



## City of River Falls News Release

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### **CITY COUNCIL APPROVES KINNICKINNIC RIVER COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGY**

#### **Directs City Staff to Seek Hydroelectric License Extension**

The City's two hydroelectric facilities are licensed to operate by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) until August 31, 2018. For the last year, City staff has been receiving input from stakeholders, conducting an analysis of operations, and considering the history of projects on the River. The City was considering several options but focused on three primary options: 1) seek full re-licensing the facilities for several decades; 2) surrendering the license and ending hydroelectric generation, or 3) seeking a short-term extension of the license.

The conclusion of City leaders, staff, and local stakeholders is that more time and information are necessary. "There's so much to still figure out," says Mayor Toland. "We need more information and community input before we make any big decisions."

At its [January 13, 2015 meeting](#) (pdf), the City Council adopted a resolution that provides staff direction regarding the hydroelectric licensing process, including endorsing a [Kinnickinnic River Corridor Planning Strategy](#) (attached) and directing staff to request an approximately 7 year extension of the current license.

"It's the best thing for us to do," says Mayor Dan Toland.

The draft [Kinnickinnic River Corridor Planning Strategy](#) (pdf) endorsed by the Council and local stakeholder groups asks FERC to extend the current license to 2025. If granted, the extension will allow the community ample time to broaden its focus from the dams and two lakes to the whole Kinnickinnic River corridor.

A broadened focus on the entire river corridor will include but not be limited to questions such as:

- Should the community continue to generate hydroelectric energy at one or both of the current facilities?
- How should we utilize the vast public land along the River to enhance the community's access to the great resource?
- How do private property owners along the River seek to use their property in the future?
- How does the Lake George Rehabilitation Plan fit into a larger vision for the corridor?
- What will it cost to fulfill the vision of the community?
- What partners are willing and able to assist the community in funding its vision?

At the meeting, the City was pleased to receive the endorsement for the strategy from several stakeholder groups. City Administrator Scot Simpson added, "The community will have the necessary time and information to determine its future relationship with the river corridor."

In the intervening time of study and community discussion, the community will continue to benefit from the hydroelectric power, and the income will be designated to fund the resulting plan. That is because the City Council approved additional measures to continue the stable financial outlook for the facilities. Starting in 2015, net cash revenues of the hydroelectric operations will be reported in the Electric Fund for the future projects arising from the Kinnickinnic River Corridor Plan. The Utility Advisory Board will also provide additional oversight of maintenance expenses.

"It's a win-win for everyone," concludes Mayor Toland.

This strategy meets the City Council's priorities of providing opportunities for wide and thorough community input, retaining flexibility for future decision making, and spending limited resources wisely.

## DRAFT KINNICKINNIC RIVER CORRIDOR PLANNING STRATEGY & TIMELINE

Year	License Extension to December 31, 2025	Phase
2015	February – Preliminary studies planned with stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likely related to sediment and recreation</li> </ul> May – FERC grants license extension July – Glen and Hoffman Park Master Plans adopted (current Park plans) Spring/Summer – Preliminary studies completed Summer/Fall – RFP and Selection of River Corridor Planning consultant	Preliminary
2016	Beginning of community process for Kinnickinnic River Corridor Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning group formed: identifying Vision/Mission and Goals</li> <li>• Engaging in issue identification, assessing existing conditions, and breaking down objectives</li> <li>• Public communication throughout: newsletters, social media, etc.</li> </ul>	Kinnickinnic River Corridor Planning
2017	Through Spring, continuing preliminary analysis for planning process. Public input process beginning in Spring/Summer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing working groups</li> <li>• Publishing surveys</li> <li>• Community meetings and open houses</li> </ul>	
2018	Begin preparing summary reports/drafts to the Corridor Planning Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafts prepared for each section of the Plan</li> </ul> Continue public input meetings on drafts of Plan Continue Plan review by Corridor Planning Group	
2019	Development and of action and funding plans. <b>Kinnickinnic River Corridor Plan</b> recommendation finalized and sent to Boards and City Council for approval.	
2020	<b>Kinnickinnic River Corridor Plan:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted by Boards and City Council by January 1, 2020</li> </ul> <b>Between July 1 and December 31, 2020:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must notify FERC whether licensee intends to file or not to file an application for a new license</li> <li>• If continued licensing of hydros selected, must submit Pre-Application Document at time of notice of intent</li> <li>• If eventual surrender is selected, within 90 days from notice, must file a schedule for the filing of a surrender application</li> </ul>	Future FERC licensing/surrender process
2021	Continuing licensing process or preparing for surrender of license and decommissioning of facilities.	
2022		
2023		
2024	If surrendering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After December 31, 2023, FERC provides existing licensee with written notice that no timely applications for the project have been filed.</li> <li>• Preparing Surrender Application</li> </ul>	
2025	<b>License expires December 31, 2025</b>	

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