



Activating the Olentangy River

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

This project addresses..

- The importance of the Olentangy River
- The current plans for the rivers revitalization
- 21 University and/or City Centered Rivers
- 2 Riverfront Design Programs
- Recommendations for how OSU should move forward

HISTORY & IMPORTANCE



Figure 1. The Olentangy River Corridor.

The Olentangy River, crucial to Central Ohio's historical development, remains a significant symbol of the region's economic, cultural, and natural heritage.

- Located within a 1/2 hour drive of over **1.5 million people**
- Supports **ecological diversity**, providing habitats for wildlife
- Offers green space for **recreation, relaxation, and exercise**
- Great opportunities for future **waterfront developments**

RAPID 5

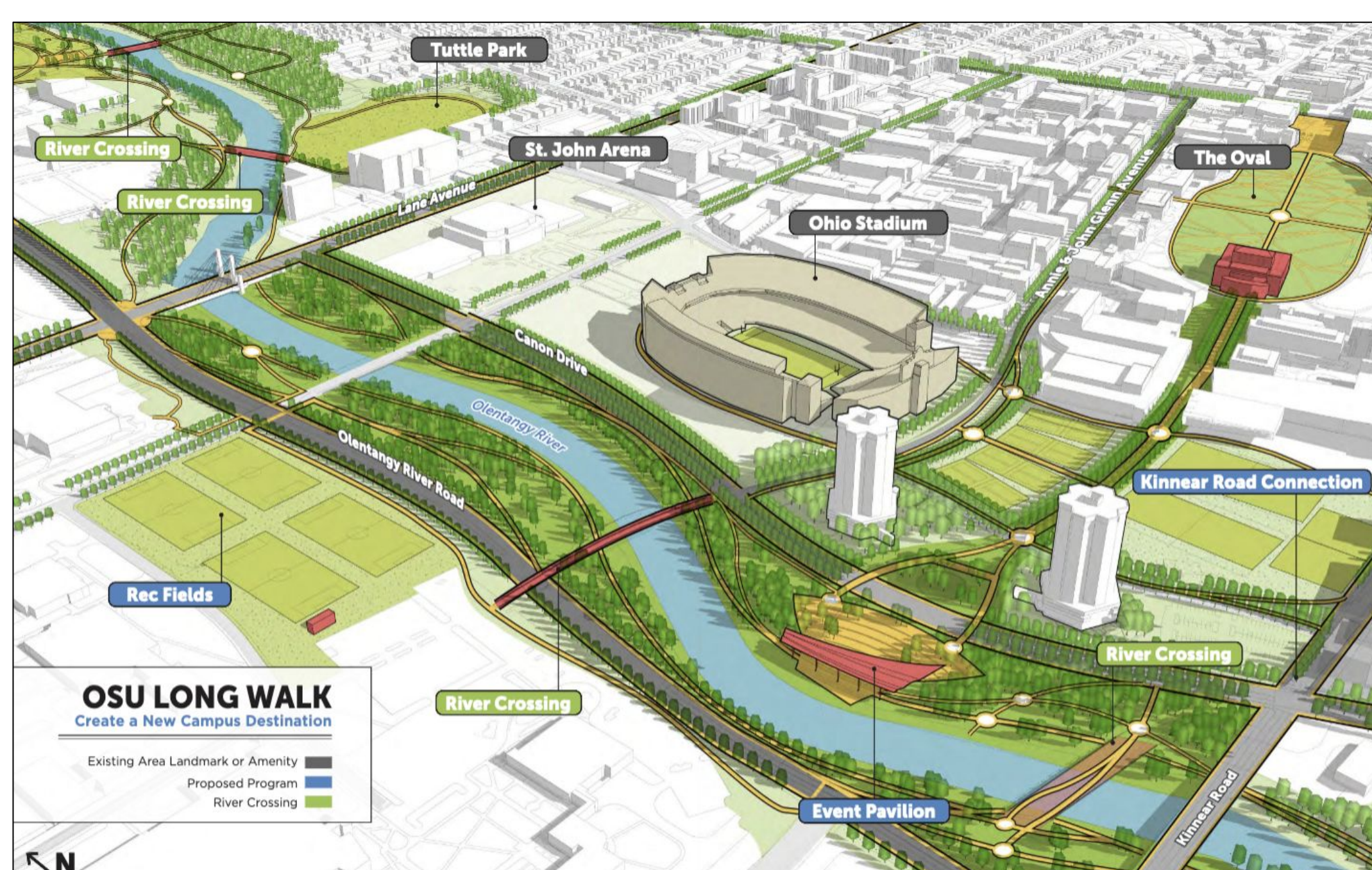


Figure 2. MKSK's RAPID 5 design plan for OSU's Long Walk.

