COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Project Title: Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan Update

MPRB Division: Planning

Project Manager: Kate Lamers

As required by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) Code of Ordinances, every construction or redevelopment project undertaken within the MPRB Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is to have a community engagement plan. The plan serves as a guide for the community engagement process through the multiple phases of planning and project development. MPRB may modify the plan as circumstance warrants during project duration and will communicate substantial modifications to stakeholders and the MPRB Board of Commissioners.

Project Description
The Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan (ATF Plan) will guide park land acquisition, development, and management for the areas along both sides of the Mississippi riverfront in Minneapolis between the Camden Bridge to the Plymouth Bridge. Eventually ATF Regional Park will connect North Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park and the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park, creating a continuous regional park system along the upper Mississippi River.

MPRB created this ATF Plan in 2013 and updated the plan in 2019. The ATF Plan is based on two plans previously adopted by MPRB and one extensive public engagement stretching over several years. In 2013, MPRB opened a 45-day public comment period for a Draft ATF Plan based on more than a year of research and community engagement completed. As an update to the plan Above the Falls: A Master Plan for the Upper River in Minneapolis jointly adopted by the City of Minneapolis and the Park Board in 2000, the draft plan is intended to fulfill two main goals:

- Integrate components of the RiverFIRST vision with the 2000 ATF Plan to guide regional park land acquisition, park development and operations; and
- Meet the Metropolitan Council’s requirements for regional park plans as outlined in the policy document 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan 2012
  (http://www.metrocouncil.org/Parks/Publications-Resources.aspx)
In addition, in 2013, the City adopted an Above the Falls Master Plan Update, which guides redevelopment of areas around the planned regional park. In the two 2013 plans, the City and MPRB recommended different boundaries for the regional park at the City owned Upper Harbor Terminal site. City and MPRB needed to establish an agreed-upon boundary before MPRB and Met Council could approve the ATF Plan. Since late 2015, City and MPRB staff have conducted engagement and planning work around the UHT to help inform a regional park boundary. Guided first by a Memorandum of Understanding between the two agencies, and, since 2017, a three-way Exclusive Rights Agreement between the City, MPRB, and a development team led by United Properties, THOR Companies, and First Avenue Productions (Developer), the group has created a concept plan that includes a regional park boundary. MPRB has updated the ATF plan with the proposed UHT boundary and has added an appendix to supplement the original work. Given the five-year time lapse and the additional materials, staff recommends a new comment period in 2019 for community members to provide input.

Upon conclusion of the public comment period, staff will update the plan based on public input received. Staff has planned the following community engagement for the comment period:

- Public notification per the requirements of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) Community Engagement Policy and Procedure;
- Advertisement of comment period through networks of the Above the Falls Community Advisory Committee (AFCAC), neighborhood organizations, project partners, other stakeholder and community groups in the area;
- Online and printed surveys;
- Social media postings;
- Placement of the Draft plan online for viewing at strategic MPRB owned locations – typically buildings nearest to the river.

**Anticipated project outcomes**
The ATF Plan shows how land acquisition and parks development can create new destinations for park visitors, expand access to the river, and enhance natural resources. The plan describes a sustainable balance of recreation, ecology, and culture within ATF Regional Park. The plan also presents strategies for project implementation and park management, including costs and maintenance practices.

ATF Regional Park will be a catalyst for the revitalization of the upper river area by creating a framework of recreation and restored ecological function. Eventually, the regional park boundary will encompass continuous public parks and trails, an extended West River Parkway, riverfront access points, significant park components, and habitat and water-quality enhancements.

**MPRB Project Funding Source(s)**
Funding sources for master plan implementation will be ongoing and determined annually. Initial project funding needs outlined below are for the administrative tasks of updating the master plan, providing opportunities for community input, and submitting the plan to MPRB and Metropolitan Council for approval.
Engagement Recommendation

**Level of Engagement: Consult**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inform</th>
<th>Consult</th>
<th>Collaborate</th>
<th>Partner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement Goal:</strong></td>
<td>To provide stakeholders with factual, balanced, and timely information to help them understand the project.</td>
<td>To obtain stakeholder feedback on project analysis, alternatives, or decisions.</td>
<td>To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that perspectives are consistently understood, considered, and reflected in project decisions.</td>
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<td><strong>MPRB Promise to the Public:</strong></td>
<td>The MPRB will keep stakeholders informed.</td>
<td>The MPRB will keep stakeholders informed, listen to and acknowledge feedback, and work to ensure stakeholder feedback is reflected in alternatives developed.</td>
<td>The MPRB will work with stakeholders for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate recommendations to the maximum extent possible.</td>
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MPRB and the City will **consult** with the community regarding the master plan.

In 2000 the City and MPRB formed the Above the Falls Community Advisory Committee (AFCAC) as an advisory group for the planning and implementation of the Above the Falls Regional Park. In 2012 MPRB
renewed the AFCAC charge to serve as the community advisory committee for the 2013 ATF Plan. Given the limited scope of the ATF Plan update, and the institutional knowledge that AFCAC members have accumulated, staff recommends that AFCAC continue to provide recommendations for the 2019 review and update of the plan. This committee will:

- Contribute to broad community engagement by acting an ongoing contact point for staff and a nexus of community organizations.
- Strive to understand and represent the needs of all community members.
- Assist with ongoing communication of technical plan elements to the general public.
- Assist the staff team in identifying groups, events, and other methods to connect with a wide range of community members.
- Make recommendations on the ATF Plan.

