SECTION 6

Park Development Concept
VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As described in the 2000 ATF Master Plan, Above the Falls Regional Park is envisioned as a continuous parks and trails system along both banks of the Mississippi River, offering recreational amenities within a framework of restored ecological function. The ATF Regional Park is intended to provide public access to the Mississippi River; enhance the habitat, structure and function of the river and its environs; and become integrated with the broader Minneapolis Grand Rounds. To achieve this a number of actions are needed, including the acquisition of additional park land; development of parks with new recreational and public-water access amenities; continued habitat creation and riverbank restoration; construction of new parkways and trails; and robust recreational programming and operations.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Remain Committed and Be Patient.
Achievement of the land assembly, park development, and park programming initiatives outlined in the ATF Master Plan will require years of continuous commitment.

Build Strong Relationships.
The initiatives of the master plan will be best achieved in the context of strong community, landowner, business, and partner relationships.

Meanfully Engage.
The ATF master plan is a bold framework for landscape transformation. Implementing the master plan will demand many individual park development projects around which the community must be meaningfully engaged.

Seize Opportunities.
Land assembly, funding, and partnership opportunities may present themselves when least expected; be ready.

Expect the Unexpected.
Creating parks on previously developed land surrounded by public infrastructure and in a context of unpredictable politics, funding, and climate will demand strategic agility.

Design for Stacked Benefits.
The realization of the many potential community, environmental, and ecological benefits in parks demands creative design approaches beyond the norm.

Design Welcoming Spaces and Programs.
Translating the desire for welcoming public spaces into the creation of welcoming public spaces demands continuous learning, experimenting, and falling short but always conscious effort.

Understand the Impacts.
Parks have impacts that are some combination of positive and negative. We need to understand the full breadth of impacts as best we can, amplify the positive, and mitigate the negative.
BASIS IN 2000 ATF MASTER PLAN

While much of the 2000 ATF Plan is retained in this 2019 ATF Park Plan, some changes to the park development concept have been infused from plans adopted more recently by MPRB (ATF Phase I plan, Sheridan Memorial Park plan, and RiverFirst). For example, one important difference centers on the west bank between Lowry Ave. and the BNSF railroad bridge. The 2000 ATF Plan envisioned “The Promenade,” a dense neighborhood of new high-rise, mixed-use buildings with a formal, hardened esplanade along the river’s edge. West River Parkway was shown as separated from the riverbank parks, inland from this mixed-use district. Implementation of this new district was to come via massive public buyout programs and condemnation through eminent domain, making way for simultaneous public infrastructure investments and large Tax Increment Finance-funded private redevelopment projects.

This 2019 ATF Park Plan recognizes that such sweeping implementation strategies are not viable given the funding and tools now available to MPRB and the City of Minneapolis. Instead, this plan returns to the implementation model championed by H.W.S. Cleveland at the creation of the Minneapolis park system: to secure public access to natural amenities such as lakes and rivers by surrounding them with parks, and to allow private economic development to evolve independent of yet strengthened by public parks.

The table below and the map at left summarize those elements from the 2000 ATF Master Plan that have been superseded by subsequent park planning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map</th>
<th>2000 Park Concept</th>
<th>2019 Park Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Parkway only</td>
<td>Parkway and riverfront park¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>The Promenade</td>
<td>Parkway, restored riverbank and 26th Ave N overlook¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Skyline Amphitheater</td>
<td>“Ole” Olson Park as shown in 2006 ATF Phase I plan²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Riverbank trail at Xcel</td>
<td>trail at Marshall St NE and NE Columbia Ave.³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Botanical Conservatory</td>
<td>restored riverbank/ravine system, trails and overlooks¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Dock and Boat Rental</td>
<td>Sheridan Park veterans memorial, trail and river overlook⁴</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:  
¹. from the 2019 Upper Harbor Terminal Redevelopment Concept Plan  
². from the ATF Phase I plan (2006)  
³. based on outreach with Xcel Energy staff in 2012  
⁴. from Sheridan Memorial Park plan (2007)

Some park elements from the 2000 ATF Master Plan are superseded by concepts in this 2019 ATF Park Plan.
Future parkland and trails shown here are conceptual, and will depend on land acquisitions. For context, connecting elements outside the Regional Park boundary are shown, such as existing trails and neighborhood parks as well as proposed future “Riverway Streets.”