RAPID 5 is a collaborative project envisioned by MORPC, the Urban Land Institute of Columbus, Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks, along with various public and private partners across Central Ohio.

Its goal is to link Central Ohio's major river corridors and trails to create the largest interconnected, greenspace system in the country.



MKSK RAPID 5

CASE STUDIES



Figure 3. The Monongahela River, WVU, Morgantown, WV.

Monongahela River: West Virginia University Revitalization project included an amphitheater, picnic area, tree realignment, and increased biking trails.



Figure 4. The Thames River, Connecticut College, New London, CT.

Thames River: Cleared the riverfront of invasive tree species to create an accessible waterfront for Connecticut College students, faculty, and staff. Supports recreational, educational, research, and athletic opportunities.



Figure 5. The Buffalo Bayou, Houston, TX.

Buffalo Bayou: Added green space, expanded tree canopy, trails, bikeways, pedestrian bridges, and waterfront access.



Figure 6. Mill River, Stamford, CT.

Mill River: Sparked by dam removal, revitalization projects included volunteer stewardship events, cultural preservation, invasive species removal, adding native plants, and permeable pavement for walking trails.

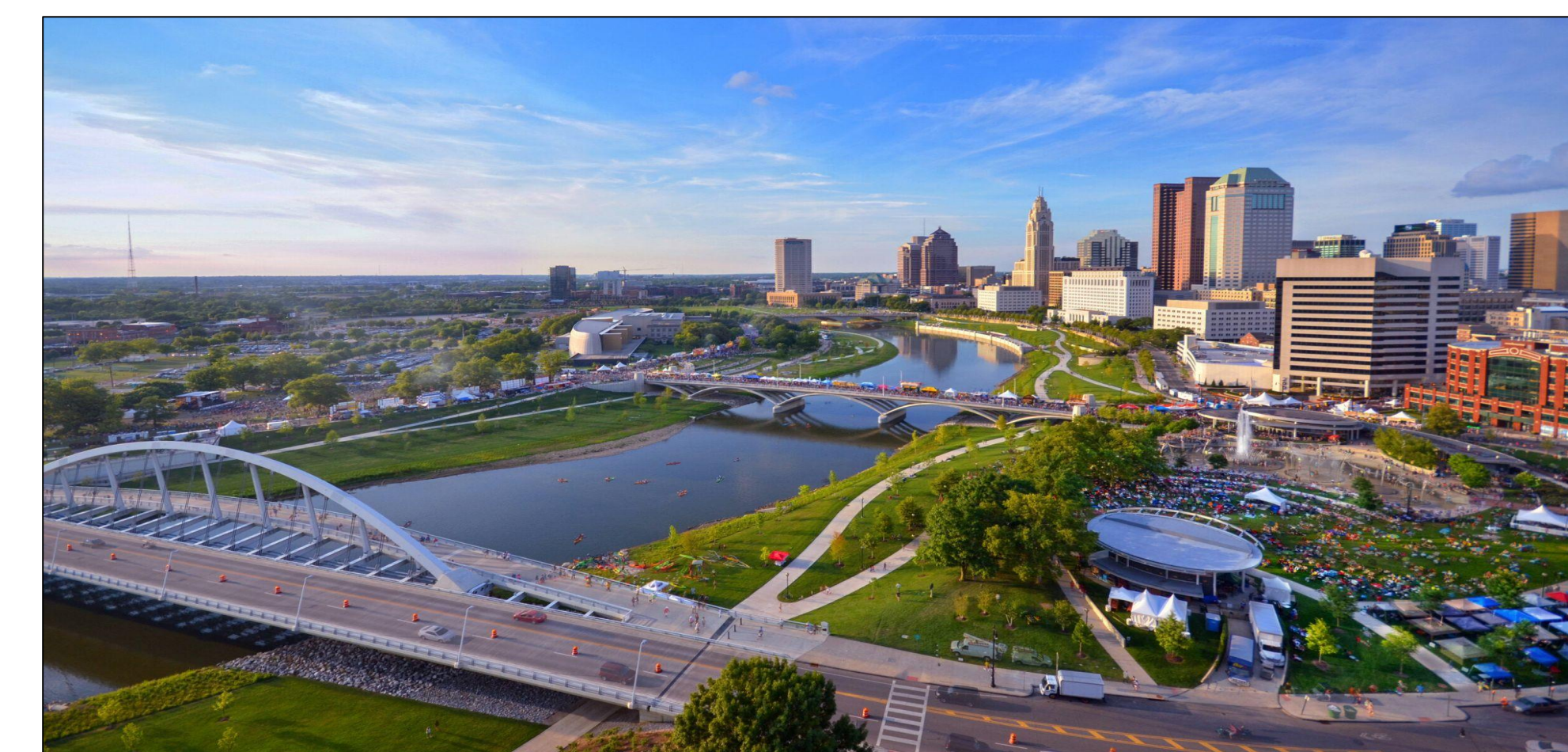


Figure 7. Scioto Mile, Columbus, OH..

Scioto Mile: A destination hotspot through expanded green space, increased recreation, artistic installations, and ecological restoration, ultimately enhancing connectivity in the downtown area. The Scioto Mile not only enhanced the local economy, but served as a symbol of collective vision and progress for the entire city.

RIVER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Dayton River Institute

