

# ABOVE THE FALLS

## REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN

DECEMBER 2019



**Minneapolis**  
Park & Recreation Board

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# Acknowledgements

The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board is grateful to the many individuals, organizations, consultants, and agency staff who contributed to this regional park plan. The 2019 Updated ATF Plan was developed by MPRB along with a coordinated planning effort with the City of Minneapolis, and the designated Developer (United Properties, THOR Companies, and First Avenue Productions). Community engagement and inter-agency coordination through the RiverFirst Initiative, Upper Harbor Terminal planning efforts and the Above the Falls Small Area Plan were instrumental, and included:

- *The General Public*
- *City of Minneapolis*
- *Hennepin County*
- *University of Minnesota*
- *National Park Service*
- *Friends of the Mississippi River*
- *Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership*
- *US Army Corps of Engineers*
- *Minnesota Department of Natural Resources*
- *Minnesota Historical Society*
- *Minnesota Department of Transportation*
- *Mississippi Watershed Management Organization*
- *Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board*

## Notes about this document

The final draft *Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan* (ATF Park Plan) was revised based on public review and comment after a 45-day comment period. This December 2019 draft will be presented to the Park Board for approval. Following this, the ATF Park Plan will be presented to the Minneapolis City Council, and to the Metropolitan Council and its committees for approval. Each stage will include opportunity for public comment.

This ATF Regional Park Plan was developed by the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board in parallel to the *Above the Falls Master Plan Update* led by the City of Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development in collaboration with the City of Minneapolis Department of Health and the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board. The ATF Park Plan's chapter divisions and content are intended to fulfill Metropolitan Council requirements for regional park master plans. Also referenced are guiding principles and vision goals that are related to the City's plan but not central to this regional park master plan. These are described here as "Connected Actions," in recognition of their importance as context to Above the Falls Regional Park.

This plan has been prepared under the direction and leadership of the following Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board personnel.

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More information about this plan and the planning process is available here:

**[https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park\\_care\\_improvements/park\\_projects/current\\_projects/above-the-falls-regional-park-master-plan-update/](https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park_care_improvements/park_projects/current_projects/above-the-falls-regional-park-master-plan-update/)**

Drafted and edited by:



**Hoisington Koegler Group**





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**DRAFT based on public comment: December 2019**

For more information about the Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan and the planning process, please visit:

**[https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park\\_care\\_improvements/park\\_projects/current\\_projects/above-the-falls-regional-park-master-plan-update/](https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park_care_improvements/park_projects/current_projects/above-the-falls-regional-park-master-plan-update/)**





Much of the parks development vision is based on *RiverFirst*, a competition-winning design that was enriched by deep community engagement in 2011.



MPRB's purchase and cleanup of the Scherer Bros. site was facilitated by Metropolitan Council Regional Park funds and Hennepin County Emergency Response Funds, combined with MPRB capital funds. Such partnerships are critical to implementing the regional park vision.



Wilderness Inquiry

Parks programming and access to the river are enhanced through collaboration with the National Park Service, Wilderness Inquiry and other organizations.

The **Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan** (2019 ATF Park Plan) will guide parkland acquisition, park development and management for the areas along both sides of the upper Mississippi riverfront in Minneapolis between the Plymouth Avenue Bridge and the Camden Bridge. This 2019 ATF Park Plan is based on two plans previously adopted by the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) and on extensive public engagement over many months. The plan describes a sustainable balance of recreation, ecology and culture within ATF Regional Park. Strategies for project implementation and park management are presented, including costs and maintenance practices.

Eventually, ATF Regional Park will connect North Mississippi Regional Park and the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park, creating a continuous regional park system along the upper Mississippi River. This 2019 ATF Park Plan shows how land acquisition and parks development can create new destinations for park visitors, expand access to the river and enhance natural resources. As Because ATF Regional Park is an urban-infill park, acquisition of park land will occur incrementally over time, depending on funding and as purchase and easement opportunities arise through MPRB's engagement with willing sellers.

## NEED FOR PLAN UPDATE

ATF Regional Park was established in 2000 with the *Above the Falls: A Master Plan for the Upper River in Minneapolis* (2000 ATF Plan). In 2007, MPRB implemented ATF Phase I on the west bank from Plymouth Ave. North to 22nd Ave. North. In 2011, the City of Minneapolis began a process to update the 2000 ATF Plan. Finally, in 2012, MPRB approved the parks vision in *RiverFirst: A Park Design Proposal and Implementation Plan for the Minneapolis Upper Riverfront* (RiverFirst), a long-term vision for the upper river. This 2019 Above the Falls Park Master Plan was updated to reflect these plans and other evolving opportunities and priorities.

The 2019 ATF Park Plan renews the vision of the original 2000 ATF Plan and integrates elements of ATF Phase I and RiverFirst, both of which share the original plan's focus on "developing the Mississippi riverfront into a regional park amenity." The revised plan casts long-term parks goals centered on an exceptional recreational and environmental resource – the Mississippi River. 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.

One key difference between the 2000 ATF Plan and this 2019 ATF Park Plan centers on the west bank. The 2000 ATF Plan envisioned a dense neighborhood of new high-rise, mixed-use buildings with a formal, hardened promenade along the river's edge and a separate West River Parkway inland from these blocks. Implementation was to come via massive public buyout programs and 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 available to MPRB and the City of Minneapolis. Instead, this plan adopts the RiverFirst parks vision for the area and returns to the 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



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economic development to evolve independent of yet strengthened by the amenities that such parks create. Implementation of the 2019 ATF Park Plan will be a long-term, incremental prospect requiring patience and consistent policy-making. Property and easement acquisition for parks and trails will require the on-going cooperative efforts of the MPRB, the City, private land owners, non-profit partners and especially the Metropolitan Council.

## **ATF PARK PLAN 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.

### ***Meaningfully 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.



*MPRB's strategy for property acquisition is to engage only with willing sellers, incrementally adding parkland along the river. One key property is the 48-acre, City-owned Upper Harbor Terminal. At other large industrial properties, MPRB will pursue interim trail easements in the near-term.*

## IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES

### ***Engage Actively and Continuously in Land Assembly.***

The ATF Master Plan will only be achieved if riverfront parkland is methodically placed in public trust through a combination of acquisition, easements, or forms of partnership over a period of years – this is job #1 of ATF Master Plan implementation.

### ***Develop Linear Recreation.***

Continue to implement the parkway and trail system, including key river crossings (especially the BNSF rail bridge). Linear recreation will be instrumental in fulfilling the vision and establishing an activated constituency for ATF Regional Park.

### ***Complete the Design Vision for Park Spaces Currently Under Development.***

Graco Park/Hall's Island, Sheridan Memorial Park, 26th Avenue North Overlook, and Upper Harbor Terminal are active projects at time this master plan is being authored and they warrant fulfillment.

### ***Develop New Park Spaces and Facilities.***

As land is protected and as resources allow, construct parks using a few key strategies as guideposts.

#### ***Smart Park Development is a Staged Activity.***

Stage one in establishing activated and beloved public spaces is creating ways for people to access them, spend time in them, and weave them into the stories of their lives. Accomplishing this task should always be top-of-mind in park investment decisions. Too much development before a constituency exists results in squandered resources. Too little results in low visitation and a constituency not being created.

#### ***Program Parks Appropriately.***

Integral to the act of designing a park is creating its program model; one that strikes the appropriate balance between organized programming and non-programming of spaces and times.

### ***Get People on the River.***

Nearly two-thirds of the ATF Regional Park is Mississippi River. There is tremendous capacity for expansion of recreational water access and activities.

### ***Care for Park Assets.***

Land and park facilities demand financial and staffing resources at robust levels necessary to accomplish continuous care.

### ***Pursue Connected Actions Outside Park Boundary.***

Ideas about the I-94 lid, Marshall Street improvements, and a link to the Camden commercial district fall outside the purview of this master plan, will be instrumental to the park's future success and should continue to receive attention and resources.



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## NEAR-TERM REGIONAL PARK PRIORITIES

In the near future, MPRB will focus resources on properties it already owns, including but not limited to the following:

- Continued MPRB assembly of parkland within the regional park boundary.
- Implementation of interim parkland management strategies.
- Implementation of the 26th Avenue North overlook.
- Continued programming and stewardship of existing park land
- Continued development of Graco Park on the Scherer Bros. site and establishment of habitat on the new Hall's Island
- Partnership with the City of Minneapolis to transition the 48-acre Upper Harbor Terminal from industrial uses to new parks and other uses, including phased development of West River Parkway
- Continued improvements to Sheridan Memorial Park
- Continued development of ADA-compliant Public Water Access points

## LONG-TERM PRIORITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Some long-term priorities in this 2019 Park Plan fall outside regional park lands currently owned by MPRB, will require much more stakeholder engagement, and will depend on partnerships and resources still in cultivation. These include:

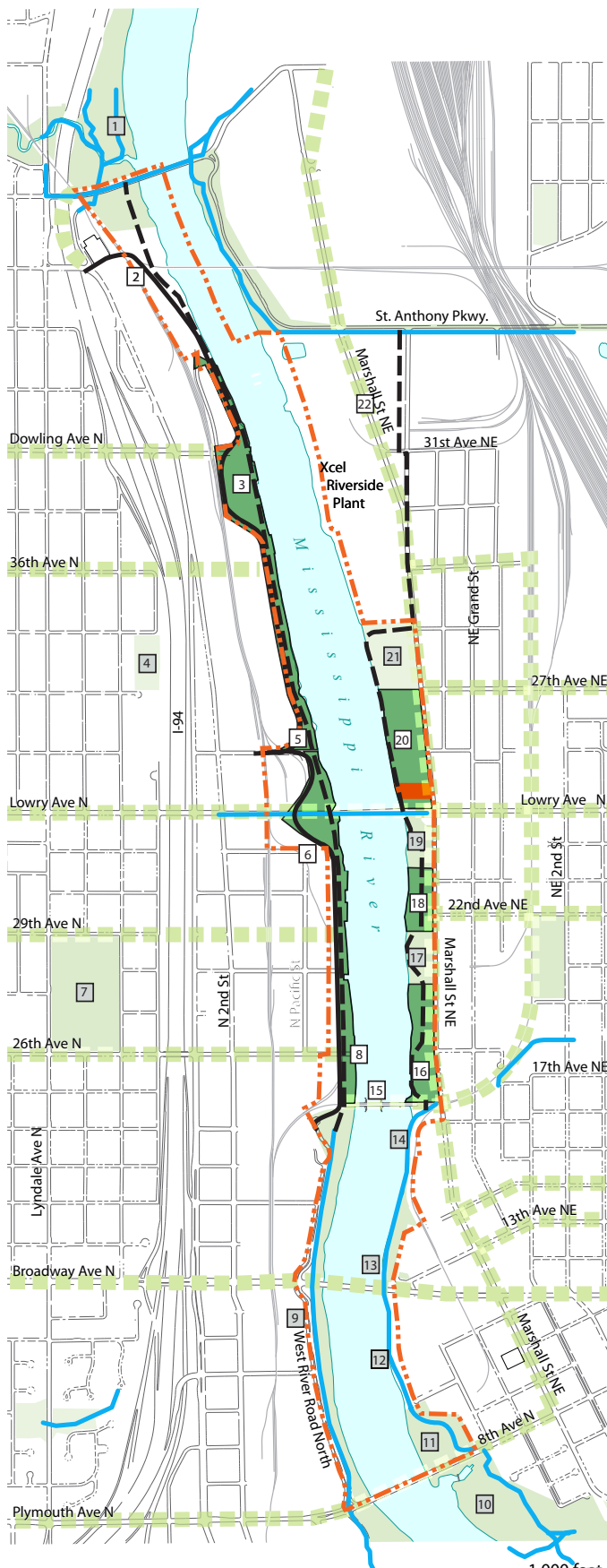
- Extension of West River Parkway between 22nd Ave North and 41st Ave North along the west bank, requiring acquisition of many privately and publicly owned parcels
- Development of Northside riverfront parks with connections to northside neighborhoods
- Continued coordination with the City and County to improve Marshall Street NE as a parkway-like corridor for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Development of Northeast riverfront parks and trails, as land acquisitions and funding allow
- With the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County, pursuit of bike/ped trail development rights on the BNSF rail bridge across the river.
- Continued MPRB assembly of parkland within the regional park boundary.
- Preparation of acquired lands for park development.



*Improving existing riverbank access points, such as at Marshall Terrace Park, is a modest yet important near-term priority of the Regional Park plan.*



*The long-term vision includes improved river crossings. One example is acquisition and conversion of the BNSF rail bridge, a specific goal shared by the City of Minneapolis.*



### Legend

- Regional Park Boundary
- Riverway Street
- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trail Connections
- Proposed Parkway
- Proposed Parkland
- Parkland
- Mississippi Watershed Management Organization

0.5 Miles

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."

- 1 North Mississippi Regional Park (existing)
- 2 West River Parkway Extension
- 3 Park Trails
- 4 Perkins Hill Park (existing)
- 5 Upper Harbor Terminal parkway and riverfront park
- 6 West River Parkway Extension
- 7 Farview Park (existing)
- 8 26th Ave N Overlook
- 9 West River Road North (existing)
- 10 Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park (existing)
- 11 Scherer Brothers Park Site (Graco Park)
- 12 East Bank Trail
- 13 Sheridan Memorial Park (existing)
- 14 East Bank Trail
- 15 BNSF Rail Bridge
- 16 Northeast Riverfront Park
- 17 Gluek Park (existing)
- 18 Northeast Riverfront Park
- 19 Edgewater Park (existing)
- 20 Northeast Riverfront Park
- 21 Marshall Terrace Park (existing)
- 22 East Bank Trail (easement required)

## FLOOD ZONES

Figure E.1 Above the Falls Regional Park development plan



# SECTION 1

## Planning Framework





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## INTENT

The upper reach of the Mississippi River through Minneapolis is on the cusp of a renaissance. Over the past few decades, land uses have been transitioning from predominantly heavy industry to an influx of jobs, housing, arts/design/culture, and entertainment. Environmental contamination is being remediated. Industrial transport on the river has ceased. Recreational use of the river is increasing. And there is growing focus on activating the riverfront as dynamic public realm.

In 2000, the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board and City of Minneapolis pointed the way with the visionary Above the Falls Master Plan, which was a combined park and urban redevelopment plan for the future of Minneapolis' upper river corridor. The 2000 plan expressed a vision for converting the riverfront from numerous private backlots to a contiguous ribbon of public parkland on both banks that serves as an address to adjacent redevelopment and the community's front yard. The plan set the stage for establishing the Above the Falls Regional Park as the MPRB's newest addition to its collection of regional parks.

This master plan document is an update to the 2000 master plan. Consistent with MN Statute 473.313 compelling regional park implementing agencies (including the MPRB) to establish and regularly update regional park master plans and submit them to the Metropolitan Council for authorization. This plan was crafted to meet the requirements of the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan <http://www.metrocouncil.org/parks/parks.htm>. Unlike the 2000 plan, this document is exclusively a park plan. It has been closely coordinated with but doesn't address land use guidance, which is under the jurisdiction of the City of Minneapolis. The plan is an aspirational as well as practical and strategic document intended to guide land assembly, park development/preservation, and park operations & maintenance activities within the boundary of the park for the next 15+/- years. The plan reflects inherent qualities and context of the park's urban riverfront setting in combination with community values and recreational interests. The plan is formulated in the context of multiple rounds of community engagement including a formal public comment period and public hearing through which comments have been received, documented and, to the extent warranted, incorporated into the document.

## MISSISSIPPI REGIONAL CORRIDOR CRITICAL AREA (MRCCA)

The Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) is a state-designated land corridor along 72 miles of the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities Metropolitan, including the 2.75 miles within the Above the Falls Master Plan project boundary between North Mississippi Regional Park and the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park. The master plan area is within the CA-Urban Mixed (UM) zone, which includes "commercial, institutional, and industrial mixed-use areas as well as parks and recreational areas."

Per Minnesota Statutes, section 116G.15, subd. 1, the purpose of the designation is to:

- 1.) Protect and preserve the Mississippi River and adjacent lands that the legislature finds to be unique and valuable state

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and regional resources for the benefit of the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the state, region, and nation;

2.) Prevent and mitigate irreversible damages to these state, regional, and natural resources;

3.) Preserve and enhance the natural, aesthetic, cultural, and historical values of the Mississippi River and adjacent lands for public use and benefit;

4.) Protect and preserve the Mississippi River as an essential element in the national, state, and regional transportation, sewer and water, and recreational systems; and

5.) Protect and preserve the biological and ecological functions of the Mississippi River corridor.



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Per State Rules MR 6106.0010 – 6106.0180, local governments in the corridor must complete a MRCCA plan as part of their comprehensive plans. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) works under the purview of the City of Minneapolis' ordinances. The City of Minneapolis is in the process of completing its zoning ordinances and they are nearly complete, but have not been fully finalized. MPRB, however, was a reviewer of the City's proposed rules during the process and we anticipate that improvements envisioned in the ATF Plan will meet the MRCCA zoning requirements. The city's finalized language and the guidance in this master plan will serve as the driving guidance for the planning, design, and implementation of existing and future park land within the MRCCA jurisdictional area.

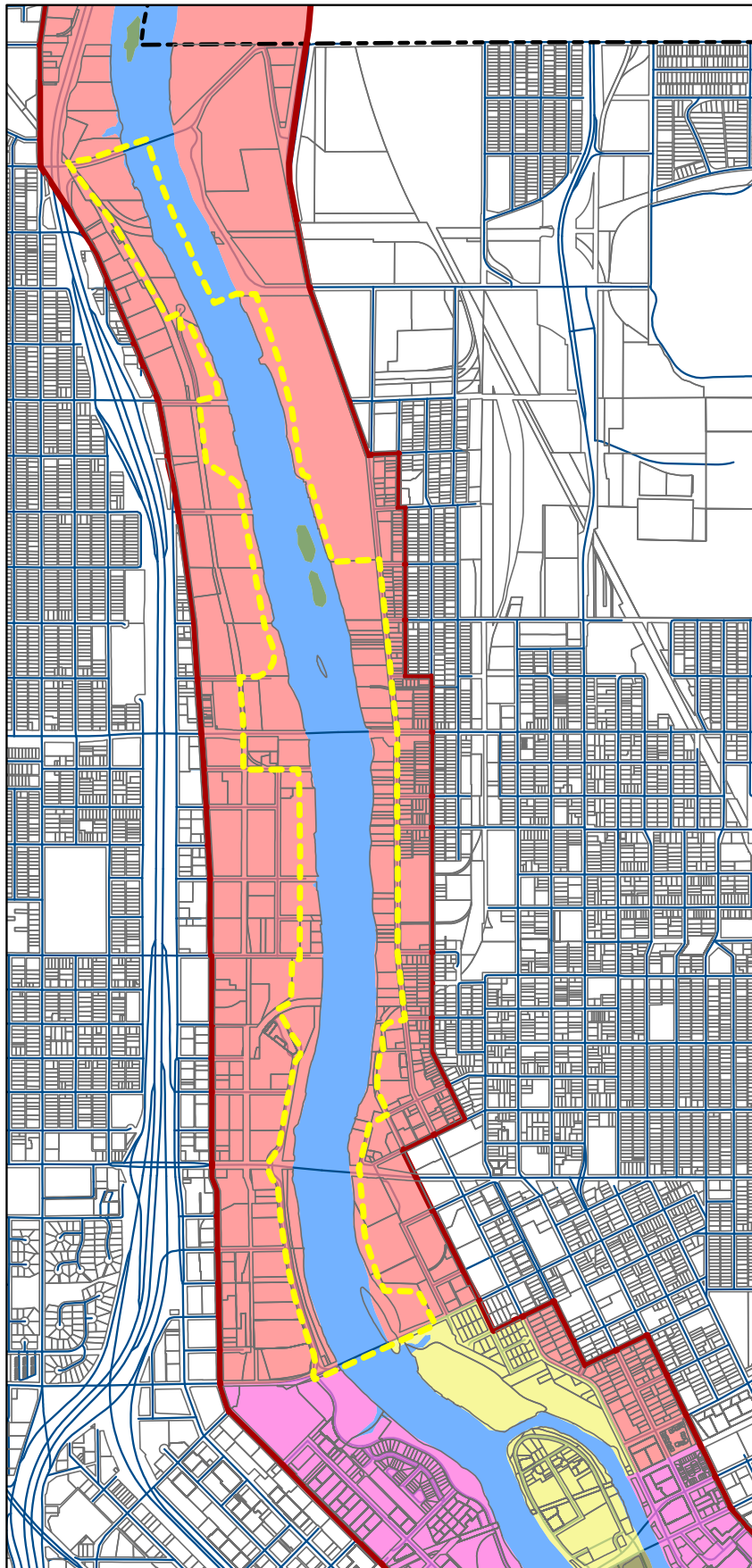
The Above the Falls Master Plan will meet State Rules MR 6106.0010 – 6106.0180 that will include:

- The addition of park land, green space, and natural areas where there is currently none
- Restoration of the shoreline throughout the entire project area
- Increasing the addition of ecological and habitat connections
- Decreasing the amount of buildings and nonpermeable surfaces
- Any new public facilities will be consistent with best management practices and protect primary conversation areas

This master plan also acknowledges the standards and criteria set forth in the State Statute that establish guidelines for the preservation, protection, and management of lands within the MRCCA. These standards apply to public facilities, private facilities, vegetation management, land alteration and storm water management, subdivision and land development, and exemptions.

The Above the Falls Master Plan recognizes that the design and construction of trail facilities must comply with the standards contained in Minn. Rules 6106.0130. This master plan also acknowledges that trails and trail facilities must be designed and constructed in a manner that protects primary conservation areas and public river corridor views.





## Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area

### Legend

- Above the Falls Regional Park Boundary
- MRCCA Boundary
- Parcels
- Minneapolis City Limits
- River
- MRCCA Districts**
  - CA-River Neighborhood (RN)
  - CA-Rural Open Space (ROS)
  - CA-River Town Crossings (RTC)
  - CA-Separated Form River (SR)
  - CA-Urban Core (UC)
  - CA-Urban Mixed (UM)



0.5

Miles

Sources: City of Minneapolis,  
Hennepin County, MnDNR, MPRB



## PLANNING AGENCIES

### METROPOLITAN REGIONAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Regional parks are developed in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area to preserve green space for wildlife habitat and provide a wide-range of natural resource-related recreational opportunities. Established in 1974, the Regional Parks and Open Space System is overseen by the Metropolitan Council in partnership with cities, counties, and special park districts. While the operation of the system is the responsibility of cities, counties, and special park districts, the Metropolitan Council supports it with planning, funding, and advocacy. In 2012, the system includes 51 regional parks and park reserves, 308 miles of 38 regional trails, and seven special recreation features.

MPRB's planning time frame for this ATF Parks Plan is through the year 2030, corresponding with the Metropolitan Council's (Met Council) 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan. To maintain accuracy and relevancy, the ATF Parks Plan should be updated at least every 10 years. This Master Plan is consistent with both the 2030 and 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plans. Plan approval by the Met Council is necessary to be eligible for regional parks system capital funding for land acquisition and development. Required plan elements addressed in this master plan include:

- Boundaries and acquisition costs
- Plan for stewardship
- Demand forecast
- Development concept
- Conflicts
- Public services
- Operations
- Citizen participation
- Public awareness
- Accessibility
- Natural resources management



#### MPRB SYSTEM:

- 6,809 acres of land and water
- 180 park properties
- 55-mile Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway
- Ranked annually since 2013 as the #1 park system in the nation by The Trust for Public Land

### MINNEAPOLIS PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board manages one of the most extensive urban park systems in the United States. The Minneapolis Park System has grown to over 6,800 acres of land and water in 180 park properties, including local and regional parks, playgrounds, golf courses, gardens, picnic areas, biking and walking paths, and nature sanctuaries. The system includes the 55-mile Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway. It is overseen by a nine-member Board of Commissioners which is an independently elected, semi-autonomous body responsible for maintaining and developing the system. MPRB provides

planning, programming, maintenance, and police protection for the park and recreational facilities in its jurisdiction. The MPRB works cooperatively with the Metro Council, the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, State Legislature and nine other implementing agencies to operate the regional park system.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board was created in 1883 by an act of the Minnesota State Legislature and vote by Minneapolis residents. The mission of the MPRB is to permanently preserve, protect, maintain, improve and enhance its natural resources, parkland and recreational opportunities for current and future generations. The MPRB exists to provide places and recreation opportunities for all people to gather, celebrate, contemplate, and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community, and the environment.

The 2007-2020 MPRB Comprehensive Plan sets the vision and direction for the park and recreation system. A key implementation strategy is to “Continue to expand physical access to the Mississippi River in a manner that is aesthetically compatible with the riverfront and sensitive to ecological function, giving priority to implementing the Above the Falls Master Plan” (p. 24). This 2019 Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan is an important step in realizing that strategy.

## PREVIOUS PLANNING

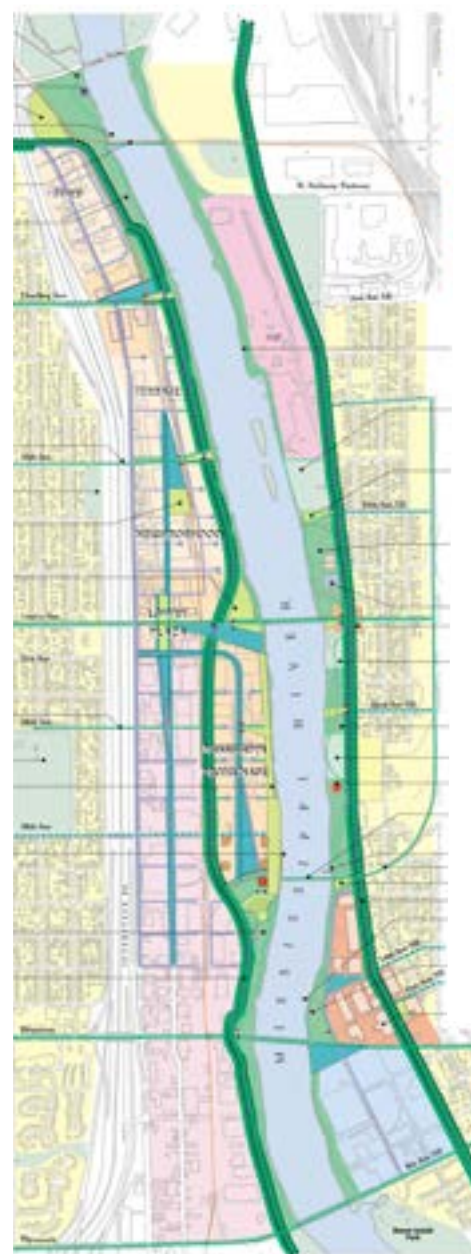
### ABOVE THE FALLS MASTER PLAN (2000)

Above the Falls: A Master Plan for the Upper River in Minneapolis (2000 ATF Plan) articulates the city’s vision for the upper Mississippi River. The plan was adopted in 2000 by both the City Council and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB). Among other goals, the plan envisioned the development of the upper Mississippi riverfront into a regional park amenity. The plan was approved by the Metropolitan Council to establish Above the Falls Regional Park in 2000. The 2000 plan addresses more than park and open spaces; it seeks complementary redevelopment of areas adjacent to ATF Regional Park to capitalize on the River’s charms which are currently relatively unavailable to area residents and visitors. The 2000 ATF Plan articulated the following objectives, which continue to apply to this master plan update:

- Provide public access to the river through a continuous system of riverfront parks and trails
- Create a system of Riverway Streets to link the adjacent neighborhoods to the river
- Enhance the ecological function of the river corridor
- Link the upper River to the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway
- Realize the area’s potential for economic development
- Establish urban design guidelines for future development

### IMPLEMENTATION TO-DATE

Since the Above the Falls Regional Park was established and original master plan adopted in 2000, progress toward park implementation has been made.



*Figure 1.2 Above the Falls Master Plan adopted by City of Minneapolis and MPRB in 2000*



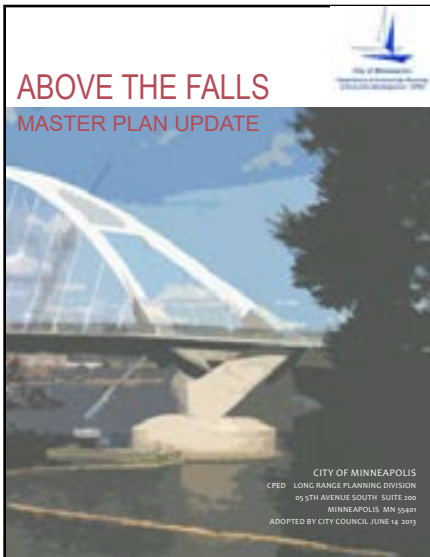
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In addition, non-park investments have been made within and outside the park boundary that impact the park and the way people engage with it. A compilation of the significant improvements is illustrated in Figure 1.3 and generally described below.

**Land Assembly.** Roughly 64 acres of the 140 upland acres (45%) within the ATF Regional Park boundary is currently under MPRB ownership through fee title or easement. In Addition, the MPRB is working toward an agreement with the City of Minneapolis to assume ownership of roughly 20 acres of the Upper Harbor Terminal property as parkland. Often associated with land assembly is the cleanup and demolition of acquired properties, which often have buildings to be removed and require some level of environmental remediation. The MPRB has created an internal real estate staffing position to manage the pursuit of land assembly opportunities and demands.

**Park & Trail Development.** Roughly 40 acres of parkland has been developed for recreational and ecological uses with the ATF Regional Park. Some of these lands, such as Hall's Island and Sheridan Memorial Park are in the midst of multi-year phases of park development while others such as Gluek Park and Marshall Terrace Park are generally built out. Trail extensions happen in stages as land is assembled with the most current example being the East Bank Trail from Plymouth Avenue to the BNSF rail bridge.

**Current Pursuits.** The MPRB is actively pursuing additional land assembly and park development within ATF Regional Park. While land assembly efforts are often private discussions, the Upper Harbor Terminal is an example of one that is public. Active park development efforts include 26th Avenue North Overlook, Graco Park, Upper Harbor Terminal and others.



## NEED FOR A PLAN UPDATE

In 2009, the Minneapolis City Council renewed its commitment to this area by directing City planning staff to pursue a review and update of the 2000 ATF Plan. Led by the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development, the City's Above the Falls Master Plan Update was adopted by City Council in 2013. At the same time, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board initiated a high-profile and ambitious initiative to refresh the park vision for the same area, resulting in *RiverFirst: A Park Design Proposal and Implementation Plan for the Minneapolis Upper Riverfront* (RiverFirst). These combined efforts (along with subsequent implementation and developments since then) have informed the MPRB's creation of this Above the Falls Regional Park Plan.

## THE 2013 ABOVE THE FALLS SMALL AREA PLAN BY THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

The City's 2013 ATF Update renewed the vision of the original 2000 ATF Plan, focusing on guiding land use while "developing the Mississippi riverfront into a regional park amenity in north and northeast Minneapolis." The plan supports new investment and improved environmental quality - leveraging the unique and valuable asset that is the Mississippi River.

The 2013 ATF Update differs from the original 2000 ATF Plan in some areas by recommending changes to land use guidance based on extensive market-

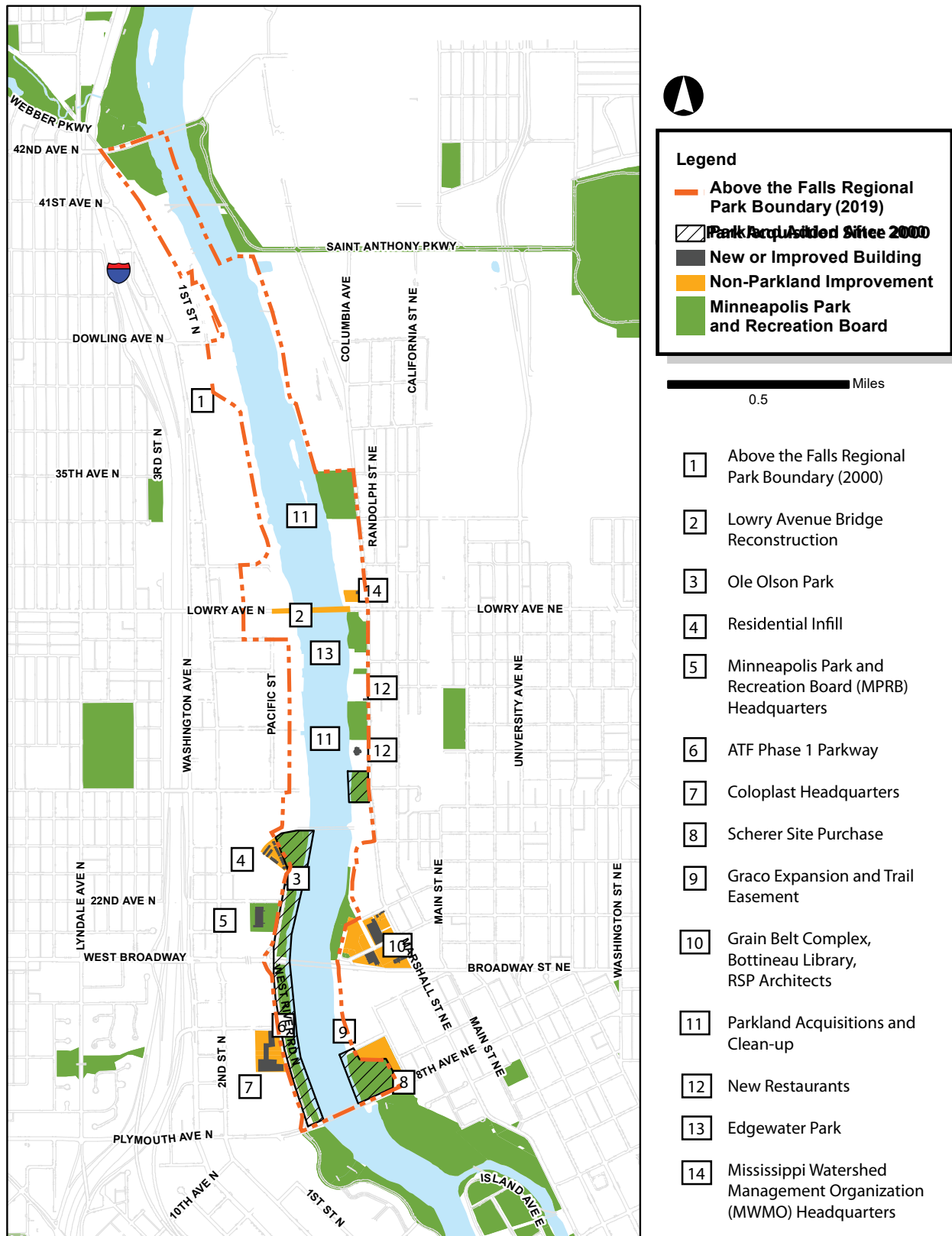


Figure 1.3 Implementation steps and other development completed since the 2000 ATF plan





*The RiverFirst vision was approved by MPRB in March, 2012, following an international design competition and many months of community engagement.*

feasibility analysis and community engagement. The plan affirmed a renewed appreciation for some uses that were initially dismissed in the original plan. It also articulated a more robust implementation section strategy with clearer action steps. The plan recognized that the vision must be realistic and achievable within a given time frame. While the City's 2013 ATF Plan Update supported the long-term view of the original 2000 ATF Plan, it focused more attention on near-term implementation, some of which has already been accomplished.

## RIVERFIRST

RiverFirst is a long-term vision for transformation of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis beyond its historically industrial roots to address contemporary opportunities including new forms of recreation that engage the river, ecological stewardship, mobility, and a green economy that employs local residents. Within this sweeping vision is a set of design recommendations for phased parks development, in particular along the upper Mississippi River.

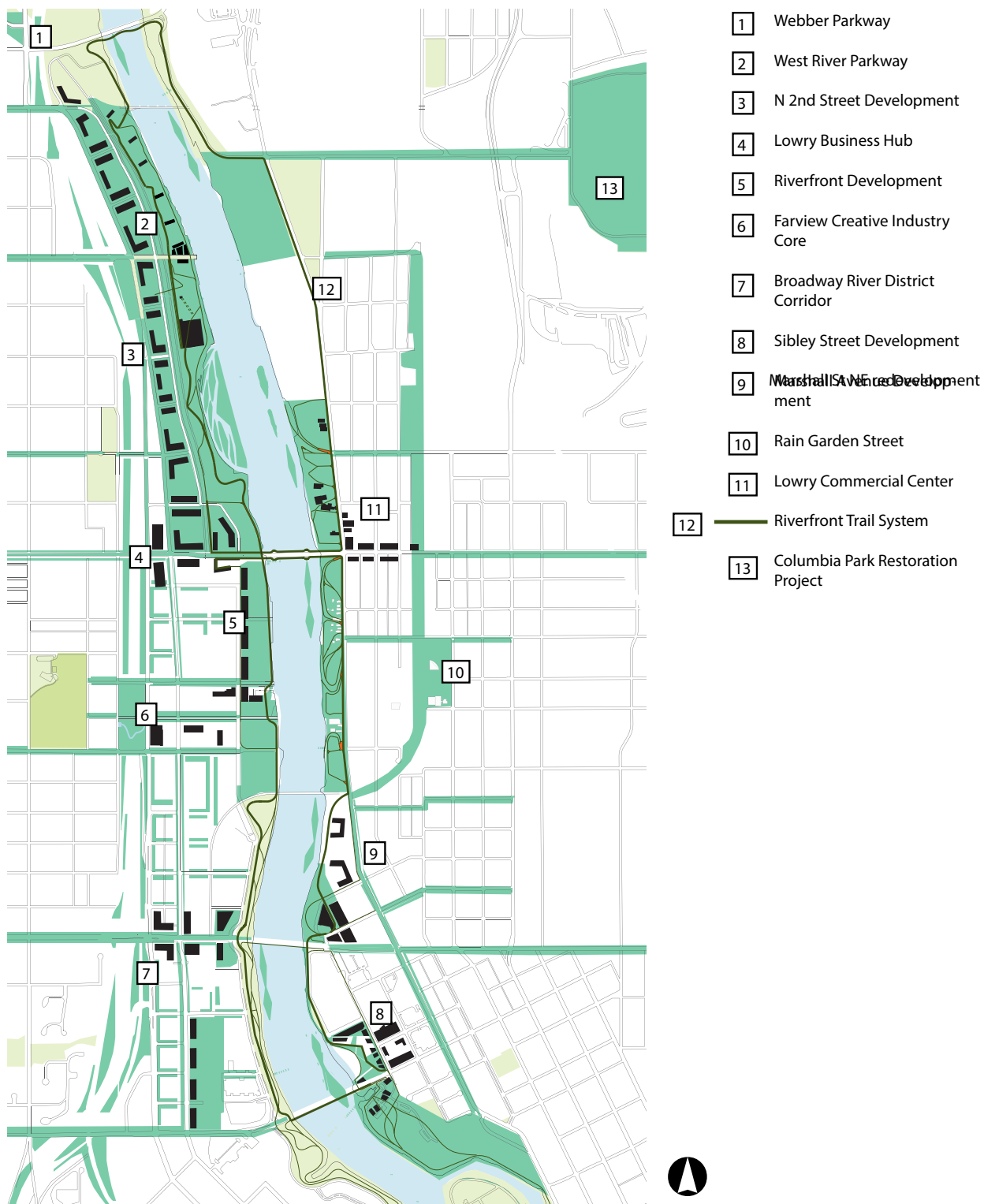
The RiverFirst vision for parks along the upper Mississippi was approved by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board on March 14, 2012, following an international design competition and subsequent visioning process led by design team TLS/KVA in 2011. This gave rise to the RiverFirst Initiative, an interagency partnership of MPRB, the City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Parks Foundation focused on realizing the RiverFirst vision by implementing priority projects.

Since initiating RiverFirst, there has been some justifiable confusion about the relationship between it and the Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan. The ATF Regional Park Master Plan (like other regional park master plans) is adopted policy of the MPRB used to guide the organization's actions and investments within the park's boundary. RiverFirst is the brand of an ongoing community call-to-action for transforming Minneapolis' upper riverfront from private shoreline to public parkland with adjacent redevelopment. It suggests park and other public space investments across two regional parks (ATF and Central Riverfront) and investments within but also beyond regional park boundaries.

Figure 1.4 shows RiverFirst's long-term vision, which goes beyond parks, stormwater management and trails to address larger urban design issues by envisioning the growth of creative industries, commercial amenities, and residential communities in a way that reinforces both the RiverFirst initiatives and the City's redevelopment goals.

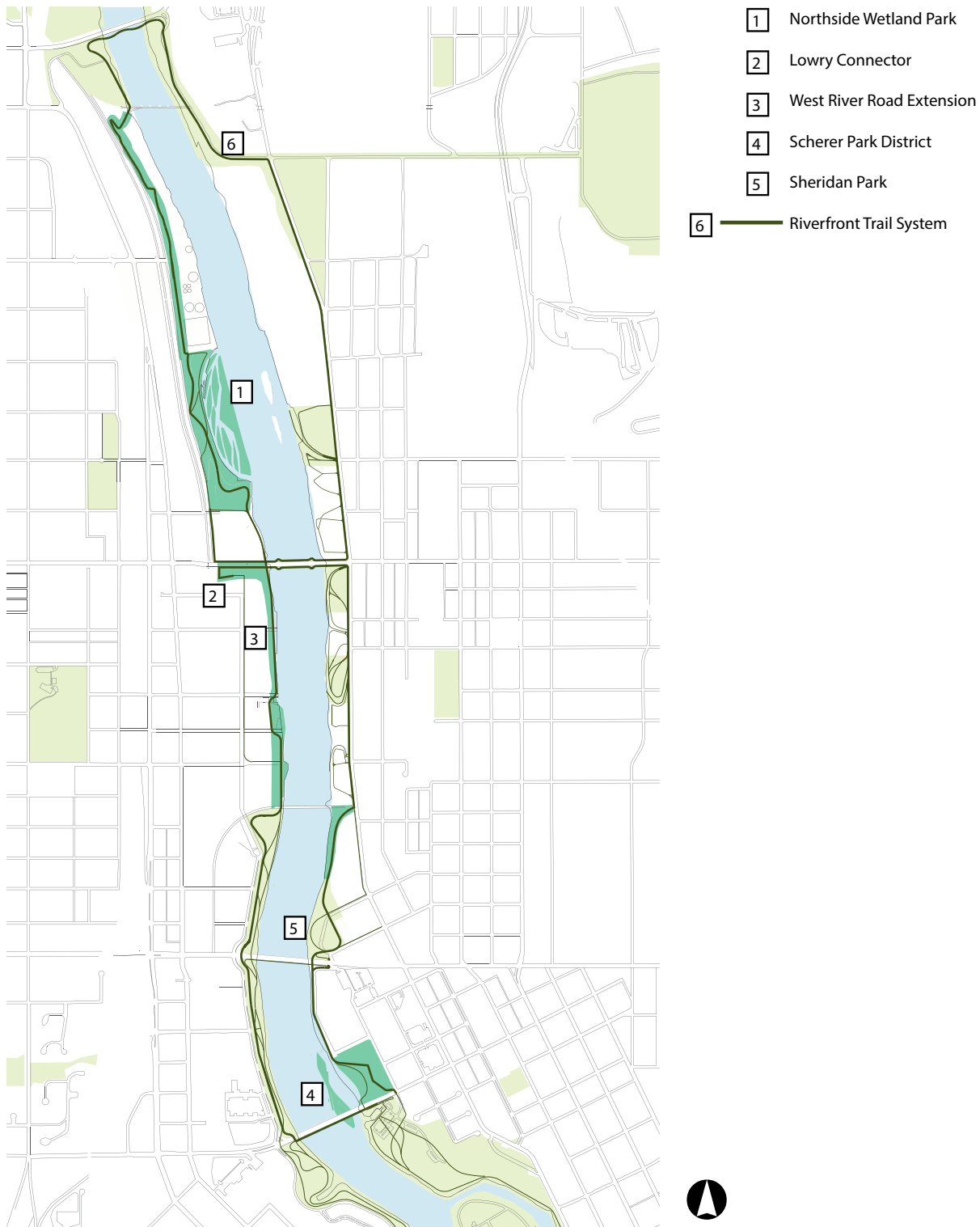
Figure 1.5 summarizes RiverFirst's near-term vision for parks, stormwater management, and trails -- particularly those within the ATF Regional Park boundary.

Many components of the RiverFirst park vision have been integrated with elements from the 2000 ATF Plan to inform this updated 2019 ATF Park Plan Update. See Section 6: Park Development Concept for more details.



**Figure 1.4 RiverFirst long-term urban design vision (2012)**

*This expansive vision extends far beyond the ATF Regional Park boundary, and addresses many urban development issues in addition to park development.*



**Figure 1.5 RiverFirst 5-year vision for parks development (2012)**

*Components of this near-term parks vision have been integrated with this 2019 ATF Park Plan.*





# SECTION 2

## Park Background

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## LOCATION, HISTORY, AND CONTEXT

The Above the Falls Regional Park surrounds and includes 2.75 miles of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis. The park extends from the Plymouth Avenue bridge on the south to the Camden Bridge on the north. In Minneapolis, this reach of the river is known as the “upper river”. As illustrated in Figure 2.1, ATF is one of a series of regional parks encompassing the entirety of the Mississippi River’s reach through Minneapolis. To the north of ATF are North Mississippi Regional Park and St. Anthony Parkway Regional Trail and to its south are the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park, Mississippi Gorge Regional Park, and Minnehaha Falls Regional Park as well as Fort Snelling State Park.

Land uses in the upper river corridor have evolved since western settlement in response to resource availability, market forces, technology and changing forms of transportation. Until the past twenty years, the constant thread across 140 years of change had been the goal of leverage the Mississippi River as a transportation resource in support of an upper river industrial economy. The district was first developed with lumber milling, foundries, breweries, and some agriculture to capitalize on its location just up-stream from St. Anthony Falls. As rail transport matched river transport in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, rail yards and support facilities were located on both riverbanks above the falls and new rail bridges were constructed across the river. Lumber milling and foundries gave way to metal recycling, retailing, technology, and industrial storage.

In support of industry and after decades of lobbying by city leaders, a pair of locks were constructed at St. Anthony Falls in the 1960s to push the head of Mississippi River navigation upstream from Saint Paul to the Minneapolis upper river. Preparation for barge transport lead to armoring much of the upper river shoreline, giving it the industrial character seen today. Preparation also prompted the City of Minneapolis to construct the publicly owned Upper Harbor Terminal, interlinking commodities transport by barge, rail, and road.

Several businesses on the upper river took advantage of barge transport and the Upper Harbor Terminal (UHT) supported the transport of bulk commodities for decades. However, transformation of the upper river into a dominant barging economy did not materialize. By the late 1990s, a different vision for the upper river began to emerge; one of land use transformation from industrial to a mix of jobs, housing and parkland. The 2000 Above the Falls master plan catalyzed the new vision for both redevelopment and parkland. The near simultaneous closures of the Upper Harbor Terminal and Upper St. Anthony Falls navigation lock in 2015 signaled the end of river industry and the commencement of the next chapter for the upper river.

Today, the MPRB has acquired a significant amount of riverfront parkland, developed several parks on both sides of the river and extended West River Parkway to Ole Olson Park. Many industrial uses continue within and outside the regional park boundary while other formerly industrial structures adjacent to the park are being adaptively reused. Technology, entertainment, and design businesses are moving to the upper river bringing new jobs and property investment with them. The current state of land use transformation can be expected to continue for years or decades. Integral to the riverfront parkland vision is MPRB participation as an active investor in land and park improvements within the upper river corridor.

Upper Harbor Terminal closed in 2014, and the City of Minneapolis has determined that some of the land will be available for redevelopment as a park.

This document was updated in 2019 with the most current information on Upper Harbor Terminal land proposed to be added to Above the Falls Regional Park. See Appendix A for additional information.



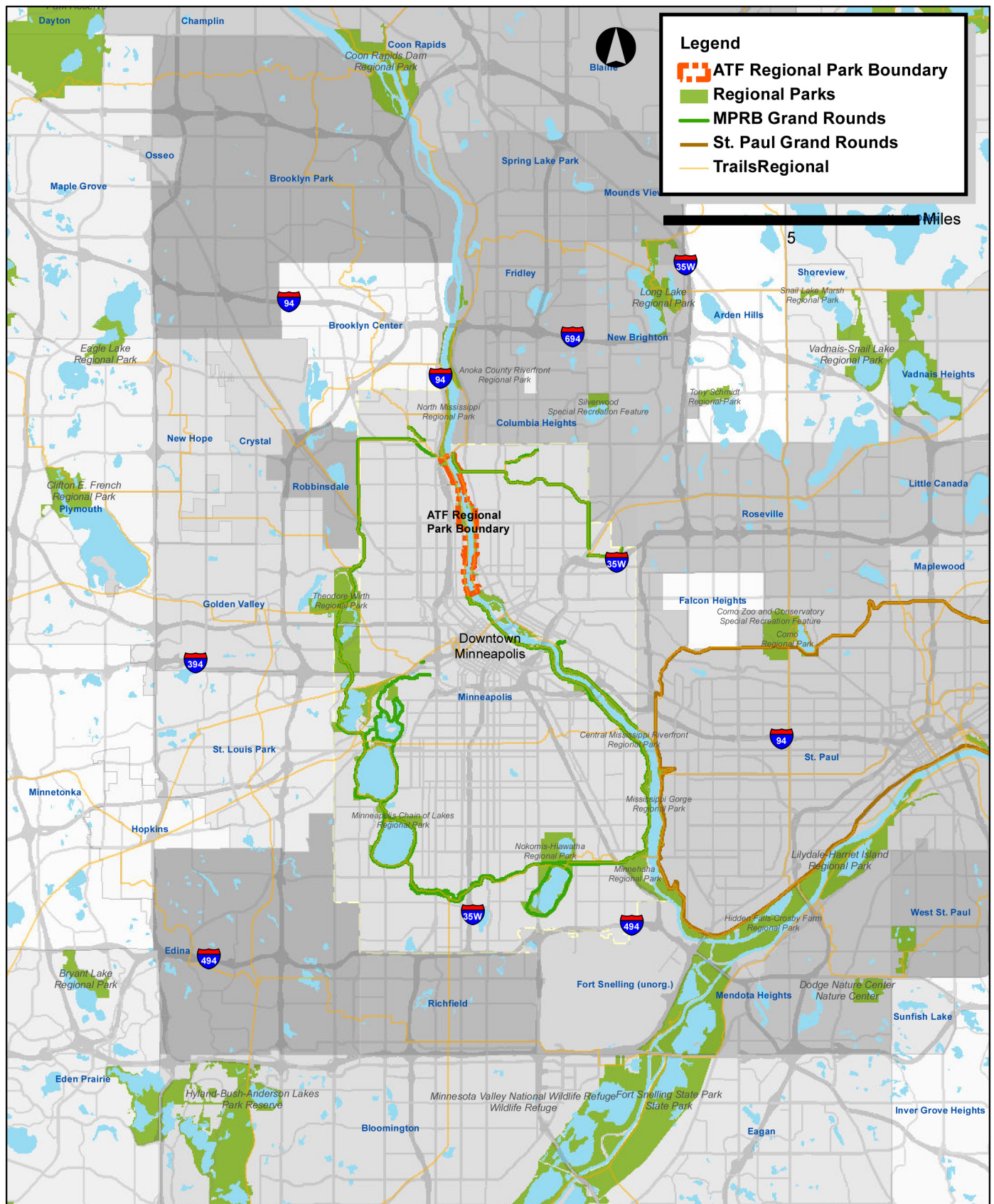


Figure 2.1 Above the Falls Regional Park Location within the MPRB System





### Legend

  Above the Falls Regional Park Boundary

  Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

0.5 Miles

- 1 North Mississippi Regional Park
- 2 Orvin "Ole" Olson Park
- 3 West River Road North
- 4 Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park
- 5 Scherer Brothers Site
- 6 Sheridan Memorial Park
- 7 1720 Marshall Park Property
- 8 Gluek Park
- 9 Edgewater Park
- 10 Marshall Terrace Park
- 11 St. Anthony Parkway

Figure 2.2 Above the Falls Regional Park Existing Park Components

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## INDIGENOUS LAND AND HISTORY

While the ATF Plan focuses on transformation of the currently industrialized river, it is important to understand how brief that industry, and all Euro-American history is, when compared to the time that Indigenous peoples spent around the river. The land on which Minneapolis now sits, is in the heartland of the Dakota people. To acknowledge the significance of indigenous peoples past, present, and future along the river, the ATF plan recommends further study and interpretive planning that can help respect and foster understanding of the deeper history of the area. As MPRB seeks to forge new connections with the river, there is much to learn from the stewardship of the Dakota and Ojibwe People.

The ATF area is part of a network of culturally and spiritually significant sites that include lands outside of Minneapolis, the Falls (St. Anthony Falls downtown), the Bdote, or confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers, and the banks of Bde Maka Ska. Comprehensive interpretive planning can help establish an understanding of history, and create consistent messaging to create a memorable narrative. Interpretive planning can also be an engaging tool that helps form a program for building a relationship with the river, which can help guide park design. Through art, communications, food, programming, and more, the layers of meaning can expand the parks ability to meet the needs of those seeking historical, cultural, recreational, and arts based experiences. Respectfully acknowledging the history, including that which is challenging and difficult, will help the ATF appeal to a wider audience that is inclusive in terms of age, ethnicity, culture, abilities, and access needs.

The river was and continues to be an important transportation route for economic purposes and a crossroad for cultures. However, Above the Falls Regional Park encompasses an area that epitomizes the negative impact of urban and industrial environments on natural systems and communities. The Mississippi River was foundational to the Dakota and other Indigenous cultures for millennia. From that time to the banishment of the Dakota people from their homeland, to the neighborhoods broken apart by the Interstate in North Minneapolis, and to the heavy industry that damaged the health of the river and the nearby communities, looking backwards is an important part of shaping the future. As the industrial era passes, and the places for people are once again emerging, it is imperative that they be places of inclusion that honor the past and present cultural diversity of Minneapolis.

## PARK DESCRIPTION AND BOUNDARY

The Mississippi River itself is the key feature of the Above the Falls Regional Park. The regional park boundary is intended to provide a continuous public park, with adequate depth for a riverfront parkway on the west bank, restored riverbanks, space for people to enjoy the riverfront, significant park components and areas for improved habitat and surface-water management.

As with other regional parks along the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Above the Falls Regional Park comprises distinct, named parks, some connected by linear park features and trails. These existing parks form the foundation of ATF Regional Park and will benefit from the implementation of this plan as described in Section 6 - Park Development Concept.



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## EXISTING PARKS - WEST BANK

Refer to Figure 2.2 locations of the following parks



*2006 grand opening of Orvin "Ole" Olson Park*

### ***Orvin "Ole" Olson Park***

2325 West River Road

"Ole" Olson Park is a 3.5 acre park located on West River Road, just north of N 22nd Avenue. The land was purchased by the Park Board in 2002, marking one of the first implementation pieces to emerge from the 2000 ATF Plan. Formerly the site of Midwest Paint, a large railroad roundhouse, and famed Riverview Supper Club, the property was heavily contaminated before the Park Board acquired it and invested in extensive soils remediation. The park opened in 2006 and was developed as part of the first phase of the 2000 ATF Plan. It features a spectacular view of the river and the downtown skyline with walking and cycling paths.



*Watching the River Rats water-ski team from park land on West River Road North*

### ***Riverbank parkland along West River Road North***

between Plymouth Avenue North and 22nd Avenue North

This 12.4 acres of parkland does not have an official name within the MPRB system but is part of ATF Regional Park. Improvements completed between 2006 and 2008 include separated pedestrians paths and bicycle trails, which run continuously underneath the Plymouth and Broadway bridges. Additional paths allow users to experience the lower river terrace and river's edge. A boat ramp is used for emergency response, bridge maintenance and by the River Rats water-ski performers. In the summer, large crowds gather on the river bank to watch the River Rats perform. Restored riverbanks, native plantings and stormwater management improvement were funded in partnership with the MWMO. Views from this area include the downtown Minneapolis skyline and the former Scherer Bros. Lumber site now owned by MPRB and planned for park development.



*View of the Minneapolis skyline from Orvin "Ole" Olson Park (Courtesy of Friends of the Mississippi River)*



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## EXISTING PARKS - EAST BANK

### ***Sheridan Memorial Park***

1300 Water Street NE

The former site of a foundry adjacent to the Grain Belt Brewery complex, Sheridan Memorial Park is a 3.5 acre park which is actively and incrementally being developed. The first lot for the park was acquired in 1986 with expansions occurring in 1995, 2007, and 2009. Remediation of contaminated soils was completed prior to opening the parkland to the public to provide access to the riverbank by way of informal stone steps to the river's edge. The first phase of park development was constructed in 2013 and included a memorial honoring all U.S. veterans, a peace garden, picnic areas and a river overlook. A playground, sport courts, and lawn recreation are planned for 2019 construction.



*2007 dedication of Sheridan Memorial Park*

### ***Gluek Park***

2000 Marshall Street NE

Encompassing 3.7 acres along the Mississippi River, Gluek Park is the site of the former Gluek Brewery and mansion, and was listed as a federal Superfund site due to soil contamination. In 2004 MPRB remediated the soils, and by 2008 park improvements were complete. The park features two river overlooks, a picnic shelter, pathways, gardens and interpretive signage.



*Gazebo and river overlook in Gluek Park*

### ***Edgewater Park***

2326 Marshall Street NE

Named for its location as the site of the former Edgewater Inn, the 3.5 acre MPRB acquired the land in 1993, constructed the park in 2006-2007. The park is divided into two sections – the Prairie and the Metro with planting, layouts and signage evoking both themes. Walkways carve the park into three sections and mimic the alignment of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. An overlook provides a wonderful vista of the Mississippi River and the recently-completed Lowry Avenue bridge.



*Edgewater Park and Marshall St NE*

### ***Marshall Terrace Park***

2740 Marshall Street NE

The 8.4 acre Marshall Terrace Park was acquired by MPRB in 1914 to serve as a neighborhood park with typical recreation facilities. Today the park includes fields for softball and baseball, a playground, basketball court and a wading pool. Two sets of wooden steps and overlooks lead to the water's edge, allowing the public to access the broad shoreline along this stretch of the river. However, the steps are not ADA-compliant; reconstruction of universally-accessible steps and ramps to the riverbank is a long-term goal. Adjacent the park are two river islands which have been colonized by dozens of nesting herons as well as eagles. The rookeries are visible through Xcel Energy's online bird-cam program. Xcel Energy maintains the islands in partnership with MN-DNR.



*River overlook in Marshall Terrace Park*

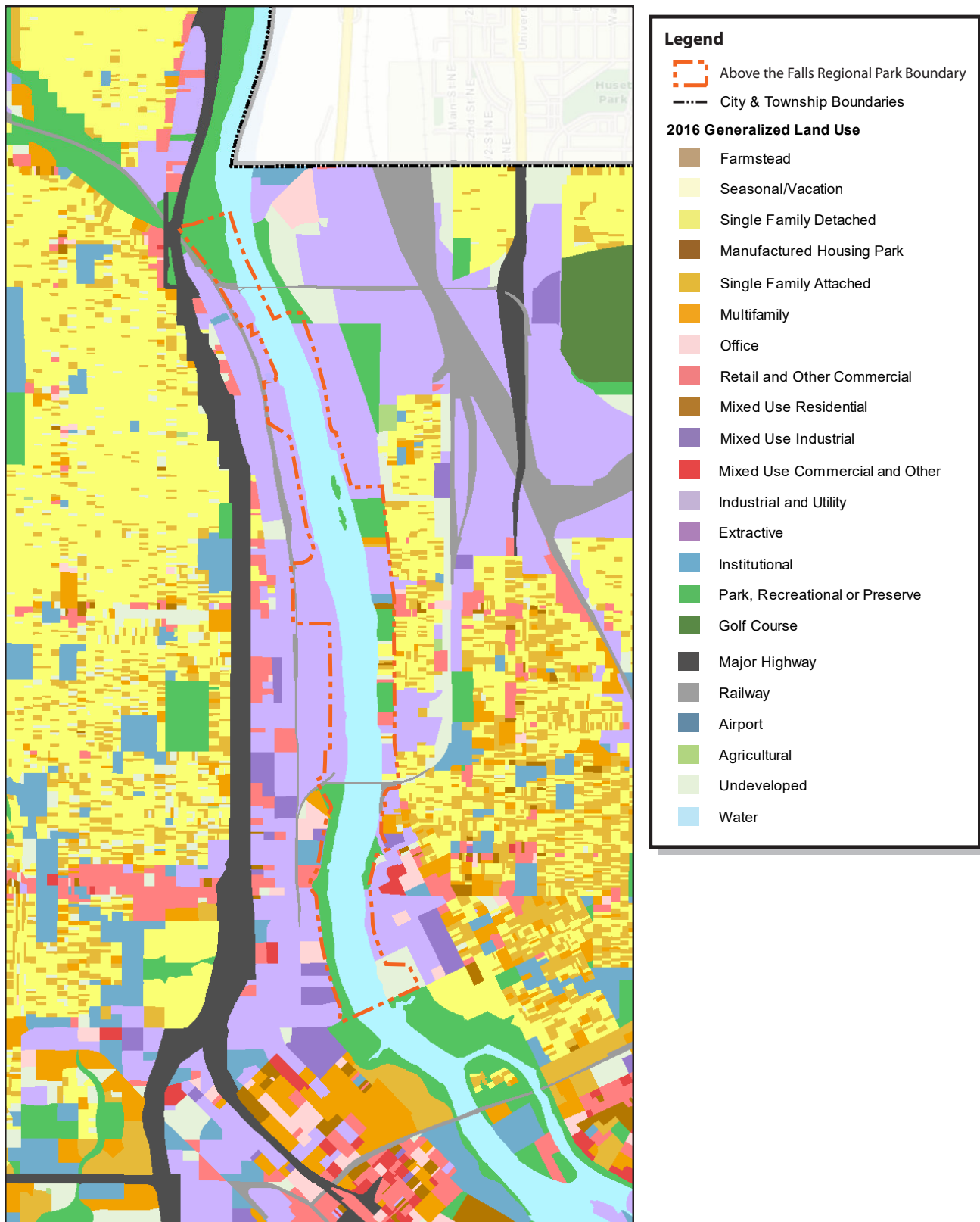


Figure 2.3 Land Use, 2016

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## LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN

Above the Falls Regional Park continues to be influenced by its historic industrial roots. As shown in Figure 2.3 the predominant existing land use on the west bank is industrial. South of the BNSF railroad bridge is a mixture of commercial, residential, and civic uses, including the Riverview Townhomes, Broadway Pizza, and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Offices. These uses were developed in the last few decades when a railroad line was abandoned and West River Road was extended. They demonstrate that there is the potential for uses other than industrial in this area.

A pivotal redevelopment site on the west bank is the Upper Harbor Terminal (UHT), a 48-acre former barge terminal facility owned by the City of Minneapolis. For over fifty years, the majority of the site was used for outdoor storage needed for a bulk-material-handling operation. Nine acres were used to store spoils from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' annual channel-dredging. In 2015, the St. Anthony Falls lock ceased operation, dredging of a navigation channel above the St. Anthony Falls also ceased, and the UHT became an active redevelopment opportunity (including substantial regional parkland).

Since 2015, The City of Minneapolis and Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board have collaborated on a redevelopment strategy for the UHT that is described in detail in Appendix A.

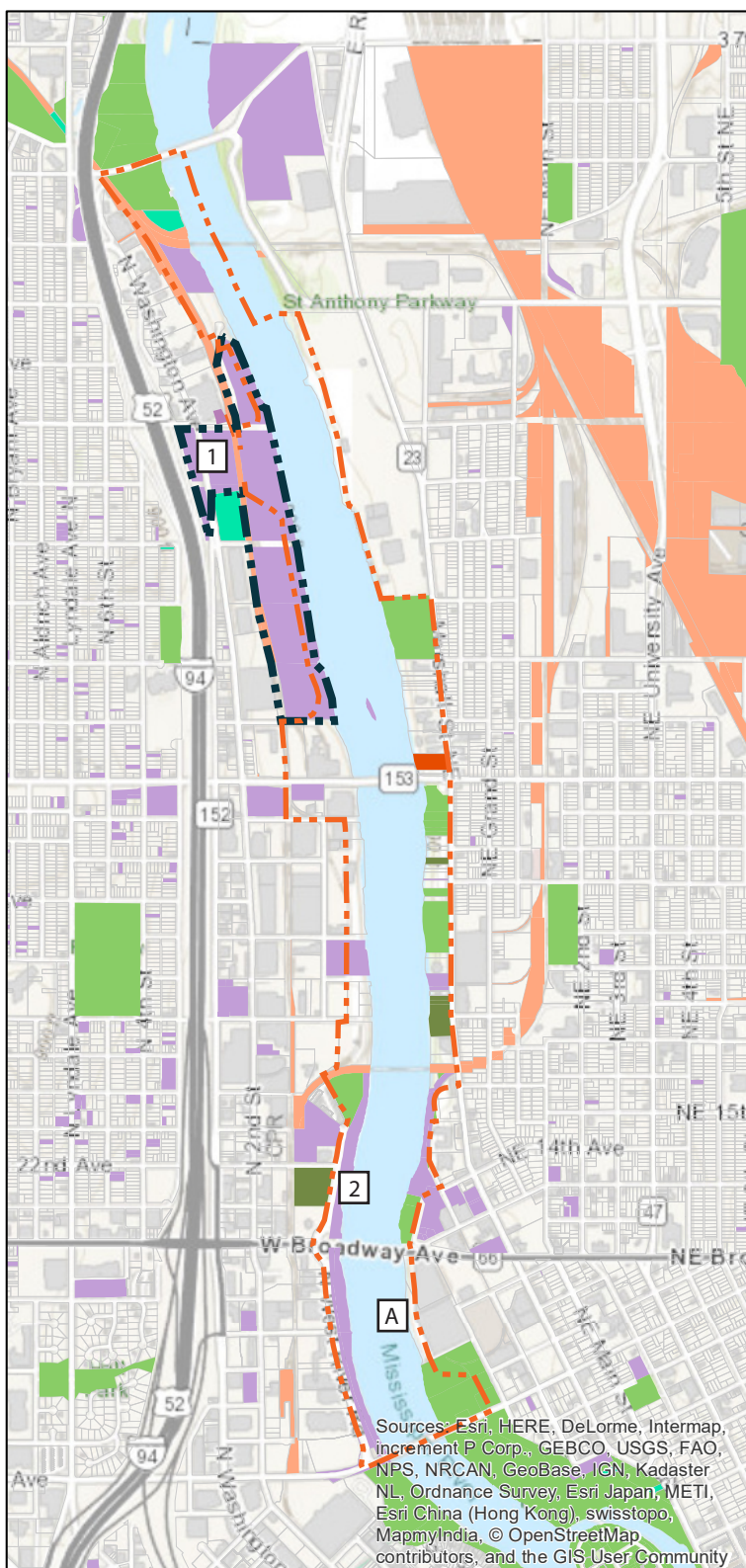
## TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

Within its urban context, Above the Falls Regional Park is connected to national, regional, and local transportation systems. Interstate 94 is located less than a half-mile west of the river, with exits at Broadway and Dowling Ave. connecting to the regional park. Lowry Avenue is a high-traffic east-west roadway with a river crossing that connects many neighborhoods to the regional park. River crossings also occur at Broadway, Plymouth Ave. North/8th Street NE and 43rd Ave. North/37th Ave. NE (Camden Bridge). Broadway and 26th Ave North also connect ATF Regional Park with Theodore Wirth Regional Park.

On the west bank, West River Road North extends from Plymouth Ave. North and the Central Mississippi Riverfront north to just past Broadway where it terminates at the BNSF Railroad line that crosses the Mississippi River. The area north of the BNSF railroad bridge is an irregular grid of streets and discontinuous sidewalks extending to Lowry Avenue. North of Lowry, the area retains its industrial roots with limited street connectivity and large superblocks due to rail crossings. On the east bank, Marshall Street NE is a major north-south roadway owned by Hennepin County. The road's western right-of-way line forms the ATF Regional Park boundary in this segment of the park. South of the BNSF railroad bridge is a grid of local streets. To the north, in the area currently occupied by Xcel Energy Riverside Plant, there are no local streets within the Regional Park boundary.

Between 2007-2012, the overall tonnage of commodities passing through the Upper Locks at St. Anthony Falls declined by 47%.





## Legend

- Regional Park Boundary
- Private Parcel
- MPRB Non-Parkland Use
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
- Mississippi Watershed Mgmt. Organization
- Municipal Property
- Railroad
- State Property
- Upper Harbor Terminal

## Existing Publicly-owned Facilities

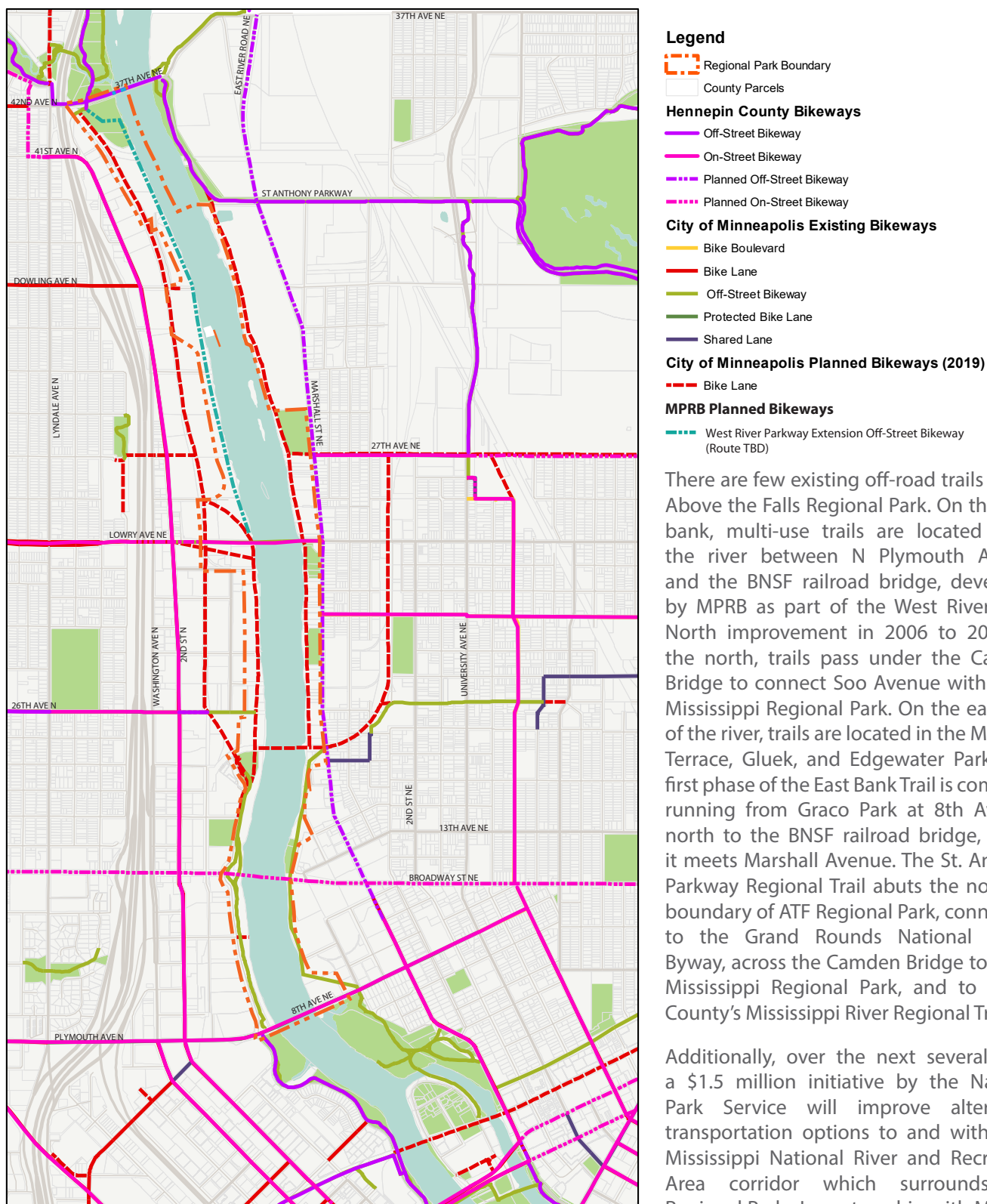
- 1 Upper Harbor Terminal- City of Minneapolis
- 2 Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board HQ

## Existing Trail Easements

- A Graco, Inc.

**Figure 2.4 Public Land Ownership, 2019**

The significant amount of publicly-owned land within and adjacent to the ATF Regional Park boundary represents great opportunities for partnership with other agencies as MPRB seeks to expand and develop the park.



**Figure 2.5 2019 Existing and Planned Bikeways (City of Minneapolis and MPRB)**

Some trail alignments shown within ATF Regional Park are conceptual and will be adjusted with adoption of this master plan document. Actual trail alignments will depend on land acquisitions and final designs.

There are few existing off-road trails within Above the Falls Regional Park. On the west bank, multi-use trails are located along the river between N Plymouth Avenue and the BNSF railroad bridge, developed by MPRB as part of the West River Road North improvement in 2006 to 2008. To the north, trails pass under the Camden Bridge to connect Soo Avenue with North Mississippi Regional Park. On the east side of the river, trails are located in the Marshall Terrace, Gluek, and Edgewater Parks. The first phase of the East Bank Trail is complete, running from Graco Park at 8th Avenue, north to the BNSF railroad bridge, where it meets Marshall Avenue. The St. Anthony Parkway Regional Trail abuts the northern boundary of ATF Regional Park, connecting to the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway, across the Camden Bridge to North Mississippi Regional Park, and to Anoka County's Mississippi River Regional Trail.

Additionally, over the next several years a \$1.5 million initiative by the National Park Service will improve alternative transportation options to and within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area corridor which surrounds ATF Regional Park. In partnership with MnDOT, MN-DNR, the City and MPRB, this program will add bicycle rental locations, facilitate transit connections to the river, improve wayfinding and enhance programming opportunities. All this will increase visitation to ATF Regional Park.

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# SECTION 3

## Public Engagement



*RiverFirst community engagement event*

## CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

As with all park development projects by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, community engagement has been an integral component of the ATF Park Plan process. While this plan has its foundation in the 2000 ATF Plan, it has been shaped significantly by the RiverFirst vision for the upper Mississippi Riverfront. The carefully planned and executed public engagement process for the ATF Update and the ATF Park Plan was an extension of the RiverFirst planning process, which engaged an exceptionally broad range of stakeholders in the year preceding the regional park planning process.

## RIVERFIRST COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The RiverFirst vision substantially informs the ATF Park Plan, particularly in terms of parks development recommendations and through the overarching idea of recreation within a functioning ecological framework. RiverFirst emerged from an international design competition hosted by MPRB. The goal was to reinvigorate community energy and imagination around the upper riverfront. In the spring of 2011, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board established the Minneapolis Riverfront Development Initiative (MRDI) as a special project to transform the winning proposal from the Minneapolis Riverfront Design Competition to a visionary plan and implementation strategy for development of parks and open space along the Minneapolis upper riverfront. The RiverFirst design team refined the vision through extensive community engagement anchored by three stakeholder committees (Steering, Technical and Advisory) which hosted six large public meetings. The design team and MRDI representatives also met with over 100 individuals in key communities and half as many organizations with relevant expertise and regulatory oversight.

Additional MRDI/RiverFirst engagement included the following:

- A community input survey taken by more than 600 people
- Promotion and participation in more than 30 community events throughout Minneapolis
- Three additional public meetings held in association with the City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership
- A website documenting competition entries as well as all public outreach and participation
- More than 40 presentations and meetings with neighborhood associations, community-based non-profit organizations, agencies and other stakeholder groups; seven paid part- and full-time “youth ambassador” interns represented the MRDI at more than 35 community events
- The debut of “River Is...” a figurative gathering of people’s thoughts about the Mississippi today and for the future

## MPRB APPROVES RIVERFIRST

At the Park Board’s meeting on March 14, 2012, following this engagement process and a standard 45-day comment period, the Board approved the

### RIVERFIRST INCLUDED:

- Community Input Survey by more than 600 people
- Participation in more than 30 community events
- Three joint public meetings
- More than 40 presentations



RiverFirst vision and authorized staff to pursue next steps, including contracting with the design team for further work on select RiverFirst projects.

Significantly, the Board also directed staff to use RiverFirst as a basis for the ATF Regional Park Master Plan, as well as the ATF Master Plan Update in coordination with City of Minneapolis staff.

## ABOVE THE FALLS UPDATE PLANNING PROCESS

The Above the Falls planning process was a collaboration among several agency departments and groups, including the following:

- Staff from MPRB, the City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development department, and the City of Minneapolis Department of Health
- The Above the Falls Citizen Advisory Committee, a standing committee since 1999 that represents neighborhoods, businesses, organizations and other stakeholders affected by the Above the Falls plan
- The Riverfront Technical Advisory Committee, a long-standing staff group that guides and coordinates planning and implementation along the river
- The Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership; which facilitated public forums and assisted with outreach to stakeholders

ATF planning outreach activities in 2012 included the following:

- Between June and December, each of 3 large public forums were attended by approximately 70-80 people
- Web postings and informational articles in community newspapers
- More than 60 outreach meetings with stakeholder groups (community organizations, churches, schools, seniors, etc.)
- At least one outreach meeting conducted in Lao and at least one conducted in Spanish

Draft ATF plan documents were presented for public review at the third public forum in December of 2012. MPRB solicited public comments on the ATF Regional Park master plan during a 45-day comment period in June–July 2013.

In 2012, community engagement was enhanced by participation from Minneapolis Health Department staff as part of a parallel Health Impact Assessment (HIA). The HIA process spurred many community meetings, a survey and over 100 “River Cards” expressing stakeholders’ hopes for the plan area. For example, among survey respondents, 72% stated “more pedestrian and bicycle trails to access the river” should be a plan priority.

After Upper Harbor Terminal ceased operation and the Saint Anthony Falls Lock and Dam was closed, engagement about the future of the Upper Harbor Terminal site continued. An emphasis was placed on outreach to North and Northeast Minneapolis residents, especially inclusion of diverse races, ethnicities, classes, ages, abilities and national origins. For a detailed report on community engagement between 2015-2018, see the Upper Harbor Terminal Appendix at the end of this document.

### 2012-2013 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

- Three large public forums
- More than 60 community outreach events
- Multi-lingual outreach including Hmong, Lao and Spanish
- Inter-agency coordination
- 45-day comment period







*Collaboration with staff from the Minneapolis Health Department, a Community Advisory Committee and several non-profit partners significantly enhanced community engagement throughout the planning process.*



*Public meetings for the ATF Regional Park master planning process were well-attended.*

## PUBLIC INPUT

To date, several letters of comment have been received as part of the planning process, including letters from:

- St. Anthony West Neighborhood Organization
- Friends of the Mississippi River
- GAF corporation
- Above the Falls Citizen Advisory Committee (AFCAC), the MPRB-designated Community Advisory Committee for the Regional Park master planning process

In general, these letters focus on the City's land-use planning efforts. Where they do reference parks planning, comments generally are supportive of the ATF Park Plan's retention of principles from the 2000 ATF Plan, including continuous parks and trails along the river, improved access to the river for all, and integrating environmental stewardship with park development.

Below are comments typical of those received during the ATF Regional Park master plan process.

### ***People want to EXPERIENCE and ACCESS the river***

- Continuous and looping trails, with connections to neighborhoods
- Boat access and gathering places, picnic shelters etc.
- Amenities and active destination points at major urban nodes
- Recreation activities for all ages (walk, bike, ski, fish, swim)
- Safe parks, "eyes-on-the-street," and surrounding activity at all hours

### ***People want to RESTORE and IMPROVE the river***

- Natural and open spaces with restored habitat for ecological health
- Native plantings and gardens
- Clean water, stormwater management and shoreline restoration
- Mitigate impacts of Asian carp and other aquatic invasive species
- General concerns about proximity of existing industry to parks

### ***People want EQUITABLE development***

- Equitable distribution of park access points and park development
- Design for a diverse population to access the public health benefits of parks
- Benefits to North and NE Minneapolis
- Draw regional park visitors while respecting existing neighborhoods and zoning
- Careful, phased implementation using a wide range of funding sources

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## EQUITY ANALYSIS

The Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan is rooted in equity as the fundamental goal is to provide parks and access to water in an area of the city that currently lacks these opportunities. Areas around the park in north and northeast Minneapolis are characterized by high poverty rates, a higher than average rate of negative health issues, and a high percentage of minority, and youth, populations. Transforming the land from industrialized shoreland to ecologically rich, publicly owned park will improve the quality of life in an underserved urban area and have profound benefits for residents and visitors.

The regional park will address a serious regional recreational deficiency. The residents of northeast and north Minneapolis have advocated for more public land and green space along the river. Based on the Hennepin County 2010 Survey of the Health of All the Population and the Environment (SHAPE) survey, perceptions of walkability and sense of community were lower among north Minneapolis residents compared to residents in other parts of the city. Adults living near the ATF project area were more likely than residents elsewhere in the city to report fair or poor health (20.0% vs 10.6%); be classified as obese (30.3% vs 18.7%); and fail to meet moderate exercise guidelines (27.6% vs 21.5%). Households in these communities were more likely to include children (27.7% under age 18 vs 20.3%) and members of ethnic minorities [African American (35.4% vs 16.7%) Asian (10.5% vs 5.5%); and multi-racial (4.8% vs 3.3%)]. 50% of survey respondents felt that additional parks would improve their health.

The Above the Falls park will provide amenities for some of the region's highest concentrations of impoverished and minority populations. The short term goals are for individual projects to support affordable and easily accessible opportunities for outdoor recreation where they will make an immediate positive impact. The long term benefits are that the park will contribute to sustainable regional growth, support private investments, and foster a healthier and more livable urban environment beyond its physical boundaries. As noted in the City of Minneapolis's ATF Master Plan Update, the existing mix of land uses along the upper riverfront are not capitalizing on the riverfront's potential for recreational amenities and ecological value. Many adjacent neighborhoods struggle with disinvestment and lack of positive economic activity.

In the Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive Plan the City defines environmental justice as the right to a clean, safe, and healthy quality of life for people of all races, incomes, and cultures. The City of Minneapolis has also passed an equity ordinance (Title 2, Chapter 21) with the goal of eliminating socioeconomic disparities that are currently predictable by race, and changing a legacy of discrimination. As MPRB continues implementation of the ATF Plan, collaboration around the Green Zones and Promise Zones are two areas where staff between the agencies can coordinate efforts to maximize equity through park development.

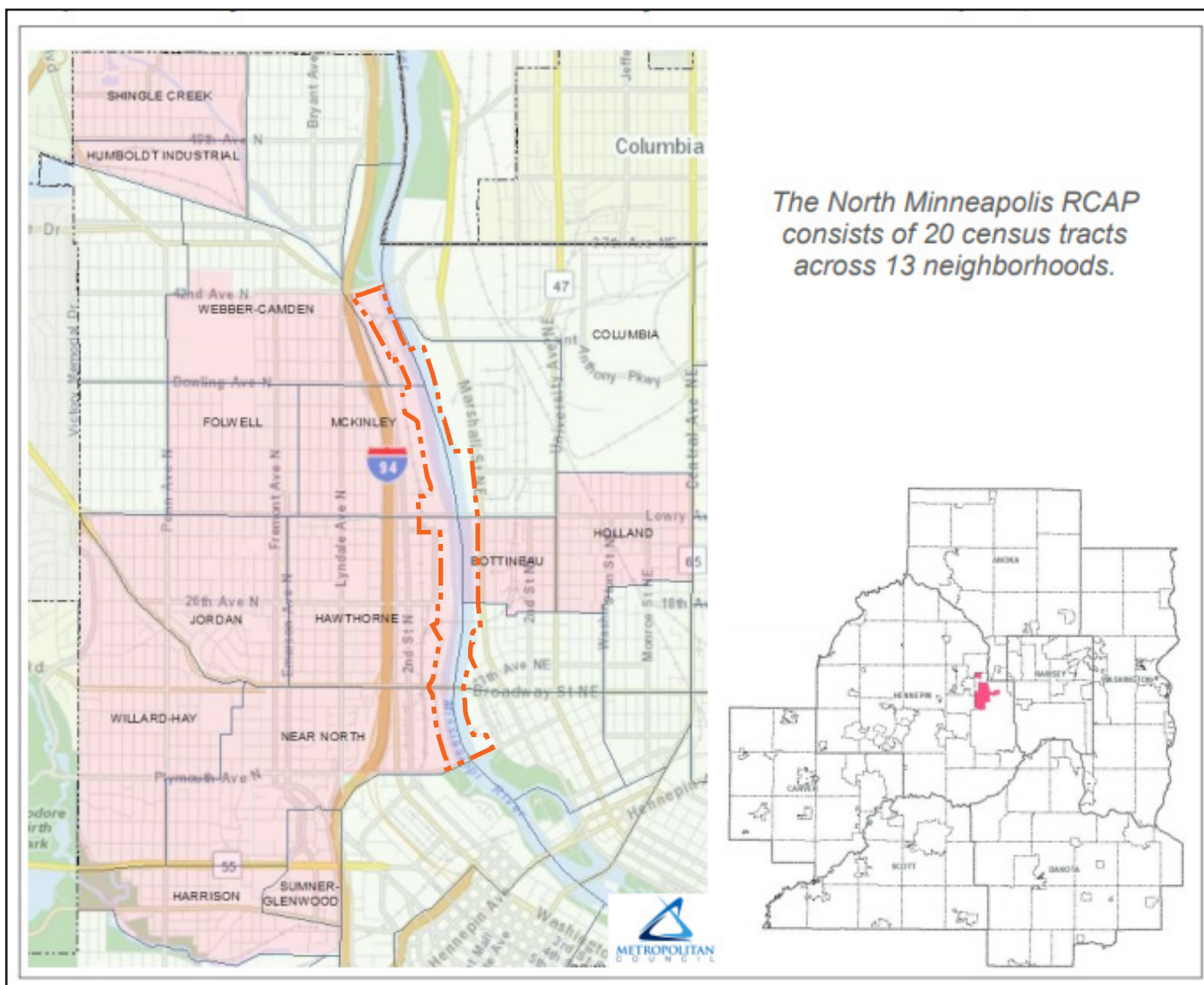


Figure 3.1 Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty around Above the Falls Regional Park (2007-2011 Metropolitan Council)



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## ALIGNMENT WITH THE NORTHERN GREEN ZONE AND PROMISE ZONE

Since the 2013 Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan process, the City of Minneapolis has established a Northern Green Zone and Promise Zone that overlap with the Above the Falls area. These plans and initiatives can supplement and enhance each other as their general goals are aligned, and the different agencies and departments can more broadly address community needs and leverage resources. This appendix outlines the key ways that the Above the Falls Regional Park can help fulfill the wider Green Zone and Promise Zone objectives.

### *Alignment with the Northern Green Zone*

The Minneapolis Green Zone is a place-based policy initiative aimed at improving health and supporting economic development using environmentally conscious efforts in communities that face the cumulative effects of environmental pollution, as well as social, political and economic vulnerability. Defined by the City of Minneapolis, the “Green Zone is an environmental and economic development tool that targets new green infrastructure and retrofits to an area in a comprehensive manner.” Low-income communities, Indigenous communities, and communities of color in Minneapolis experience unequal health, wealth, employment, and education outcomes. These communities also are overburdened by environmental conditions such as traffic and stationary pollution sources, brownfield sites, blight and substandard housing. The ATF Plan will help address these inequities through the transformation of the riverfront from industrial land to public green space.

Green Zones are a local initiative, with a currently dedicated City staff member and a Northern Green Zone Task Force. Given the extensive collaboration done with community members in developing the goals, MPRB staff can use the framework as an evaluation tool for park development. Staff should invite City staff and Northern Green Zone Task Force members to help consider alignment with the Green Zone goals, particularly in areas highlighted, from the time planning processes are initiated through ongoing management of parks. The chart below shows areas where the Green Zone goals have the most overlap with park development.

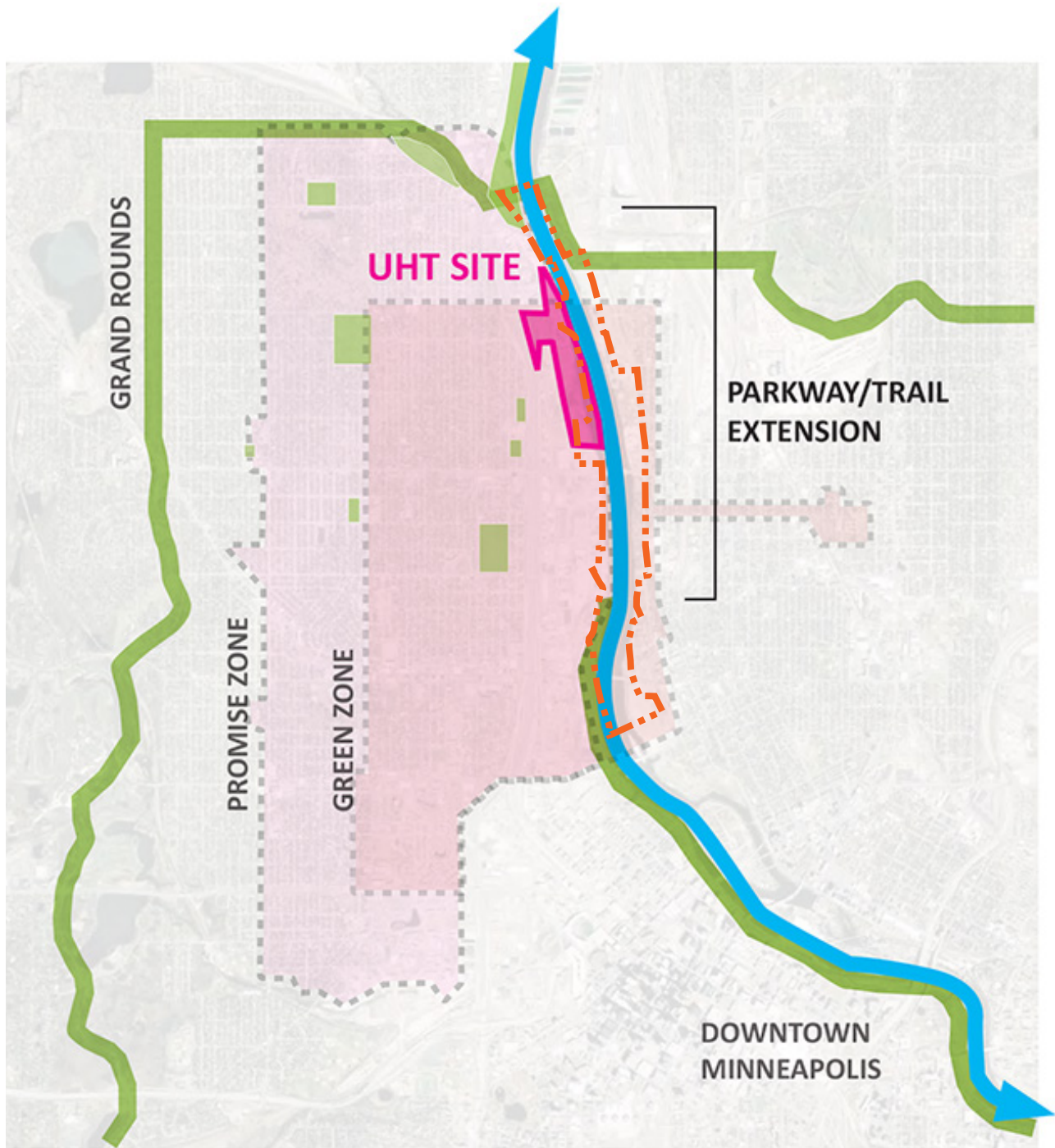


Figure 3.2 Green Zone, Promise Zone, and Upper Harbor Terminal Boundaries

Green Zone Goals	Park design and planning	Park development and implementation	Park programming, operations, and management	Impacts of parks on surrounding land
Clean up soil and water contamination and redevelop brownfields				
Improve air quality, livability, and pollinator habitat through vegetation, clean energy, and energy efficiency				
Improve air and environmental quality in business and transport				
Increase 'green' jobs and career opportunities				
Increase the availability of affordable housing and environmentally high quality housing				
Increase access to healthy, affordable food by support local systems of growing, production, and distribution				
Advance environmental awareness and education in community and schools				
Foster community healing from historical trauma and root shock, using community-based approaches to healing and health				
Stop the patterns of community violence and the cradle to prison pipeline with which it is associated				
Develop an Environmental Justice Scorecard that assesses how well the businesses and branches of government do in practicing responsible and responsive environmental stewardship and partnership around environmental justice. Use the scorecard as a tool to drive policy change toward greater environmental justice.				
Organize the community to develop ecological consciousness and foster a healthy future that takes care of the earth, takes care of the people, and takes care of the future we choose to create together.				
Work with the stakeholders and Native Nations statewide to create an environmental justice partnership that fosters a common platform among environmental justice communities, using a Minnesota Environmental Screen to provide a common basis of measurement and protocols for action.				

Table 3.1 Park Development and Green Zone Goals



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### ***Alignment with the Northside Promise Zone***

Promise Zones are designated by the federal government and in 2015/2016 the City received a 10 year designation for a large area in North Minneapolis. Promise Zones are an economic development strategy intended to support low income communities throughout the country. The North Minneapolis Promise Zone (NMPZ) is comprised of 80 percent people of color and its residents face rates of poverty, crime, housing instability, and unemployment that far exceed those in the rest of Minneapolis. Because of these disparities, Minneapolis leads the county in racial inequities. North Minneapolis' Promise Zone (NMPZ) has decided to focus on three objectives to improve the conditions of NMPZ residents. Each of these objectives will be approached through a racial equity lens.

1. Build a more Inclusive Economy that supports the NMPZ as a destination for business growth. The City aims to accomplish this by: ensuring dollars are reinvested in the community, increasing capital investment on the Northside that creates jobs for NMPZ residents.
2. Improve Health & Safety of NMPZ residents. The City aims to accomplish this by: strengthening community-law enforcement relationships by investing in community-oriented policing; increasing access to affordable healthy food.
3. Promote stable housing for all NMPZ residents. The City aims to accomplish this by: coordinating and publicizing support services related to housing; facilitating partnerships between housing stakeholders working in the NMPZ.

### **Five key Promise Zone goals are further articulated below:**

- Goal 1: Reduce racial inequities in public services and institutions that contribute to the ongoing economic exclusion of the Minneapolis Promise Zone and meaningfully engage residents in the decisions affecting their community.
- Goal 2: Reduce serious and violent crime by curtailing gun violence, strengthening community law-enforcement relationships, and addressing youth violence and domestic violence.
- Goal 3: Improve cradle-to-career outcomes for Minneapolis Promise Zone students, thereby reducing the racial achievement gap.
- Goal 4: Build a more inclusive economy in the Minneapolis Promise Zone, ensuring dollars are reinvested in the community and that goods, arts, and services are available to Minneapolis Promise Zone residents and visitors. Support the Minneapolis Promise Zone as a destination for business growth.
- Goal 5: Create jobs through the promotion of transit oriented development opportunities; incentivizing growth among businesses in proximity to the Minneapolis Promise Zone; and, creating youth employment opportunities that can meaningfully contribute to household income.

- 
- Goal 6: Promote stable housing for all residents in the Minneapolis Promise Zone by increasing availability, affordability, and quality of housing stock while coordinating support services.

Objective #2 and Goals 1, 3, and 4 area are areas where the Promise Zone goals have the most overlap with the ATF Plan. Like the Green Zone goals, staff should examine how all stages of park development and management can intersect with the Promise Zone goals and support positive change on surrounding lands as well. The Northside Promise Zone has a working group of community members and agency staff that MPRB can invite into park planning processes. In addition, the projects with strong community support within the Promise Zone may be competitive for grants and other funding.

## PARKS AND GENTRIFICATION

Historically, low-income and minority populations tend to have worse access to city parks than city residents as a whole. The reasons for such unfair land development are multifaceted and complex. Causes include red-lining and other tools that have limited communities of color from living near parks, to rising cost of living through market forces, and patterns of investment and neglect by government agencies including MPRB. The ATF efforts have tremendous potential to change this narrative and create amenities that are close, desirable, and accessible to marginalized communities. However, if providing the green space leads to displacement through higher property values and rising housing costs, park developments may worsen disparities, rather than address them. This topic will be further explored by MPRB during the upcoming 2020 Comprehensive Planning process, but two critical tools that planners can immediately employ are:

- Robust community engagement and a collaborative planning process so that park improvements serve the needs of existing residents first
- Collaboration between park professionals and other government agencies to be aware of the effects projects can have on surrounding neighborhoods. MPRB can work with the City and other stakeholders for a wider look at the intersection of parks, housing, economic development, and cumulative impacts to the community members.

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# SECTION 4

## Visitor Demand

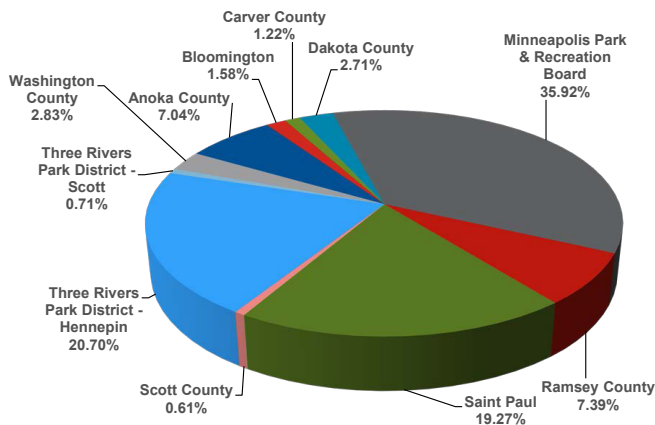


Watching the River Rats water-ski team from park land along West River Road North is a popular activity.

Demands on parks and recreation facilities continue to intensify. Park and trail usage is expected to increase as the population grows and as the trails network expands. According to the Metropolitan Council Regional Population Forecast, the population in the metropolitan area is expected to increase substantially in the next 10 – 20 years. Further, Minneapolis is expected to grow 15% by the year 2030 to 439,100, up from the 2010 census of 382,578. With an increasing population comes increasing park visitation. According to the Metropolitan Council, use of regional parks and trails will increase 9% between the years 2005 and 2020. This increase is in addition to the almost 10% increase in regional park use from 1995 to 2005 and a 12% increase in regional trail use within this same time period.

Regional parks and trails in the Twin Cities and within Minneapolis are destinations for visitors from across the region, state, nation, and world. As shown in Figure 4.1, roughly 36% of regional park and trail visits in the Twin Cities are visits to the Minneapolis system. Above the Falls Regional Park is one of eight regional parks (in addition to ten regional trails) in Minneapolis. Several of them celebrate the heritage, environment, and recreational opportunities of the Mississippi River. Many of the MPRB regional parks and trails were created well before Metropolitan Council establishment of the regional park program but others like ATF are being created from the start as part of the regional system.

When the ATF Regional Park is fully implemented, visitors who start in the park will be able to travel south through several other regional parks, along the entire length of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis and on to the riverfront regional park system in Saint Paul. ATF Regional Park users will also be able to connect to regional trails which are part of the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway,



**Figure 4.1 2016 Distribution of Annual Regional Park Visitors by Agency**  
(Source: Metropolitan Council)

Annual Estimated Visits per year, in 1,000s	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2016
Central Riverfront	1,272.50	1,627.40	1,516.00	1,431.10	1,626.60	2,182.4
Mississippi Gorge in Mpls	1,147.90	1,126.80	936.1	1,079.80	1,035.90	1,068.9
North Mississippi*	197.8	306.2	267.3	246	209.7	360.6
Mpls Park & Rec. Board Regional Parks	13,404.40	15,544.40	14,113.00	14,768.10	15,098.8	17,133.6

**Table 4.1 2016 Selected Annual Regional Park Use Estimates in Minneapolis**  
(Source: Metropolitan Council), \*includes MPRB and Three Rivers Park District data



Regional Park or Trail	Summer Visits	Winter Visits	Spring/ Fall Visits	Other Visits	Total Visits
Central Riverfront Regional Park	837,100	149,000	801,100	395,200	2,182,400
North Mississippi Regional Park	167,400	29,800	160,200	3,300	360,600
Mississippi Gorge Regional Park	404,800	123,900	533,200	7,000	1,068,900
St. Anthony Parkway Regional Trail	81,100	24,800	106,800	0	212,700
Victory Memorial Parkway Reg. Trail	247,300	75,700	325,700	2,800	651,400

**Table 4.2 Selected 2016 Annual Regional Park Use Estimates by Season**  
(source: Metropolitan Council)

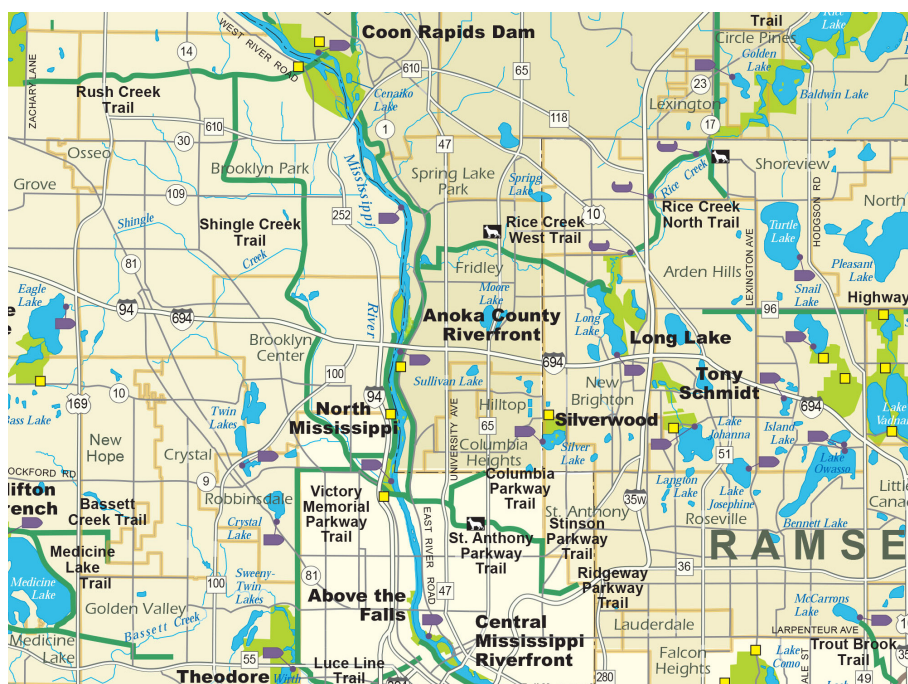
including trails associated with St. Anthony Parkway and Victory Memorial Parkway; as well as make connections to trails in Anoka County and the Three Rivers Park District. It is because of this connectivity that an examination of the annual use of the adjacent regional parks and trails can help to provide a picture of the type of visitor demand anticipated for ATF Regional Park.

However, it is important to recognize that existing parks and trails within ATF are not currently continuous, and this has inhibited public access and visitation. The RiverFirst vision casts the ATF Regional Park as a collection of regional amenities. To estimate future visitation to a fully-developed ATF regional park and trail system, it is useful to compare visitation estimates of adjacent urban regional parks that are continuous, fully developed and programmed. The visitation data shown in the figures in this chapter is drawn from the Met Council's online database.

The projected trend of increased use of urban recreational trails both within and linking to the Above the Falls Regional Park is consistent with the MN Dept. of Natural Resources report, Ten Year Forecasts—Of Minnesota Adult Outdoor Recreation Activities 2004-2014 which states that trail activities such as walking, hiking and bicycling will remain steady or increase over this time period.

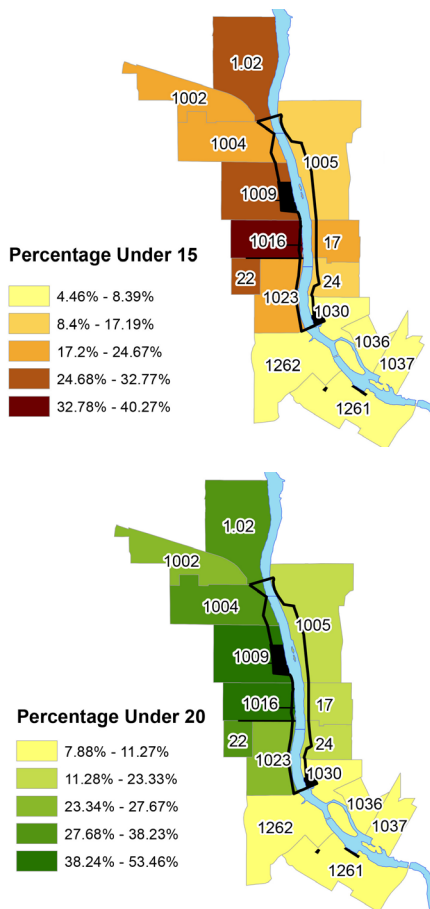


*Increasingly, park visitors seek “low-impact” activities such as walking, biking and paddling.*



**Figure 4.2 North Metro Regional Parks System** (Source: Metropolitan Council)





The neighborhoods near ATF Regional Park are among the highest concentrations of youth and young-adults in the City of Minneapolis. (source: US Census)

It is also important to recognize the role Above the Falls Regional Park plays in the regional system for the north metro area. Anoka County residents can use the Anoka County Mississippi River Regional Trail to reach Above the Falls from the cities of Columbia Heights, Fridley, Coon Rapids, and Anoka. In Hennepin County, residents using Shingle Creek Regional Trail and Twin Lakes Regional Trail can reach Above the Falls from Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center.

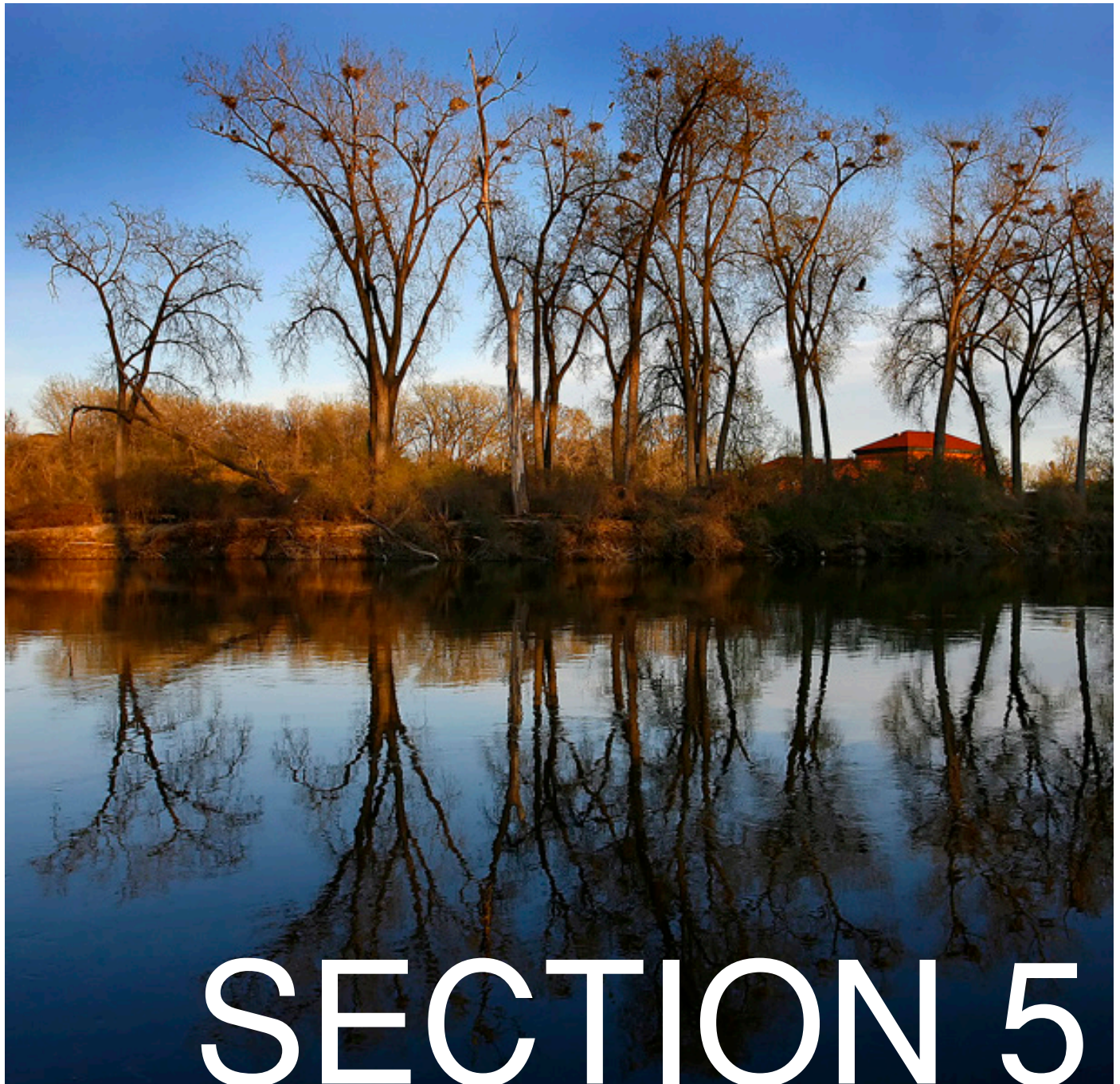
A survey by the MN-DNR found that nearly 82% of the respondents indicated that outdoor recreation is ‘very important’ or ‘moderately important’ in their lives. Popular trail related activities are walking, biking, jogging or inline skating. Expanding the trail network in ATF Regional Park will play an important role in serving this increased demand.

According to Metropolitan Council findings, baby boomers will continue to have a large presence in the regional park system, but their needs will change. Currently, the baby boomer generation uses the regional park system at rates higher than their actual percentage of the metropolitan area population. This is expected to continue and as the visitation by people over the age of 60 increases, then the type of recreation needs is expected to shift toward “low impact” recreational uses such as biking, walking and paddling.

While Above the Falls Regional Park will draw visitors from all over the metropolitan area, it is informative to examine the demographics of the communities who live and work in the immediate vicinity of the park. Using the traditional park service area model, analysis was conducted to see how many people live and work within convenient walking distance (0.5 mile), biking distance (1 miles) and driving distance (5 miles). These residents and workers are anticipated to use the park most frequently.

	2010 Population	2010 Households	2010 Employees
0.5 miles	16,545	7,405	13,790
1 mile	48,891	20,851	52,565
5 miles	523,307	220,642	400,945

**Table 4.3 Population size near the ATF Park Plan area** (source: US Census)  
Many people live or work within easy walking or biking distance of ATF Regional Park



## **Natural Resources Assessment and Management**



The MPRB Comprehensive Plan identifies a need to balance the distribution of parks and natural areas throughout the City, giving particular attention to north and northeast Minneapolis where Above the Falls Regional Park is located.

Among the goals identified in the MPRB Comprehensive Plan is the aim to “provide urban forests, natural areas, and waters that endure and captivate.” The MPRB is committed to managing natural resources responsibly, connecting people to their natural environment and fostering stewardship. The MPRB Comprehensive Plan seeks to develop partnerships that will further this goal. It also identifies a need to balance the distribution of natural areas throughout the City, giving particular attention to north and northeast Minneapolis where Above the Falls Regional Park is located. Above the Falls Regional Park provides an opportunity to reclaim the region’s connection to this part of the river and to provide recreational opportunities within a framework of restored ecological function.

## NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

### GEOLOGY

Above the Falls Regional Park is characterized by geology created when the ancient river Warren swelled with glacial melt. The area has deep sand terraces, as well as remnants of former channels and floodplains. On the west shore, the bank is located only a few feet above the water. Between N Plymouth Avenue to Lowry Avenue the banks on the west side of the river are 20 to 30 feet in height. The land extending west from the bank is fairly flat from Plymouth to 26th Avenue. North of 26th Avenue the grades are progressively steeper to 36th Avenue where the grades start to diminish towards North Mississippi Regional Park. On the east shore, the bank is higher and the slope steeper. The east side of the river has banks of 30 feet or more for most of the upper riverfront, except from Plymouth to the BNSF railroad bridge. From the edge of the bank to Marshall Street, the ground is fairly flat. These bank conditions may make access to and viewsheds of the river challenging.

As shown in images to the left, existing riverbank conditions vary considerably from re-naturalized edges to stone riprap to metal sheeting. An important aspect of the vision for the Above the Falls Regional Park is enhancement of the riverfront’s ecological integrity by reshaping previously altered shoreline to be less severe and establishing dynamic plant communities (predominantly native). Examples of this approach already implemented include West River Parkway from Broadway Avenue to Ole Olson Park, the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization headquarters, and Halls Island.

### LAND COVER

Given that Above the Falls Regional Park is in an urbanized area, the site has been extensively altered over time. These activities have included river dredging as well as importation of fill to level and stabilize the ground. As shown in Figure 5.1 Minnesota Land Cover Classification System, the only existing natural features within the park include the water/wetlands associated with the river. Otherwise, the land cover within the Regional Park is comprised of exposed earth/transitional land, short grasses, or altered/nonnative vegetation. Although altered, the areas characterized as altered/non-native vegetation should be considered opportunities as they are the open space areas associated with the railroad corridor, Xcel Riverside Plant property, North Mississippi Regional Park, and the land surrounding St. Anthony and Columbia Parkways.

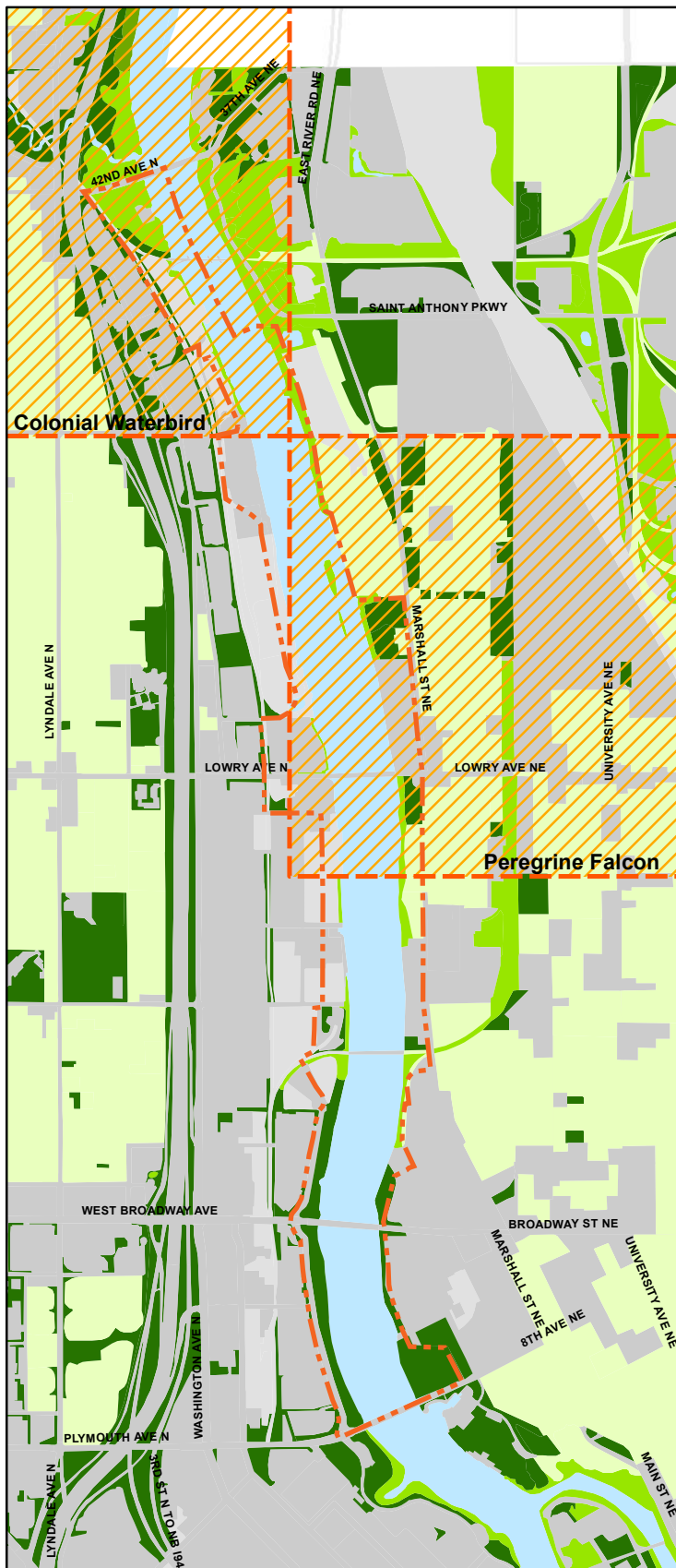


*Typical degraded shoreline in ATF*



*Shoreline restoration at Sheridan Memorial Park in 2007, funded in partnership with MWMO*





#### Legend

- Regional Park Boundary
- Rare Species Area
- Prairie/Grassland
- Hardwood Forest
- Altered/Non-Native Vegetation
- Tree Canopy with <76% Impervious
- Open Water
- Exposed Earth 0-50% Impervious
- Buildings/Pavement >76% Impervious

0.5 Miles

(Source: MN-DNR NHIS and MLCCS)

For more detailed information on the NHIS classification system, contact the MNDNR or visit [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us).

Rare-species locations as recorded by the DNR are shown only to the nearest square mile.

Figure 5.1 MLCCS Land Cover with Rare, Endangered or Threatened Species information



Friends of the Mississippi River



Friends of the Mississippi River



Friends of the Mississippi River



Friends of the Mississippi River



Existing Conditions in ATF Regional Park include restored shoreline and many habitat patches.



Beyond the riverbank, most of the nearby neighborhoods are covered with buildings and pavement with more than 75% impervious cover or exposed earth/transitional land. The urban tree canopy shown further away represents the residential neighborhoods of north and northeast Minneapolis. An examination of the MCBS Native Plant Communities database shows that there are no native plant communities within the regional park boundary.

The developed nature of the Above the Falls area can also be seen in Figure 5.2 Built Structures. While there are a number of areas without structures on the industrialized west bank, it is important to note that much of this is the Upper Harbor Terminal where outdoor storage of bulk commodities is the predominant land use. On the east bank, many of the large areas of open space along the river are existing park land. Also of note is the Xcel Energy Riverside Plant which shows as open area between 33rd and 39th Avenues North.

## RARE, ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES INVENTORY

Also shown in Figure 5.1 on the previous page, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) has identified two areas where there are known rare, endangered, or threatened species. Both species have been observed in these areas in the last 10 years. The habitat is located in the river itself or on private land that is expected to remain private in the foreseeable future. The environmental restoration proposed as part of the development of Above the Falls Regional Park will enhance the species' habitat.

## FLOOD ZONES

Where the bluff is absent, the soft edge of the riverfront can accommodate changes in water levels and serve as flood plains of the river. Figure 5.3 Floodplain shows the FEMA-designated 100 year and 500 year flood zones for the area. Most of the 100-year Floodplain is located within the regional park boundaries while the 500-year floodplain extends out into some surrounding properties. Areas of active floodplain have been considered in the vision described in the Park Development section of this plan.



*Several species of raptors are seen regularly within ATF Regional Park.*

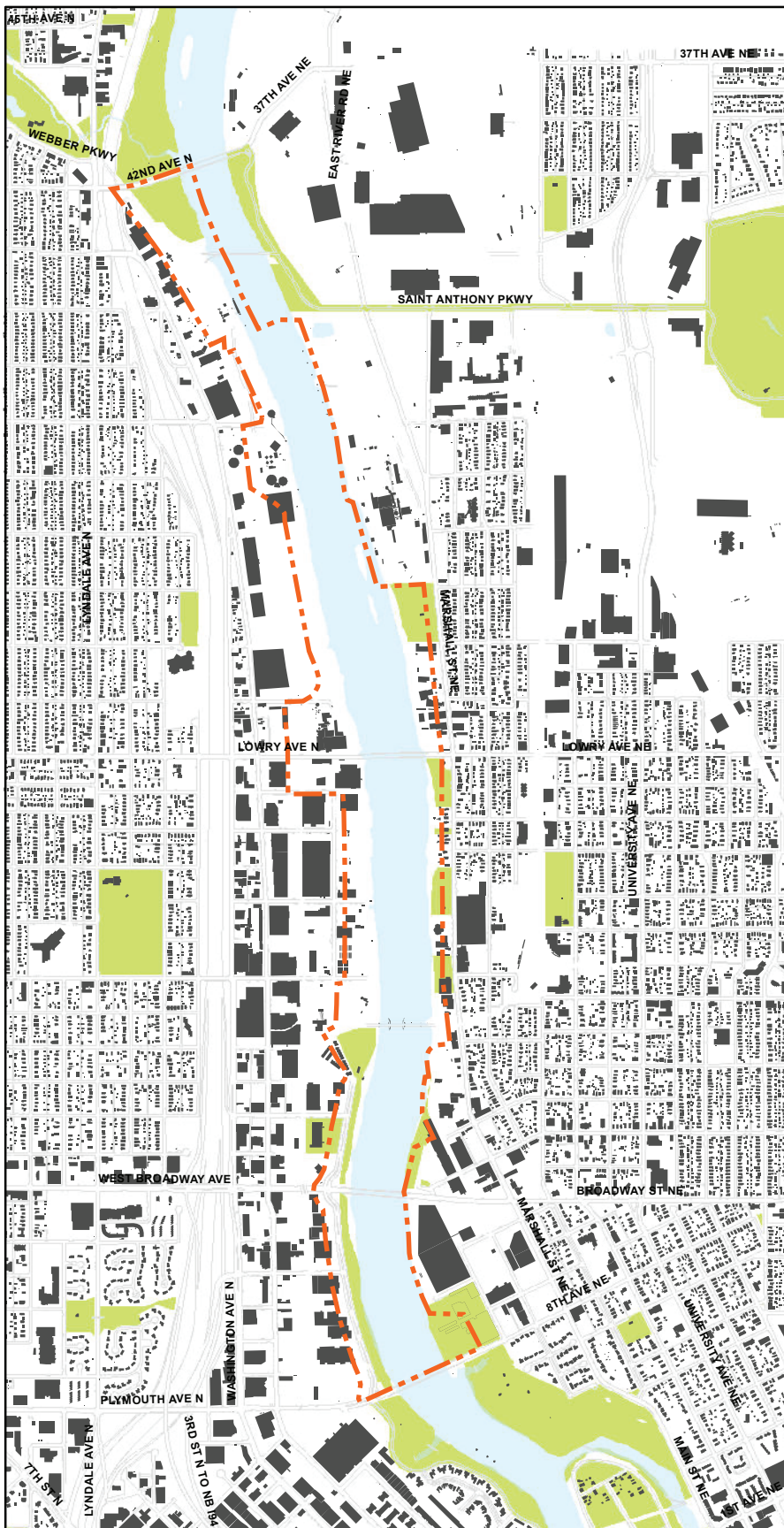


*A large heron rookery exists on islands within ATF Regional Park.*



*The urban context for ATF Regional Park includes not only residential neighborhoods and industrial uses, but also parks and other "patches" of habitat along this international migratory flyway.*





#### Legend

- - - Regional Park Boundary
- Building Footprint
- Parkland

0.5 Miles

Figure 5.2 Built Structures

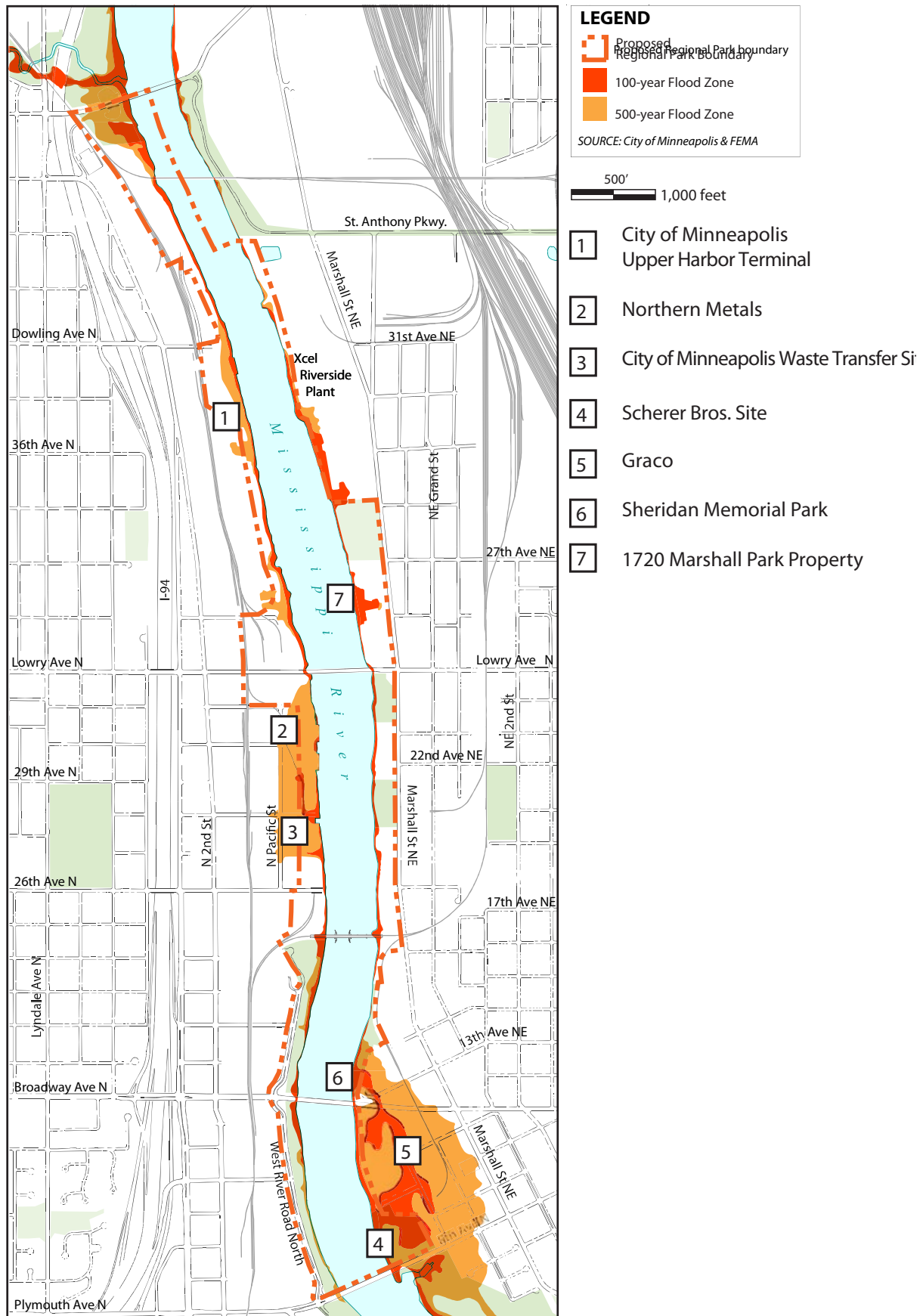


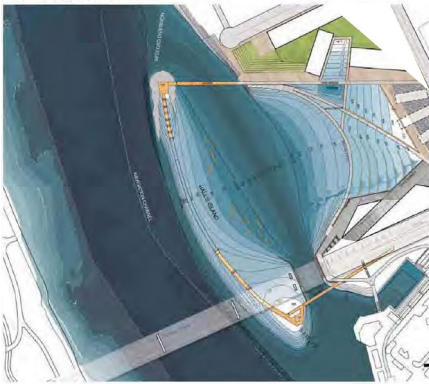
Figure 5.3 Flood Zones (Source: City of Minneapolis and FEMA)

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## WATER QUALITY

While the Mississippi River is a prominent feature in the Above the Falls Regional Park, it is important to remember that this stretch of river is part of a much larger system. The Mississippi River drains a watershed of 1.2 million square miles that includes a majority of the land mass of North America. Thus, the development of Above the Falls Regional Park will have a positive but incremental impact on the system. Significant change in the Mississippi River itself is limited by what occurs in the watershed north of the regional park.

808' : 100yr Flood



*Park design for the Scherer site accommodates the river's flood patterns.*

Water enters the Mississippi River in this area from a number of sources. There are no streams that enter the river within the Regional Park itself. Just north of ATF Regional Park, Shingle Creek enters the river, while Bassett Creek enters just to the south. Also notable is the BNSF railroad bridge, which marks the northern end of the channel dredged by U.S. the Army Corps of Engineers.

Water also flows into the river from 33 stormwater outfalls, shown in Figure 5.4. These drain stormwater runoff from streets, parking lots, yards and buildings, bringing pollutants, organic debris, and trash along the way. Some of these stormwater drains sit below the Ordinary High Water Level and are usually not visible.

According to the MPCA, the Above the Falls stretch of the Mississippi River is impaired with both fecal coliform and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), as evidenced by fish tissue. Fecal coliform is present largely due to animal waste and septic systems, and is likely associated with agricultural operations and rural development upstream. This pollutant is found at high levels at various locations and water bodies statewide. PCBs are industrial chemicals that were discontinued in the late 1970's, but still exist in residual amounts in the environment. This pollutant is found at high levels in the Mississippi as far north as St Cloud. Together, these pollutants have negative implications for recreational use of the river and fish consumption. For example, proposed water access and swimming beaches will need to be closed during periods of acute river pollution, with adequate public notice being a key operations challenge.

At present, the MPCA is conducting a TMDL (total maximum daily load) project in the Above the Falls area related to bacteria. Interventions include compliance for failing septic systems, measures to reduce runoff from feedlot/pasture areas, and overall better stormwater management (e.g. filtration and reducing sediment). This project is expected to conclude in 2012.

## SOILS AND CONTAMINATION

Structurally, soils on the west side of the river are relatively stable and suitable for development. The east bank, particularly in the middle section, has more problematic soils with the potential for water saturation that could add to any structural costs.

Soils contamination within the ATF Regional Park reflects the area's urban, industrial history. Elements like hydrocarbons, ash and sawdust result from its industrial past. Contamination occurred both from a lack of historic standards on how to handle and dispose of toxic substances and from the use of unsafe fill for development.



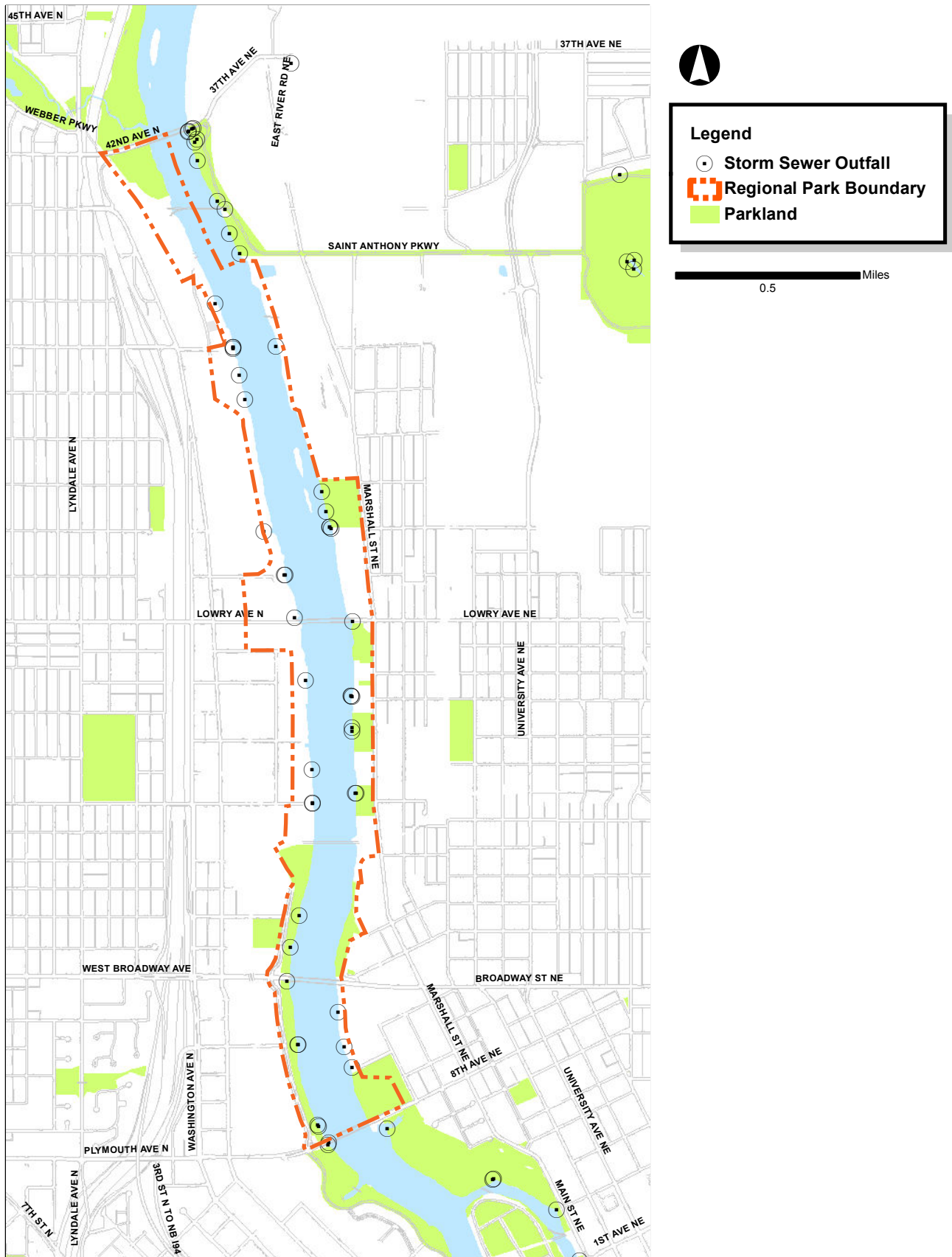


Figure 5.4 Existing Sewer Outfall Locations (Source: MWMO)

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In response to such ubiquitous contamination, park development projects must account for extensive remediation needs through Phase I and II testing. This has been the MPRB's practice on such sites as Orvin "Ole" Olson Park, Gluek Park and the Scherer Bros. property. Since the adoption of the 2000 ATF plan, the MPRB has remediated 18.6 acres of new parkland within the Regional Park. Funding has been acquired through partnerships with local agencies, such as Hennepin County and the MWMO, as well as through Federal programs.

As shown in Figure 5.5 the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has identified nearly 300 sites in the City's larger Above the Falls Study Area with some pollution-related issues. These include sites with active issues as well as those with past issues on record. The types of sites depicted include:

- CERCLIS (1 site): CERCLIS sites are places that are listed in the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System. This means that they are or were suspected of being contaminated.
- Hazardous Waste, Small to Minimal Quantity Generator (113 sites): A small to minimal quantity generator is a facility that generates less than 1,000 kilograms (2,200 pounds) of hazardous waste or 1 kilogram (2.2 pounds) of acutely hazardous waste per calendar month. Like large quantity generators, SQGs and VSQGs must have current hazardous waste licenses. For more information on hazardous waste licenses .
- Landfill, Open (3 sites): Open landfills are landfills that are still accepting waste. This includes facilities that accept household garbage, industrial waste, and debris from construction or demolition.
- Leak Site (16 sites): Leak sites are locations where a release of petroleum products has occurred from a tank system. Leak sites can occur from above ground or underground tank systems as well as from spills at tank facilities.
- Multi (105 sites): Multi sites are locations where there are multiple MPCA activities occurring. This could be a facility with a wastewater permit and an air quality permit, a cleanup site with multiple Superfund operating units, a site with a registered feedlot and a tank, etc.
- Unpermitted Dump Site (5 sites): Unpermitted dump sites are landfills that never held a valid permit from the MPCA. Generally, these dumps existed prior to the permitting program established with the creation of the MPCA in 1967.
- Voluntary Investigation & Cleanup (VIC) Site (37 sites): The Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup (VIC) Program is a non-petroleum brownfield program. VIC provides technical assistance to buyers, sellers, developers or local governments seeking to voluntarily investigate or clean up contaminated land.

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## HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY

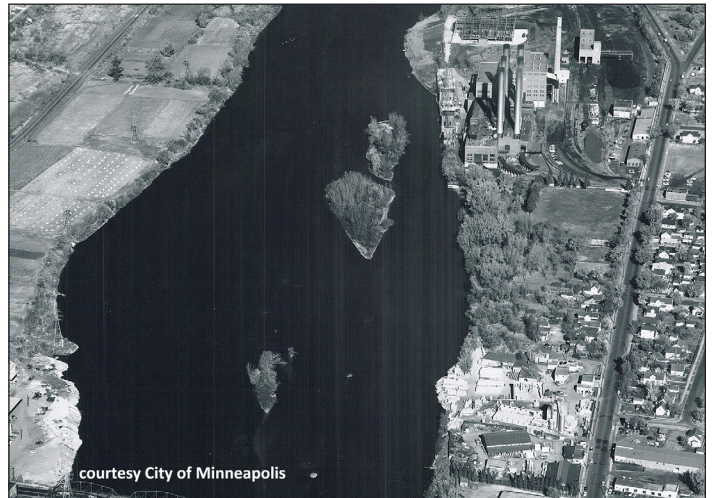
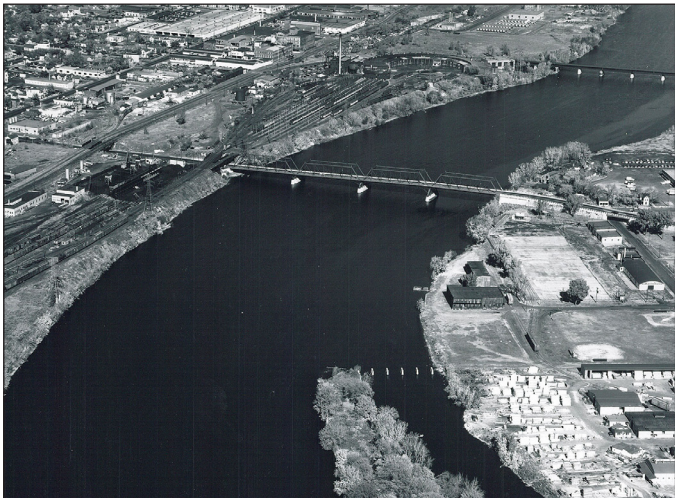
The City has conducted two historic resource inventories that included properties within the Above the Falls Regional Park. In 2004, the Northeast Minneapolis Historic Resources Inventory was a reconnaissance survey of historic resources in a 4,564 acre area which included over 12,000 buildings. The survey found 38 individual properties and one historic district which were good candidates for additional research and documentation for potential local designation or listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). None of the potential properties are within the Above the Falls Regional Park boundary.

In 2009, a historic resource inventory was conducted for the Northside Industrial Area, an area bounded by Plymouth Avenue on the south, the Mississippi River on the east, Interstate 94 on the west, and the Minneapolis city limits on the north. The purpose of the survey was to identify properties within the study area that potentially meet criteria for historic designation under the City of Minneapolis Heritage Preservation ordinance and/or the National Register. The survey area covered approximately 500 acres comprising 337 parcels. Six properties were identified for further investigation as they possessed strong potential for local designation or the National Register. None of these properties are within the Above the Falls Regional Park boundary.

As noted in the historic resource surveys, it is likely that Above the Falls Regional Park has unidentified archaeological remains given the river's importance in transportation and settlement in both pre-contact and post-contact history. Appropriate archaeological assessment and/or survey should be conducted prior to ground-disturbing activities that have the potential to disturb intact archaeological resources.

In general, MPRB will continue to incorporate consideration of historical and cultural resources and an area's many histories when designing and developing sites within ATF Regional Park. Through careful research and design, informed site selection and preservation of existing elements, parks can tell the stories of the past with sensitivity while shaping visionary futures.

To better understand the condition of and potential for these existing structures, the City of Minneapolis contracted with a team of structural and historical consultants to evaluate the structures. The resulting study found that the major structures, while well-worn, are structurally still in fair to good condition. The study also found that most of the structures retain their historic integrity and identified potential changes that might allow new uses while respecting the Secretary of Interior's Standard for the Treatment of Historic Properties (<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-143997.pdf>).



*Two photos from 1955 show land uses including residential rail yards, industry, agriculture and several islands between Plymouth Avenue (left) and the Xcel Riverside Generating Station (right). Photos courtesy of City of Minneapolis.*



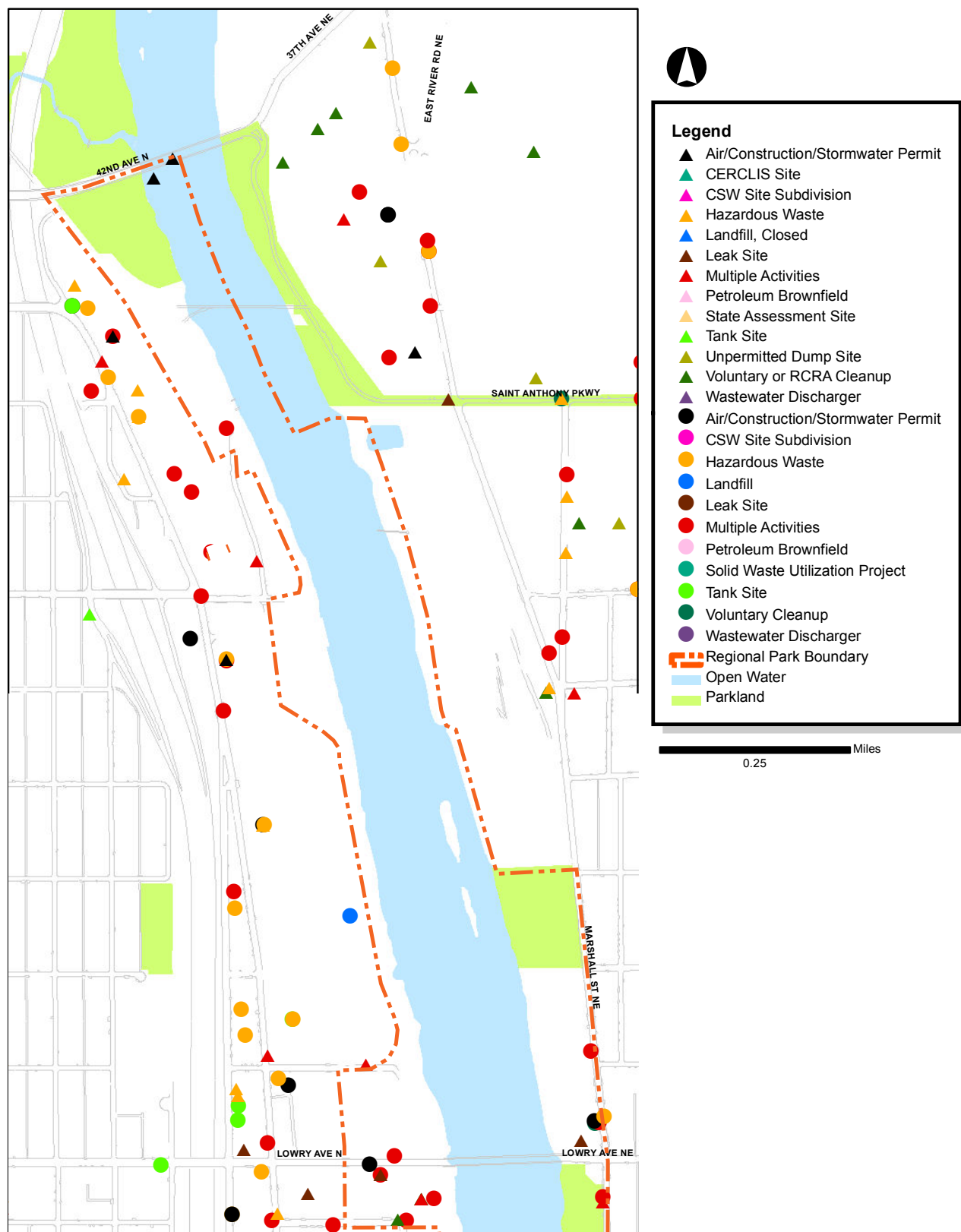


Figure 5.5 2013 Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Sites - North

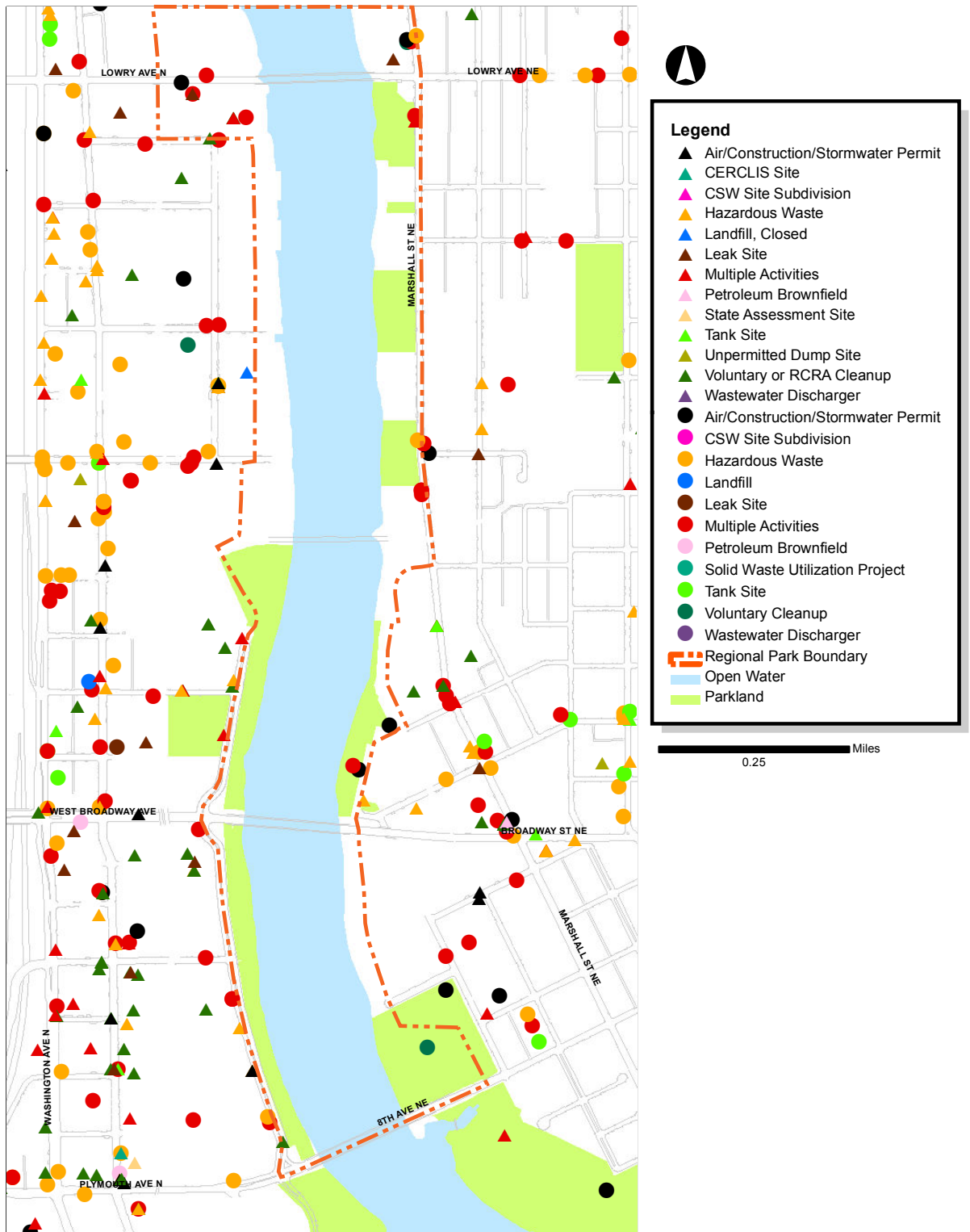


Figure 5.6 2013 Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Sites - South

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proposed park with beach at the Scherer Bros. site



# 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.

#### ***Meaningfully 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

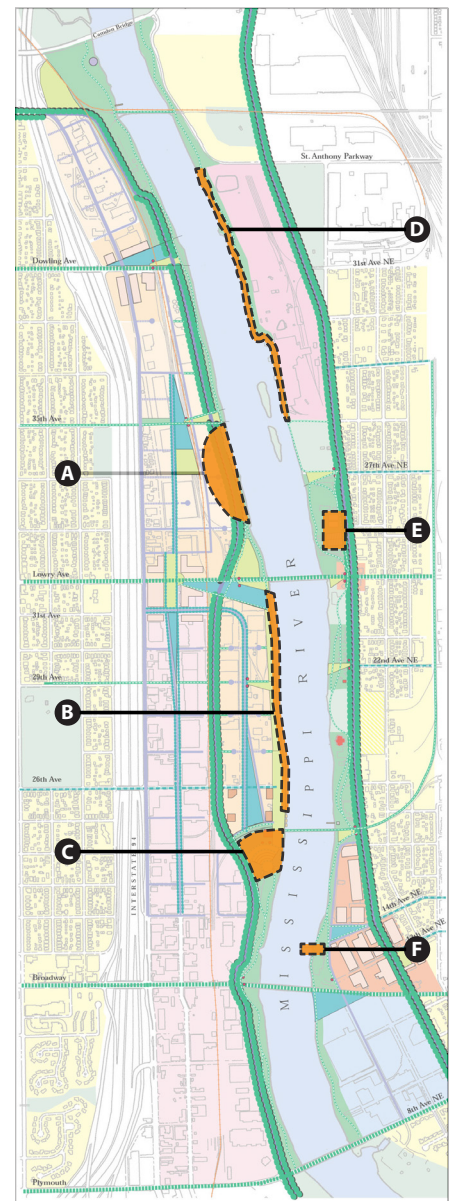
While much of the 2000 ATF Plan is retained in this 2019 ATF Park Plan, some changes to the park development concept have been infused from plans adopted more recently by MPRB (ATF Phase I plan, Sheridan Memorial Park plan, and RiverFirst). For example, one important difference centers on the west bank 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:

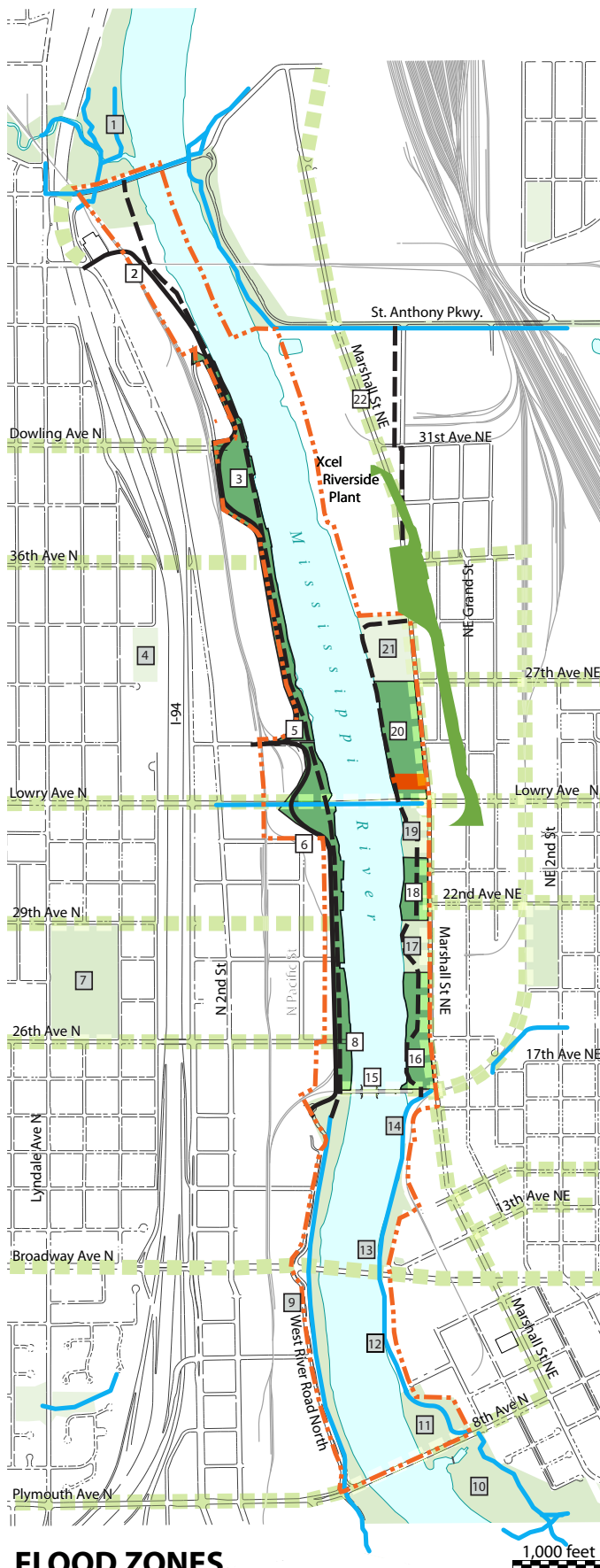
Map	2000 Park Concept	2019 Park Concept
A	Parkway only	Parkway and riverfront park <sup>1</sup>
B	The Promenade	Parkway, restored riverbank and 26th Ave N overlook <sup>1</sup>
C	Skyline Amphitheater	“Ole” Olson Park as shown in 2006 ATF Phase I plan <sup>2</sup>
D	Riverbank trail at Xcel	trail at Marshall St NE and NE Columbia Ave. <sup>3</sup>
E	Botanical Conservatory	restored riverbank/ravine system, trails and overlooks <sup>1</sup>
F	Dock and Boat Rental	Sheridan Park veterans memorial, trail and river overlook <sup>4</sup>

- 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."

- 1 North Mississippi Regional Park (existing)
- 2 West River Parkway Extension
- 3 Park Trails
- 4 Perkins Hill Park (existing)
- 5 Upper Harbor Terminal parkway and riverfront park
- 6 West River Parkway Extension
- 7 Farview Park (existing)
- 8 26th Ave N Overlook
- 9 West River Road North (existing)
- 10 Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park (existing)
- 11 Scherer Brothers Park Site (Graco Park)
- 12 East Bank Trail
- 13 Sheridan Memorial Park (existing)
- 14 East Bank Trail
- 15 BNSF Rail Bridge
- 16 Northeast Riverfront Park
- 17 Gluek Park (existing)
- 18 Northeast Riverfront Park
- 19 Edgewater Park (existing)
- 20 Northeast Riverfront Park
- 21 Marshall Terrace Park (existing)
- 22 East Bank Trail (easement required)

## FLOOD ZONES

Figure 6.1 ATF Regional Park Development Concept



**Figure 6.2 River overlook pier at 26th Avenue North**  
*Improved access to the river includes both physical and visual access points.*

The ATF Regional Park concept proposes development of new parkland as well as continued improvement to existing parks.

## 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.





Most of the 2006 ATF Phase I plan was implemented, creating trails, river access and riverbank restoration between Plymouth Ave. N. and 22nd Ave. N.



The regional park vision includes park uses throughout the year.



**Figure 6.3 Plan for Orvin "Ole" Olson Park from the 2006 ATF Phase 1 plan**

As proposed in the 2006 ATF Phase I plan, continued improvements are envisioned at "Ole" Olson Park.

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.





Figure 6.4 RiverFirst vision for a new park on the Scherer Bros. site (Graco Park)

### GRACO PARK:

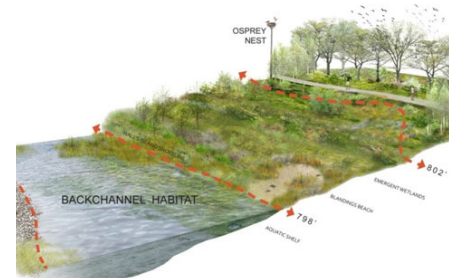
- Restoration of Hall's Island as a habitat zone (complete)
- Creation of gravel-beach cove with carry-in boat access
- Trail connections
- Restored riverbank
- Enhanced stormwater management

## 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.



*The design for Hall's Island specifies several aquatic and upland habitat zones.*

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:

- Veterans Memorial
- Playground
- Trail
- River overlook

### 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.



*The Veteran's Memorial at Sheridan Memorial Park was completed in 2014*



**Figure 6.5 Proposed development plans for Sheridan Memorial Park**





**Figure 6.6 Vision for parks in the Upper Harbor Terminal Area**

The Upper Harbor Terminal redevelopment vision includes new development oriented to the river, extension of West River Parkway, creation of linear green space, reshaping of shoreline, and habitat enhancements as well as creation of signature gathering spaces.

## 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.

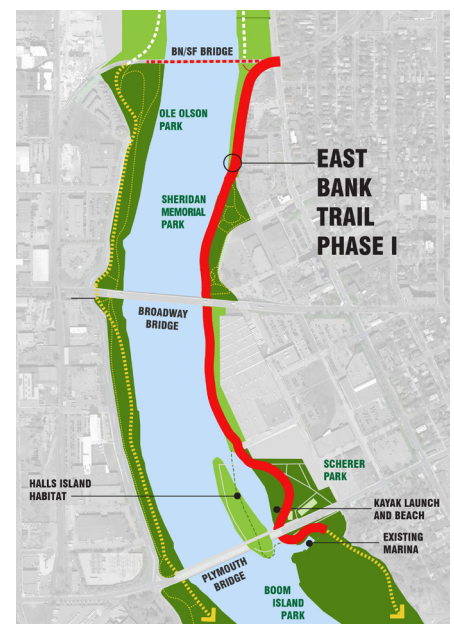
In 2017, the most recent segment of trail was constructed between Plymouth Avenue and the BNSF rail bridge through Graco Park, the Graco easement, Sheridan Memorial Park and former rail and utility easement. The trail was partially funded with a million-dollar grant from the Transportation, Community, 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.

### EAST BANK TRAIL:

Partially complete trail (Phase 1 is finished) connecting St. Anthony Parkway and Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park.



Phase one of the East Bank Trail is complete, and now connects Boom Island Park with the BNSF rail bridge.



### NORTHEAST RIVERFRONT PARKS:

- Expand through acquisitions and easements
- Riverbank restoration
- Public water access

Wetlands Park



### UPPER HARBOR TERMINAL PARK LAND:

- Extension of West River Parkway and trail system
- Reshaped shoreline and improved habitat
- Public gathering space
- Public water access

## 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.





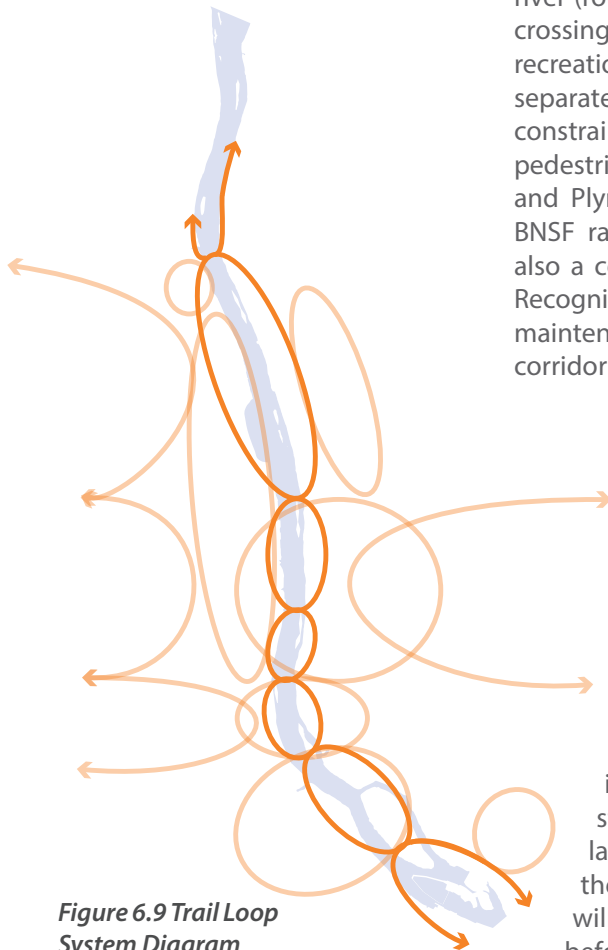
*Conversion of the BNSF rail bridge across the Mississippi River from active rail use to public space including a trail crossing is a long-term community goal animated by the RiverFirst Initiative.*

## 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 + 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.



**Figure 6.9 Trail Loop System Diagram**

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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.

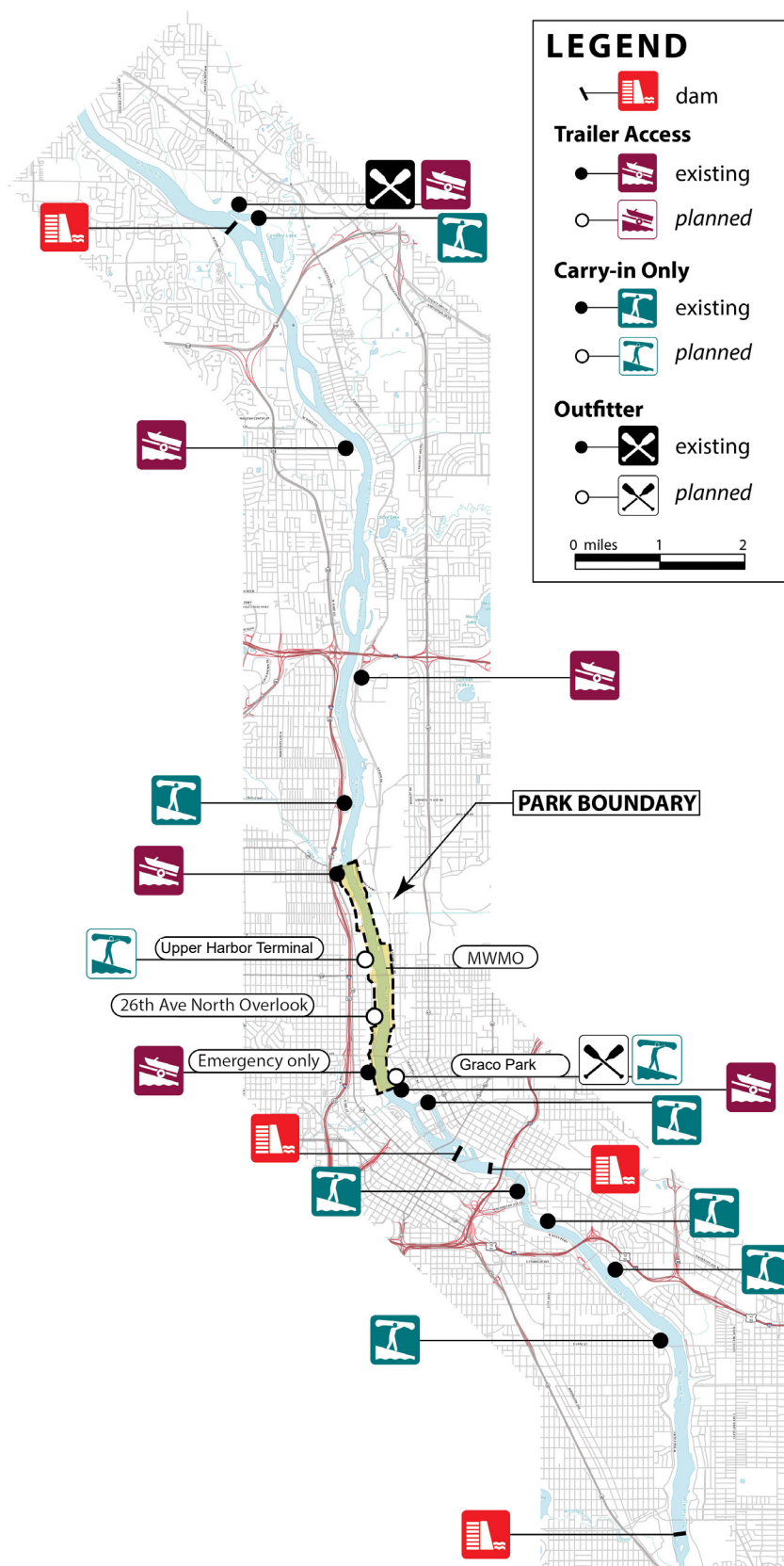
## NATIONAL WATER TRAIL

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.







## PUBLIC WATER ACCESS POINTS

New carry-in public water access points are envisioned on the west side of the river within the proposed Upper Harbor Terminal area. On the east bank, a major new carry-in public water access point is envisioned at Graco Park. (Another is planned at the MWMO headquarters, as a separate MWMO initiative.) Currently all potential future public water access points envisioned by MPRB within ATF Regional Park are for carry-in access only and will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. One motorized access point exists in North Mississippi Regional Park, at 42nd Ave North/Soo Avenue; sufficient space for additional motorized access points has not yet been identified within the Regional Park. Public-water access points are shown in Figure 6.10. Design of public water access points must not conflict with existing storm sewer outfalls.

**Figure 6.10 Public Water Access Locations, Existing and Proposed**

*Development of public water access points will depend on funding, property acquisition, existing utilities and regulatory permitting.*

MPRB parkways are considered to be a recreational amenity and urban design tool in equal measure to their traffic circulation function.

## 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. Parkway 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**

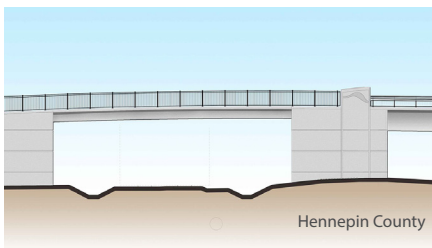
The extension of West River Parkway through the full length of ATF will establish the public-access spine for the west bank's linear park as well as adjacent redevelopment. In variance to the 2000 ATF Master Plan, this plan proposes to keep most of West River Parkway directly within riverfront parkland, 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

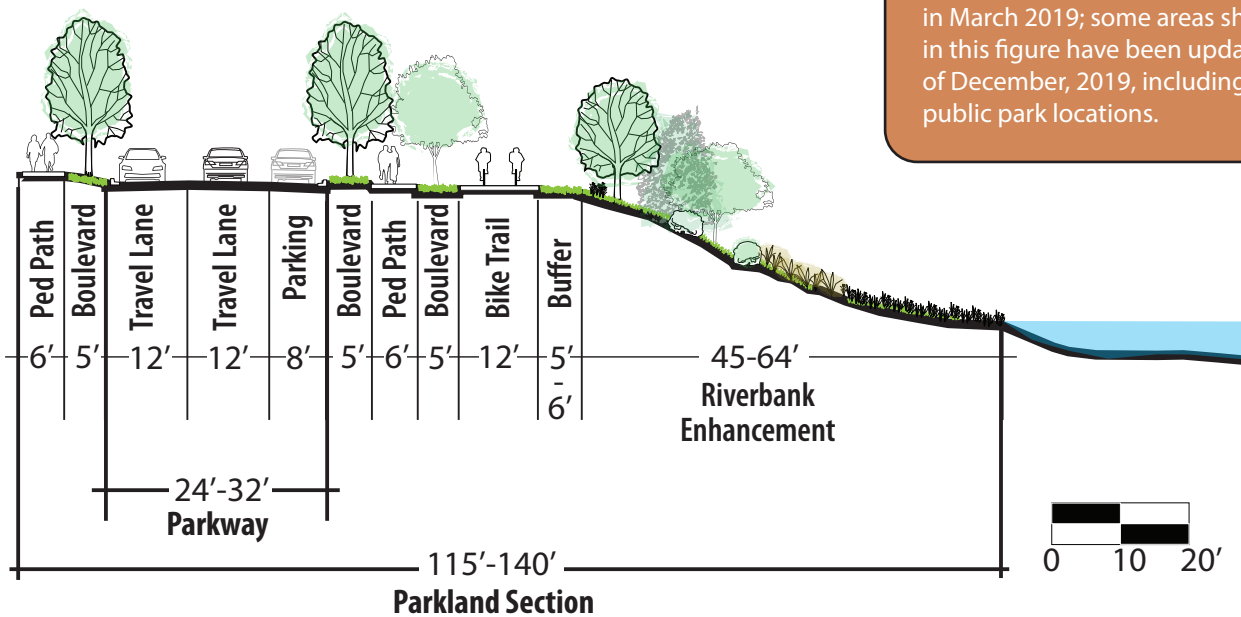
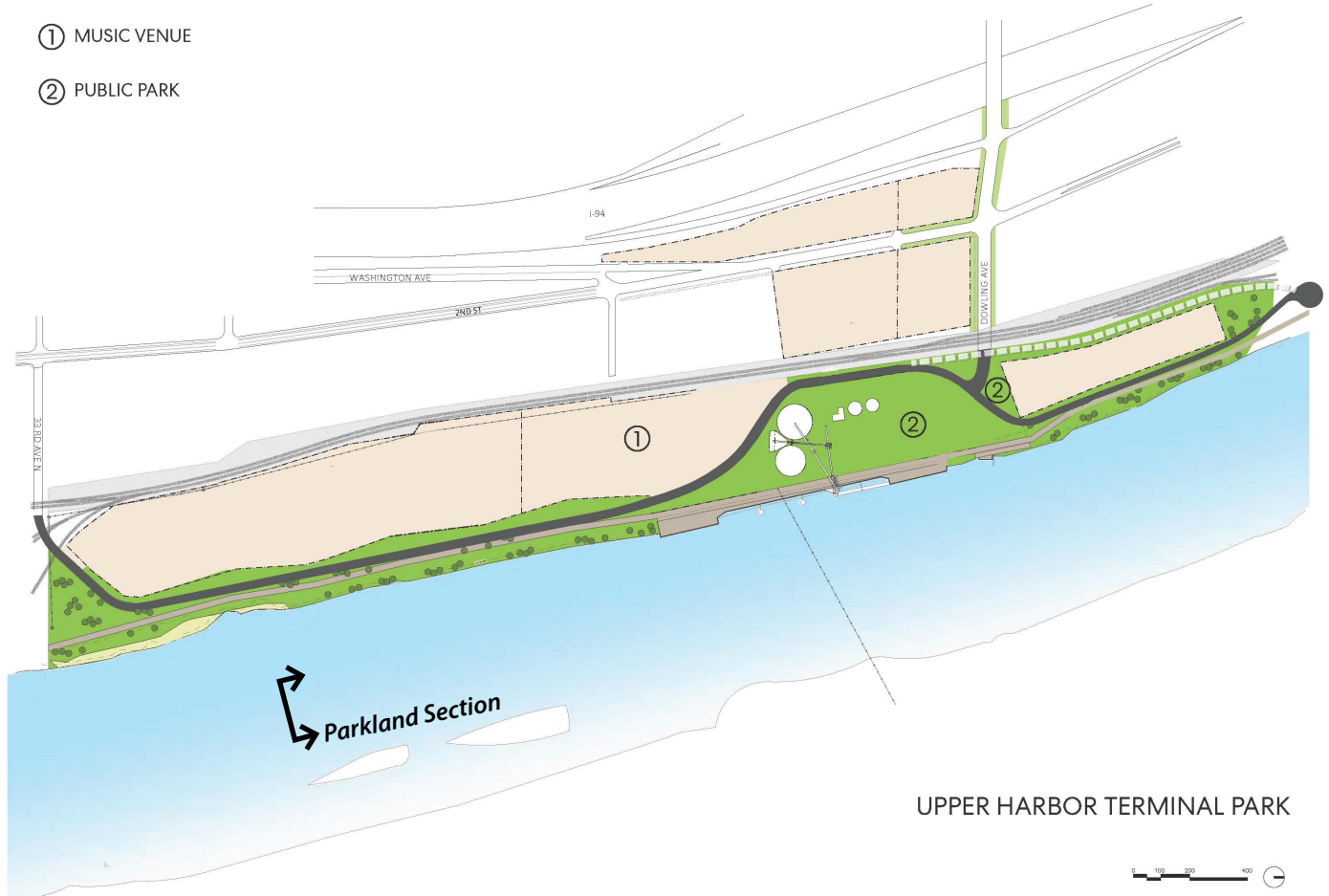


*The west abutment of the Lowry bridge includes a portal designed to accommodate existing rail and a future West River Parkway.*



*Many old private residences exist along the east bank. Because acquisition of park land is a long-term prospect, easements from willing property owners could be an interim measure for implementing a trail.*

- ① MUSIC VENUE
- ② PUBLIC PARK

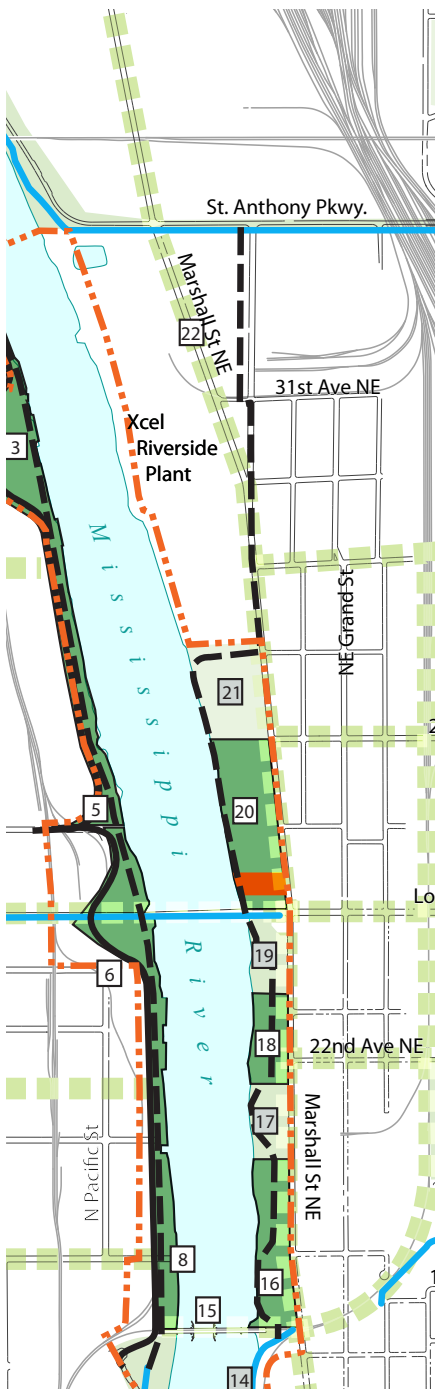


The City approved The Upper Harbor Terminal Development Concept Plan in March 2019; some areas shown in this figure have been updated as of December, 2019, including the public park locations.

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



"Connected actions" are community goals that sit outside the ATF Regional Park but that could have positive impacts on park development and park use.



Marshall Street NE is a prominent North-South connection along the eastern edge of Above the Falls Regional Park

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

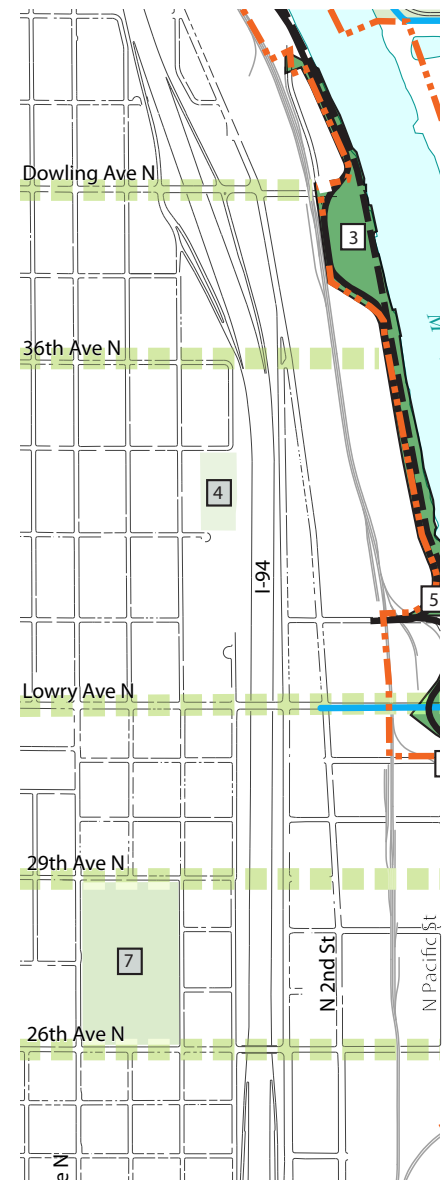
Implementation of the Riverway Street system would be a City of Minneapolis initiative supported by a wide range of agency partners.

## 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.



*Outside ATF Regional Park, a proposed system of “Riverway Streets” is intended to lead residents and visitors to riverfront parks.*

*An even bolder proposal of RiverFirst is to cap most of I-94 between 26th Avenue North and Dowling Avenue. So far, neither riverway streets nor the cap have been analyzed in detail and street corridors have not been selected.*

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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.*



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## 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.



*Typical park signage per the MPRB's signage and wayfinding standards*

## 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):

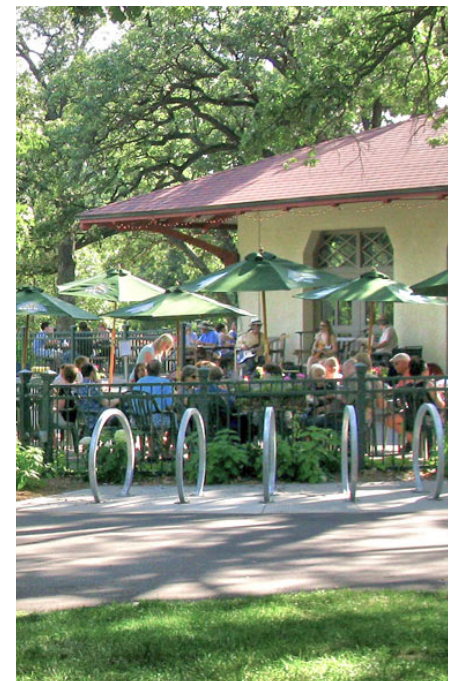
- At 10-minute walk intervals along the trail system
- At gathering spaces, food concessions and play areas

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:

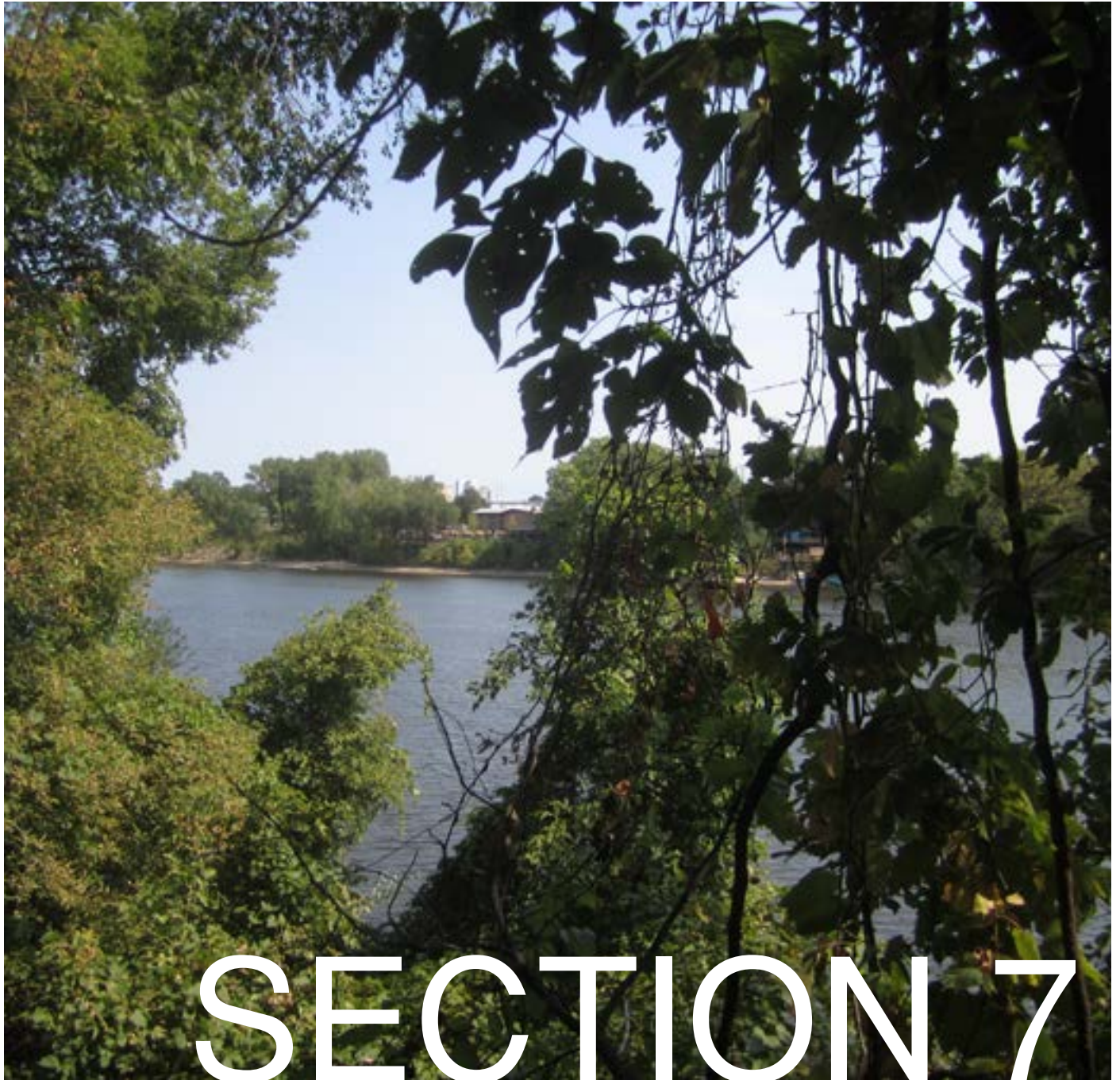
- Snacks and refreshments at least every 2 miles along both banks
- Destination food in at least one location on each bank



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

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# SECTION 7

## Park Boundary and Land Assembly





#### Legend

- Above the Falls Regional Park Boundary as of 2012
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

0.5 Miles

It has been nineteen years since the Above the Falls Regional Park was created. In that time, the regional park boundary has evolved in minor but important ways by means of several amendments adopted by the MPRB and approved by the Metropolitan Council (Figure 7.1). With this 2019 master plan update, the park boundary is further refined as shown in Figure 7.2. Boundary adjustments reflect land acquisition opportunities, refinements in redevelopment approaches, and modified park development strategies.

Figure 7.1 Above the Falls Regional Park Boundary prior to 2019 Master Plan Update



Figure 7.2 Above the Falls Regional Park Boundary (2019)

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## REGIONAL PARK BOUNDARY

The ATF Regional Park comprises roughly 375 acres of Mississippi River and its banks along a 2.75-mile stretch through north and northeast Minneapolis. The southern boundary is shared with the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park. The northern boundary is shared with the North Mississippi Regional Park and St. Anthony Parkway Regional Trail. The east and west boundaries are edged by urban development. One hundred forty acres of the park (37%) are upland and 235 acres (63%) are river surface (during normal river elevation). Minimally, the park boundary has been established to provide for the dimensional needs of shoreline habitat and linear recreation (trails and parkways). In addition to these basic linear demands, the boundary broadens where opportunities exist to provide for larger park spaces at regular intervals along the river. Where synergistic, the park boundary has been located to align with existing property boundaries and streets. However, there are also instances when the park boundary dissects a given property (such as Upper Harbor Terminal), which will prompt adjacent redevelopment. In all cases, the boundary has been located with an understanding of infrastructure demands and adjacent redevelopment potential.

## CURRENT LAND TENURE

Following are descriptions of the categories of land tenure within the ATF Regional Park. The categories are illustrated in Figure 7.3.

### *River Surface*

While it's easy to think of "the park" as the uplands, the river itself (at 63%) of park land area is the dominant share of the park and will play an increasingly pivotal role in recreational use and ecological function (see Chapter 6 for envisioned river access and river recreation). While ownership of the riverbed within a dimension of the shoreline lies with the adjacent property, the rest of riverbed is owned by the State. The surface of the water is, by law and in all cases, public domain.

### *MPRB Property*

The MPRB owns fee-title, holds easements over, or is currently in the process of acquiring 63 acres or 45% of the total upland acres within the ATF park boundary. All of the property has been secured since creation of the park in 2000 and most of it since the MPRB amplified its land assembly efforts in 2010. Another leap forward will occur when the anticipated regional parkland at Upper Harbor Terminal (roughly 19.5 acres) is transferred from the City of Minneapolis to the MPRB.

### *Inholdings*

Because of the Above the Falls' urban setting and the ambition expressed through the master plan to transform the upper river corridor from private land to public park, the activity of land assembly (through acquisition, easement or other means) is an ongoing effort and will be for years to come. An important word or concept related to this issue is "inholding". Inholding refers to lands inside the defined boundary of the regional park owned by an entity other than the MPRB. Currently, inholdings represent 55% of the park's upland land area and consist of both privately held and non-MPRB publicly held properties.



*A trail along the east bank between 10th Ave NE and Broadway now exists, thanks to an easement with Graco Inc.*



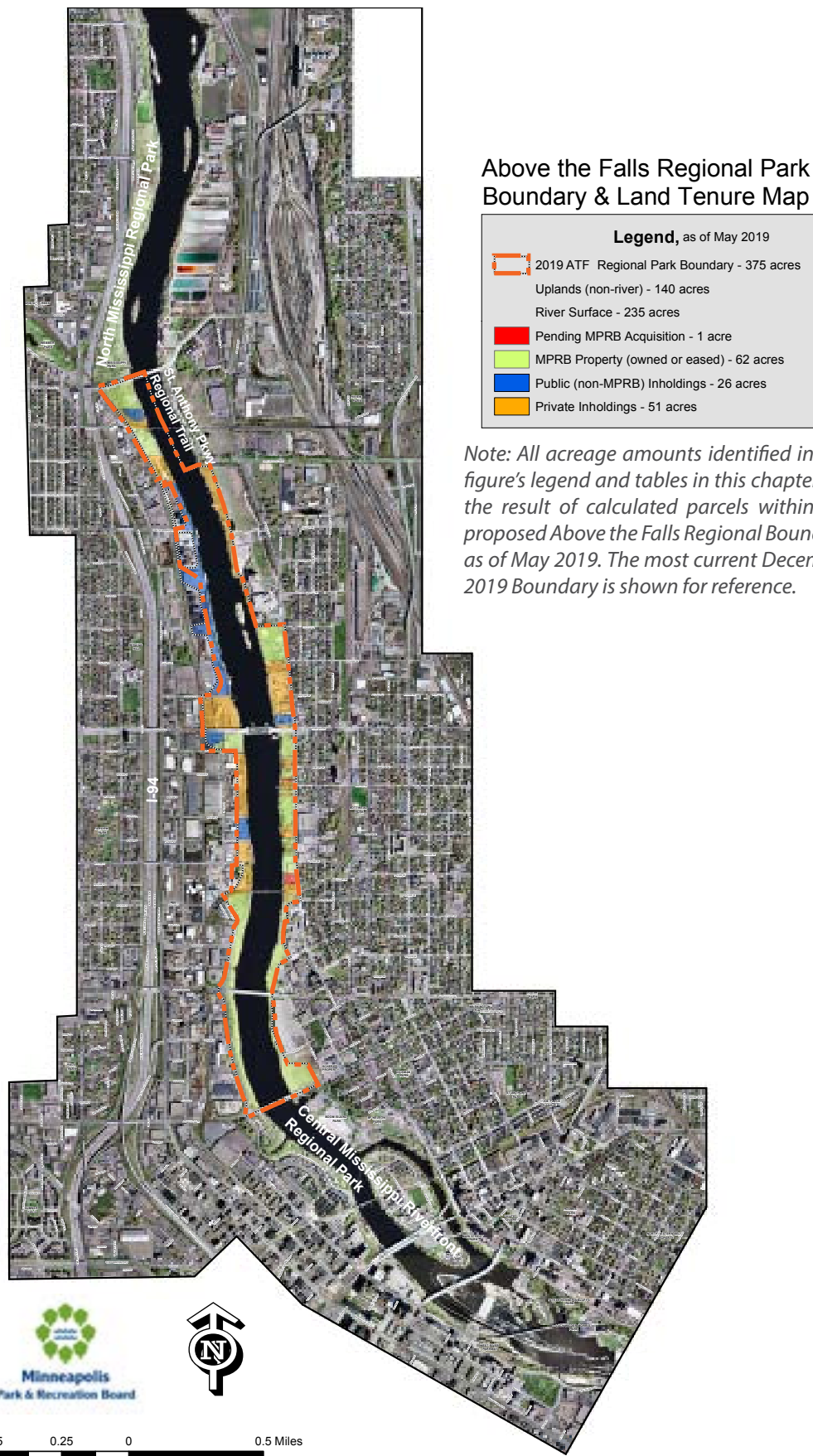


Figure 7.3 Above the Falls Regional Park Boundary and Land Tenure Map



*MPRB will engage industrial property owners on the west bank to discuss potential interim trail easements. The connection shown here is identified as a priority in the 2000 ATF Master Plan, also.*



*Riverbank trail connections within Xcel's Riverside Generating Station are not feasible due to operational and security concerns. Xcel has indicated a willingness to discuss trail easements along Marshall St NE and Columbia Ave NE.*

It is important to note that some properties may always be park inholdings. For various reasons such as capitalizing on potential programming partnerships or quickly pursuing unexpected land sales, the park boundary includes all properties that constitute preferred parkland even though some are recognized as long term or permanent inholdings. Tables 7.1 - 7.3 tabulate current park inholdings.

## LAND ASSEMBLY

Land assembly is, obviously, the first step in transforming the area defined as the ATF Regional Park from private lands to public realm. The MPRB is committed to land assembly has established robust procedures and administration activities. In 2011, the MPRB created a real estate staff position dedicated to organizing property records, addressing ongoing issues of owned properties and facilitating system-wide land assembly activities (mostly occurring in ATF Regional Park).

The MPRB approaches land assembly by building long term relationships with property owners, negotiating land purchases with willing sellers, and considering eminent domain as a mechanism of last resort. The MPRB routinely partners with other agencies and organizations, including the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization and Metropolitan Council in funding the purchase of fee-title land ownership or easements.

The MPRB's Land Policy was last updated in 2015 and is scheduled to be reviewed again in 2020. The Land Policy addresses land disposition, encroachments, attempts of eminent domain by other agencies, interim use, and divestiture. Land assembly, however, is not directly addressed in the MPRB's Land Policy; a topic for consideration in the upcoming policy update.

## PREPARATION FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT

All the land within the ATF Regional Park boundary has been previously developed. Many of the parcels have structures on them at the time of acquisition, which require demolition prior to park development. And, a significant majority of land acquisitions demand some level of environmental remediation. The conditions faced in ATF Regional Park of prior industrial development are somewhat unique among parkland in the Twin Cities regional park system. Prior industrial development often result in extraordinary one-time costs in preparation for park development not experienced in rural park settings.

Above the Falls Regional Park Park Inholdings as of May 2019			
Address	Status	Land Area (acres)	Estimated Market Value
<b>Public Lands (non-MPRB)</b>			
50 33RD AVE N	VACANT	3.58	\$2,497,400
51 34TH AVE N	VACANT	2.99	\$1,835,600
2522 Marshall ST	SPORT OR RECREATION FAC	1.42	\$1,894,000
2 36TH AVE N	IND WAREHOUSE FACTORY	6.04	\$4,620,000
51 36TH AVE N	VACANT	2.96	\$2,025,400
2 Dowling AVE	MISCELLANEOUS	3.02	\$1,631,900
4026 1/2 Washington AVE N	VACANT	1.72	\$696,100
2644 1/2 Marshall ST	VACANT	0.01	\$300
2200 Marshall ST	VACANT	0.07	\$20,900
51 Lowry AVE N	IND WAREHOUSE FACTORY	1.45	\$374,000
70 31ST AVE N	VACANT	0.47	\$136,000
2716 Pacific ST	IND WAREHOUSE FACTORY	1.98	\$1,522,500
<b>Subtotals</b>		<b>25.70</b>	<b>\$17,254,100</b>

**Table 7.1 Park Inholdings (Public, non-MPRB lands)**

## CONFLICTS

ATF Regional Park exists in a context of Minneapolis neighborhoods with a broad mix of existing uses. The park is compatible with and, in many cases, a benefit to existing uses. This portion of the Mississippi River inherently has conflicts considering the current railroads, public infrastructure, utilities, and development uses. We anticipate that there will need to be continued dialogue with community and agency partners as MPRB acquires additional park land in the defined areas. This is likely to happen on a case-by-case basis, because implementation of ATF will occur piecemeal over a very long period of time. MPRB will engage with affected parties as acquisitions and implementation projects become possible. The proposed regional park boundary was developed in consultation with stakeholders and the City of Minneapolis to ensure compatibility with future economic development.

The Xcel Energy Riverside Generating Station at the northeast corner of the regional park is a property where industrial operations, safety concerns and security needs conflict with the park uses shown in the 2000 ATF Master Plan. Based on discussions with Xcel staff, it is clear that public access along the riverbank at the plant is not feasible due to security and operational concerns. Public access along the east edge of the plant's property, on the west side of Marshall St. NE, is constrained by existing Xcel buildings and other structures. The ATF Regional Park boundary has been adjusted from its original location to exclude the Xcel Riverside Plant riverbank property from ATF Regional Park.



Above the Falls Regional Park Park Inholdings as of May 2019			
Address	Status	Land Area (acres)	Estimated Market Value
<b>Privately-held Lands</b>			
2 Plymouth AVE	UTILITY	0.14	\$61,100
2648 Marshall ST	MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	0.46	\$198,000
2504 Marshall ST	VACANT	0.38	\$181,500
4 Broadway ST NE	IND WAREHOUSE FACTORY	0.00	\$3,996,000
2302 Marshall ST	SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED	0.64	\$196,500
2608 Marshall ST	IND WAREHOUSE FACTORY	2.25	\$577,500
2626 Marshall ST	VACANT	0.41	\$75,500
3939 1ST ST N	VACANT	3.25	\$934,800
2204 Marshall ST	MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	0.49	\$237,000
1414 Marshall ST	COMM WORK SHOP	0.00	\$1,865,000
2644 Marshall ST	VACANT	0.53	\$101,900
1620 Marshall ST	SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED	0.63	\$152,200
2136 Marshall ST	SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED	0.63	\$261,600
3018 Pacific ST	IND WAREHOUSE FACTORY	0.69	\$1,155,000
1600 Marshall ST	COMM WORK SHOP	0.39	\$835,000
50 Lowry AVE N	IND WAREHOUSE FACTORY	6.48	\$1,533,500
2124 Marshall ST	BAR,RESTAURANT,CLUB	0.33	\$330,000
2602 Mill ST	VACANT	0.41	\$122,800
2536 Marshall ST	COMM WORK SHOP	2.07	\$1,312,500
1924 Marshall ST	VACANT	0.39	\$171,500
2652 Marshall ST	MULTI-FAMILY APARTMENT	1.21	\$3,673,000
2900 Marshall ST	UTILITY	8.05	\$88,164,000
901 Water ST	VACANT	0.01	\$48,300
4028 1/2 Washington AVE N	VACANT	1.12	\$87,100
1818 Marshall ST	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.24	\$178,000
2530 Marshall ST	VACANT	0.10	\$22,100
2337 River Pointe LN	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$279,000
2331 River Pointe CIR	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$361,000
1600 1/2 Marshall ST	VACANT	0.27	\$62,300
2311 River Pointe CIR	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$404,000
1820 Marshall ST	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.24	\$211,000
2612 Mill ST	VACANT	0.38	\$100,800
33 26TH AVE N	IND WAREHOUSE FACTORY	2.40	\$1,199,600
1816 Marshall ST	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.24	\$214,000
2622 Mill ST	VACANT	0.35	\$84,400
2339 River Pointe LN	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$272,500
2343 River Pointe LN	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$277,000
2309 River Pointe CIR	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$404,000
2610 Marshall ST	IND WAREHOUSE FACTORY	1.81	\$446,500
1016 Sibley ST	IND WAREHOUSE FACTORY	0.00	\$2,498,000
2325 River Pointe CIR	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$424,000
2405 River Pointe CIR	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$403,500

**Table 7.2 Privately-held Park Inholdings**

Above the Falls Regional Park Park Inholdings as of May 2019			
Address	Status	Land Area (acres)	Estimated Market Value
<b>Privately-held Lands (continued)</b>			
2307 River Pointe CIR	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$403,500
2500 Marshall ST	MIXED OFFICE,RETAIL,RESID	0.16	\$286,000
2303 River Pointe CIR	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$408,500
2341 River Pointe LN	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$272,500
2313 River Pointe CIR	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$404,000
1514 Marshall ST	VACANT	0.66	\$162,000
2628 Marshall ST	VACANT	0.27	\$55,800
2900 Pacific ST	IND WAREHOUSE FACTORY	4.37	\$3,638,500
2329 River Pointe CIR	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$408,000
2333 River Pointe CIR	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$357,000
2327 River Pointe CIR	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$431,500
4024 1/2 Washington AVE N	VACANT	0.99	\$85,600
1448 Marshall ST	MULTI-FAMILY APARTMENT	0.00	\$8,451,000
1814 Marshall ST	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.24	\$178,000
76 23RD AVE N	VACANT	1.06	\$222,400
2403 River Pointe CIR	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$411,500
2630 Marshall ST	VACANT	0.26	\$44,200
2305 River Pointe CIR	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$404,000
2335 River Pointe LN	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	0.00	\$277,000
2208 Marshall ST	MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	0.24	\$188,100
2300 Marshall ST	SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED	0.26	\$243,000
1900 Marshall ST	BAR,RESTAURANT,CLUB	1.05	\$1,350,000
		0.24	\$0
74 Lowry AVE N	VACANT	2.62	\$580,300
30 26TH AVE N	VACANT	1.12	\$317,600
	<b>Subtotals</b>	<b>50.54</b>	<b>\$133,693,000</b>
	<b>Inholding Totals</b>	<b>76.24</b>	<b>\$150,947,100</b>

Table 7.3 Privately-held Park Inholdings (Continued) and Inholding Totals

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# SECTION 8

## Accessibility



*Maintaining access to parks and trails throughout the winter is a hallmark of the MPRB system.*



*Near-term park development goals include new and renovated riverbank access points that offer universal accessibility.*

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is committed to ensuring that park users are connected to the land and each other. The neighborhoods adjacent to the Above the Falls master plan area have historically been subject to inequities in city planning and development, including allowing industrial development along the river rather than green space and the construction of I-94 that cuts off North Minneapolis from the river. This plan commits to increase access to the river and park land for residents in North and Northeast Minneapolis. To achieve this vision, the MPRB *2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan* identified the following three strategies that are specifically related to accessibility and special needs populations:

- “Build or renew facilities to meet or exceed standards for accessibility.” (p. 25)
- “Ensure recreation opportunities are available for persons with disabilities.” (p. 18)
- “Identify and reduce physical and financial barriers to participation in programming.” (p. 18)

## MPRB ADA ACTION PLAN

In 2018, MPRB approved the MPRB ADA Action Plan (2018-2020) to guide the MPRB ADA Transition planning. The action plan is a living document to assist all departments with tasks that range from capital planning, to rehabilitation of existing facilities, and from recreational programming to communications. The document identifies current best practices and standards, and lists a range of action-oriented tasks. As much of the park land will be new, the ATF Regional Park is an opportunity to model park planning and development that sets the stage for inclusive parks and park programming.

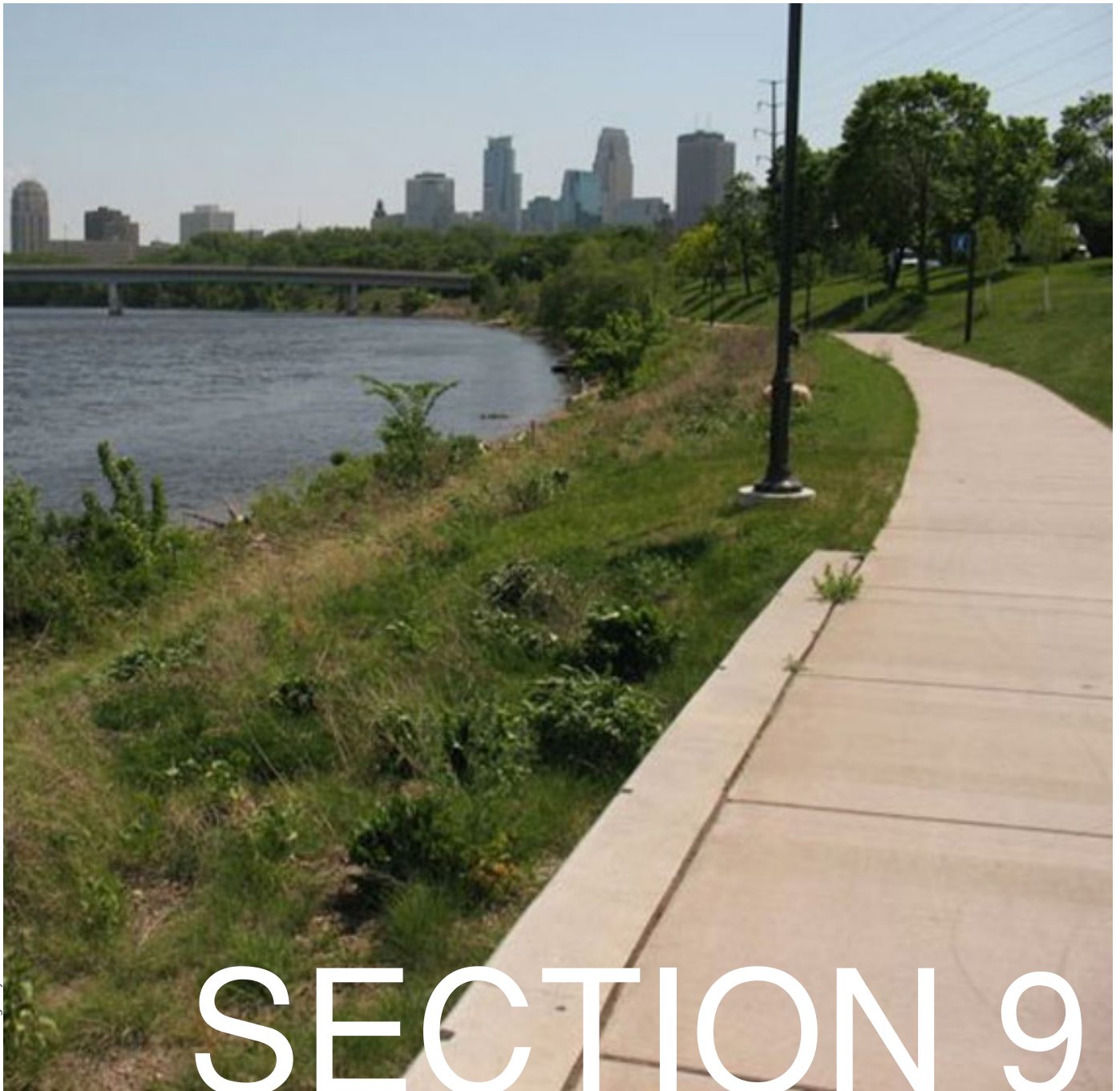
In developing new park elements within Above the Falls Regional Park, care will be taken to design facilities that meet requirements for the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as principles for universal accessibility. Some existing facilities do not meet ADA, such as the steps to the riverbank at Marshall Terrace Park and Sheridan Memorial Park. These will be rehabilitated to meet ADA as resources allow.

User costs, too, can be a barrier to park use for individuals or groups. Most ATF Regional Park facilities will not require a fee for public use, consistent with MPRB policy throughout its system. Amenities such as multi-use trails, community gathering spots and public water access points are generally provided free of charge. Some of the amenities proposed for Above the Falls Regional Park could require minimal user fees, for example potential boat-storage at the Scherer Bros. site, or event fees to reserve gathering spaces. MPRB offers users the option of purchasing a permit or using meters for parking, and reduced fees arrangements are available for recreational programming.

MPRB does not have jurisdiction over city decision-making and development, but will continue to be an active partner in conversations around how city development and zoning may impact equitable access to adjacent park spaces.



View of emergency boat launch at 28th Avenue North



# SECTION 9

## Public Service Needs





Potential "phase I" extension of West River Parkway could take place at the City-owned Upper Harbor Terminal, using existing surface streets and rail crossings to connect riverbank park land to existing neighborhoods.



Stormwater management in ATF Regional Park will be integrated with park and parkway design. This stormwater management facility was implemented as part of ATF Phase I in 2007 with technical and funding partnership from MWMO.

## 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) and the City of Minneapolis.

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 efficient 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.





# SECTION 10

## Operations and Stewardship Plan

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## OPERATIONS

The quality of park operations is equal in importance to park design. Over the past eight years, the MPRB has retooled its operating structure for the park system based on geographic service areas within the city. In conjunction, budgeting practices have been altered to reflect revenues and expenditures on a service area basis. Creating master plans for each regional park and each service area is a critical step in the overall structure since the master plan establishes a design vision, investment framework, and any partnership model that form the basis for sound operations.

The term “operations” refers to the full spectrum of ongoing demands of a park including maintenance, public safety, resource consumption/conservation, and capital repairs. This approach provides a more complete understanding of operations and outlines actions necessary to reach that future.

Maintenance is a critical part of the equation for two primary reasons. First, robust maintenance maximizes the longevity of investments in park assets. A trail, for example, where pavement cracks are filled and sealed will last years longer than one left to natural forces of weather, use, and time. Second, the standard of care achieved through maintenance directly impacts the magnitude of visits and the quality of experience enjoyed by guests. People are inclined to extend their stays and revisit well cared-for parks. Beyond these primary factors, the standard of care demonstrated in a park will cause a cascade of results (positive or negative).

Because a master plan is intended to express a preferred future and the actions necessary to reach it, the basic equation for operations applied by the MPRB solves for three things:

- Desired standard of care
- Ongoing personnel, equipment, and capital repair resources needed to achieve the desired standard of care
- Translation of personnel, equipment, and repair resources into annual operating budgets

To express the information in coherent a way as possible, Table 10.1 identifies operating budget standards applied to park assets across the Minneapolis park system. As capital projects are programmed and designed, these budgets (and future updates to them) will be applied to the design to understand operating commitments inherent to the design as well as understand implications of design alternatives.



# Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

Annual Maintenance Budget Standards: 2019 values

Asset Type	Asset Name	Life Cycle	Life Expectancy	Unit of Operation	Operating Unit Cost Per Year
Buildings	Recreation Center	75	50	sf	\$ -
	Bandshell	75	50	sf	\$ 10
	Maintenance Building	75	50	sf	\$ 5
	Maintenance Facility	75	50	sf	\$ 5
	Picnic Shelter	50	50	capacity	\$ 30
	Restroom Building	50	50	each	\$ 10,000
	Booth	15	15	each	\$ 2,000
	Kiosk	25	25	each	\$ 500
	Seasonal Warming House	15	15	each	\$ 10,000
	Permanent Warming House	50	50	sf	\$ 20
Fields	Premier Diamond - Natural	15	15	each	\$ 25,000
	Premier Field - Natural	15	15	each	\$ 25,000
	Premier Diamond - Artificial	10	15	each	\$ 5,000
	Premier Field - Artificial	10	15	each	\$ 5,000
	Multi-use Diamond	40	40	each	\$ 20,000
	Sports Dome	25	25	each	\$ 80,000
Play	Playground	25	25	each	\$ 7,500
	Nature Play	25	25	each	\$ 7,500
	Adventure Play	25	25	each	\$ 7,500
	Adult Fitness	25	25	each	\$ 2,500
	Skate Park - Regional	25	25	each	\$ 20,000
	Skate Park - Neighborhood	15	15	each	\$ 7,500
	Bike Park - Regional	15	15	each	\$ 30,000
	Off-Leash Recreation Area	15	15	each	\$ 15,000
	Disc Golf	15	15	each	\$ 2,000
	Archery	10	10	each	\$ 7,500
Courts	Basketball	20	25	each	\$ 1,500
	Half-Court Basketball	20	25	each	\$ 1,000
	Horseshoes	25	25	each	\$ 100
	Shuffleboard	25	25	each	\$ 50
	Tennis	25	25	each	\$ 1,500
	Pickleball	25	25	each	\$ 1,500
	Bocce	20	20	each	\$ 50
	Sand Volleyball	15	15	each	\$ 2,000
	Multi-Sport Court	25	25	each	\$ 1,500
Winter	Open Skate - Seasonal	n/a	n/a	each	\$ 30,000
	Ice Rink - Seasonal	n/a	n/a	each	\$ 40,000
	Ice Rink - Year Round	25	25	each	\$ 25,000
	Refrigerated Rink	40	40	each	\$ 80,000
	Designated Sledding Hill	n/a	n/a	each	\$ 20,000
Aquatics	Wading Pool	40	25	each	\$ 15,000
	Splash Pad	25	25	each	\$ 35,000
	Swimming Pool	30	30	each	\$ 350,000
	Beach	40	40	each	\$ 20,000
Features	Decorative Fountain	40	40	each	\$ 80,000
	Public Art	40	40	each	\$ 1,500
	Community Oven	25	25	each	\$ 3,000
Circulation & Gathering	Pedestrian Path	40	40	sf	\$ 0.05
	Bike Path	25	25	sf	\$ 0.20
	Multi-Use Path	25	25	sf	\$ 0.20
	Service Area Paving	25	25	sf	\$ 0.20
	Visitor Parking Lot	25	25	stall	\$ 40
	Stage (open air)	40	40	each	\$ 1,000
	Ped/Bike Bridge	75	75	each	\$ 500
	Dock	20	20	each	\$ 3,000
	Stairs	40	40	step	\$ 200
	Event Lawn	40	40	ac	\$ 20,000
	Plaza	40	40	sf	\$ 1
Furnishings	Seating/Picnic Furnishings	15	25	each	\$ 25
	Drinking Fountain	15	25	each	\$ 1,500
	Performance/Event Electronics	30	30	ls	\$ 2,000
	Bike Rack	15	25	loop	\$ 20
	Lighting	30	30	each	\$ 200
	Wayfinding/Signage	30	30	ls	\$ 2,000
	Receptacles	15	25	each	\$ 1,000
	Porta Potty	15	15	each	\$ 1,000
	Boat Rack	40	40	each	\$ 1,000
Landscape	Lawn - Unirrigated	75	75	ac	\$ 4,500
	Lawn - Irrigated	40	40	ac	\$ 10,000
	Trees	75	75	each	\$ 25
	Prairie	75	75	ac	\$ 3,500
	Tended Landscaping	25	25	ac	\$ 20,000
	Tended Garden	40	40	ac	\$ 120,000
	Shoreline	40	40	lf	\$ 2
	Naturalized Landscape	75	75	ac	\$ 1,500
	Urban Agriculture Area	20	20	ac	\$ 15,000
	Lake/Pond	n/a	n/a	each	\$ 10,000

Table 10.1 Operating Budget Standards

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The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) is the steward of a nationally-acclaimed park system. Since 1883 this independently elected, semi-autonomous body has provided high-quality parks and programs relevant to residents of Minneapolis, the region and beyond. Park programs, services and facilities attract millions of regional and neighborhood park visitors each year.

## MPRB POLICY

The Minneapolis park system is essential to the quality of life and identity of the City. The system's founders understood the role that parks play in a healthy, livable, and balanced city. Through its policies and practices, the Park Board has remained committed to maintaining this vision, and will continue to provide high-quality recreational facilities and services while protecting and restoring natural and cultural resources within its system.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Board's *2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan* affirms this commitment to stewardship:

THE MPRB'S FOCUS ON CORE VALUES PROVIDES A STRONG SYSTEM OF SUPPORT FOR PARKS:

- sustainability
- visionary leadership
- safety
- responsiveness and innovation
- independence

Land, trees, and water – the foundation of the park system – require long-term investment and care. Parks are protected to benefit the entire city; therefore, all residents have a stake in the future of these resources and bear responsibility for their stewardship. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is committed to providing leadership in natural resource management, connecting people to their natural environment, and fostering a sense of stewardship. (p. 3)

The Comprehensive Plan further articulates policies, goals and strategies for management of the park system's natural and cultural resources, and for the development of partnerships that will further this mission. The Comprehensive Plan calls for balancing the distribution of park amenities throughout the city, giving particular focus to north and northeast Minneapolis – the areas surrounding ATF Regional Park. Based on this deep commitment, the Comprehensive Plan identifies stewardship strategies that will guide implementation of the ATF Park Plan:

- Communicate the importance of preserving and properly managing natural resources for health, water and air quality, and general environmental benefit.
- Be a resource for residents and visitors seeking information about the regional park's natural resources and the urban forest.
- Establish and strengthen public and private partnerships that enhance MPRB's management of natural areas, waters, and urban forest; and sponsor programs and events that promote exploring, protecting, and enhancing these resources.
- Engage partners and volunteers in the restoration, maintenance and preservation of the park system's natural and cultural resources.
- Strengthen existing and create new opportunities for research, cooperative exchange of information, and teaching with universities, state and federal agencies, research institutes, and recognized experts.

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## ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS

The MPRB code of Ordinances addresses use, operations and maintenance of MPRB parkland. The MPRB Ordinances are adopted as part of the Code of Ordinances for the City of Minneapolis. For example, under Chapter 12, “Environmental Protection”, ordinance PB12-1 governs shore land and floodplain preservation:

*This ordinance is adopted to: enhance and preserve the environmental qualities of surface waters and shore land areas under the jurisdiction of the MPRB; provide for the reasonable use of such waters and shore land areas; comply with the requirements of state law regarding the management of shore land areas; and protect the public health, safety and welfare.*

(Pk. Bd. Ord. No. 2001-102, § 1, 9-19-01)

Policies of the following additional organizations will influence the implementation or management of this regional park plan:

MPCA – regulates and administers funding programs for remediation of contaminated land, regulates stormwater management policies through the Clean Water Act;

MWMO – facilitates the long-term management of its water and associated land resources through the development and implementation of projects, programs, and policies that respect ecosystem principles and reflect changing community values. The MPRB is represented on the MWMO Board of Directors;

MN DNR – regulates public waters, shoreline vegetation, aquatic vegetation, beaches and public water access/boat launch management and construction;

City of Minneapolis – governs land-use guidance and zoning; regulates and permits buildings and site improvements involving grading/drainage and erosion control, tree preservation, and stormwater management.

## PRACTICES

The MPRB is responsible for providing daily and long-term maintenance and operations on park land within ATF Regional Park. Most typical park maintenance activities are the responsibility of MPRB’s “Environmental Stewardship” division, which is charged in the MPRB organizational plan with “caring for the physical system” in all its aspects (mowing, park patrol, debris removal, lighting, restroom maintenance, cleaning, etc.). Departments include Equipment and Fleet Management, Forestry, Park Maintenance, Natural and Water Resource Management, Park Police and Volunteer Coordination.

Solid waste such as litter or garbage is collected by MPRB staff from parks and from waste containers on a scheduled basis throughout the regional park. MPRB’s outdoor recycling program is a commingled program where users can recycle plastic, glass and aluminum in a single blue recycling container accompanied by “Recycle Here” signs. MPRB delivers waste and recyclable materials to the appropriate City and County facilities.

### PARTNERSHIP

The MWMO is among MPRB’s many valued partners, and has provided significant funding and technical expertise for improved stormwater management, expanded habitat and restored shoreline.





*Regular maintenance of trails is performed by MPRB staff. Maintenance and replacement of parkway roadways and lighting is performed by the City of Minneapolis under a joint-services agreement.*

Specific operations practices and budgets for future parks will depend on individual park program, design development. Therefore, it is difficult to quantify operations costs for much of ATF Regional Park.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Many partnerships strengthen MPRB’s role in ATF Regional Park. The MWMO continues to provide significant funding and technical expertise for improving stormwater management, expanding habitat and restoring shoreline. The National Park Service (NPS) conducts interpretive programs and, with Wilderness Inquiry, leads paddling trips that help school children and other groups to experience the river directly. The Friends of the Mississippi River leads volunteer clean-up events in ecologically-sensitive areas. These are just a few examples.

Maintenance of parkway roadways and lighting is a major budget item for MPRB. In 1999 the Park Board and the City of Minneapolis established a joint services agreement whereby City of Minneapolis Department of Public Works (DPW) forces will maintain and improve parkway roadways and parkway lighting. All other functions of parkway maintenance and operations within ATF Regional Park fall under the maintenance responsibility of the MPRB. As in its other regional parks, the Park Board will inspect bicycle and pedestrian trails annually and will complete repairs such as bituminous overlays, crack-sealing, etc. Trail signage, sweeping, or other regular maintenance will be provided by the Park Board.

## OPERATIONS IN PARK SUB-AREAS

Operation and maintenance (O&M) expenditures throughout ATF Regional Park will be funded by MPRB’s annual operations and maintenance budget with supplementary funding from the State appropriations passed through the Metropolitan Council to Regional Park implementing agencies for operations. Revenue generated by parking fees, special events or programs are normally placed in the MPRB’s general revenue budget and typically do not fund O&M in its regional parks. Hall’s Island will be developed as an urban habitat patch and so could qualify for additional State or Federal funding programs, such as the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.

This 2019 ATF Park Plan is intended to guide park development and operations not only for existing park lands but also for potential future park land, much of which has yet to be acquired or designed. Specific operations in future park sub-areas will depend on individual park program and development. This a long-term prospect, and therefore it is difficult to quantify operations costs for much of ATF Regional Park, with the exceptions below.

## EXISTING PARKS

MPRB will continue to maintain and operate existing parks in ATF Regional Park as it has in the past (See “Section 2 - Park Background”). Capital replacement of site improvements and equipment will be scheduled as needed and as funding allows. An example is the play-equipment renovation at Marshall Terrace Park that occurred in 2013.

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## SHERIDAN MEMORIAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Park development plans called for a river overlook terrace and a veteran's memorial with a public art component. MPRB staff will maintain the paved and planted areas as at other existing parks, removing trash daily and performing other tasks seasonally or as needed. MPRB cares for public art throughout the park system in partnership with the City of Minneapolis Art in Public Places program, often contracting with specialists to evaluate and conserve artworks. Regional Park funding does not support MPRB's maintenance of artworks in the regional park.

## EAST BANK TRAIL

Construction of the first phase of the East Bank Trail is complete. Regular maintenance includes trash removal, seasonal trail sweeping and plowing, arboriculture and annual mowing of naturalized areas.

## GRACO PARK AND HALL'S ISLAND

Graco Park, the park proposed for the Scherer Bros. site, will provide river access, gathering spaces and other typical regional park amenities. The re-creation of Hall's Island focused on habitat creation and sheltering the gravel "river beach" on the park's shore. These two areas will require very different operations and maintenance practices.

Currently, MPRB operates thirteen (13) beaches, all on lakes. An average annual operating cost for a busy regional-destination lake beach can approach \$100,000 annually. This includes seasonal and full-time recreation staffing, as well as lifeguards during June through August. Costs to operate the regional-destination riverfront beach at the Scherer site will depend on the intensity of programmed uses. For example, until river water quality consistently improves, the river beach could be designated a non-swimming beach for visual access and carry-in paddling only. Once the beach becomes a designated swimming facility, seasonal operating costs are anticipated to be at or above the average for MPRB lake beaches. Fees from a potential boat-rental concession could defray operating costs.

In addition to the beach, the proposed park at the Scherer site will accommodate special programs such as movies, festivals, and other large gatherings. Such MPRB events are self-funded via user fees, sponsors, grants or in-kind partnership, and could even generate enterprise revenue to defray daily operating costs of the park.

Other MPRB staffing such as Park Police must also grow in response to new parks. It is estimated that the new park and beach at the Scherer site alone will require additional 20% FTE from Park Police staff, plus seasonal Park Patrol staff. This does not include Park Police needs for special events, which are usually self-funding through permit fees.

Potential buildings shown on the Scherer site are intended to be adjacent to yet outside the regional park. Still, MPRB has set high standards for this "park supportive" development, including LEED certification, green roofs, structured parking, daylighting and other sustainability measures. Developers and/or tenants of these buildings could be partners in park stewardship, potentially even participating in daily park maintenance.



*Some special ecological maintenance services, such as prairie burning, are performed by contractors.*

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## FUTURE TRAILS AND PARKWAY

Maintenance of future trails will include mowing, trash removal, sweeping, plowing and other routine operations. Bituminous surfacing of parkway roadway and trails is anticipated to have a life cycle of 20 – 25 years, assuming regular sealcoating. In its Capital Improvement Plan, the Park Board will provide for rehabilitation of trail and roadway surfaces at the end of their life cycles. Maintenance costs for the parkway and trails will be determined on an annual basis as the network expands within the regional park. Currently, through an agreement with MPRB, the City of Minneapolis Department of Public Works maintains the parkway roadways and all parkway lighting, including capital replacement.

## FUTURE HABITAT AND NATURAL AREAS

The park development plan includes many areas of restored and constructed habitat which will require specialized maintenance. As in other MPRB regional parks, routine maintenance will be performed by MPRB staff, while contractors and agency partners will perform the majority of the unique ecological services needed in habitat areas. Based on current contracts, typical costs for maintenance of habitat areas similar to those proposed in this plan approach \$2,000 per acre per year.

**Hall's Island**, completed in 2018, is a constructed yet ecologically functioning habitat patch, that includes upland as well as significant littoral and emergent zones. It is currently undergoing intensive maintenance in order to establish desired vegetation. This maintenance is being performed by qualified specialists as part of construction contracts. This will help ensure successful establishment and will minimize initial burdens on staff resources. Following establishment, ecological services will be performed by contractors as needed to maintain the integrity of habitat zones.

**Restored river shoreline** requires very little regular maintenance following proper establishment. Seasonally, MPRB staff removes litter and debris, and mows to control invasive species as needed. This practice will continue as shoreline restoration expands along both riverbanks within the regional park.

The RiverFirst initiative had envisioned the **Northside Wetlands** as a long-term goal proposed as part of a redeveloped Upper Harbor Terminal. The plan defined the wetland area as a series of ecological zones with trails, habitat, and stormwater management extending over more than ten acres. While plans for the Upper Harbor Terminal have changed, as described more fully in appendix A, there is still opportunity for blending public amenities, ecology, and stormwater management within the project. Such a large, ecologically-based project is unprecedented in the MPRB system and will succeed only through partnerships with the DNR, MWMO, and City of Minneapolis, among others. MPRB will examine maintenance practices that may involve collaboration between the MPRB Environmental Services department, partner agencies, and specialized technical assistants. Should this effort move forward, MPRB will model maintenance costs as part of a capital-budget estimating during schematic design.



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## STEWARDSHIP OF NON-PARK AREAS

The purchase of the Scherer Bros. site was a rare opportunity to add a significant, free-standing parcel to the regional park. For the most part, acquisition of regional park land is expected to continue through the purchase of small parcels, incrementally over many years. Yet park development is best done over large, contiguous or interconnected areas. With this in mind, MPRB plans to hold and maintain land until park development is feasible, as it has in the past. Currently MPRB owns non-park property at 1808, 1812 and 2220 Marshall Street NE along the east bank. These are maintained as vacant lots with no public park use or programming. (See “Section 2 - Park Background” for a history of recent ATF Regional Park land acquisition and development.)

In 2012, MPRB acquired the property at 1720 Marshall St. NE. The building and site are well suited to a light-industrial use. The current MPRB north-side maintenance facility, at Victory Memorial Parkway and 45th Ave N, is remote and has outgrown staff needs. MPRB intends to use the 1720 property as a maintenance facility for approximately ten years. Planned improvements for this use are limited to building upgrades, stormwater management BMPs and, potentially, accommodating public access to the riverbank. If and when adjacent properties have been acquired to create a contiguous stretch of park land, the parcel at 1720 will be included in park development plans.



*The property at 2220 Marshall Street NE is one of several that are owned by MPRB but maintained as non-park property within ATF Regional Park.*

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# SECTION 11

## Public Awareness





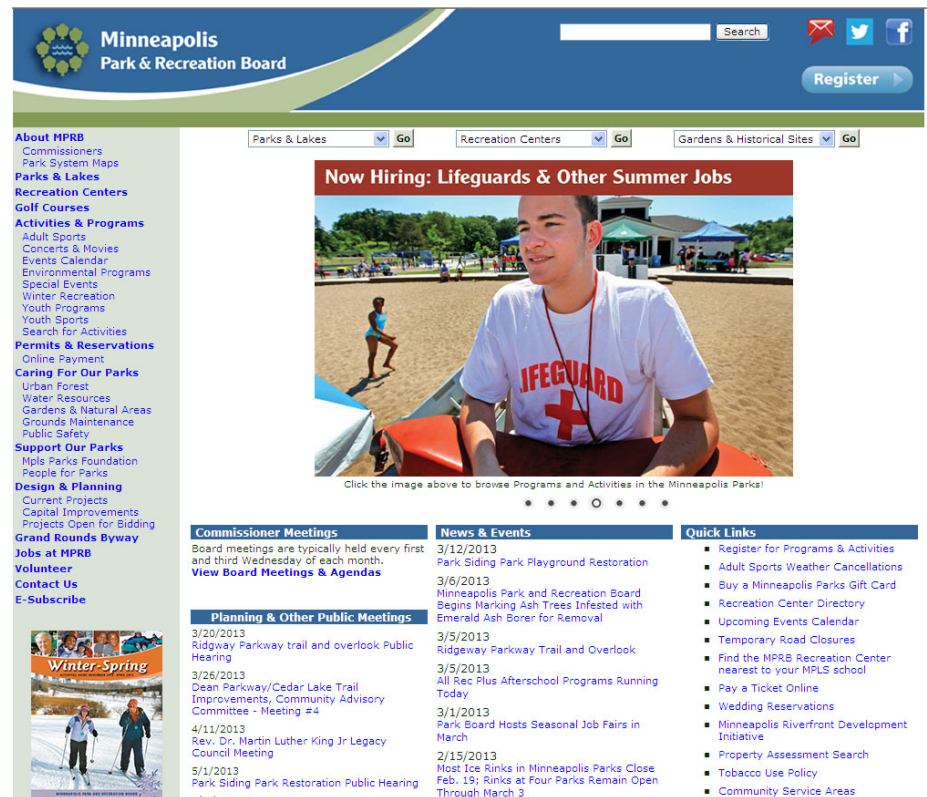
MPRB's seasonal guide to parks and activities is distributed to recreation centers, schools and homes throughout the city.

The urban context of ATF Regional Park will help to make the public aware of park development as it progresses. As with other parks and facilities throughout its system, MPRB will publicize and promote ATF Regional Park development and programming through a variety of established channels, including the MPRB web site and promotional publications as well as through community newspapers and other media. Grand openings, press releases, and integration of parks with school and recreational programs will expand awareness. As required by MPRB policy, trails and destinations within ATF Regional Park will be identified by signs. Existing MPRB system maps will be updated as progress is made in extending trails within ATF Regional Park.

Partner agencies and organizations continue to be an important part of promoting MPRB parks. The National Park Service, for example, conducts programs and events throughout the river corridor and on the water, and will be a critical partner in publicizing the expansion of parks and river access in ATF Regional Park. The Mississippi River Trail (MRT) also designates existing road and trail corridors within ATF Regional Park as vital links of its 3,000 miles of river trail, and the improvements proposed by this plan will expand the program opportunities promoted on MRT's web site and publications.



Throughout the MPRB system, park and trail signage is integrated with the fabric of the city, pointing the way for residents and visitors alike.



MPRB's web page is constantly updated as new information is made available regarding parks, recreation leagues, programs, public meetings, etc.





ATF Phase I dedication, 2008

# SECTION 12

## Implementation, Costs and Funding

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## IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES

### ***Engage Actively and Continuously in Land Assembly.***

The ATF Master Plan will only be achieved if riverfront parkland is methodically placed in public trust through a combination of acquisition, easements, or forms of partnership over a period of years – this is job #1 of ATF Master Plan implementation.

### ***Develop Linear Recreation.***

Continue to implement the parkway and trail system, including key river crossings (especially the BNSF rail bridge). Linear recreation will be instrumental in fulfilling the vision and establishing an activated constituency for ATF Regional Park.

### ***Complete the Design Vision for Park Spaces Currently Under Development.***

Graco Park/Hall's Island, Sheridan Memorial Park, 26th Avenue North Overlook, and Upper Harbor Terminal are active projects at time this master plan is being authored and they warrant fulfillment.

### ***Develop New Park Spaces and Facilities.***

As land is protected and as resources allow, construct parks using a few key strategies as guideposts.

#### ***Smart Park Development is a Staged Activity.***

Stage one in establishing activated and beloved public spaces is creating ways for people to access them, spend time in them, and weave them into the stories of their lives. Accomplishing this task should always be top-of-mind in park investment decisions. Too much development before a constituency exists results in squandered resources. Too little results in low visitation and a constituency not being created.

#### ***Program Parks Appropriately.***

Integral to the act of designing a park is creating its program model; one that strikes the appropriate balance between organized programming and non-programming of spaces and times.

### ***Get People on the River.***

Nearly two-thirds of the ATF Regional Park is Mississippi River. There is tremendous capacity for expansion of recreational water access and activities.

### ***Care for Park Assets.***

Land and park facilities demand financial and staffing resources at robust levels necessary to accomplish continuous care.

### ***Pursue Connected Actions Outside Park Boundary.***

Ideas about the I-94 lid, Marshall Street improvements, and a link to the Camden commercial district fall outside the purview of this master plan, will be instrumental to the park's future success and should continue to receive attention and resources.



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## IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Since the 2000 ATF Master Plan was adopted, MPRB and the City of Minneapolis have accomplished much to implement the plan. As shown in Figure 12.1, this includes new park land, infrastructure and community redevelopment. Within ATF Regional Park, successes include the extension of West River Road North extension and riverfront trails, acquisition of the Scherer Brothers site and other properties along the east bank, and development of Edgewater Park. Successes also include the additional community engagement and planning completed in RiverFirst, the City's ATF Master Plan Update and this 2013 ATF Park Plan.

Future implementation phases will depend on project readiness, land acquisition opportunities, funding availability and partnerships. For purposes of this Regional Park master plan, the projects identified in **Section 6: Park Development Concept** have been categorized into near-term and long-term projects. Longer-term projects may be accelerated as opportunities arise. Similarly, funding or partnership opportunities may move a project from the long-term vision into a near-term implementation priority.

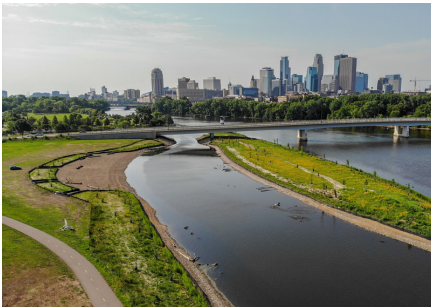
Property acquisition for parkland is an ongoing priority for MPRB. Recently, staff capacity was expanded to increase focus on planning and executing property acquisitions within Above the Falls Regional Park.

In the near-term, MPRB will focus Regional Park resources on properties it already owns.

## NEAR-TERM PRIORITIES

MPRB will focus resources in the near-term on properties it already owns, including the following:

- Continued MPRB assembly of parkland within the regional park boundary.
- Implementation of interim parkland management strategies.
- Implementation of the 26th Avenue North overlook.
- Programming and stewardship of existing parkland and riverbank within the Regional Park
- Development of public park amenities at Upper Harbor Terminal
- Improvements to Sheridan Park by 2014, including a veteran's memorial and East Bank Trail connections (Complete)
- Riverbank access improvements at Marshall Terrace Park, as funding allows; following the City's planned closure of the Upper Harbor Terminal, phased development of West River Parkway with connections to existing city streets;
- Continued development of public water access points and public park amenities
- Continued coordination with the City and County to explore connections from Marshall Street NE to ATF Regional Park and the river
- Development of the first phase of public park amenities at Upper Harbor Terminal



Hall's Island in 2018 (MWMO)

### HALL'S ISLAND

As discussed in **Section 6: Park Development Concept**, the recreation of Hall's Island faced many technical and regulatory challenges. In 2012, MPRB invested in schematic design of the park at the Scherer Bros. site, including the proposed park, Hall's Island and the inner channel. The design team tested various design options and engaged with staff from regulatory agencies and partner organizations. The resulting design meets the intent of MN-DNR public water regulations and was constructed in 2018.

## LONG-TERM PRIORITIES

Long-term priorities in this Regional Park master plan are those that fall outside park lands currently owned by MPRB, will require much more stakeholder engagement, and/or will rely on partnerships and resources still in cultivation. These include:

- Extension of West River Parkway between 22nd Ave North and 41st Ave North along the west bank, requiring acquisition of many privately and publicly owned parcels
- Development of Northside riverfront parks with connections to northside neighborhoods
- Continued coordination with the City and County to improve Marshall Street NE as a parkway-like corridor for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Development of Northeast riverfront parks and trails, as land acquisitions and funding allow
- With the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County, pursuit of bike/ped trail development rights on the BNSF rail bridge across the river.
- Continued MPRB assembly of parkland within the regional park boundary.
- Preparation of acquired lands for park development.

## INTERIM LAND MANAGEMENT

Because park development isn't always immediately feasible or wise on newly acquired parcels, interim land management strategies in the time period between acquisition and park development are critically important. The MPRB has developed and continues to refine varied approaches to interim land management that include commercial/residential leases, limited or occasional recreational access, and bioremediation.

A key goal of an interim land management strategy will be to communicate that the land is owned and well stewarded by the MPRB and that interim efforts constitute a "placeholder" until a permanent park design and build-out happens in the future. Interim strategies can put acquired land to interesting, productive, nurturing, and beautiful use before it becomes an official park.

## ESTIMATED COSTS

It is difficult to estimate project budgets for many of the park development concepts in this Regional Park plan because they are long-term goals, the designs are conceptual, and the projects are sited on land yet to be acquired. One example is the Upper Harbor Terminal park area at the City-owned Upper Harbor Terminal. The Northside Wetlands Park concept, shown in the RiverFirst vision document, has an estimated budget of \$53 million. This budget is highly speculative, and includes significant contingencies but does not include land-acquisition costs.

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## SCHEMATIC DESIGN BUDGET ESTIMATES

In 2012, MPRB invested in schematic design of several projects within the RiverFirst vision. This process tested the projects' technical feasibility, identified implementation steps and estimated project budgets. Using the 2012 estimates as a guide, MPRB allocated funding and worked to secure funds from outside sources to implement some early projects.

MPRB, or partner agencies, have completed initial project work as noted in Table 12.1 below.

**Table 12.1 Completed ATF Projects**

Project	Budget	Status
<b>Sheridan Memorial Park Phase 1</b> <i>Soil remediation, shoreline restoration, trails, Veterans Memorial, visitor amenities</i>	\$1,400,000	Completed in 2015
<b>Plymouth Bridge</b> <i>Limited to protected bikeways</i>	N/A	
<b>Hall's Island</b> <i>Island construction and restoration</i>	\$5,400,000	Completed in 2018
<b>East Bank Trail</b> <i>Trail segment from Plymouth Avenue to Sheridan Memorial Park</i>	\$1,300,000	Completed in 2016

MPRB has updated budgets for several projects that are underway or planned for the near future as noted in Table 12.2.

**Table 12.2 Planned or In-process ATF Projects**

Project	Budget	Status
<b>Sheridan Memorial Park Phase 2</b> <i>Shelter, playground, multi-purpose field, pathways, landscape and visitor amenities</i>	\$1,600,000	Construction started in 2018, completion planned for 2019.
<b>26th Avenue North Overlook</b> <i>Overlook and plaza construction, shoreline restoration</i>	\$1,000,000	Estimated construction start in 2019, completion planned for 2020.
<b>Upper Harbor Terminal</b> <i>First phase of improvements, details are to be determined but likely include a connection to the river along Dowling Avenue, shoreline restoration and river edge treatments, initial visitor amenities, and circulation.</i>	\$12,000,000	Planning for concept design and phase 1 improvements planned for 2019, construction planned to begin in 2020 or 2021.
<b>Graco Park</b> <i>First phase of improvements: details are to be determined but include bridges to Hall's Island, connections to Boom Island Park, and park amenities.</i>	\$4,000,000	Schematic and final design occurred in 2019, construction will be completed in 2022 according to the donation agreement.
<b>Plymouth Bridge</b> <i>Project development by the City of Minneapolis</i>	\$1,300,000	Timeline uncertain

The projected budgets will cover project costs including administration, design and engineering, surveying and testing, construction, and contingencies. Property acquisition and site remediation costs are not included. All budgets are approximate, and may change as internal allocations may be adjusted, and staff seek additional funding.



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## FUNDING SOURCES

MPRB's development of Above the Falls Regional Park will rely on extensive partnerships. For example, at the Scherer Bros. site, the land purchase was by funded by Metropolitan Council regional sources as well as MPRB capital. Site demolition and clean-up was funded by Hennepin County Emergency Response Funds, US American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds and MPRB capital. Hennepin County has been a strong partner in funding soils remediation at Gluek Park, Edgewater Park, BF Nelson Park, and many other sites in the MPRB system. MPRB has received several grants to assist with park development. In 2012, MPRB received a Federal grant of \$1 million towards the development of the East Bank Trail. In 2014, the Land and Water Conservation awarded a \$500,000 grant for additional park amenities at Sheridan Memorial Park.

The Mississippi Watershed Management Organization has been a substantial partner, supporting Hall's Island, Sheridan Memorial Park, and others with significant grant funds. MWMO supports MPRB with vegetation restoration, stormwater management, innovative water treatment systems, technical help, communications, and more throughout the watershed.

The Minneapolis Parks Foundation (MPF) is a significant funding partner for MPRB. In 2015, MPF and MPRB signed the first fund raising agreement for RiverFirst for two projects. Water Works, a downtown project in former industrial area addresses high existing community needs in the heavily used Mill District. Through this first agreement, MPF is also funding the first stage of improvements to build the 26th Avenue North Overlook (sometimes referred to as the Great Northern Greenway Riverlink). In addition to significant help with capital projects, MPF raises awareness of the combined efforts along the river and elevates community engagement and programming for park projects.

The majority of ATF funding is public funding and MPRB acknowledges that taxpayers primarily fund the park. As throughout its history, MPRB will continue to develop and operate the park with the understanding that parkland is owned by all with the goal of serving the public.

These partners continue to contribute funding to land acquisition, remediation, and park development within ATF Regional Park:

- Metropolitan Council
- Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO)
- Hennepin County
- City of Minneapolis
- US Department of Transportation grant programs
- Minneapolis Parks Foundation
- Federal and State Agencies that assist with land and water conservation and park development