

Partners for Places Project Lessons Report

Project Name: *Take Me to the River: Connecting Milwaukee's Southside to the Harbor District*

- **Year Complete:** 2018
- **Local Government:** City of Milwaukee, WI
- **Local Foundation:** Brico Fund, Inc., Fund for Lake Michigan, Zilber Family Foundation

Project Purpose

To enhance the community's quality of life by creating sustainable, accessible, and inviting access to the Kinnickinnic River in Milwaukee's emerging Harbor District.

Key Lessons Learned

Lessons learned about tools and tactics through the project that other sustainability directors could use to advance their work.

One important lesson was the power of graphic design competitions to spur innovation and public investment. Engaging designers helped to create a vision of what's possible for the community helped spur interest and investment in a larger project.

Lessons for developing a collaborative process between a local government sustainability director and local place-based foundation(s).

Collaboration with other non-profit organizations that had a relationship with the foundation was very important. The local place-based foundations received many requests for funding from various groups, sometimes within same issue area. With the foundations understandably trying to maximize the impact of their contributions to the community, they sometimes looked to the City to collaborate with other groups that they funded. They also looked to the City to play a leadership role in coordinating these nonprofit groups' activities to align with city plans.

Additional Information and Resources

The [Take Me to the River](#) project was successfully completed, and the venue continues to host [events](#) that have served to better connect the community.