Figure 6.1 ATF Regional Park Development Concept
PARK DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Current recreational uses within Above the Falls Regional Park include community gathering in parks; trail use by walkers, runners, bicyclists and in-line skaters; and water-related activities such as boating (motorized and paddling) and angling. Continued recreational development within Above the Falls is planned for both sides of the river. Figure 6.1 shows the ATF Regional Park development concept. To place the Regional Park concept in context, Figure 6.1 also shows non-park goals from the greater ATF Master Plan vision that fall outside the Regional Park boundary but that nevertheless will contribute to the vitality of the Regional Park (see “Connected Actions” below).

The park concept proposes new parks as well as continued improvement to existing parks. Community gathering spaces of varying sizes are proposed in several locations. Each will have typical furnishings and amenities including benches, open picnic shelters, drinking fountains, etc. Larger gathering spaces will have public restrooms as funding allows.

A number of key improvements are proposed for the west bank. A signature gathering space is proposed for the Upper Harbor Terminal. As shown in the 2006 ATF Phase I plan, modest improvements are proposed at “Ole” Olson Park: a river overlook, a small multi-purpose building and a “catwalk” connection to the BNSF railroad bridge when it is converted to trail use. This catwalk concept is echoed in the RiverFirst vision.

On the east bank, several gathering areas are available at existing parks. These will be enhanced with a new veteran’s memorial at Sheridan Memorial Park and at new riverside parks between Broadway and Lowry, and at Graco Park with its beach and carry-in boat launch.
Expanding the system of multi-use trail loops that exists in the regional parks adjacent to the north and south is a focus of the 2000 ATF Plan, the 2006 ATF Phase I plan and RiverFirst; this Regional Park plan reflects that priority. Approximately 2 miles of the total 6.3 miles of proposed multi-use trails currently exist. Continuous trail development is the long-term goal on both sides of the river, but this depends on significant land acquisition. In Figure 6.1, parkway and trails shown on future park land are conceptual and for planning purposes only. Ultimately, trails will connect to North Mississippi Regional Park, Victory Memorial Regional Trail, St. Anthony Parkway Regional Trail and the Anoka County Mississippi River Regional Trail on the north. On the south end of the park, trails will connect to the Central Mississippi River Regional Park through Boom Island Park and along West River Road North.

In addition to providing trails along the river, future trail loops must also make river crossings at regular intervals. Existing bicycle lanes connect across the river at the Plymouth, Lowry, and Camden/42nd Ave bridges. The Plymouth Ave. bridge was recently enhanced with amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists. The park development concept proposes that the existing BNSF railroad bridge be converted to a pedestrian/bicycle connector to add an additional crossing. This bridge project will depend on significant partnership with the City of Minneapolis.

The MPRB enjoys a long history hosting important cultural institutions (MIA is an example). As the MPRB curates buildout of ATF Regional Park, it will welcome opportunities to collaborate with other entities on the development of new cultural institutions. Opportunities will be sought that expand the park’s regional draw, celebrate its riverfront park location, and diversifies representation of arts, culture, history, and ethnicities in Minneapolis and the region.
PARK PROJECTS

The park projects outlined in this Section represent ongoing efforts and near-term priorities envisioned and vetted with the community through the RiverFirst Initiative. Many of the projects have their roots in the 2000 ATF master plan and since RiverFirst was able to build from progress made in land acquisition and park development since the 2000 plan, it provides both more refinement and updated thinking. The Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan will be updated as land is acquired, parks are developed, and desired recreational experiences evolve.

