

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

## August 2011

### *Menomonee Valley – From the Ground Up*

Connecting communities to jobs, environmental education, restored natural resources, and new recreational opportunities.



UEC/MVP Project, Inc. is a 501c3 tax-exempt charitable organization formed by Menomonee Valley Partners, Inc. and Urban Ecology Center, Inc. to complete a unique collaborative effort – *Menomonee Valley – From the Ground Up*.

**For more information, contact**  
Laura Bray at (414) 274-4654 or at [Laura@RenewtheValley.org](mailto:Laura@RenewtheValley.org) or  
Ken Leinbach at (414) 964-8505 or at [KLeinbach@UrbanEcologyCenter.org](mailto:KLeinbach@UrbanEcologyCenter.org).

## AUGUST 2011 UPDATE

### Help build a legacy for the future, *From the Ground Up.*

**Menomonee Valley - From the Ground Up** is an effort led by two strong non-profits working collaboratively to expand service to better **meet economic, educational, health and quality of life needs** in Milwaukee.

The joint \$26 million effort, done in partnership with the State of Wisconsin and the City of Milwaukee, will establish a third branch Urban Ecology Center in the Valley, transform a 24-acre brownfield into a new park and greatly enhance the bike/pedestrian offerings for area residents and businesses. The park will become the outdoor science classroom for thousands of kids each year. Projects are phased over five years and implemented as plans progress and funds are raised. In fall 2010, the first phase was finished with the completion of four additional miles of the Hank Aaron State Trail and a trailhead and walk-to-work connection known as the "Valley Passage."

To date, Menomonee Valley Partners and Urban Ecology Center have worked together to **secure \$20 million for the \$26 million effort.** In addition to public sector support of \$15 million, the following private sector supporters are early investors:

Brewers Community Foundation  
Brico Fund  
Burke Foundation  
Art and Rhonda Downey  
Greater Milwaukee Foundation  
Harley-Davidson Foundation  
Helen Bader Foundation  
Herzfeld Foundation  
Fred & Susie Kasten  
Sheldon and Marianne Lubar  
Menomonee Valley BID

Menomonee Valley Partners  
Palermo's Pizza  
P&H Mining  
Ralph Evinrude Foundation  
Rexnord Industries  
Steigleder Charitable Trust  
Wisconsin Energy Foundation  
US Bank  
Zilber Community Foundation  
...and numerous individuals.



**Your involvement now will build on the momentum!** On July 15th, we received news of an extraordinary pledge of \$2.3 million from the Burke Foundation. With a strong showing from early investors and the timing of this pledge, we can now begin construction THIS year on Urban Ecology Center's Valley branch so that it will be open to serve neighborhood residents, schools and area businesses in fall 2012. An alternative schedule was to open in 2013, but because of this recent momentum we now can pursue a more aggressive plan. Currently, we are seeking partners that want to join this esteemed group of funders in time for the ground breaking in late September. Gifts of any size, or even pledged over time, get us closer securing the remaining \$6 million left to fulfill the entire effort.

### Contact us to find out how you can get engaged!

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

**Milwaukee's Menomonee River Valley** sits at the crossroads of Wisconsin's population center. The Valley runs 4 miles, spans 1200 acres and is surrounded by the most densely populated neighborhoods in the state of Wisconsin with more than 415,000 people live in nearby communities. For decades, the Valley was Wisconsin's most visible eyesore with acres of blight. Since 1999, a strong **public-private partnership** has been working here to build economic and community assets to meet today's needs and those of future generations.



The redevelopment work in the Menomonee Valley is **transformative** and catalytic. In ten short years, the Valley has again become a **hub of economic activity** and public/private collaboration has led to 4,200 new jobs, and 28 company moves or expansions. With improved environmental conditions, wildlife is returning to the Valley.

This homegrown success story has become a national model in sustainable urban development, recognized by the Sierra Club as one of the **Nation's Top 10 Redevelopment Projects**.



