SECTION 9

Public Service Needs
INFRASTRUCTURE

Much of Above the Falls Regional Park can be developed without extensive investment in non-recreational public infrastructure, services and utilities. Within its context of a fully-developed urban core, there are sufficient existing roads, electricity, gas, water, and sewer services to implement the vision.

The proposed extension of West River Parkway is the sole major infrastructure project necessary to spatially define and provide access to the park. Land acquisition is the major challenge to implementation. Incremental progress can be made by leveraging existing public connections and by prioritizing acquisition or easements of those parcels that exist between existing network nodes. For example, between 31st Ave N and 33rd Ave N the Lowry bridge offers a western portal designed to accommodate future West River Parkway. Early phases of West River Parkway can focus here and at the 48-acre Upper Harbor Terminal (UHT) area owned by the City of Minneapolis.

At UHT the private economic development projects planned for areas adjacent to ATF Regional Park will require significant extension of nearby infrastructure and services at the district scale. This is consistent with the 2000 ATF Plan already adopted by the City and MPRB as long-term policy. Park design and development at UHT primarily will integrate restored river shoreline and naturalized stormwater management facilities, thus reducing reliance on storm sewer piping compared with conventional private economic development.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Stormwater improvements are largely anticipated to occur as part of park development projects, such as the extension of West River Parkway or as part of the development of specific parks. MPRB will implement these projects in partnership with other organizations, such as the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO).

Recognizing that stormwater management technology is constantly evolving, the plan does not identify specific strategies, but instead provides a set of principles to guide the development of stormwater management infrastructure. These principles include:

- Continue to pursue a range of stormwater best management practices (BMPs) in new development and parks, including vegetated swales, rain gardens, impervious surface reduction, underground treatment structures and green roofs.
- Explore ways to attractively integrate stormwater-management features into the public realm.
- Support retrofits of existing sites with stormwater BMPs, including green roofs, reduced impervious surface cover and other strategies (see the MWMO’s 2012 Urban BMP Retrofit Study for cost/benefit analysis).
- Consider partnerships and coordination between private development and parks to maximize the efficiency of stormwater systems, explore shared solutions, and increase the greening of the public realm.
- Coordinate the design of stormwater management facilities and parks to enhance public realm connectivity and preserve scenic views.