GRACO PARK

In 2010, the MPRB purchased the former site of the Scherer Lumber Yard, 11.4 acres of riverfront property with a storied history of lumber milling. The site is located at the east bank of the river bounded by Plymouth Avenue, Sibley Street NE and Graco Manufacturing. The property was cleared, and soils remediated in 2011. In 2012, the Metropolitan Council approved a revised regional park boundary through the site to establish 7.8 acres as regional parkland with the remainder held out for supportive redevelopment. The park boundary was determined through a conceptual design process conducted with the RiverFirst Initiative. In 2019, the MPRB made an agreement with Graco Industries under which the MPRB received a riverfront trail easement on neighboring Graco property and a substantial donation toward park development in exchange for Graco receiving development rights on the non-regional park portion of the Scherer property (illustrated as Parcel “D” in Fig. 6.4) and park naming rights.
Until the mid-1960s, an island, known as Hall's Island existed across a narrow channel from the Scherer property. The island was eliminated by filling the channel and extending the mainland into the river to attract industrial barging. Fifty years passed and the vision for making the upper Mississippi River the head of commercial navigation was abandoned. Capitalizing on the interesting history of Hall’s Island, RiverFirst proposed reestablishment of the island as part of a comprehensive park and redevelopment vision for the property. Special legislation was granted in 2013 approving State permits to reestablish the island. In 2018, the island was re-established, and native vegetation planted. The island and adjacent channel were specially engineered and armored to accommodate normal river flows as well as periods of flooding.

The development concept for Graco Park is to establish a primary riverfront recreational destination with a diverse mix of attractions including a pebble beach, park pavilion with refreshments and visitor services, water recreation outfitting, lawn, strolling paths, a regional bike path, and a nature walk across the length of Hall’s Island accessed by pedestrian bridges across the newly-created channel. The park and island are designed to substantially enhance riverfront migratory, nesting, and feeding habitat. Park design improves river flood conditions through substantial regrading (see Figure 6.4).

In addition to everyday use, Graco Park will be a passive-space adjacent to Boom Island Park during crowd events. Pedestrian and bike paths will connect the two park spaces via the shoreline under the Plymouth Avenue Bridge.

**SHERIDAN MEMORIAL PARK**

Sheridan Memorial Park is a 3.5-acre riverfront site located on the former Grain Belt Brewery campus. The park is designed as an important recreational attraction that serves surrounding neighborhoods as well as regional visitors. Like all park destinations within the ATF Regional Park, Sheridan Memorial Park is interconnected up and down the riverfront with pedestrian paths and riverfront habitat. The park development concept includes a dramatic public art installation and river overlook plaza (constructed in 2014) memorializing actions of non-violence and peace within conflicts of war, nature-based play, regional bike path, lawn, strolling paths, a play court, stormwater treatment measures, and shoreline habitat enhancements.

The memorial was the first phase of park development completed in 2014. Some preparatory site work including soil remediation, grading and curbing were completed in late 2018. The next phase of construction in 2019 includes the play area, circulation paths, a shelter, basketball court and lawn. The City of Minneapolis and MPRB continue to coordinate adjustment to adjacent Water Street to best activate the park with future development at its edge.

**Figure 6.5 Proposed development plans for Sheridan Memorial Park**
EAST BANK TRAIL

The East Bank Trail includes pedestrian and bike connections on the east bank of the Mississippi River through the full length of ATF Regional Park from Plymouth Avenue on the south to the Camden Bridge on the north. Where space allows, pedestrian and bike trails will be separated facilities. The far northern segment of the trail from St. Anthony Parkway to the Camden Bridge has been in place for several decades. Unless land use changes allow for a riverfront trail through the Xcel Energy’s Riverside Power Plant from St. Anthony Parkway south to 28th Street NE, this segment of trail will be directly adjacent to Marshall Street NE. The remainder of the trail, except for short segments around existing development will be located away from Marshall Street and toward the river.

In 2017, the most recent segment of trail was constructed between Plymouth Avenue and the BNSF rail bridge through Graco Park, the Graco easement, Sheridan Memorial Park and former rail and utility easement. The trail was partially funded with a million-dollar grant from the Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (TCSP) of the US Federal Highway Administration.