MPRB recognizes that a single committee cannot represent the entire community, and that AFCAC is one stakeholder group among many. Staff will actively seek input from other community groups, with outreach focused on making new community members aware of the Above the Falls efforts. Staff had identified the following stakeholder groups, but will add others as appropriate:

- AFCAC
- Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership
- Northside and Northeast Neighborhood organizations, particularly those nearest the river
- Northside and Northeast businesses, particularly those nearest the river
- Business Associations and economic development organizations such as NEON, Black Women’s Wealth Alliance
- Green Zone and Promise Zone working groups
- Government Agencies such as the City of Minneapolis (City), National Park Services (NPS), and Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS)
- Youth oriented organizations
- Advocacy groups such as Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- Environmental Organizations such as Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR)
- Organizations representing cultural and ethnic groups, such as the Hmong American Mutual Assistance Association (HAMAA) and Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota
- Faith based organizations

Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities
All stakeholders are expected to work collaboratively to create and refine research and take an active role in the education of MPRB and City staff and community members. Stakeholders shall provide input toward final project recommendations for approval by the Board of Commissioners. Participants are expected to engage in the process in a manner that promotes respectful civil discourse and enhances
mutual understanding of all stakeholder viewpoints. Any requests for public or project information should be directed to the project manager.

Identification of Project Stakeholders and Advisors
Much of the engagement for the ATF Master Plan was done in 2012 – 2013. The 2019 updates largely cover the Upper Harbor Terminal boundary definition, which had another extensive engagement process and the small updates where implementation has progressed. Given the limited scope of the recent updates, staff will focus current engagement on:

- Providing opportunities for people and groups to comment on the ATF Plan during the 45 day comment period
- Raising awareness of the ATF Plan and the many ways that stakeholders can intersect with the multitude of projects and efforts involved in implementation

Staff will attempt to involve, engage, and notify as many people as possible through a variety of public outreach methods and working with existing community groups. Staff will pay special attention to ensure that groups who often do not participate in public process, such as recent immigrant groups, seniors, youth, and persons of color are engaged in the project.

Staff will use different outreach and engagement strategies to reach out to different demographic groups. The project team will utilize culturally appropriate outreach and engagement methods and will provide interpretation and translation where it is needed and most effective.

Outreach and Research Methods
Staff recognizes that both MPRB and the City have significant projects in the area in the next couple of years. In order to avoid overburdening the community with requests for input, representatives from a variety of City and MPRB departments and partner organizations are meeting to coordinate civic engagement efforts. The steps outlined below represent a more typical community engagement plan, but may be modified based on the outcome of the coordination meetings.

AFCAC Meetings
AFCAC typically holds meetings during the last Tuesday of every month. These meetings are an opportunity for public interaction with staff regarding ongoing work along the upper river.

Social/Digital Media and Website
- The MPRB staff will maintain an up-to-date project website and will use news releases, the GovDelivery email subscription service, and other digital media, as appropriate, to keep stakeholders up to date on the project. Staff have heard that social media may be a preferred digital communication method to websites, online surveys, and emails, for some groups and will explore options to expand digital outreach.

Online and Print Opportunities for Comment
- MPRB will provide an opportunity for online comments during the 45 day comment period. In
addition, paper copies, and comment cards will be available at MPRB Headquarters and the following locations: Bottineau, Logan, Webber, Folwell, Farview, and North Commons Recreation Centers, and the Carl Kroenig Interpretation Center.

Language Translation
- MPRB Planning staff will work MPRB Community Outreach staff to determine translation needs. Translation services may vary by geographic area. MPRB Community Outreach staff will advise on what materials should be translated and when/if to provide verbal interpretation services.

Public Hearings
Following a public comment period on the plan, an MPRB public hearing on the draft plan will take place. The MPRB Board of Commissioners will discuss the overall concept plan and vote on approval of schematic design for the future park area and on appropriate aspects of the implementation plan.

Tentative Project Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>February 14 – March 31</td>
<td>Reopen a new 45 day comment period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late March – Early April</td>
<td>Comment organization and compilation</td>
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<td>April 17 (tentative)</td>
<td>MPRB Public Hearing and Master Plan Consideration</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Submission of ATF Plan to Met Council</td>
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Resources
A portion of the funding dedicated to staff time and consultant fees will be utilized for community engagement. In addition, the project budget includes costs of graphic production and formatting, consultant time, and notifications.

The project supports the following elements of the MPRB Comprehensive Plan
- Theme: Dynamic parks that shape city character
  - Goal: Parks shape an evolving city.
  - Goal: Park facility renewal and development respects history and focuses on sustainability, accessibility, flexibility, and beauty.
  - Goal: Focused land management supports current and future generations.

Evaluation Summary
Following project completion, the project manager will analyze the effectiveness of the engagement process from both stakeholder and organization points of view and will provide a brief summary
statement. The summary statement will indicate how the process advances policy goals, and will assist the Board and staff in evaluating and informing an ongoing community engagement process.

**Summary Statement**: Statement pending plan completion