Enhancements along the Menomonee River and the new Hank Aaron State Trail offer employees and nearby residents a vibrant environment to work and play.

## There is still important work ahead!

Even with all of the success in the Menomonee Valley, the redevelopment work is not complete. The Valley is at the heart of many economic, social and environmental needs.

### ⇒ **Neighborhoods adjacent to the Menomonee Valley are still struggling**

The neighborhoods surrounding the Valley have been hit hard by economic decline. They are the most densely populated neighborhoods in the state and home to some of its poorest residents. Nearby communities accounted for 82% of the State's welfare aid and have disproportionately high rates of obesity and asthma.



More than **100,000 kids live nearby**, many in distressed neighborhoods that lack quality education, access to employment, and safe places to play outside.

### ⇒ **Poor conditions along the Menomonee River persist**

The Menomonee River was once a lush wetland that provided Native American tribes with a seemingly inexhaustible supply of fish, waterfowl, and wild rice. When industry arrived, the River was channelized and its marshes were filled with construction and industrial waste.

For decades, unstable banks have been eroding causing contaminated materials to enter into the Menomonee River on route to Lake Michigan.

With the Valley disconnected from its surrounding neighborhoods for so long, many nearby residents are not even aware that the river exists or know how its poor health impacts water quality throughout the entire region.



A **comprehensive** plan is being implemented to **address these issues**.

**Menomonee Valley - From the Ground Up** is a \$26 million effort that is building on momentum in the Menomonee Valley and **creating vibrant communities**.

Together, Menomonee Valley Partners and Urban Ecology Center, in partnership with the State of Wisconsin and City of Milwaukee, are implementing a series of projects over the next five years:

1. **New bike/pedestrian infrastructure - \$ 11.3 million**

The length of the Hank Aaron State Trail will be doubled with construction of a six-mile western extension and three new pedestrian bridges to overcome the physical barriers that disconnect people from jobs. When complete, the Trail will connect residents to new employment and recreation opportunities, while supporting the region's efforts to attract and retain talented people who desire transportation options, healthy lifestyles and livable communities. These infrastructure components are fully funded through public sources and are now being implemented.



2. **A third branch of the Urban Ecology Center - \$ 5.2 million**

A third branch of the Urban Ecology Center will be established to serve Milwaukee's South Side. The Center engages people of all ages in environmental exploration and provides Milwaukee's youth with applied science education. The neighborhood-based model focuses intensively on serving community needs within a two-mile radius of a given Center. The Center's two existing branches at Riverside and Washington Parks serve more than 75,000 people of all ages each year. Daily programs engage youth and families in positive activities and create vibrant, safe parks. This model is being studied, and in some cases implemented, by other US cities including Racine, Columbus, Syracuse, Baltimore, and San Diego.



Urban Ecology Center has grown from a small effort to save one urban park into a **national model**.

Programs activate neighborhoods, reduce crime, **improve science education** and raise the environmental consciousness of the entire community.

A vacant tavern will become a sustainably-designed community center and **an anchor for positive change and public safety**. Thousands of kids and families will be served annually with hands-on science education, as well as year-round after-school, evening and weekend community programs.



Urban Ecology Center does not currently serve Milwaukee's South Side. However, the **demand is high** and the need for science-based education and community programming is great. There are at least 73 schools nearby that serve more than 30,000 students, 80% of whom qualify for federal free or reduced-fee lunch programs.

### 3. A new 24-acre park along the Hank Aaron State Trail - \$ 9.5 million

Along the south bank of the River, a **vacant rail yard** will be transformed into a 24-acre park and outdoor science classroom. The project will stop erosion along this stretch of river, improve water quality, create habitat for native species, and offer public access for fishing and canoeing.



The effort will transform this vacant rail yard into a **24-acre outdoor science classroom** and vibrant park to serve the needs of area schools, residents, and businesses.

**Contact us to find out how you can get engaged!**



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