UPPER HARBOR TERMINAL REDEVELOPMENT

The redevelopment of the 48-acre, city-owned Upper Harbor Terminal (UHT) offers a significant opportunity for both the MPRB and the City of Minneapolis. In 2013 when MPRB created the majority of the ATF Plan, the UHT was still an active barging terminal. MPRB defined some recommended adjustments to the 2000 ATF Plan, including additional park area at the southern end of the site. However, the City’s 2013 Above the Falls Master Plan Update defined an alternative boundary based on their assessment of redevelopment options. The two plans highlighted the challenge of designing either park land or development in isolation on such a narrow strip of land. In 2015 the City and MPRB embarked on a more collaborative process to examine the full possibilities of the site which is described in Appendix A.
NORTHEAST RIVERFRONT PARKS

The three existing riverfront parks on the east bank form a strong foundation for Above the Falls Regional Park. Over the long-term this plan envisions a continuous public park along the east bank. The MPRB continues to pursue acquisition of identified private parcels when available and, when not available for acquisition, to secure easements to allow the expansion of park uses along the river, especially trails. In the short-term, the focus in existing parks on the east bank will be to maintain what exists and to improve river access. Planned enhancements include public water access points and trail improvements. As new park land is acquired, park development will include separate trail connections for bicyclists and pedestrians, restoration of riverbanks and ravines, access to the riverbank for pedestrians and carry-in boaters, surface water management features and river overlooks (Figure 6.7).

As described in the City’s ATF Master Plan, existing restaurants along Marshall St. NE are seen as a benefit to park users and will be encouraged to remain. MPRB will seek trail easements where opportunities exist to make key connections.

Figure 6.7 RiverFirst Vision for Northeast Riverfront Parks

Figure 6.8 RiverFirst vision for parks in the Upper Harbor Terminal Area

The RiverFirst vision included a new wetland complex with habitat zones, trails, and public water access (above), and a large public gathering space for festivals. The park plan at the UHT and the adjacent land uses were further planned in the 2015 – 2019 process.
TRAIL LOOP SYSTEM

Central to the recreational concept for Above the Falls Regional Park is the creation of trail loops circumnavigating segments of the river. The trail loop vision includes continuous walking and biking trails along both banks of the river (roughly 6.3 miles of trail corridor) in addition to new or enhanced river crossings. The goal will be to separate walking from biking and other wheeled recreation using two parallel paved pathways. The ability to implement separated trails in all cases will be dependent on space availability, site constraints, and sometimes funding availability. River crossings with enhanced pedestrian and bike experiences are envisioned for the Broadway Avenue and Plymouth Avenue bridges while a new crossing is envisioned for the BNSF rail bridge. Cross-country ski trails (either informal or groomed) are also a consideration within the ATF Regional Park master planning process. Recognizing the difficult climate and logistical challenges and potential added maintenance demand, they should be fully vetted with each future park/corridor design effort to determine legitimacy.

Currently, 2.1 miles of the 6.3 miles of trail corridor have been constructed. On both the west and east banks, trails are in place between Plymouth Avenue and the BNSF rail corridor. While the west bank is constructed to achieve the goal of separated trails, the east bank trail is a combined-use trail due to space and funding constraints at the time of construction. Much of the east bank corridor, however, has the opportunity for conversion to separated trails with future reconstruction.

As in the past, expanded trail development and river crossings will be opportunistic; dependent on land assembly efforts and bridge investments. It is likely that a combination of dedicated trails and on-street segments will be the norm for some time to come until the full land assembly/trail development vision is achieved. Collaboration with the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, and some property owners will be essential to creating alternate routes in the intervening years before full build-out of trails can be achieved.
In the quest for continuous trails on both banks, one segment of trail planning remains allusive. This is the stretch of east bank trail through or alongside the Xcel Energy Riverside Generating Station. In the station’s current operational and security regime, a riverbank trail through the property (as suggested in the 2000 ATF Master Plan) has not been accepted by Xcel Energy. A trail on the opposite side of the site along Marshall Street (either within or outside the right-of-way) is also not currently feasible due to space constraints. As a workaround until the situation changes, this Master Plan recommends that the MPRB coordinate with the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County to provide on-street bikeway designation outside the park boundary on either Marshall Street or adjacent local streets or both.

**NATIONAL WATER TRAIL**

The section of the Mississippi River through the ATF Regional Park is within the vast length of the National Water Trail from Lake Itasca to the Gulf of Mexico. Use of the river for non-motorized boating continues to grow as individuals, groups and professional outfitters are recognizing the river as a fascinating recreational attraction. In support of an innovative paddle share program, the National Park Service and MPRB began a partnership in 2016 to locate boat lockers on MPRB property at intervals along the river and, where necessary, portage routes designated. Paddle Share lockers are currently located immediately upstream of the ATF Regional Park in North Mississippi Regional Park and immediately downstream in the Central Riverfront Regional Park.

