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## WKBT News Channel 8

### **UPDATE: Onalaska Waterfront Development**

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ONALASKA, Wisconsin (WXOW) -- In 2006, the city of Onalaska purchased 47 acres of waterfront land to develop for public use. But the idea to utilize that land and incorporate the river into downtown has been in the works since the mid-90s.

Sam Scinta sits as chairman of the Waterfront Project Management Team.

When the city bought the 47 acres of waterfront land for \$650,000 in 2006, the plans to develop that land became reality. "Starting this year, you're going to start seeing some of the buildings coming down. You're going to start seeing a little development down here," Sam says.

Not just chairman, but as a citizen of the town, Scinta is glad to see the plan progress.

"Things happen at certain times for the right reasons. The city, over the last several years, has been acquiring the land, has been setting the foundation for this project to happen," Scinta says. The plan includes a handful of projects, including new trails and a cultural and tourism center to name a few. The total bill amounts to a couple million dollars, paid for on all government levels and through a hotel visitors' tax.

The development will be called the "Great River Landing." Within the next five years it should be done. The city hopes people find this to be just as great of an amenity as the others in Onalaska.

"It's also a quality of life project, and one that will offer citizens new opportunities in the community to experience nature and get down here and see this beautiful space," says City Development Director, Jason Gilman.

"Now's the time to start getting this engrained into people's heads, so that when they think of Onalaska or the waterfront, they're thinking of the Great River Landing. They're thinking of all these wonderful things we're working on down here," Sam says.

Scinta says the waterfront appeals to all interests.

"If you're interested in boating, there's going to be stuff for you. If you're interested in fishing, there's going to be stuff for you," he says.

With something for everyone, a new waterfront will sit only steps from downtown.

The city will hold a funding summit on April 20th to seek out financial support for the project.

Also, there will be a chance for the public to weigh in on the project tomorrow, February 15th at Onalaska City Hall. The Waterfront Project Team is hosting a meeting at 3:30 p.m.

To watch the interview go to <http://video.wkbt.com/watch.php?id=11781>