3-year experiential learning program where University of Dayton students engage in activities that safeguard and enhance the rivers and waterways within the Great Miami River Watershed, like:

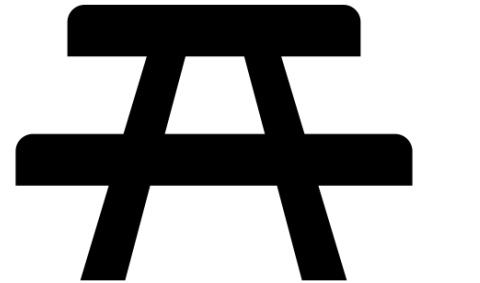
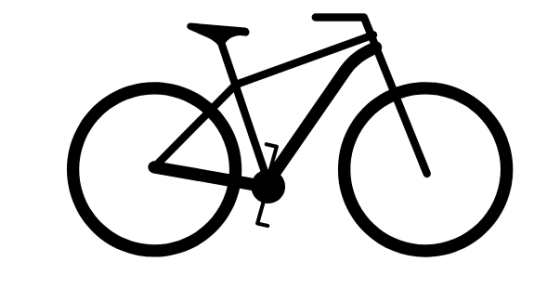
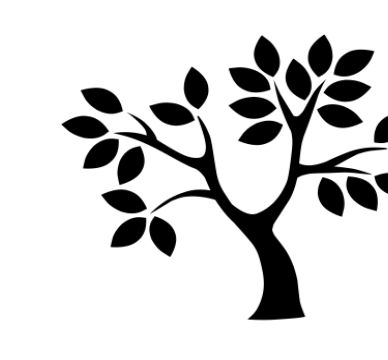
- River cleanups and water quality monitoring
- Environmental education
- Recreation initiatives
- Community engagement
- Stakeholder collaboration
- Student enjoyment of natural spaces



Figure 7. UD students kayak in the Great Miami

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE CASE STUDIES

- **Trees and Trails:** More than 90% of projects enhanced canopy and trails.
- **Open Greenery:** Picnic areas, green space, and rest pavilions were an expectation of each project while amphitheatres were the most common structural expansion.
- **Outdoor Learning:** Expansion of public and private environmental education opportunities.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish a Robust Planning Process

- Form a committee dedicated to planning, developing, and overseeing river activation efforts.
- Develop a Master Plan for River Use.
- Partner with MKSK's Existing RAPID 5 Plans for Olentangy Corridor.

Develop Infrastructure, Green Space, and Trails

- Maximize open green space for socializing, studying, and relaxing.
- Increase campus connectivity through the corridor.
- Construct an amphitheater and other smaller open-walled structures.

Organize Educational and Recreational Activities

- Develop necessary infrastructure to facilitate engagement with the riparian environment.
- Partner with the School of Environment and Natural Resources (SENR), the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES), and other units at Ohio State for campus learning engagement.
- Connect with Ohio State Recreational Sports.

References



Extensive Recommendations



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