In addition to those existing, several carry-in points (soft access) for canoes and kayaks are proposed for on both sides of the riverfront within ATF Regional Park. Wayfinding signage along the Mississippi River is also recommended to help users navigate the water trail and portage system.
Development of public water access points will depend on funding, property acquisition, existing utilities and regulatory permitting.
PARKWAY DEVELOPMENT AND PHASING STRATEGY

Unlike lakes, streams, and river corridors purchased by the MPRB prior to urbanization, the Mississippi River through north and northeast Minneapolis was already developed with industry when the Minneapolis Park Board was formed and began land acquisition in 1883. As a result, the Minneapolis Grand Rounds and associated parkway system has only barely touched the Above the Falls stretch of riverfront.

MPRB parkways are not located within public right-of-way. Rather, parkways are on parkland and an integral part of the park system’s package of recreational amenities. Parkways have also grown into a powerful urban design tool that places the park system at the community’s “front door”. This simple yet powerful approach to parkways used throughout Minneapolis’ development history has yielded a pattern of development that creates parkway addresses and drives the benefits of parks deep into surrounding neighborhoods.

West Bank

The extension of West River Parkway through the full length of ATF will establish the public-access spine for the west bank’s linear park as well as adjacent redevelopment. In variance to the 2000 ATF Master Plan, this plan proposes to keep most of West River Parkway directly within riverfront parkland, rather than peeling the parkway away from parkland and using it as a high-amenity street surrounded by development. This approach allows for parkway implementation independent from the readiness of adjacent redevelopment. It also ensures that future development will face, rather than turn its back to the park and the river.

As a current example of designing West River Parkway, the segment through Upper Harbor Terminal (Fig. 6.11) is being designed to act as an address for proposed adjacent development and a companion to bike/pedestrian trails as well as the linear park. The designed parkway location provides space for riverbank reshaping and green space interconnection between recreational destinations. This segment of parkway may accommodate limited truck traffic although the design is focused on minimizing intersections and encouraging development access from side streets. The parkway location at Upper Harbor Terminal is also an example of the inevitable give-and-take in balancing park development with adjacent redevelopment because a portion of the parkway is proposed to be separated from the river by development while the trail system remains at the riverfront. Upper Harbor Terminal will be a formative model for the next era of the Grand Rounds that addresses emerging understandings of circulation, recreation, urban ecology, cultural landscapes, community benefits, and the creation of welcoming public realm.

East Bank

The east bank of ATF Regional Park has different circumstances than the west bank. The east bank has several historic structures, active commercial properties, and high-density residential properties on or just off the river that can be expected to remain through the next generation regardless of how the park is developed. In addition, Marshall Street (a designated county trunk highway), which parallels the length of the park is relatively close to the riverfront, making the addition of a parkway a duplicative effort.

The combination of these factors leads to an east bank approach that relies on the existing street network to serve the park and act as the riverfront address rather than introduction of a parkway. The goal will be to influence future street
REGIONAL PARK BOUNDARY

1. DOWLING PLAZA
2. DOWLING AVE GREENING
3. BOARDWALK AND POTENTIAL WATER ACCESS
4. OUTDOOR MUSIC PERFORMANCE VENUE
5. RELICS PARK
6. THE HUB
7. WATERFRONT PARK
8. BEACH
9. PARK
10. PARKWAY
11. PHASE 1 DEVELOPMENT
12. FUTURE PHASE(S) DEVELOPMENT

Figure 6.11 Regional Park Boundary and Example Parkland Section at Upper Harbor Terminal
(Source: 2019 Upper Harbor Terminal Development Concept Plan)

*This park location will be confirmed in future planning phases.
investments (especially Marshall Street) in ways that cause them to take on the
design character of MPRB parkways and best balance the needs of multiple
modes of travel.

With this approach, neither a proposed parkway nor the existing street network
is within the park boundary on the east bank. Marshall Street touches the
boundary along much of its edge but is outside the park.

**CONNECTED ACTIONS OUTSIDE THE REGIONAL PARK**

The community’s vision for redevelopment in the greater plan area goes
beyond the creation and expansion of Above the Fall Regional Park. The 2000
ATF Master Plan, the City’s 2013 ATF Update, and RiverFirst all build on this vision
to support redevelopment, urban design, and connectivity in the surrounding
area. A number of the recommended implementation steps will have a positive
impact on the Regional Park and so are important to identify. These actions are
categorized in this regional park master plan as “connected actions” because
they are either located outside of the Regional Park boundary or will not be not
the focus of MPRB initiatives. Many of these connected actions are long-term
goals that will require extensive partnerships to plan, design, and implement.
Additional information can be found in the City’s 2013 Above the Falls Master
Plan Update.

**MARSHALL STREET ENHANCEMENTS**

Marshall Street NE forms the eastern edge of the Above the Falls Regional Park
boundary for nearly two-thirds of its length. The road and right-of-way sit fully
outside the proposed ATF Regional Park boundary. Marshall is a Hennepin
County roadway that is the primary north-south transportation corridor on
the east bank of the river. (Historically this very old corridor was known as the
Red River Ox Cart Trail.) It is also identified as a long-range bicycle commuter
route in the City of Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan. Currently the County has
no reconstruction plans for the roadway or sidewalks.

Streetscape enhancements to Marshall were identified as a community goal
in the 2000 ATF Plan, and in the County’s 2003 “A Design Development Plan
for The Marshall/Main Street Corridor” which supports the development of a
robust corridor for all modes of transportation. Such enhancements would
benefit ATF Regional Park users both in the short-term and long-term. However,
the County’s 2003 plan also identifies a need to acquire additional right-of-way
if the study’s recommendations are to be implemented. Given the MPRB’s need
to continue property acquisition for parks along the east bank, it is possible
that trail users could be directed to Marshall St. NE as an interim connection
between individual trail segments constructed in Northeast Riverfront Parks. At
the north end of ATF Regional Park, Marshall St. NE will be location of the final
segment connecting Above the Falls Regional Park to the St. Anthony Regional
Trail and the trail connection over the Camden Bridge.

As noted in the 2000 ATF Master Plan, there is limited right-of-way along
Marshall Street. Hennepin County has expressed concerns about the ability of
the roadway to accommodate not only automobile traffic and parking, but also
a trail, bike lane, and enhanced green boulevard on both sides of the street.
Hennepin County would lead any discussions among, stakeholder groups, the City of Minneapolis, and MPRB to determine how best to address the variety of functions for Marshall St. NE.

**RIVERWAY STREETS**

The 2000 ATF Master Plan and RiverFirst both identify the need for improved connections between the river and adjacent neighborhoods. A proposed system of “Riverway Streets” is intended to lead residents and visitors to riverfront parks. This system uses existing major thoroughfares with river crossing bridges, as well as existing local streets that provide the most direct routes across north and northeast Minneapolis. Regional routes on high traffic thoroughfares could receive enhancements oriented to vehicular way-finding, while local routes could receive improved facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. Employing a common palette of streetscape elements would identify the streets leading to and parallel with the river as a unified system. Especially important is the installation of signage specifically designed to direct people to upper riverfront parks. Some examples of Riverway Street elements would include:

- Directional signs to local parks
- Decorative pedestrian-level lighting
- Bicycle infrastructure
- Enhanced boulevard plantings
- Additional street tree plantings

Implementation of the Riverway Street system would be a City of Minneapolis initiative supported by a wide range of agency partners.

**FARVIEW PARK EXTENSION**

The Farview Park Extension is intended to reconnect the communities of North Minneapolis with the Mississippi River. The long-term vision in RiverFirst is to cap Interstate 94 with a land bridge featuring urban agriculture and public open space between 26th Ave North and 28th Ave North (Figure 6.12). Ultimately, according to the Park Board’s action in March, 2012, the intent is to cap up to one mile of the highway. Recognizing that the RiverFirst land bridge is a long-term goal that would exist outside the ATF Regional Park boundary, and would require significant public investment as well as extensive inter-agency partnership, this 2019 ATF Park Plan does not include it as a priority. In the near-term RiverFirst focuses on streetscape enhancements to the City’s planned reconstruction of 26th Ave North.

**PARKWAY LINK TO CAMDEN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT**

The Master Plan proposes extending West River Parkway along the entire length of the regional park’s west bank from the parkway’s current terminus at Ole Olson Park on the south to North Mississippi Regional Park on the north. Like Grand Rounds parkways elsewhere in the city, West River Parkway will act as a front door and parkway address to adjacent development and compel redevelopment to orient toward the public realm and Mississippi River rather than away from it. This simple but powerful use of parkways to put eyes on public space is significant to the achievement of the Minneapolis Grand Rounds system as an armature to Minneapolis’ development pattern and public space ethos.
The new West River Parkway will also create important symbolic and very real connections between the neighborhoods of north Minneapolis and the broader recreational, economic, and cultural amenities of the city. To realize West River Parkway’s full potential as connective urban tissue and as an economic tool, its northern extent will need to veer west, out of the Above the Falls Regional Park and into the Camden commercial district. There are two ways to accomplish the Camden connection.

- The first and most practical will require a short corridor of land acquisition outside the park boundary to connect with 41st Avenue North, which crosses over I-94 and into the Camden commercial district. From there, a parkway designation could be applied to two blocks of Lyndale Avenue before reaching Webber Parkway and thus, connecting to the broader Grand Rounds system.

- The second option is more aspirational but also more elegant. It would extend West River Parkway a short distance into North Mississippi River Regional Park before veering west to parallel Shingle Creek on direct alignment with Webber Parkway. The new parkway would travel under I-94 via expanded freeway and rail underpasses that currently serve Shingle Creek and create a new 4-way intersection at Webber Parkway and Lyndale Avenue. This option would obviously require infrastructure upgrades, but it would keep the parkway within regional parkland and adjacent to natural landscapes for its entire stretch. It would also create a compelling link between the Camden neighborhood and Mississippi River.

Figure 6.12 RiverFirst’s long-term vision for Farview Park Extension

Outside ATF Regional Park, the RiverFirst vision calls for a green “land-bridge” deck over I-94 with improved street connections to northside neighborhoods and a variety of sustainable uses. This is an ambitious, long-term vision that would require partnership among many agencies to implement. It is not a project that MPRB would initiate as part of ATF Regional Park development.
Node Development

As an urban infill park, Above the Falls Regional Park will be directly impacted by the character of the development that surrounds it. Of particular concern is the redevelopment that will occur around major street intersections or “nodes” adjacent to ATF Regional Park. On the west bank nodes occur at the Camden Bridge, Dowling Avenue North, Lowry Avenue, and Broadway. On the east bank nodes occur at Lowry Avenue, Broadway, and 8th Avenue NE. At each of these locations, the City’s 2013 ATF Plan Update calls for development that enhances and contributes to the nearby park amenities and programming. Site design guidelines encourage the preservation of river views and the use of private green spaces as visual extensions of public park land.

Land uses and private development at such nodes will be regulated and guided by the City of Minneapolis.

Comprehensive Signage and Wayfinding

Signage and wayfinding will meet the standards established in the 1999 Grand Rounds Scenic Byway Interpretive Master Plan. As park and trail development has occurred and future park development does occur in the ATF Regional Park, the MPRB’s signage and wayfinding standards will be applied. This package of standards includes custom signage and sign structures that direct visitors to parks and recreational facilities, mark trails, and provide safety and regulatory information. On-site signage will be linked with digital information using latest technology as segments of the park are built-out. Because trails on the east bank of the river through the park also have federal designation as the Mississippi River Trail, signage will reflect this designation.

Essential Visitor Services

For the Central Riverfront and ATF Regional Parks, the MPRB has established the following interval guidelines for essential visitor services as follows:

Restrooms (permanent or portable):
- At 10-minute walk intervals along the trail system
- At gathering spaces, food concessions and play areas

Drinking fountains and bottle filling stations:
- At 20-minute walk intervals along the trail system
- At gathering spaces, food concessions and play areas

Food/nourishment:
- Snacks and refreshments at least every 2 miles along both banks
- Destination food in at least one location on each bank

Sea Salt restaurant at Minnehaha Regional Park is a popular dining destination within the MPRB system
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