown Flint.

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**CASE STUDY**

Spending time outdoors — hiking, biking, kayaking or simply relaxing by a river — has many health benefits. Studies have found that time spent outdoors reduces stress, improves the immune system and reduces the risk of contracting cancer, lung disease or kidney disease.

Source: Being outside can improve memory, fight depression, and lower blood pressure — here are 12 science-backed reasons to spend more time outdoors. Kevin Loria, Business Insider, April 22, 2018, accessed May 31, 2019 via https://www.businessinsider.com/why-spending-more-time-outside-is-healthy-2017-7
PHASE 2

GOAL

Add recreational attractions, similar to Chicago’s popular Maggie Daly Park, to Chevy Commons and improve other park facilities.
An extreme makeover at the confluence of the Flint River and Swartz Creek will create a river access site and beautify the concrete banks. The pedestrian bridge already has been installed.
The Flint River, which is a state-designated water trail, along with improved parks and biking/hiking trails, will drive Flint’s recreation-based economy. The Flint River Trail is part of the Iron Belle Trail, a 774-mile long trail that stretches from Detroit’s Belle Isle to Ironwood.

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CASE STUDY

Bicycle tourism is big business. Communities along North Carolina’s Outer Banks invested $6.7 million in bicycle infrastructure, which now generates $60 million annually in economic activity.

Improved parks and trails along the river will provide new recreational activities and create a stronger sense of community.
A recent overhaul of Kettering University’s Atwood Stadium is attracting more people to the riverfront to enjoy Fourth of July fireworks, high school football, professional soccer and more.
Restoring the Flint River will attract more people to the waterfront for a variety of reasons — to fish, jog or simply enjoy the scenery.

“Water is like a magnet for people,” according to John Hartig, a Great Lakes scientist and author who helped establish the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.
PHASE 3

GOAL

Use a two-mile stretch of the restored river and adjoining trails as a focal point that connects a network of community and state assets — including parks, trails, cultural institutions and universities — and spurs the development of waterfront housing and office complexes.
The river is a unifying force that connects people and links numerous community assets in Flint, including parks and other green space, cultural institutions, universities and the Farmers’ Market.

INCREASING CONNECTIONS
Designating the river as a Michigan Water Trail and adding the Flint River Trail to the Iron Belle Trail already has strengthened Flint’s connection to the rest of the state.
Restoring the river will bolster community pride, increase property values and drive economic development along the waterfront, including the construction of new housing and office buildings.

CASE STUDY

Milwaukee’s RiverWalk project, which features three miles of walkway along the Milwaukee River, attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. The $52 million project also generated a $1 billion increase in property values on adjacent lands and served as a catalyst for the development of 2,800 housing units, 515 hotel rooms and 4.7 million square feet of office space.

“For most people, I think the aesthetic value of a river is its greatest attribute. Whether it is the sound of moving water or watching the water flow, it gives people a sense of being and an opportunity to perhaps forget the hustle and bustle of the world around them — even if it's just for a quick moment.”

— Joe Leonardi
Retired fisheries biologist; Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Partners in efforts to reimagine the Flint River include: