

Public Park at the Upper Harbor Terminal Concept Plan Draft



Fall 2021



Minneapolis
Park & Recreation Board

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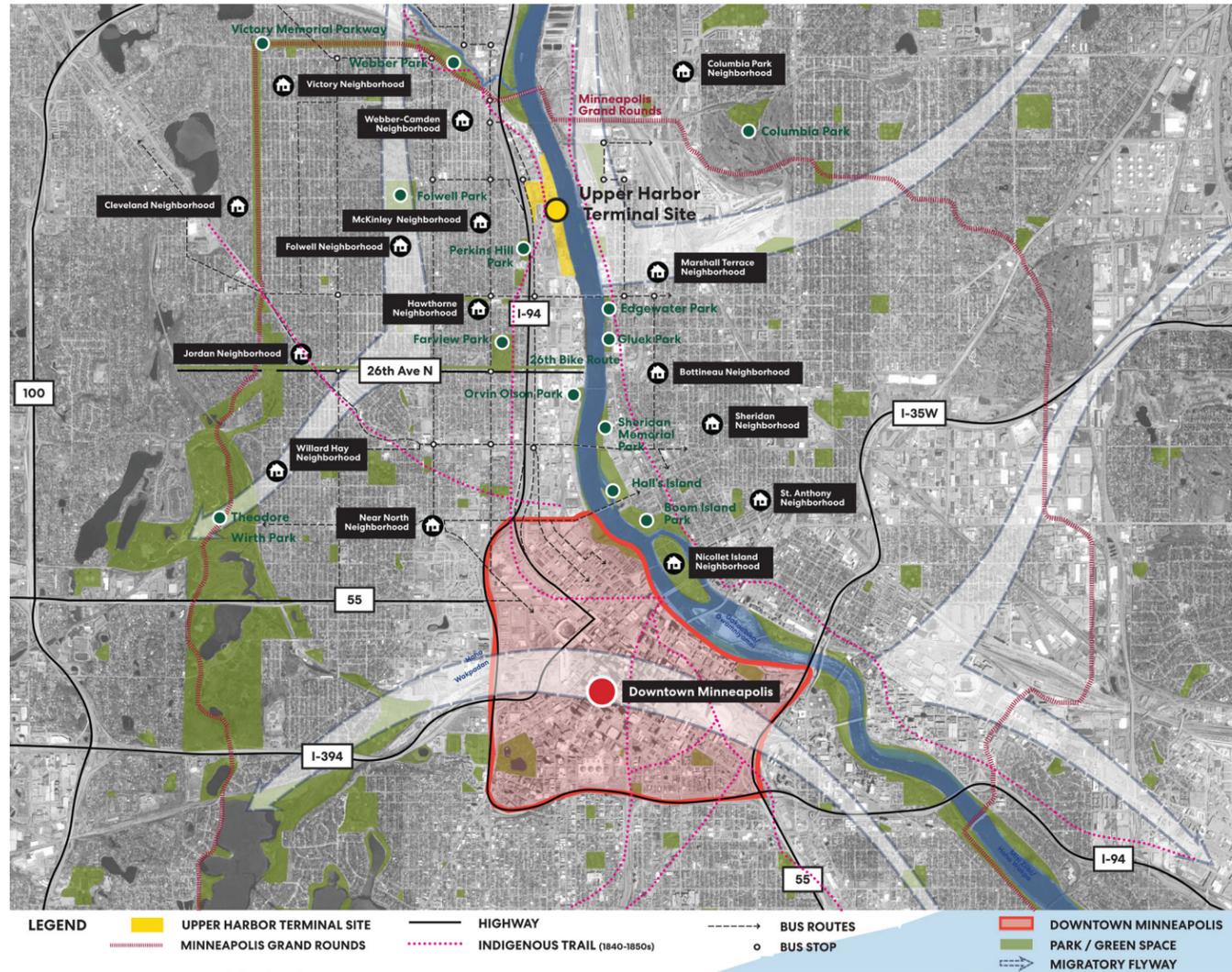
Countless public participants who attended meetings, stopped at events, answered surveys, sent emails or letters, made phone calls, talked with neighbors, answered doors, toured the site, and contributed their wisdom, insight, and time to their community.

And thank you to all the participants yet to come as engagement will continue as the park is built and the vision is realized.

All quotes were used with permission from community members; however inclusion does not indicate endorsement of the entire plan.

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Introduction

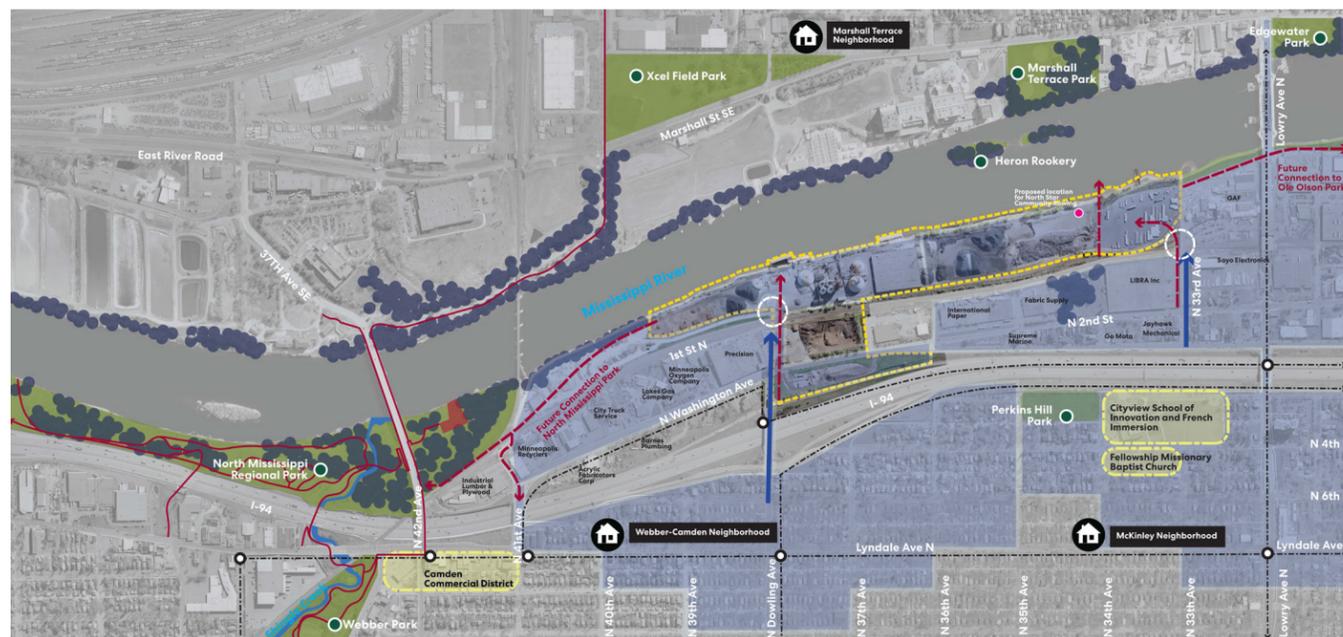
This document expresses the park program and conceptual design for 19.5 acres of new Mississippi Riverfront parkland at the Upper Harbor Terminal (UHT) in north Minneapolis. Dedication of this new parkland will be the largest single addition of land to the Minneapolis park system in decades. With a mile of riverfront in what has been a heavy industrial zone of the city, this new parkland will be a substantial contribution to the broader vision of transforming the riverfront through North and Northeast Minneapolis from private to public.

Parkland proposed for UHT is within the park boundary of the Above the Falls Regional Park; the newest regional park under the jurisdiction of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB). The master plan for Above the Falls calls for methodically purchasing properties necessary to establish the adopted park boundary on both sides of the river and, as funds allow, develop parks and programming to create an interconnected park, trail and parkway experience for north and northeast Minneapolis residents.

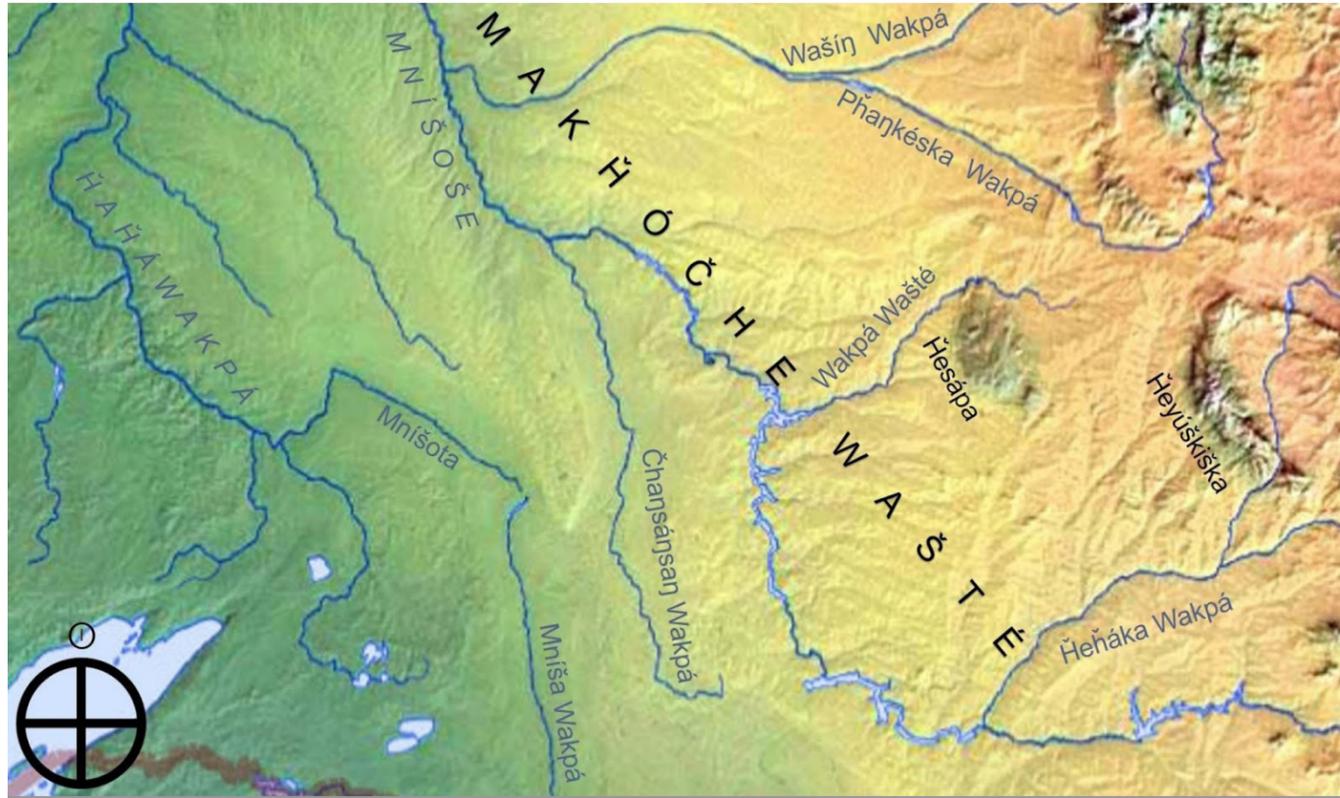
The parkland at UHT is in an area poised for change. The industrial land uses between I-94 and the Mississippi River will inevitably transform in coming decades as the city grows and evolves, the MPRB has already acquired other properties or parkland creation near UHT and, the UHT property itself is transforming from a City of Minneapolis industrial terminal to a mixed-use redevelopment district.

The several-year, community process to conceptualize parkland at UHT has been a case study for how to position parks as a tool for good in addressing vital topics of gentrification, racial equity and the creation of welcoming public space for all. As the planning process unfolded the COVID-19 pandemic hit, uprisings for racial injustice emerged and tragic events of climate crisis were headlines. These society-altering conditions highlighted, even more, the urgency to create multi-dimensional parks of service to very real community needs.

This mile of new parkland at UHT presents opportunities to ponder and address deep questions about the responsibility of parks. The results are no doubt imperfect but hopefully make positive strides and are positioned to allow for continued evolution and improvement.



Land and Community Acknowledgement



Map courtesy of Dakota Goodhouse, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

Dakota Land

As an agency, MPRB is seeking to build a culture and practice of land acknowledgment. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan process (in draft form at the time that this document is posted) included research and engagement on how to lift and support Indigenous voices in everyday work, throughout the agency and across disciplines.

“It is important to acknowledge that we are on Dakota land, but also to acknowledge that a statement that is not followed by action is either meaningless or harmful.”

—DEVELOPED WITH DAKOTA COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Many of the larger strategies and efforts are much broader than any individual project, but clearly each project and process can contribute to system wide goals. Although these goals are still in development, staff have evaluated how the UHT project can address input from the Comprehensive Plan work and other projects in addition to the UHT.

Mnišota Makhóche (Minnesota) is the homeland of the Dakota people. The Dakota have lived here for many thousands of years. Anishinaabe people reside here, too, and reached their current homelands after following the megis shell to the food that grows on water (manoomin, or wild rice). Indigenous people from other Tribal nations also reside in Minnesota and have made innumerable contributions to our region.

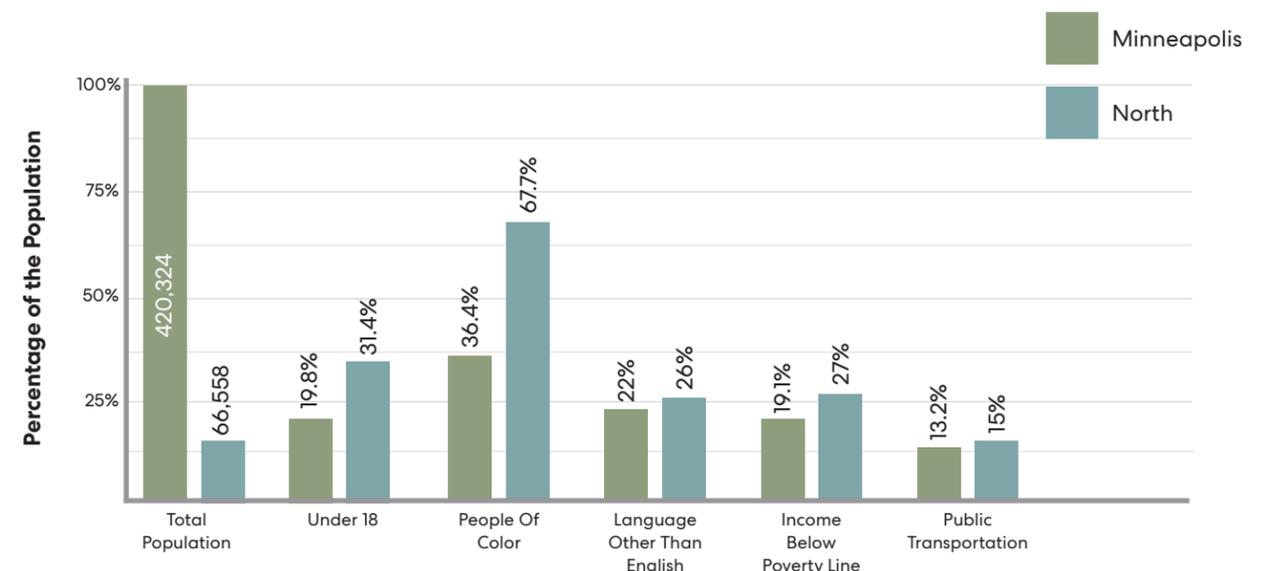
—Excerpt from *The Land We're On* by the Native Governance Center

North Minneapolis

North Minneapolis, generally defined for this project as the area north of I-394 and west of the Mississippi River, is home to the most people of color by sector in the city. Currently 69.9% people of color, the Northside has historically been an area with lower access to wealth and opportunity; much of the land area is covered by areas of concentrated poverty (ACP50s). For decades it was one of the few places African-American people could own homes and businesses. Through the early and mid-1900's, the MPRB used park acquisition and development funding tools including the Elwell Law that assessed costs to area property owners. While this practice expanded park investments across the city as a whole, it led to inherent inequities in park investment with wealthier and/or more willing parts of the city gaining more park amenities. This history in park investment combined with other non-park activities including racially-restrictive covenants, red-lining, construction of I-94, and predatory lending have left a legacy of damage and unequal investment in poorer areas of the city.

“Of all the parks in Minnesota, I can't think of one that is a Black Space. It is time to make one.”

—BLACK OUTDOOR AND ACTIVE LIVING ADVOCATE



The park at the UHT should be for all community members and all Northside residents but must also acknowledge that American Descendants of Slavery (ADOS), Dakota, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) have dealt with the greatest burdens of structural racism, disinvestment, and environmental injustice. In this document, the term Northside residents or community members is intended to be broadly inclusive, but to emphasize these groups.

Purpose and Intent of the Concept Plan Document

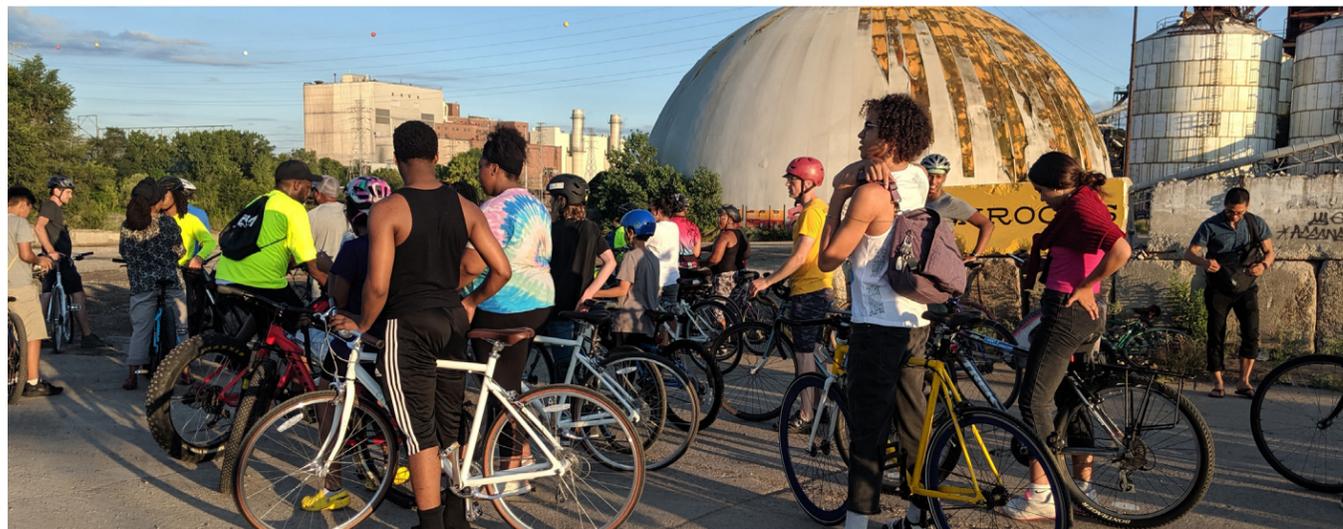
The following park concept design document is the result of years of engagement and work. Although there are some key recommendations for park operations, staffing, and programming, the main objective of the planning process was to guide physical park improvements.

Specifically, this document is intended to:

- Define the general location and amenities of park improvements
- Document and communicate the process and findings that led to these recommendations
- Articulate key philosophies and ideas that can contribute to future park choices
- Set a framework for collaboration with outside partners to support the goals identified

This document is divided into six parts. The Introduction and Planning Process document the process, the Project Vision and the Park Concept Design sections are staff recommendations for Board approval and to guide policy, and the Operations and Maintenance and Implementation Sections provide guidance for staff planning.

1. **The Introduction provides an overview of the process, the document, and context for the project**
2. **The Planning Process summarizes how MPRB arrived at this plan through community engagement, study and research, and technical analysis**
3. **The Project Vision is a look at the key themes that arose out of the planning process**
4. **The Park Concept Design summarizes the priority park principles and the physical park design to support them**
5. **The Operations and Maintenance section outlines recommendations for park staffing, programming, and care.**
6. **The Implementation pages provide guidance for the first phase of the park and future park decisions**



Relationship to Other Plans

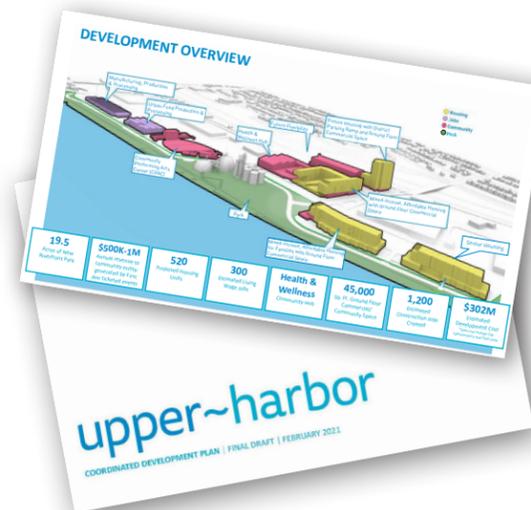
The Upper Harbor Terminal has been studied as a part of many other plans over the last two decades. Below are companion plans to this document that are critical in order to understand the full UHT project. Many other documents, plans, and frameworks that have informed this plan including engagement plans, technical studies, cultural contextual studies, and park area master plans are referenced in the appendix.

Upper Harbor Terminal Public Art Master Plan

“All should be welcome at the UHT park, but it needs to be a Northside space. Everyone should know that they are on the Northside, and Northsiders should know that this is a place for them”

—COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER

Juxtaposition Arts (JXTA) played an important role throughout the UHT park planning. Over several years the team led extensive engagement efforts, participated in programming, planning, and design, and provided valuable insight and leadership. As the planning team transitioned from broad engagement, to a compiling and addressing the many comments collected, it became apparent that the project needed a specific interpretive effort. In the Public Art Master Plan, which is part of the park concept planning work, JXTA defined the key Northside storylines and recommended strategies for implementation.



Upper Harbor Terminal Coordinated Plan

Approximately half of the 48 acres at the UHT is to be public park, the remaining land will be either development parcels or City of Minneapolis public Right-of-Way. City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development and Public Works Departments have led collaborative planning processes in partnership with the City's Upper Harbor Terminal Collaborative Planning Committee, and the development team to create the Coordinated Plan. The Coordinated Plan includes strategies and commitment to mitigate and disrupt gentrification and displacement and increase access to the site, i.e. community housing preference, City retaining the land in public ownership, targeting housing at Northside incomes, job preferences for Northside residents, physical improvements to access the site, etc.

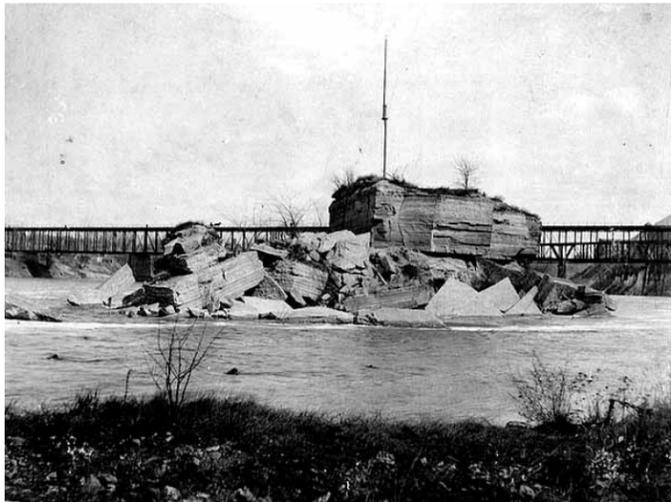
Upper Harbor Terminal Site



Henry Lewis: *Falls of St. Anthony*, Source: MNHS



St. Anthony Falls, Source: MNHS



The Destruction of Spirit Island, Source: MNHS

Site History

For millennia the land along the Mississippi River was a travel way within the land of the Dakota where many different Indigenous Nations and people met. After Euro-American colonization and the creation of the currently known City of Minneapolis, city residents established several river related industries on the land. In the early 1900's the land was converted to farmland, and eventually purchased by the City of Minneapolis with the purposes of establishing an upper port as the head of navigation.

Since the 1960's the UHT has operated as an inter-modal barge shipping terminal. In the following decades, the UHT and other riverfront areas were divided from the existing residential neighborhoods by I-94; a barrier which exists today. The freeway construction displaced many people from their homes and, along with the heavy industry, is a symbol of the environmental injustice experienced by people living in North Minneapolis.

In 2015 the Army Corps of Engineers closed the St. Anthony Falls Lock which ended barge traffic to the upper river and the City of Minneapolis began a new phase of planning for the UHT.

Site Context



The park will be in the McKinley Neighborhood, about a quarter mile from the existing residential area, and two miles from downtown. Many current residents will be within a ten minute walking range of the entryways to the UHT site at Dowling Avenue and 33rd Avenue, with an additional five minute walk to reach the rivers edge and park land. The park will also have direct connections to the Camden Business District and North Mississippi Regional Park, although such connections cannot be completed without future land acquisition.

The UHT site is within the Above the Falls Regional Park and the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, one of the few urban National Park boundaries. Development within the park will be guided by several zoning districts: the Shoreland Overlay District, the Floodplain Overlay District, and the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area.

The river corridor is an international flyway for a host of wildlife and immediately upstream North Mississippi Regional Park includes acres of restored native vegetation. The UHT site, like much of the industrial land to the south, does not contain significant ecological cover. There is a large heron and egret rookery across the river and slightly downstream from the UHT.

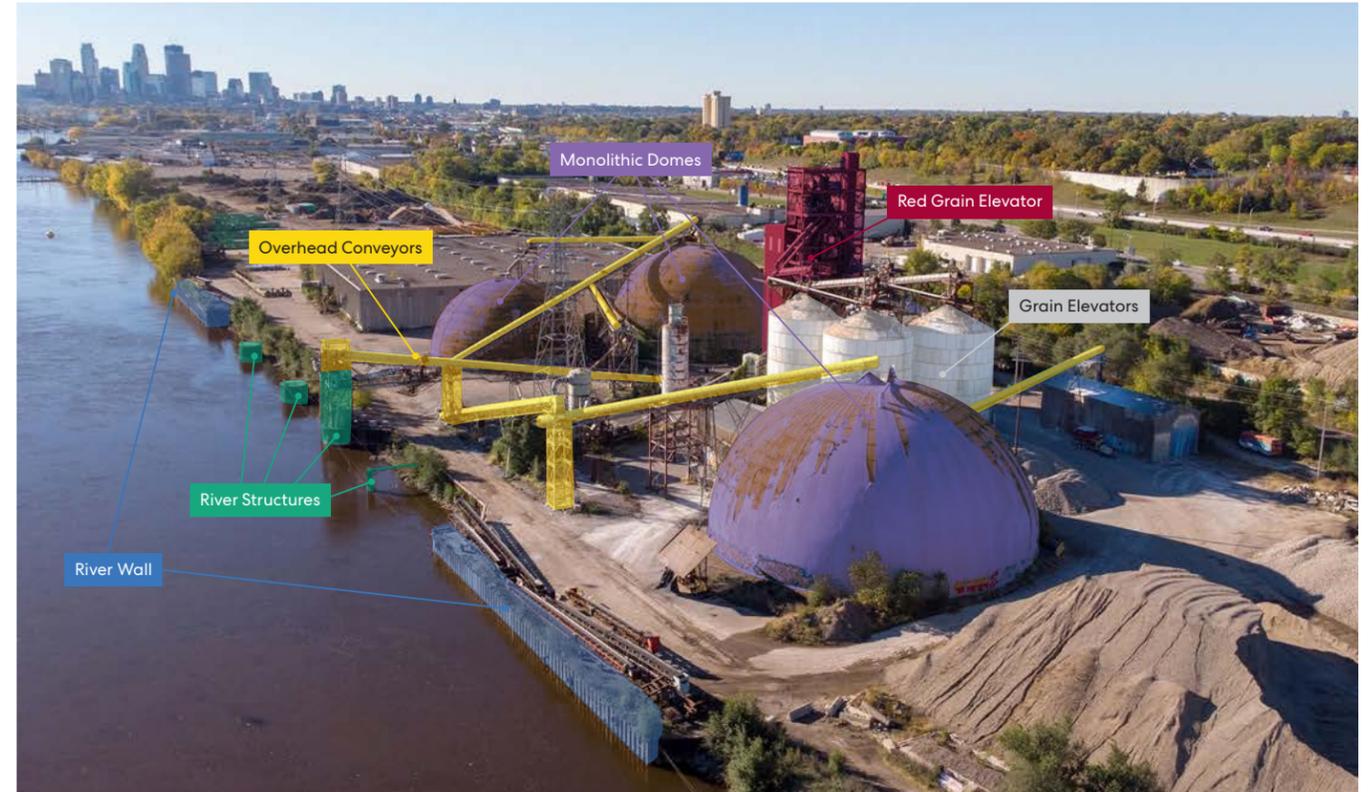
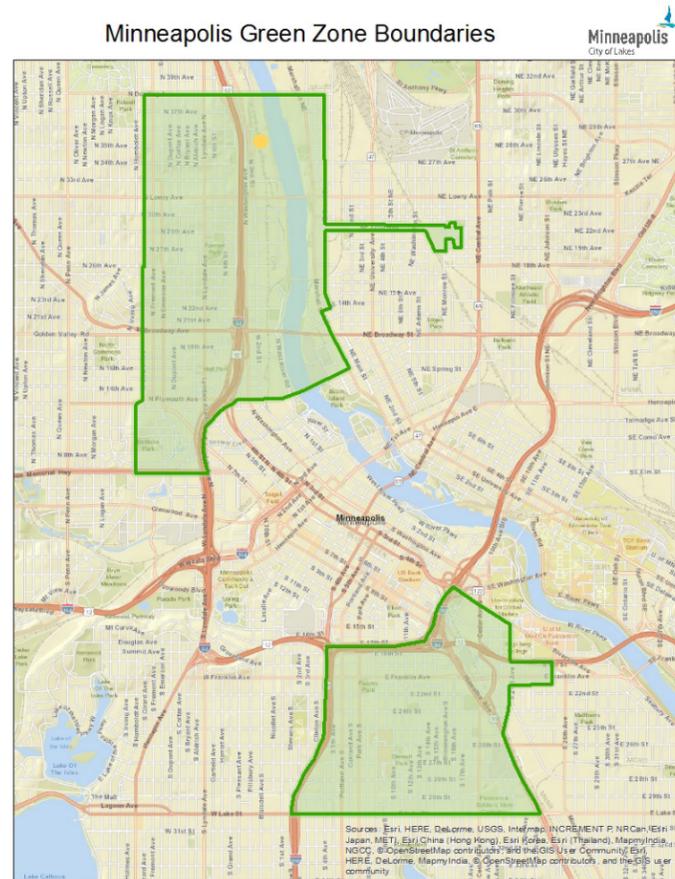
More information about the requirements and review processes and the land cover can be found in the AUAR document (link provided in the appendix).

Northside Green Zone and Promise Zone

The UHT property falls within the locally designated Northside Green Zone and federally designated Promise 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. Promise Zones are an economic development strategy intended to support low-income communities throughout the country. There are many ways in which the park development aligns with the goals of the two zones; converting blighted industrial land and inaccessible riverfront to public green space is a fundamental step.

Existing Conditions

The 48 acre UHT site consists of nine tax parcels, and is almost a mile long and approximately 500 feet wide for much of its length. Concentrated along the riverwall and near the end of Dowling Avenue, the site contains industrial structures linked to its function as a barging terminal. In addition to the riverwall, the structures include two barge docks and mooring cells, three concrete storage domes (formerly four), a grain elevator complex, a conveyor system, office and scale pit, and many small support buildings and structures. There are not locally or nationally designated historic buildings, structures, archaeological sites, or traditional cultural properties within the Upper Harbor Terminal site. The Upper Harbor Terminal site has been identified as potentially eligible as a local City of Minneapolis historic district. The City is further evaluating the site under local designation criteria.



The eastern edge of the site is defined by the river, while the western edge is largely bound by an active rail line. Two parcels are situated between the rail line and I-94 along Dowling Avenue, but the entire park area is between the rail line and the river. Overhead electrical transmission lines bisect the site. Across the river is the Xcel Energy plant, and the other surrounding land uses are mainly industrial.

The overall character of the park site is industrial, outside of the structures it is characterized by flat areas used for storage or transport. The existing riverbank slopes are steep and composed largely of dredged materials and debris. There is little upland vegetation and the vegetation on the slopes are mainly stands of Siberian Ash and Buckthorn with some higher quality Cottonwood Trees near the waters edge. Environmental testing shows low amounts of soil contamination with debris being the main component. Much of the debris is evident in the large chunks of concrete across the site and along the rivers edge.

The Alternative Urban Areawide Review contains a much more extensive summary of the UHT site and context; references can be found in the Appendix.



Planning Process

Although the Upper Harbor Terminal has been the site of planning, visioning, and speculation for decades, the current process began in 2015. In 2019, with a park boundary established by the city approved Upper Harbor Terminal Concept Plan, the two agencies branched into collaborative, but separately managed planning processes.



URBAN ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

How can we understand and celebrate the natural and ecological systems on the site?

THE EXISTING ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Key Considerations for the Site's Natural Systems and Ecology



DEFINING THE ECOLOGICAL COMPONENTS

A Network of Natural Resources



WHAT IF?

Opportunities to Expand Site Ecological Assets



What if... we designed posts and planted habitat refuges for migratory birds to come into the park?



What if... we planted a diverse native tree canopy to aid in ecological habitat, create social value, and support in the park's longevity?



What if... we integrated stormwater management strategies as ecologically and socially productive elements?



What if... we restore segments of the Mississippi river shoreline to create regional ecological corridors and educational value?

Planning Process Timeline

<p>2015 – 2017 UHT Pre-Planning Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of upcoming project • Seek input into a search for a developer partner • Build community connections and inform an engagement plan • Open houses, attendance at meetings, outreach at events, initial site tours, surveys 	<p>2017 – 2019 Site Concept Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring community members to the site • Engage on more specific park and development topics • Create an overall concept and define a park boundary • Project meetings, expanded site tours, outreach at events, door knocking, surveys 	<p>2019 – 2021 City Development Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative Planning Committee • Draft Coordinated Plan and AUAR engagement • Learning Tables • Public meetings, workshops, and outreach 	<p>2019 – 2021 MPRB Park Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Advisory Committee • Focus Groups and Outreach • Public Art Master Plan • Youth Prototype Building • Public meetings and workshop days
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See Appendix for a more detailed timeline

Engagement Approach

From 2015 – 2019 MPRB gathered substantial public input on the future park. MPRB collected thousands of comments through dozens of meetings and open houses, outreach events, site tours, conversations in person, phone, or email, and hundreds of responses to online surveys. Much of this early engagement was centered in outreach to connect with people where they were at and encourage general awareness and discussion.

After such a widespread general engagement effort, the project needed a place for ongoing and focused discussion. MPRB Commissioners and a group of community stakeholders appointed a 17 member Community Advisory Committee (CAC) that met regularly for two years.

Believing that no single format works for all people, staff continued engagement outside of the CAC as well. In 2019 MPRB hired community liaisons to assist staff in meeting with under-represented community members and introduced the project to existing work groups that could provide insight and expertise.

Juxtaposition Arts (JXTA) was an engagement and creative partner throughout the process. As JXTA developed the Public Art Master Plan, their team conducted many discussions and oral interviews that contributed to the overall project engagement.

Community Advisory Committee

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) met 17 times as a group and many members engaged outside of CAC meetings. CAC meetings included public participation and comment. While the CAC served as a backbone for the planning work, the members were not asked to represent their particular demographic or to serve as the sole voice of the community. The CAC was a deliberation group that offered valuable input and insight based on their time, commitment, and longevity with the project.

The two primary goals for the CAC were to recommend a concept plan for the overall park and to prioritize what the first phase of improvements should be. CAC members made several key recommendations throughout the project, including a change to the park boundary early in the process. In addition to reviewing the community input gathered, the CAC advised on a program model for the park, draft park concepts, and an approach to balance the desire for park amenities with concerns about green gentrification and displacement. Although community members provided valuable feedback in response to initial draft concepts, the time did not seem right for a park design focused discussion and the project team transitioned to address other concerns.



Throughout the process, CAC members felt that the adjacent development was critical to how the park would function. In January, the CAC approved a series of recommendations to the City’s Collaborative Planning Committee regarding the development impacts to the park. Some of the key concerns for CAC members were around the adjacent performance venue, and whether noise, congestion, traffic, and queuing would prevent residents from fully using the park. CAC members also felt that the park would largely serve the adjacent residences and businesses and were concerned about who would live and work at the UHT. Members were concerned that plans for transit, affordable housing, local jobs, and other community benefits would not be implemented.

“Adjacent development is important because it will greatly impact who uses the park and whether current Northside residents and ADOS, Dakota, and other BIPOC users feel connected with the park”

—COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The CAC did not recommend design principles or a design as there was not consensus on a primary project direction. Based on CAC input, staff identified three diverging directions which are outlined below. Rather than vote on a recommendation, CAC members elected to provide individual statements which are included in the Appendix. Staff assessed CAC discussions and conclusions, along with the engagement from other community members of the years, in order to make recommendations and compile this document.

1. Do not proceed with park development at this time

- Developing a park will advance the adjacent development and cause displacement or other negative impacts
- It is premature to develop a park until more anti-displacement measures are in place
- Conduct discussions with Dakota community leaders and members to offer the land back or leadership to determine the outcome of the project.
- Restart the park process to allow for Northside community leadership.

2. Proceed with cleaning up the industrial site, restoring the land, and minimal circulation and improvements to make a safe public space but do not proceed with further park amenities

- Maximize site clean-up and removal of industrial structures. Maximize site clean-up and removal of industrial structures.
- Focus on environmental healing by restoring the land with vegetation, stormwater management, and contaminated soil treatment.
- Provide minimal circulation such as a riverfront trail, and necessary safety measures

3. Build just enough park to allow the site to safely function as a public place, attract Northside residents, and support deliberate programming and staffing.

- Beyond basic improvements, focus on site clean-up and environmental restoration.
- Provide necessary infrastructure to support engagement at the park, as well as staffing and programming.
 - Physical improvements should be adequate and flexible enough to support commonly requested experiences.
 - Maximize site clean-up and environmental healing and land restoration.
 - With dedicated budget continue work with Northside and Dakota community members on more detailed park development ideas

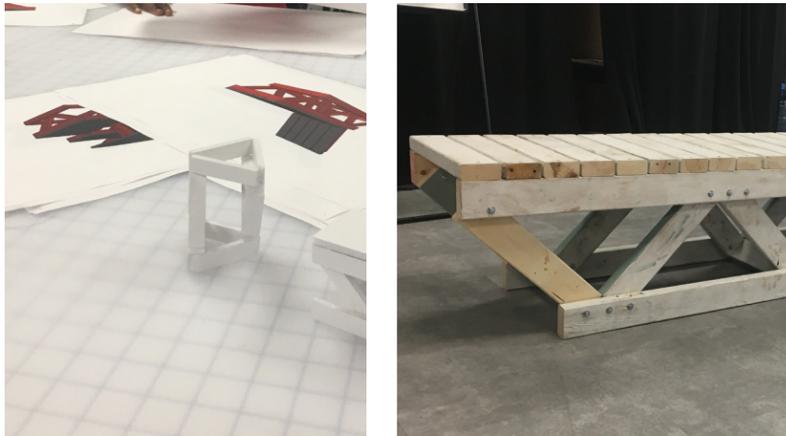
It is important to not oversimplify and frame the question around whether people want a park or not. A choice between nice things or risking displacement is not really a choice.

Although some CAC members were uncertain about advancing the park, issues that were greater than any one project impacted considerations about the UHT. Some CAC and community members felt that advancing the park would serve the developers more than Northside residents.

Parks for All, the MPRB Comprehensive Plan project was running concurrently with much of the UHT park planning. Staff shared information, resources, and contacts between projects, and collaborated to link work that was broad and systemwide with work at the project specific level. Recommendations in this document are specifically for the UHT project; the Comprehensive Plan contains vision, values, goals, and strategies for the larger system.

Community Build

Staff sought ways to continue engagement and bring community voices deeper into the design and construction process. Particularly because gatherings and in-person work had been restricted due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the team experimented with two new projects during the summer of 2021. JXTA led one process to design and build several different types of prototype site furnishings for the UHT. MPRB staff and Dakota team members led an internal Green Team in learning about Indigenous architecture and practices and building a shade structure and other small projects.



Goals of Site Furnishing Prototype Project

- Invest in local community members and organizations
- Design site furnishings from widely available materials
- Design site furnishings appropriate for youth construction
- Create pathways for local hiring to maintain and replace furnishings
- Testing the site furnishings before the actual project
- Further engagement through design, construction, and testing furniture in public places
- Create a brand for UHT and other Northside parks with local design
- Provide opportunities for team to work closely together for reciprocal learning



Juxtaposition Arts Enviro Studio designing and building models for benches, tables and chairs, picnic furnishings, and lounge chairs.

Goals of Indigenous Architecture Prototype Project

- Test a design, construction, engagement, and programming process to deepen Indigenous collaboration and engagement
- Establish a process to bring Green Team crews into construction projects with multi-faceted learning
- Design structures from widely available materials and appropriate for youth construction
- Create pathways for local investment to maintain and replace shelters
- Testing shade shelter prototype before the actual project
- Create unique architecture for the UHT and other parks that offer educational opportunities about Dakota land



Indigenous Architecture Green Team learning about Dakota architecture and practices and building a sample shade structure



RiverFirst and Above the Falls Key Findings:

- People want to **EXPERIENCE** and **ACCESS** the river
- People want to **RESTORE** and **IMPROVE** the river
- People want **EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Project Vision



"Welcome to North Minneapolis" Mural by Charles Caldwell

The Promise and the Challenge of New Parkland

Northside residents clearly expressed a desire for access to the river, public green space, and positive investment in their community during the 2011 – 2019 planning processes. The benefits of new park space, transforming the current industrial land to an environmentally rich river corridor, and addressing a serious recreational deficiency have captured the attention and imagination of many people.

However, the reality of implementing significant new park amenities is more complex. As land prices and the cost of living rises, well justified concerns about gentrification and displacement have grown as well. People are concerned about financial and physical displacement, but also about cultural gentrification and the loss of the Northside identity to wealthier and Whiter residents.

The park at the UHT could address existing disparities, or could worsen them if it contributes to rapid cultural change and rising land prices that displace current residents

Although the UHT property is the largest tract of City owned land up for redevelopment, it is housed in a much larger area between the I-94 and the river that is poised for change. There is potential to alleviate existing disparities; but the possibility that it will exacerbate them is real and profound. Because this area, including the UHT is divided from the existing residential areas by the freeway, the risk is heightened that the land could develop a new identity with little relationship to the current residents.

These concerns are a critical factor in shaping recommendations for the park. It is important that MPRB consider the park in the context of larger forces in the area. It is important to understand, that investment, even in amenities that are truly wanted, may not be beneficial to community members who are vulnerable to negative impacts of change.

Throughout the engagement period community members expressed a range of hopes, concerns, and desires for the park. This vision section organizes the key findings into Values and a Program Model. From the values that must guide all decisions made, for park experiences and design, these recommendations offer a touchstone on how this park can fulfill its promise.

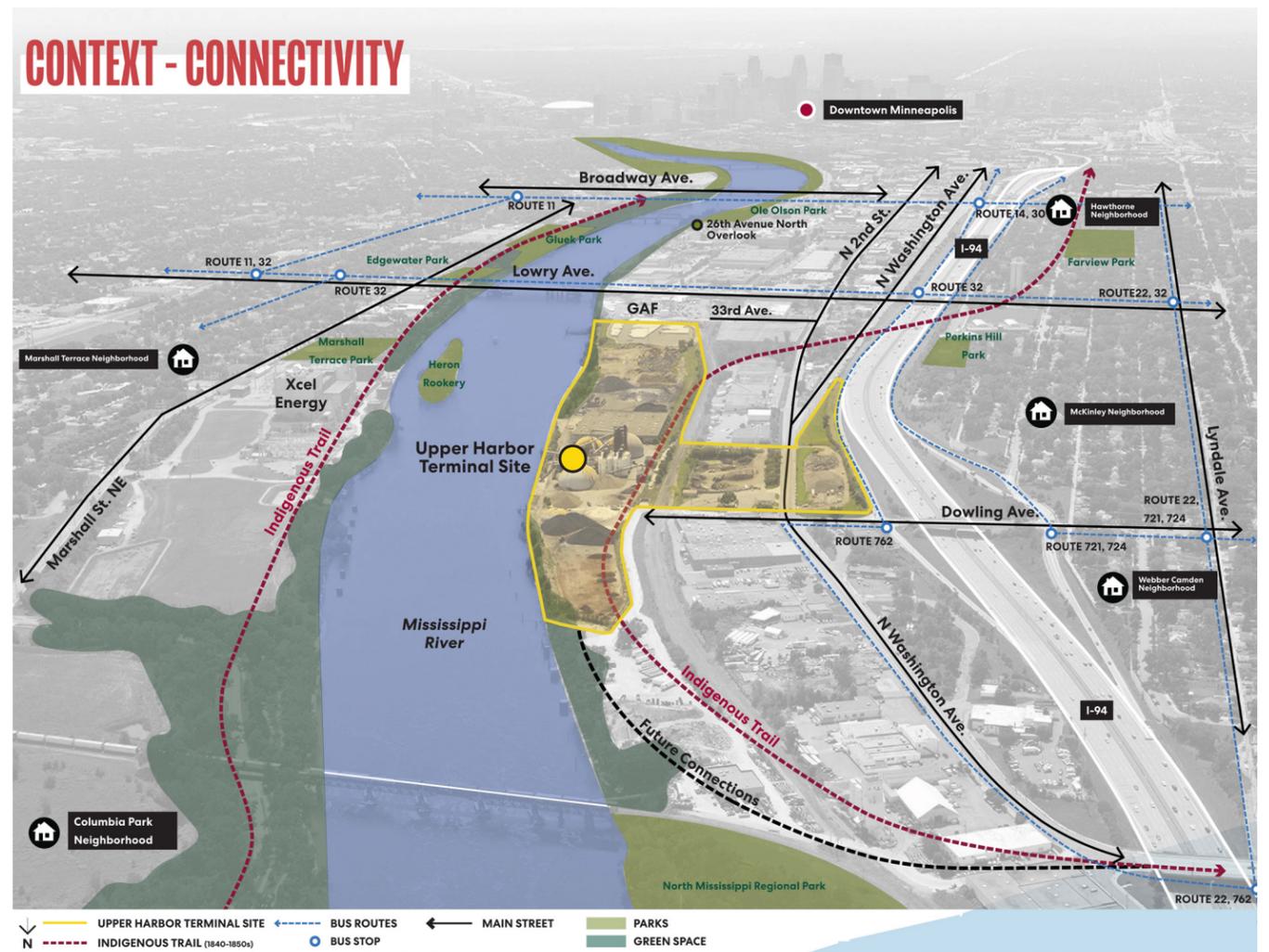
Definition of Gentrification:

Refers to the modification of a neighborhood, typically due to an increase in “desirability”. This change often brings increased property values, new and different businesses to the area, and may be signaled by storefront renovations, public works projects, or neighborhood “rebranding”. However, the increased wealth and economic gains are not experienced equally by all residents. New residents are more likely to benefit while existing residents are disproportionately burdened with increased property taxes, and prices of food and necessities.

Definition of Displacement:

Refers to the forced relocation of a household FROM a neighborhood for reasons beyond their control. Large-scale displacement across a neighborhood can change the community demographically, economically, physically, and socially.

— From MPRB Comprehensive Plan Draft



“How do we make sure that the UHT really feels like a part the Northside? We want people to come to the UHT and have a good introduction to the Northside and the river, and not think that this is a part of Downtown coming up the river or Northeast coming across.”

— NORTHSIDE RESIDENT

Values

Values guide the way MPRB approaches work and are a basis to evaluate future decisions. Tactics and strategies change over time, but holding these values close helps staff ground a project or process in the core mission defined through extensive engagement.

1. Slow down the process of park development and allow for the park to evolve once more is known about the adjacent development and how Northside community members are connecting with the park.
2. Prioritize park investments in people over infrastructure as a strategy to combat gentrification and displacement
3. Maximize community options and control over park development by investing only in basic, flexible, and generally reversible park improvements.
4. Define this park as a Northside place and for the people by honoring and celebrating Northside people in multi-layered ways
5. Actively program and staff the park to build ownership, provide supportive jobs and capacity building for Northside community members.
6. Address larger issues that may be outside of the immediate UHT boundary, but impact work at this park and elsewhere in the system.

“Adjacent development is important because it will greatly impact who uses the park and whether current Northside residents and ADOS, Dakota, and other BIPOC users feel connected with the park”

—COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

“The Upper Harbor Terminal is not the first project to articulate community goals. Many projects set goals and make promises and then do not deliver.”

—NORTHSIDE RESIDENT

1. Slow Down the Process and allow for the park to evolve once more is known about the Development of the larger area and how Northside community members are connecting with the park.

The needs of Northside residents should drive the park design. Decades of systemic racism has led to a lack of trust and there is tremendous uncertainty about the future of the area and who the park will serve. It is premature to map out a long term plan; the park should be a place to experiment and adjust as needed.

- a. Develop the park with the **Just Green Enough** or Slow Park approach with a focus on local community needs. →
- b. Maintain a Slow Park approach until it is better understood how the adjacent development will be designed, implemented, and operated.
 - Allow for future options that allow MPRB to work with the City should they wish to explore alternatives to a privately operated multi-thousand seat venue including options determined to be appropriate in a public park. Noise, traffic, congestion, and crowds from the Community Performing Arts Center may impact use of the park.*
 - The park should prioritize support for people living in deeply affordable housing and current Northside residents. The design and operation of the park should respond to who lives in the proposed housing in the adjacent development.*
 - The park should be supportive of businesses that are owned and operated by Northside residents, that employ Northside residents, and that have positive synergy with the park. The design and function of the park should respond to who owns and works in businesses in the adjacent development.*
- c. Continue collaboration with the City, developers, and other partners to achieve community goals.
- d. Maintain a Slow Park approach until there is a better understanding of how the larger area between the freeway and river may be changing.
- e. Maintain a Slow Park approach until current residents are comfortable that displacement is not a high imminent risk.
- f. Maintain a Slow Park approach until transportation barriers can be addressed at each stage of park implementation.
- g. Keep the park flexible and basic so that the park future is undetermined and not a basis for speculative real estate investment.

*Edited from CAC Recommendation to CPC, see Appendix for full list. See land use coordination section for more CAC Recommendations.

For the purposes of this project “just green enough” is a space that serves the surrounding community first and foremost and seeks to reduce the risks of displacement or lack of ownership by current Northside residents. A park that is “just green enough” is not intended to mean either disinvestment in a community or a low-quality park or a low amount of green, vegetated space. Beginning with more basic improvements is also known as the Slow Park movement and is an evolving strategy to combat gentrification resulting from green space development. Slowing the rate of change, particularly if combined with efforts to build local connections, can help avoid cultural gentrification. When creating a new park, starting with just enough features to support local use, allows the park users to help shape more of the space after they’ve gotten to know it. Future park development could be deferred unless community members feel improvements will not add to the risk of gentrification.

2. Prioritize Park Investments in People Over Infrastructure as a strategy to combat gentrification and displacement.

Developing, building, and operating the park itself should be part of a larger strategy to build wealth and career driving skills for Northside residents. Creating the park at the UHT is not the end goal; the park and related work should be a step toward addressing the existing racial inequities. These disparities are not limited to access to recreation and nature, but include income inequality, safety, career opportunities. The following tactics should be integrated into the park as a way to prioritize investment in people over investments in infrastructure:

- a. **Create a job, career, and training intensive park**, rather than a park designed for leisure with expensive physical amenities.
- b. **Maximize investment in the North Minneapolis community** during the implementation process. Encourage Northside business and organization participation, and provide opportunities for participants to build skills. Find opportunities to create cradle to career pathways through a variety of tools including mentorship and capacity building opportunities.
- c. **Leverage the construction process** to establish a connection to the park before it opens.

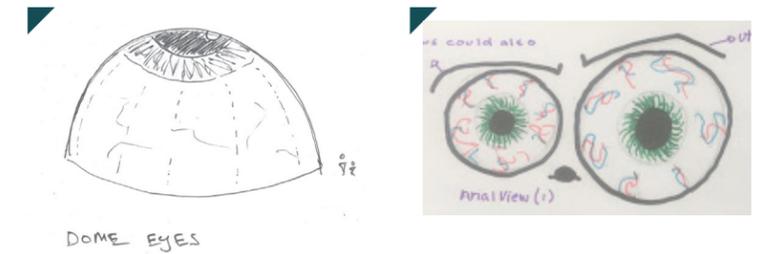
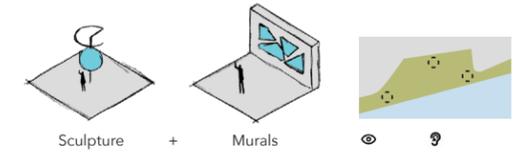
“Northside people absolutely deserve a nice neighborhood. But if you start by investing in the physical realm and not in the people, they may never be able to enjoy it.”

—NORTHSIDE RESIDENT



3. Maximize Community Options and Control

- a. Approach park construction and funding so that the first phase of **park improvements is continuation of engagement** rather than an end. Seek opportunities for people and organizations to help build the park as a more collaborative approach to community involvement.
- b. Develop the park to **support goals already defined by relevant community led processes** such as the Northside Green Zone and Promise Zone.
- c. **First phase improvements should be adaptable. Communicate promises for future actions** into the park as a public accountability measure.
- d. **Revisit full park concept design** after community members can experiment in initial park spaces. If the goals for the park are not being met, modify park design and/or operations.



Untitled, J.R.

JXTA Public Art idea of Environmental Justice Eyes symbolically watching

Right here is where you can start to turn it around. But you got to acknowledge the past. You got to acknowledge those pains, those things that have happened, those injustices in order to know what not to do again.

- Princess Haley

“With the Green Zones we’ve done a lot of work to say what we want for environmental justice on the Northside. We don’t want to restate these goals. What we need is for every project that happens to support these goals.”

—NORTHSIDE GREEN ZONE TASK FORCE MEMBER

4. Define this Park as a Northside Place and for the People

While Minneapolis is on track to become majority BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) by 2040, the North Minneapolis neighborhoods have long been home to diverse communities. Having the UHT park be a place welcoming to all, where all communities can learn about Dakota land and Black culture, as well as the Indigenous, Southeast Asian, African, and Latinx and many different people that call North Minneapolis home means balancing diverse voices and activities.

- a. This park should honor and acknowledge the Dakota and Indigenous people through **active support of Indigenous voices, practices and treaty rights**. Move beyond art and signage to and work with Dakota people to create places for access, gathering, and harvesting, and support education, language, and Indigenous land management and cultural practices.
- b. This park should be a Black Space and all who come to the park should be aware that this is a place that **celebrates and supports Black lives**. There are many ways to reinforce the idea of Black space from envisioning a place where art, music, and culture are nourished, to a safe and green refuge from other life stresses, to an economically supportive park.
- c. **Name the park something that is meaningful to both North Minneapolis residents and Dakota people**. Conduct a name exploration process that engages the Northside community members and Dakota people.



Full summary of the UHT listening session conducted by JXTA is found in the appendix

The industry has divided the Northside people from the River and left a legacy of pollution and pain. The industry should not be erased from memory or celebrated; the decades of work by Northside people for environmental justice and the re-greening of the space is what should be celebrated.

- d. **Celebrate the diversity** of the Northside residents.
- e. Dedicate budget to **embed art and expression** into the park to support artists and create a strong sense of ownership and belonging.
- f. Use the five **Northside Storylines** defined by Juxtaposition Arts during the Public Art Master Planning Process as a guide to which stories should be promoted. →



Juxtaposition Arts Northside Storylines

1. **Histories of ecological harm and disconnection from this place** – The River has been altered to benefit settlers, businesses and industry. The river has the power to heal our communities but first we need connection
2. **Environmental justice work and vision** - Industry has polluted the water, soil and air. As community organizing forces polluters to change and move out, it's critical that the Northside community is at the table to envision and drive what is next.
3. **Appropriation and re-appropriation of this place** – Local graffiti artists began using the domes and other structures as canvases, redesigning the area as an outdoor gallery. This DIY approach to placemaking turned Upper Harbor Terminal into place known by artists.
4. **Settlement history of the Northside** The Northside is defined by resilient people who came together from different historical traumas. This revolutionary community, defined by our victories as much as our struggles, shares this history. Now we have a new generation who is creating a new vision and reality.

5. **Food sovereignty in Black, Native and POC communities** - A movement of growers and chefs, gardeners and organizers, entrepreneurs and non-profits are working against a lack of access to fresh and healthy foods. UHT has the potential to amplify Northside food justice efforts.

“This park should have something to represent each culture and ethnic group”

—LAO FOCUS GROUP COMMUNITY MEMBER

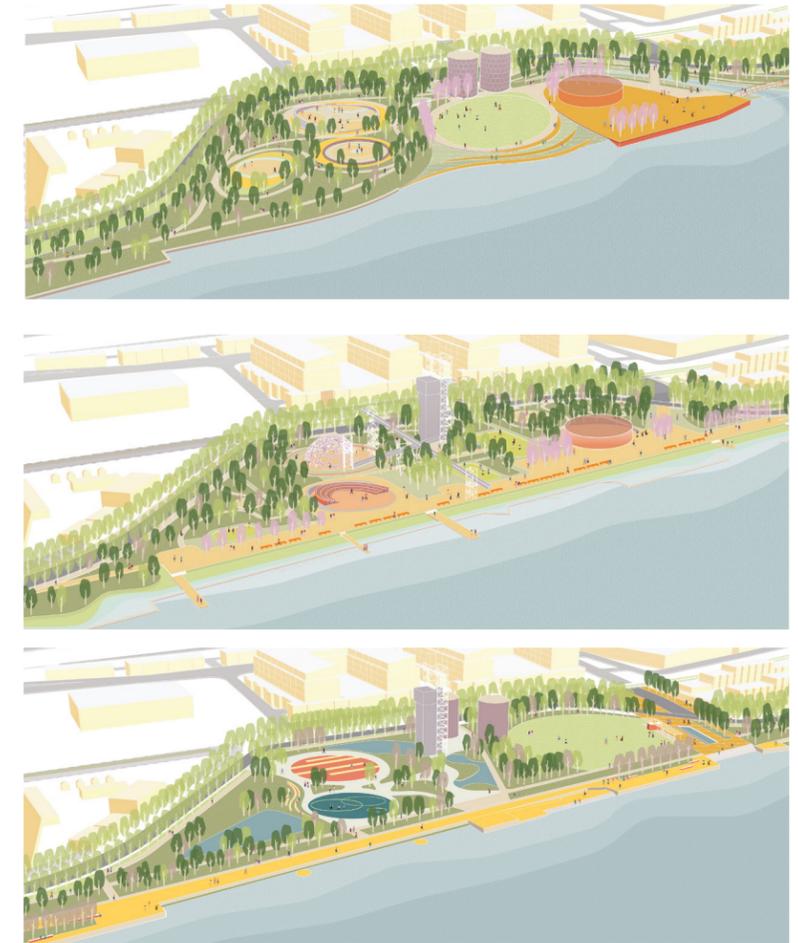
One example that arose repeatedly was the different relationships distinct cultural groups had with water and the river. While water is sacred in all cultures, expressing its centrality to life varies widely. For some community members, the Mississippi River is a well-known and loved, others have had little opportunity or access to this or any similar water body. Building relationships and getting to know the array of programmatic interests and support needed is essential; the park must support tailored and varied methods.



5. Actively Program and Staff the Park to connect residents, build ownership, and provide supportive jobs and capacity building.

Because the UHT is an unknown space and disconnected physically from the neighborhood, it is essential to intentionally create ownership and connections with Northside residents.

- a. **Activate the park with appropriate and supportive programming.** Provide programming where people can enjoy the park without significant capital and equipment and provide options for public use. Create an atmosphere where people are welcomed without spending money. When there are opportunities to purchase food or materials at the park, **encourage Northside entrepreneurs to seek participation.**
- b. Use **employment as a tool to activate** and care for the park, invest in the community, and teach skills related to the river, ecological areas, green infrastructure, and recreation. Encourage Northside and BIPOC community members to seek employment with MPRB and other partners.
- c. Provide supportive and intentional programming to support activities that are typically enjoyed by White users, such as watercraft recreation.. **Encourage Northside and BIPOC community members involvement** and skill building.
- d. Emphasize positive park activation through **programming and employment and partnerships as a security mechanism**, rather than traditional policing.



Draft Design Concepts from May 2020

Community members often expressed diverging visions for the park, from a green and nature based area, to a more active park with recreational amenities, to a more urban character. The park can still evolve into any of these directions and be a destination area it becomes clear that substantial new improvements are desired.

“We need an investment in programming and connective work that is as committed as the infrastructure development.”

—BLACK OUTDOOR AND ACTIVE LIVING ADVOCATE

Park Design Principles

Park design principles provide specific direction on park amenities, design, or layout. Based on the public engagement process, the Vision statements, the program model, and the story lines developed by JXTA, the first set of park design principles provide more specific guidance on park space design and development:

- 1. Maximize site clean-up** and removal of industrial structures that take up significant space.
- 2. Focus on environmental healing:** restore the land with native and ecologically rich vegetation, manage stormwater to protect the river, clean contaminated soil, use green and renewable materials, and mitigate climate change.
- 3. Provide critical visitor support,** such as restrooms, drinking water, lights, seating, wayfinding signage, shade, parking, and shelter. Because UHT is in a somewhat isolated area, basic support is critical for any significant park use, especially if people use transit to access the site.
- 4. Support commonly requested experiences** with picnic areas, accessible water access, flexible lawn area, play, and seating, walking, and gardens.
- 5. Support programming and activation** including flexible accessible (paved) areas, flexible lawn space, multipurpose indoor space, and infrastructure such as storage, lights, outlets, and water. With programming, MPRB and other organizations can help bridge awareness and transportation gaps as well as invest into the people and connect them to the park through paid work.
- 6. Support robust staffing and capacity building with green infrastructure** working areas, gardens and stormwater management designed for staff training, indoor and outdoor staff storage, and staff office touchdown areas.

7. Embed art and expression into the park with dedicated budget to support artists and create a strong sense of ownership and belonging by Northside community members.

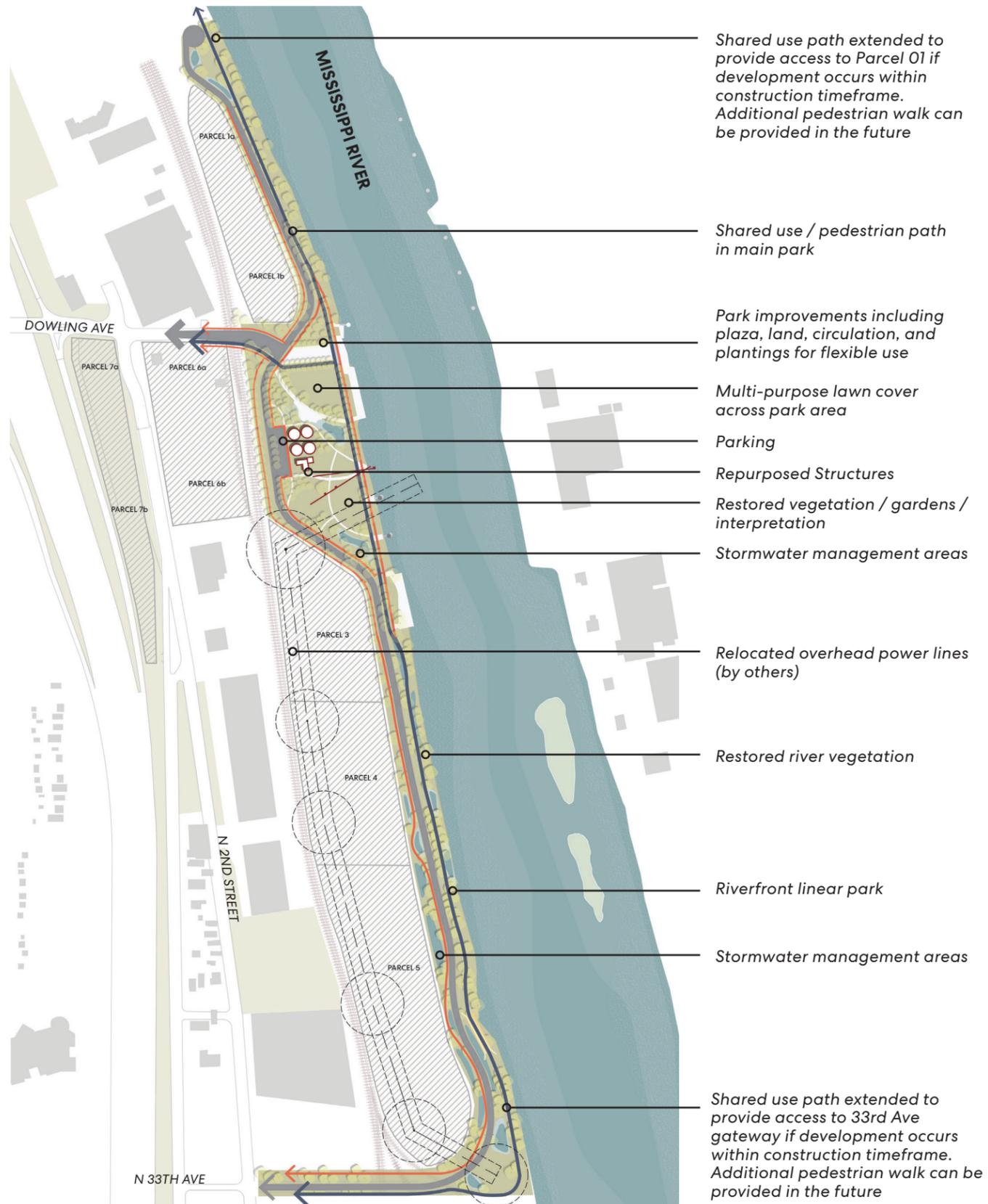
8. Acknowledge Dakota land and support Dakota and Indigenous people in visible ways through interpretation, design, gardens, areas to gather and harvest, outdoor learning areas, and visible incorporation of language, and cultural practices.

9. Plan for evolution with community use: use mobile and flexible methods to provide amenities where possible and plan on future adjustments to spaces.

- a. Allow for a variety of indoor park space options, including the potential for public park space on the ground floor of an adjacent development parcel. Provide basic indoor space with mobile and movable buildings as both the need and the options for future building space become clear.
- b. Allow for future removal of the river wall and restoration of an ecological edge. Do not place significant permanent structures, such as a building, that would deter future options to change the wall.
- c. Utilize mobile furnishings, such as a mobile stage to test out performance events. Allow for the addition of a permanent outdoor performance area, particularly if the adjacent venue should change.

“The park should help shape the future. This is an important connection to the river and an opportunity to support our claim to this space.”

—NORTHSIDE RESIDENT

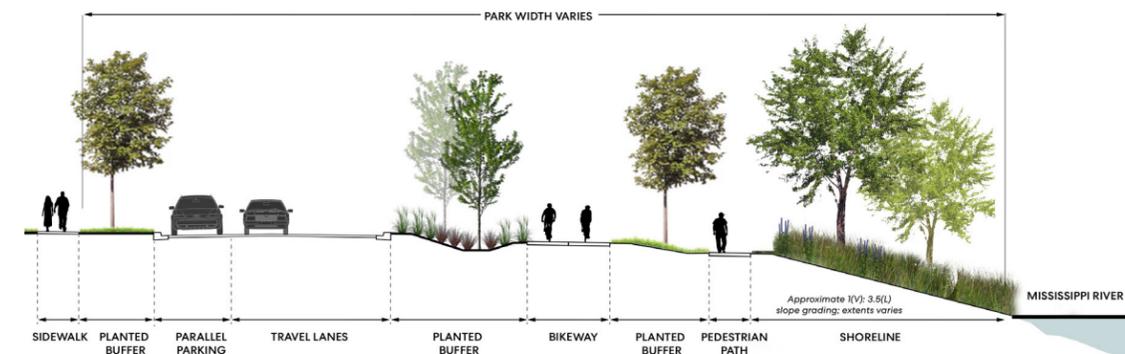


Outside of the main park, much of the area is characterized as a linear park area, or a narrower segment of park that large serves as a connection between nodes.

Park Design Concept

Full Park at UHT

The proposed park at the UHT is 19.5 acres and spans the entire length of the property along the riverfront. The entire riverfront is public and the park varies from 60 feet to 360 feet wide, with a larger park area of about 5-6 acres near the terminus of Dowling Avenue.



Linear park area is sized to allow adequate space for the parkway, which also serves as a City street for this project, separated bicycle and pedestrian trails, buffers between circulation, a riverbank gently sloped enough to encourage native vegetation establishment, and stormwater treatment areas.



Interpretation of the draft development concept by El Dorado Associates. Included to show approximate spacing of road, trails, and shoreline in park.

Primary Park Features



Function of Park Spaces

Four of the design principles are focused around park features that achieve certain goals. Many uses may be layered within a particular features, and the visitor support features are important for all types of park users.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES	#3: PROVIDE CRITICAL VISITOR SUPPORT	#4: SUPPORT COMMONLY REQUESTED EXPERIENCES	#5: SUPPORT PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVATION	#6: SUPPORT ROBUST STAFFING
Park Spaces				
Flexible Plaza			X	
Flexible Lawn		X	X	
Picnic Area		X		
Play Area		X	X	
Water Access		X	X	
Mobile Buildings	X	X	X	X
Green Infrastructure Center			X	X
Gardens		X	X	X
Natural Areas		X	X	X
Stormwater Management				X
Parking	X	X	X	X
Circulation	X	X	X	X
Visitor Amenities	X	X	X	X
Staff Use	X		X	X

Flexible Plaza

A flexible plaza, or paved area supports accessible seating, events, markets, group fitness, performances, bicycle and watercraft clinics and lessons. A plaza may be programmed to allow for roller skating or other specialized pop up events.



Flexible paved areas work for casual seating but also for events – most events need accessibility, water hook ups, outlets and space to arrange mobile equipment. The proposed space is relatively inexpensive and easy to change in the future but can support a wide variety of programming.

Programming can test and lay the groundwork for different ideas: pop up food vendors may lead to a permanent restaurant in the park. Bicycle workshops and watercraft clinics may lead to an outfitter shop tailored to Northside residents.

Flexible Lawn

A lawn allows for casual athletics, play, picnic overflow, large group gatherings. The lawn may be combined with the plaza area for larger event, music, and movie space.



Picnic Area

A place where large families or casual groups could picnic and barbecue or cookout was a commonly requested park feature among Southeast Asian, East African, Latinx, Black, and Indigenous focus group participants. Community members emphasized the need for shade, seating, grills, and options for reservations but also accommodations for spontaneous gatherings.

Met Council and other organizations have researched who uses regional parks – one commonality is that BIPOC users more often ask for large group gathering spaces. The limited seating at a single picnic table is often seen as catering to small nuclear families.



Lawn as an extension of the picnic area helps support large group use and minimizes the need for additional space. A bee lawn may be appropriate for some or all of the multipurpose lawn, particularly in areas of less intensive use.

Play Area

Play areas are some of the most visited park amenities and make picnicking and other activities more attractive for entire families. Nature play can be created from MPRB branch trimmings and removed trees to create a green and river oriented aesthetic. Compared to most manufactured playgrounds, nature play areas can be easily moved and modified in the future.

Water Access

An accessible route to the water supports people's desire to experience the water as well as canoe or kayak from the UHT site. River oriented recreation requires knowledgeable and experienced staff to help community members connect with the river safely and enjoyably. The accessible pathway is located near the building and staffing area to support watercraft users. This pathway also allows people to touch the water and be at the rivers edge: a common request from community members. Although, areas along the river wall will be usable for fishing, many anglers prefer to be closer to the water and can use the access point to get to the waterline. The ramp can be built with limited infrastructure and adjust in the future, particularly if the riverwall were to change.



Nature play can provide both physical and interactive / creative play



Mobile Buildings

Mobile buildings can provide shelter, indoor space, plumbed restrooms, staff areas, and climate controlled storage and still be moved to allow for site redesign in the future. An indoor space supports outdoor park us and offers an important refuge in inclement weather.. A multipurpose indoor public space expands programming opportunities, allows work and camps to continue on rain days, and opens up winter opportunities. Although portable restrooms are an option, permanent restrooms are best staffed for safety. A touchdown office space supports a variety of recreation, events, customer service, and environmental stewardship groups to utilize the UHT space.



Teen Teamworks Summer 2021 crews identified shade, seating, water, restrooms, loading areas, storage, shelter, and a cool rest area as important for summer environmental work.

Green Infrastructure Center

A reused dome footprint is a hub that can be used for experimenting, building, accessible gardens and displays, seed cultivation, greenhouses, storage, drop of and loading. Robust staffing, such as with MPRB green teams, needs flexible spaces, ways to load and unload materials, tools, furnishings, and rest areas. Taking care of vegetation is a specialized skill and requires a space for learning; this central space supports the surrounding gardens and natural areas.





Linking as many jobs as possible to environmental restoration is a way to support activation of the park and to invest in people. Safety is an often cited concern – having community members doing high quality work and learning at the park helps activate the park and sets the tone of who belongs at this park.

Gardens

Specific garden training areas allow for hands on experience to learn about how to manage vegetation; public gardens will also need ongoing care. Gardens may vary; likely opportunities include:

- Urban agriculture
- Native vegetation management
- Indigenous gardens
- Stormwater Management Green Infrastructure
- Areas for harvesting
(See Community Garden Policy Link in Appendix)

Careers in green infrastructure (planning, design, construction and maintenance) are a known growth industry. A strong green infrastructure training program at the UHT park requires extensive collaboration across departments. Some tools are already in place – MPRB partners with the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) to support youth in environmental careers. See Operations and Maintenance section for more information.



A teaching area can include built in interpretation, language, art, outdoor class space. The green infrastructure job training area can also double as a general public educational space. Partner organizations have expressed interest in bringing their teams to train at the UHT park.

Natural Areas

While specific gardens may be implemented, particularly in the main park area, much of the UHT site will be restored with native vegetation. Because the UHT site is largely non-vegetated or contains significant non-native and invasive species, it presents a tremendous opportunity to return a large section of river corridor to a diverse and thriving ecosystem. Much of the riverbank is too steep to be stable and will need to be regraded and flattened to remove debris and allow for quality vegetation establishment. Along the shore MPRB will establish a variety of vegetation types to prevent erosion into the water, stabilize the soils, as well as enhance and restore the river corridor. Mesic prairie plants are likely to be most appropriate for areas on top of the slope that have limited grade change. Restoration of the slopes will enhance the floodplain for greater connectivity throughout the corridor for wildlife.

Near the water, MPRB can enhance habitat by removing dead wood susceptible to disease, and preserving tree snags and debris that wildlife could utilize to create brush and rock nesting sites. Both the shoreline and upland areas offer opportunities to plant a variety of trees for nesting, and an array of plants to support pollinators. The green infrastructure treatment areas can incorporate native plants suited to both wet and dry conditions that contribute to wildlife habitat and blend into the restored landscape.



Germander, Obedient Plant and other native plants are found on the river corridor and can support the Endangered Rusty Patched Bumblebee as well as other pollinators.



“There shouldn’t be a choice between jobs and the environment. Supporting the River should be our job.”

—NORTHSIDE GREEN ZONE TASK FORCE MEMBER

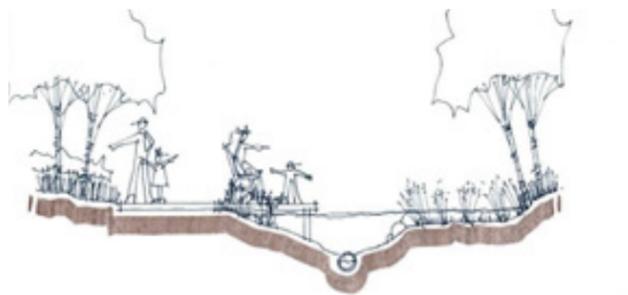
Photo Credit: Friends of the Mississippi River Ole Olson Park

Stormwater Management

The Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, City, developers, and Park Board collaborating across property lines on a district stormwater system to collect and treat stormwater runoff prior to discharge to the groundwater and Mississippi River. All parties are also exploring a regional stormwater system that could potentially treat a portion of runoff from 162 acres in North Minneapolis and provide a source of recycled stormwater for irrigation, within the proposed development, and to create water features that enhance the public space and provide for a larger variety of ecosystems in the stormwater management features.



Green infrastructure is an approach to water management that protects, restores, and mimics the natural water cycle. Green infrastructure incorporates both the natural environment and engineered systems to provide clean water, conserve ecosystem values and functions, create or enhance habitat, and provide a wide range of environmental benefits. Examples of green infrastructure being explored include bioretention areas with native plantings, bio infiltration and biofiltration swales (e.g. rain gardens) detention/retention basins, tree trenches, stormwater wetlands, stormwater reuse for irrigation, and permeable pavement



Stormwater management areas can be beautiful and usable and include circulation, seating, and interpretation. These areas will periodically hold more water, making them a constantly changing park amenity.



District Stormwater Concept Plan Draft

While there is still significant and detailed collaboration needed to make these efforts happen, the innovative stormwater systems offer opportunity for MPRB to blend environmental protection with green infrastructure related jobs and training. See the Operations and Management section for more information.



“The environmental movement has often focused too much on the environment and not on the people. Green infrastructure is great, but there should be a greater benefit than seeing green infrastructure in our neighborhood. Who is building it? Who is taking care of it and learning about it? Who is making money off of it?”

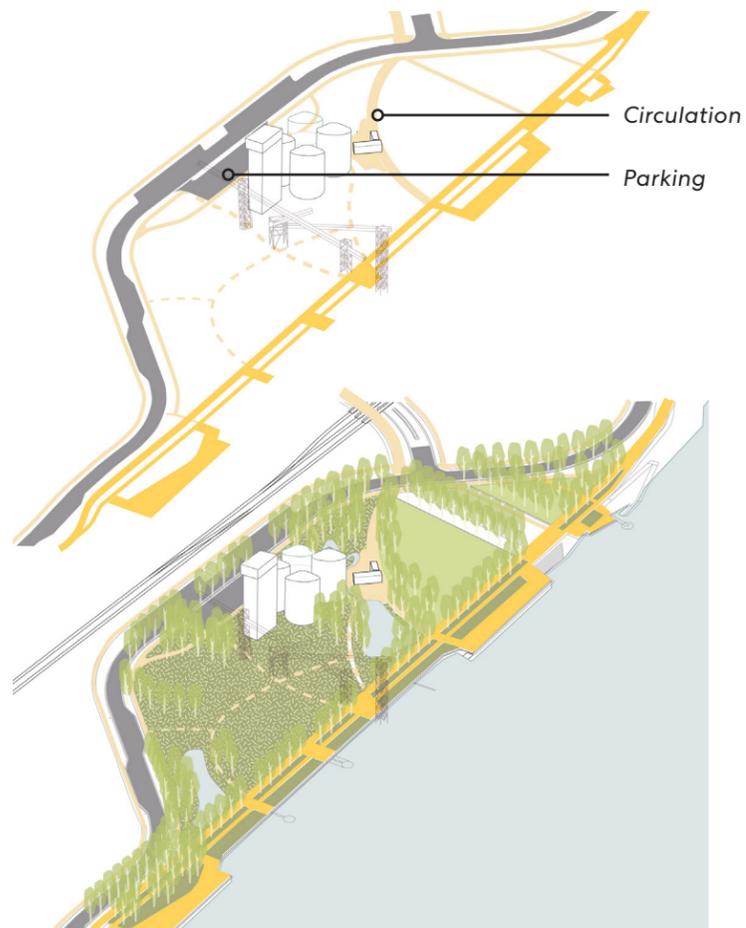
—NORTHSIDE RESIDENT

Parking

A dedicated parking lot provides approximately 20 stalls and allows for easier drop off areas. Additional parallel stalls on the parkway also serve the public spaces and support mass transit or bus and shuttle use

Circulation and Wayfinding

Riverfront trails are a signature component of the park system and Grand Rounds, but the site will require an entire hierarchy of pathways to provide accessible connections and allow for walking loops. Along the river, the pathways themselves become an amenity where people can look over the water; interpretive elements can also be incorporated with pathways for tours. A general circulation system will be supported with lighting, signage, places to stop and rest, and other fundamental park support features.



Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission have pointed to wayfinding and other basic infrastructure as critical to support BIPOC regional park use.

Visitor Amenities

Although not visible on conceptual drawings, the park design includes restrooms, drinking water, lights, seating, wayfinding, and signage, and necessary utility connections.

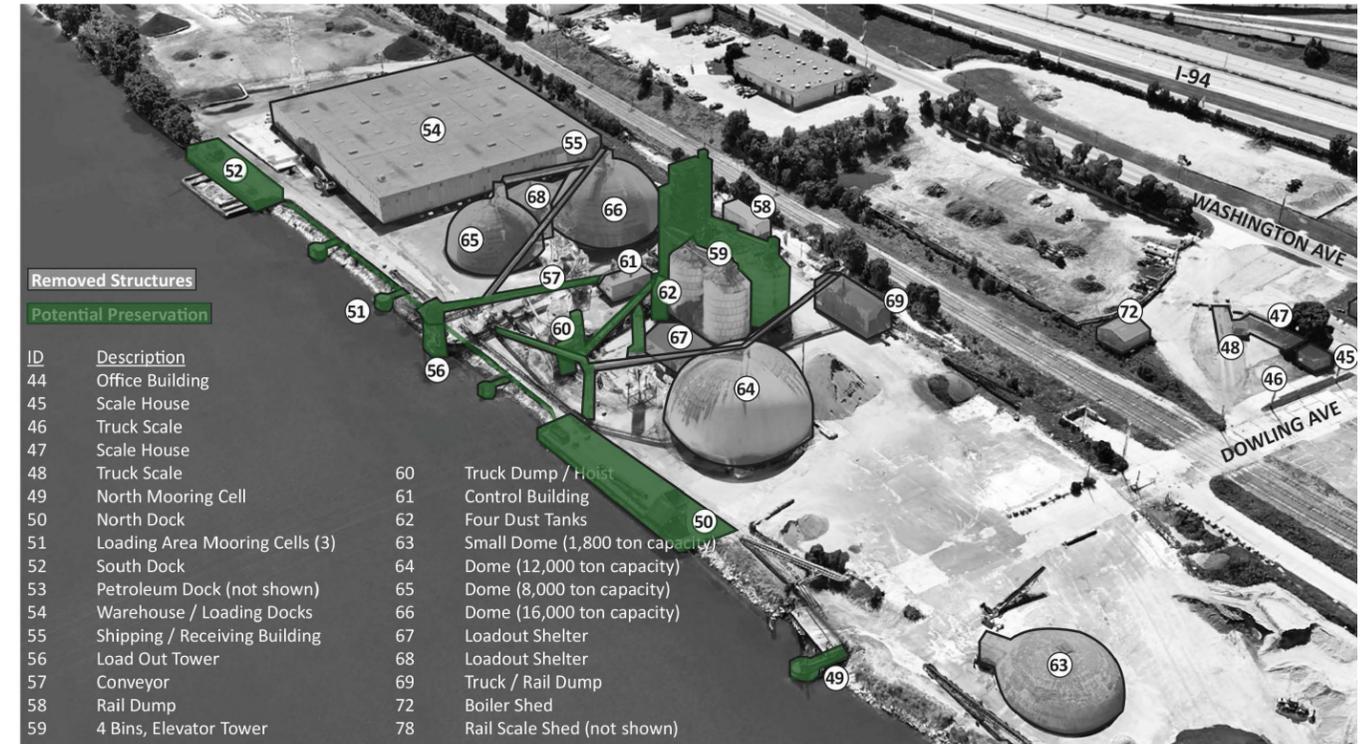
Staff Use

Staffing and programming will need storage for gardening and maintenance tools, water equipment, or programming elements. Reusing grain elevators for storage and to house a water reuse cistern can reduce demand for new materials. Grain elevators may be removed in the future when longer term building and storage needs are better understood.



River Corridor Restoration

Industrial Structures



The following structures are planned to be removed as part of the first phase of improvements:

- The domes pose challenges for reuse and will be removed to maximize space. Portions of domes may be repurposed for low walls, site furnishings etc.
- Miscellaneous outbuildings and wooden structures.

“There is historical relationship between Black people and nature. The narrative of that relationship has been erased. We need to recover that relationship; reconnecting with this river is a part of our legacy.”

—BLACK OUTDOOR AND ACTIVE LIVING ADVOCATE

The following structures are planned to remain during the first phase of improvements and will require limited modification for temporary use, security and stabilization. Structures may be removed in the future:

- All four grain silos will remain; two are the likely maximum number to be permanently re-purposed. Grain silos can serve as temporary storage for water and programming/maintenance equipment.
- The red grain elevator may be retained and renovated for public purposes or removed at a future date.
- Overhead conveyors will need modifications. Some conveyors may be re-purposed to shape spaces, and hang art, lights, shade, or other public park amenities. Portions may be re-purposed on-site as bike racks, art, and other site furnishings.
- River wall will remain in place for the current phase of construction; park design will allow for future changes or removal and restoration of a naturalized edge.
- River related infrastructure such as mooring cells will remain; may be removed in the future



Remaining and repurposed structures are an opportunity to tell Northside and Indigenous stories, their relationship to the river and industry, and the reclaiming of public green space.



Site Contamination

Design Principle: Unlike many industrial sites, the UHT has relatively low amounts of soil contamination. After being farmed, the site was a storage and transportation hub. There is significant debris throughout the site, but testing has generally shown low amounts of toxins. MPRB will remove much of the surface debris, such as large concrete pieces, and clean or remove the soil to meet safety standards for public spaces should it be necessary.

In keeping with community discussions, MPRB will seek to clean the soil, rather than remove it where possible. Phytoremediation is a promising way to clean the soil on site rather than removing the problem to a landfill. The potential for phytoremediation treatments depend on more specific evaluation and testing.

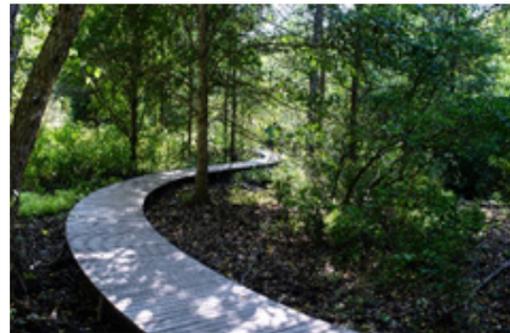
Indigenous community members have expressed interest in healing the soil with native plants and using art and language to teach about the relationship between people, land, and water. Sunflowers, a Minnesota wildflower, are being explored for phytoremediation benefits.



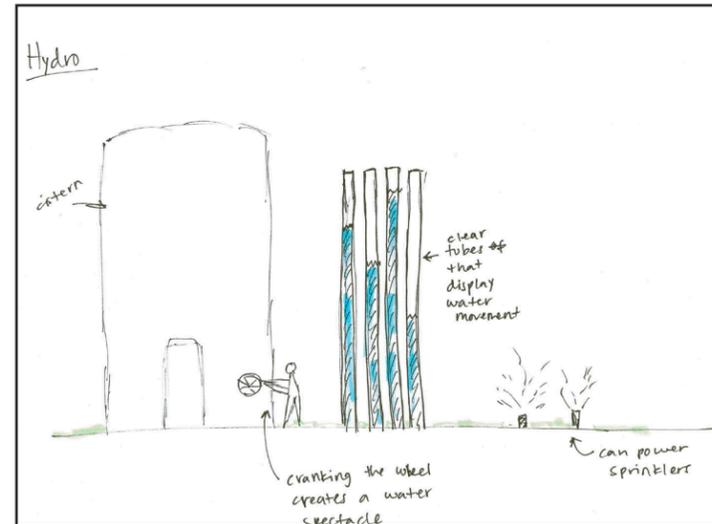
Addressing Climate Change

The 2019 MPRB Carbon Footprint Analysis identified buildings, and operation of large engines, and small engines as the primary contributors to emissions within the park system. In addition to installing solar panels and using electrical equipment, the project team can seek local, renewable, and non-toxic materials during construction processes.

The establishment and maintenance of substantial native plants stands, including prairies, wooded areas, and shoreland vegetation at UHT park addresses climate mitigation, climate adaptation, and resilience. Many of the landscapes listed include deep rooted prairie plants which have a variety of benefits.



The boardwalk at the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden was made with thermally treated local ash trees; a local and non-toxic alternative to tropical hardwoods and chemically treated wood



The people powered ideas included in the Juxtaposition Arts Master Plan are being further explored by the project teams in the fall of 2021

Early experimentations with hempcrete in the summer of 2021

Resilience

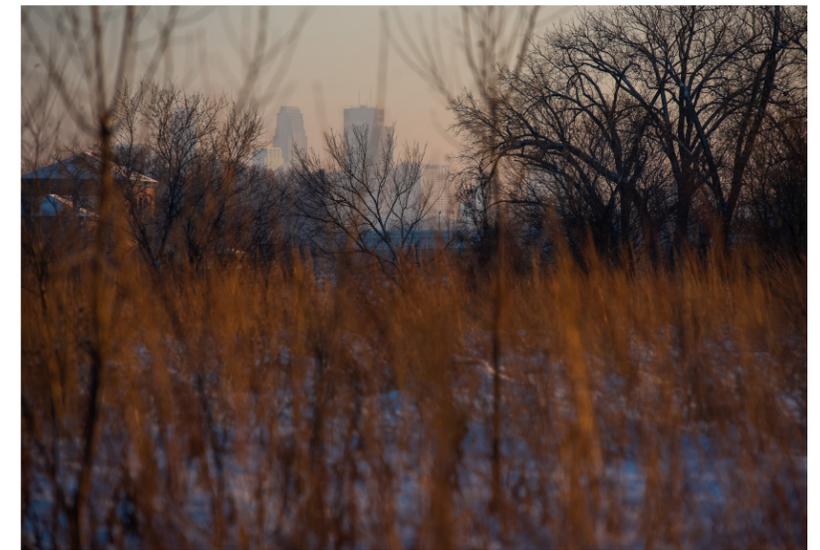
Prairies are resilient to the extremes of wet and dry. The soil organic matter allows prairie soils to hold large volumes of water like a sponge deep in the soil for use during dry times. Resilience also occurs because of the diversity of prairie plant species and the natural orchestration of plant dominance under differing growing conditions. During the times plants are outside of their niche tolerances they either go dormant or rely and seed stored in the soil to perpetuate and dominate again when ideal conditions resume.

Maintenance

In comparison with other landscape choices such as lawn, prairie plant maintenance results in very little greenhouse gas release. Burning a prairie may release some greenhouse gases, but below ground plant material stays and carbon is sequestered.

Carbon Sequestration —

Through the process of photosynthesis carbon is sequestered from the atmosphere to build plant tissues. Roots over time die and decays leaving behind a portion of this carbon in the soils. The black dirt in prairies are some of the richest soils in on the planet because of this buildup of carbon.



Prairie plant systems actively grow through a variety of extreme conditions which also makes many prairie plants suitable to stormwater management areas.

Wildlife Friendly Design and Lighting

The restored landscape will attract wildlife; it is important that the park amenities do not harm it in turn. Artificial light at night can be harmful to birds, amphibians, insects, mammals, and fish and glass can pose a hazard to birds. While some lighting will be necessary for safety reasons, careful design and smart lighting systems can reduce the overall impacts.

- Minimize light, use down lights and blue/green lights, and have lights off as much as possible, particularly during migratory periods.
- Make glass visible to birds and place vegetation carefully near windows. Use Dark Sky certified lighting and design according to guidelines developed by the Audubon Society or US Fish and Wildlife Service or other applicable organizations.
- Use biodegradable netting for erosion control areas and other wildlife friendly materials and practices



Lighting at the 26th Avenue North Overlook allows for minimal down lighting to provide visibility and precise control of color, intensity and timing to minimize impacts to river life.

Dakota Land and Indigenous Connections

There are many ways to send messages about who a space is for and who is welcomed and celebrated at public parks. Although many of the following ideas will be developed at a more detailed design stage, they are critical for how a place speaks to park users and becomes embraced and owned.

Indigenous educators have suggested that parks should serve as high quality and experiential outdoor classrooms. Parks can be accessible places to become familiar with Dakota land and Indigenous people. Parks can supplement schools with information and language and informed staff. Park programming can support cultural practices, and park spaces can support community gathering and practices. The following pages map how some of the ideas from engagement can be reflected in the park design.

“It is so important to teach our youth and provide opportunities for them along the way.”

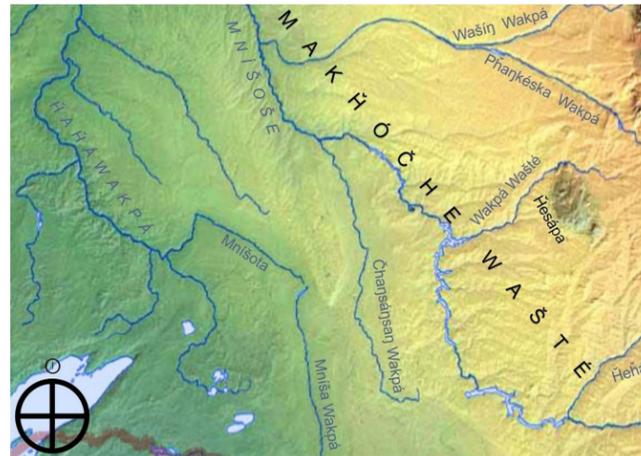
—DAKOTA COMMUNITY MEMBER

“Schools are required to teach about Dakota people, but they don’t often have good materials to teach with. If we create outdoor classrooms in the parks, schools could bring students there and everyone else could learn too.”

—DAKOTA EDUCATOR

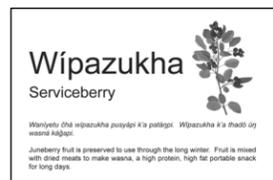
Educational opportunities

- Native harvest and cooking camps and opportunities and food distribution
- Art creation camps led by young adults where younger kids can participate/assist in creating native inspired art for the park
- Demonstrations to make and set up a tipi for programming on site
- Youth led tours of the park, its history, and significance of all programming/structures
- Outdoor education courses and jobs to learn about the ecosystem and land preservation
- Designing and building interpretive elements and signage and learning Dakota language



Map courtesy of Dakota Goodhouse, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

Show Indigenous perspectives of the land and history. Industry at the Upper Harbor Terminal is connected to the industrialization of the Falls and the destruction of Spirit Island.



Shaping the Park Site

Architecture— Teach about Dakota architecture about tipis and bark houses and earth houses. Find ways to bring Dakota forms and learning into new structures that everyone can learn from.

Design— use the circular dome bases and create circular gardens, pools, river overlooks, and radial walking paths. Show the symbolism of how everything is connected including visitors to the park and all that they do



Interpretation throughout the Park



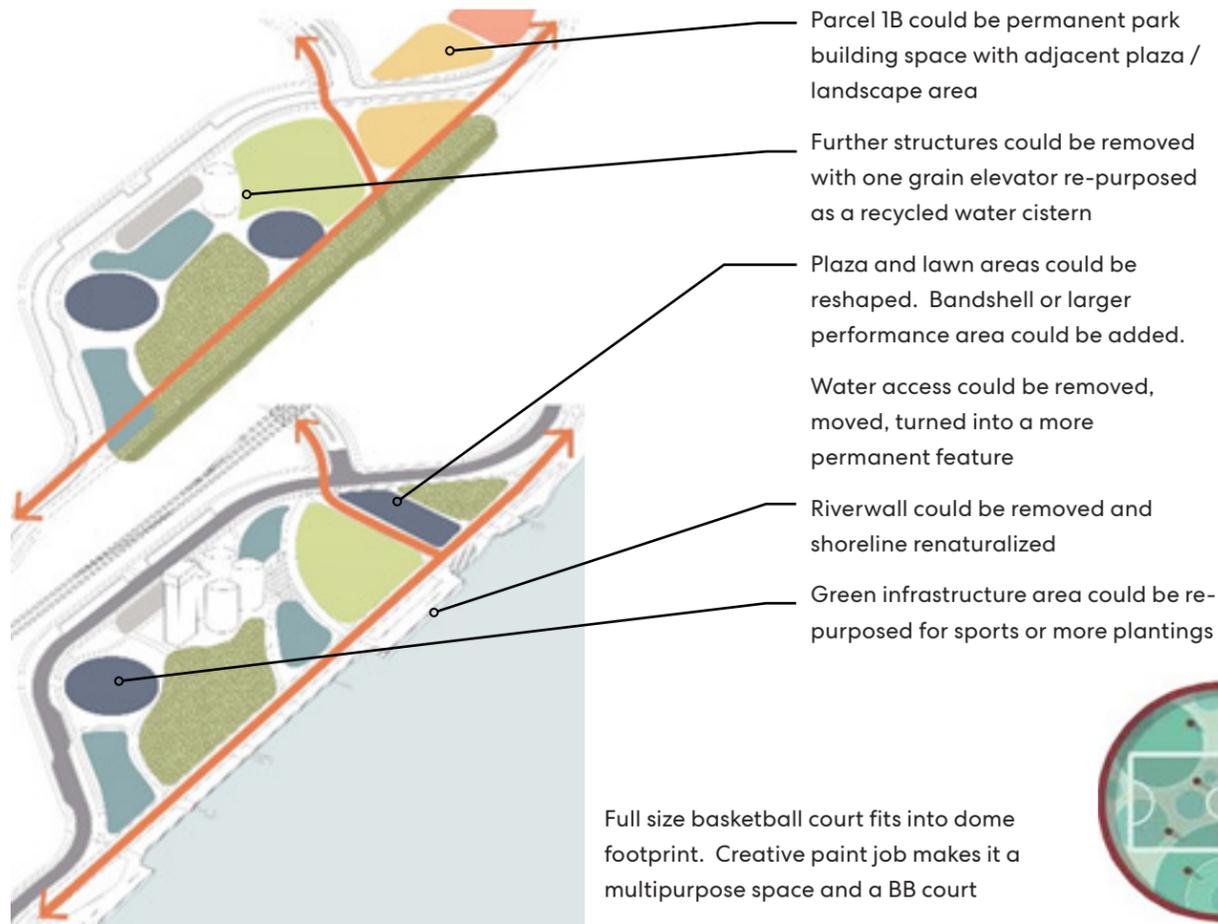
“This same water flows through the wild rice fields to the North. People should stand at this river and understand how many people depend on it for food and income. The wild rice to the North needs clean water and this river is also the drinking water for Mpls. If the rice can’t grow, we can’t drink it. We are all connected, and we need to learn to recognize that instead of always thinking of ourselves as individuals”

—NORTHSIDE ANISHINAABE RESIDENT

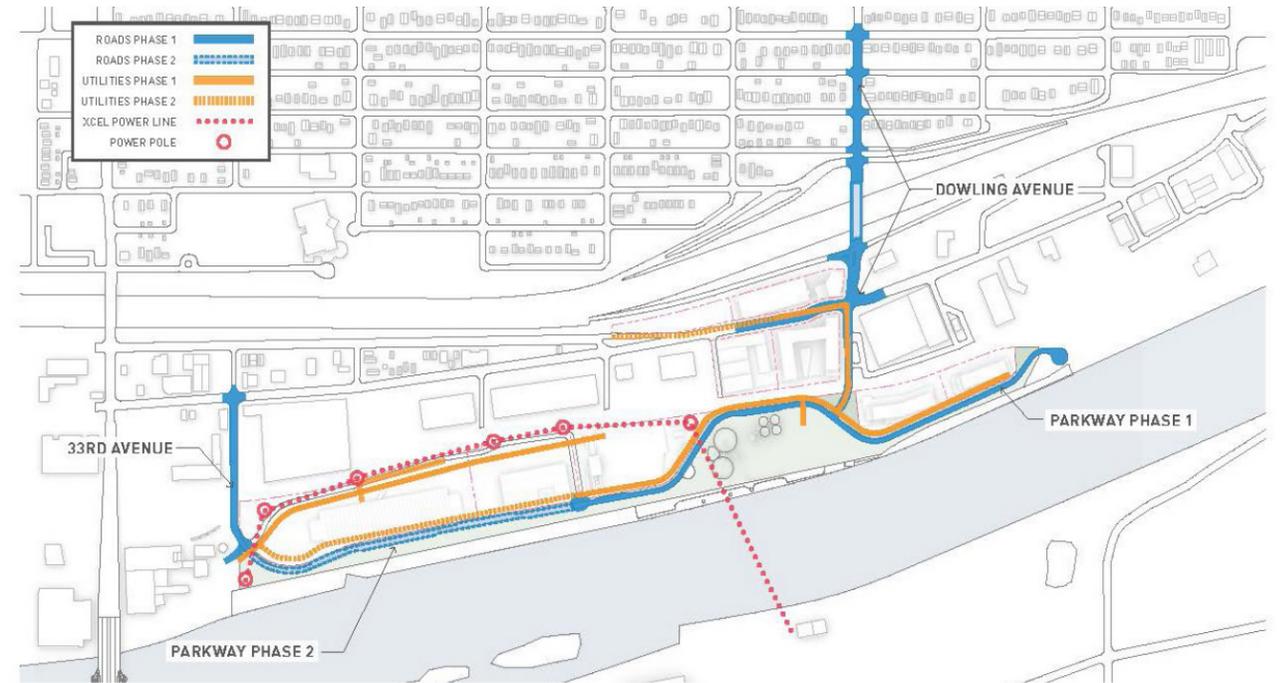
- 1 Industry on the river is connected to the industry and colonization to the north.
- 2 Upstream connections to the Bdote where the Rum River and Mississippi River meet.
- 3 **“What happens to the water, happens to us”** Water cleansing journey along Dowling Avenue. Make it visible and educational.
- 4 **“Dakota language and land are interconnected”** Support cultural and community programming in the multipurpose social spaces such as ceremonies, art, markets, games, and education.
- 5 **“Water is our first medicine”** Provide education with the healing of the land and the water
- 6 **“Water is relational, not transactional”** Stormwater management and habitat areas to clean water and protect the river along the linear park area. Vegetation enhancement, viewing of heron rookery.
- 7 Downstream connection to the Owámniyomni, Ĥaḥáwakpa, Mniówesni, Bdote (St. Anthony Falls, Coldwater Springs, Minnehaha Falls, confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers.

Planning for Evolution

Initial park improvements – lawn, pavement, signage, lights, gardens, are relatively easy to shift. By deferring major commitments, other than basic infrastructure and land restoration, more decisions can be made when the context is clear, and people have gotten to know the park.



Land Use Coordination



Improved Connections

The City of Minneapolis has worked in close coordination with MPRB and stakeholders such as Metro Transit to plan for better connectivity to the UHT site and park. As a part of the upcoming UHT work, the City of Minneapolis will improve the following connections to the UHT site:

- Improvements to “Upper” Dowling Avenue (Lyndale Avenue North to I-94)
- Improvements to “Lower” Dowling Avenue (I-94 to parkway)
- Phase 1 North / South Parkway at the UHT site
- Improvements to 33rd Avenue North (2nd Street to parkway)
- Transit
- Public utilities to the UHT site

The long term plan is for the parkway and riverfront trails to eventually extend along the river north and south of the site and connect to the larger network of parkways, trails, and city streets. The parkway and trail connections will take years to develop as property along the river will need to be acquired, with the goal of continuous public access along the entire riverfront. A more detailed section of public works improvements are found in the City of Minneapolis Coordinated Plan. More information about long term connections up and down the riverfront is in the Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan.

Shared Road and Circulation

The new segment of parkway at the UHT follows the traditional parkway aesthetic and pattern including parkway features such as: a narrow two-way street with red granite chip-seal surfaces, a stouter curb and gutter section, parallel parking bays on either side of the street, and standard lighting fixtures. Due to the narrow site and the desire to support both park and development, this segment of parkway will also serve as a City street. Like many City streets, this roadway will accommodate some utilities and truck traffic, although such traffic is expected to be limited. Like standard parkways, MPRB will be the underlying land owner. Should the street be vacated in the future, the parkway will be entirely owned by MPRB.

MPRB and the City of Minneapolis have collaborated on the layout and design of the parkway and inclusion of utilities and access points. Additional specific areas of collaboration will include:

- Detailed street design and future curb cuts
- Construction cost share and allocations
- Street closures for events
- Maintenance
- Lighting
- Utilities and access
- Parking
- Stormwater management

City and MPRB will coordinate the detailed design of this corridor so that it meets both parties' needs and negotiate a maintenance and use agreement that will address the responsibilities and rights of each party.

Transit

The City of Minneapolis Public Works team led collaboration with Metro Transit to plan for service to the UHT site. In addition to working out routes that may evolve depending on project phasing, the project design can support transit by accommodating layover and turnaround spaces, and restroom access for drivers.

Xcel Power Line

The UHT site is currently bisected by overhead high transmission powerlines, owned and operated by the private utility holding company Xcel Energy. The lines are a major site constraint in redevelopment and the land pole on the west bank is located in the heart of the proposed park.

CAC and community members continually expressed a desire to have the powerlines as far from the park as possible, and to minimize poles in the park and lines over park space. The City explored burying the lines, but estimates indicated that this option was cost-prohibitive.

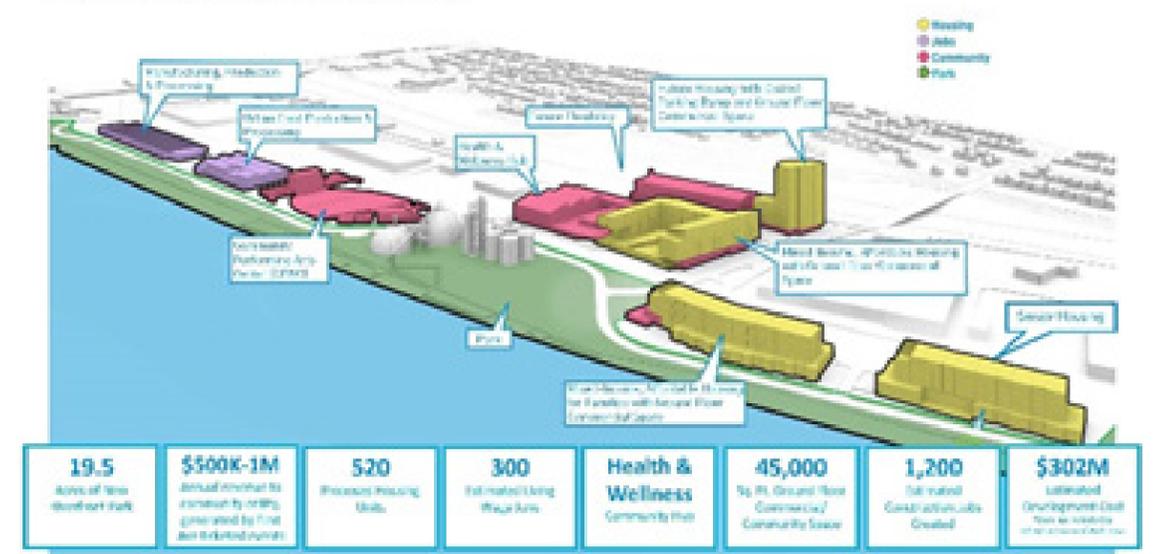
The City worked cooperatively with MPRB, the development team, and Xcel to identify a realignment that minimized the impact to the park and routed the lines as far west as possible. Grouping other existing utility easements consolidated the amount of space needed and maximized the area available for park and development. The City and Xcel are sharing the cost for line relocation.

The graphic on page 62 shows the relocated line.

Adjacent Development

The Coordinated Plan shows the anticipated development however the details of the development will be determined over decades. The interface between the park and adjacent land uses is an iterative process and coordination will continue indefinitely. The current plan plan maximizes flexibility to allow MPRB and community members to respond and shape the park as the area changes.

DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW





Operations and Maintenance

The Operations and Maintenance section provides an overview of staffing needs for the new park and some more detailed strategies and ideas that have arisen from the engagement process. This analysis will assist MPRB in identifying key opportunities, potential deficiencies, identifying resources, and establishing a structure.

Employment at UHT can build connections to the new park for Northside residents and support park activation and programming.

Capacity Building

MPRB has established goals to build capacity for native vegetation management and stormwater green infrastructure (also known as stormwater best management practices or BMP's) management. MPRB is also seeking to expand the current youth employment and investment programs around more organized career pathways, especially careers in green infrastructure. Introducing nearly a mile of new riverfront shoreline into the park space requires a significant staffing investment, and the UHT offers an opportunity to address internal needs while meeting community goals. Staff developed the ideas below based on discussions with various MPRB departments, as well as North Minneapolis and Indigenous consultants, potential agency and funding partners, and City Green Zone and Promise Zone staff. Some ideas are driven by the immediate need to maintain the new park, others have arisen from existing needs within the MPRB system that might be addressed on the UHT site.



High quality youth training and employment requires an established infrastructure, robust qualified staffing, technical expertise, and steady budgets. Developing youth programs requires MPRB to develop an in-house network of experts to support them.

MPRB Stormwater Green Infrastructure Management and Native Plant Restoration Management

MPRB gardeners, the Green Team or Civilian Conservation Corps could maintain rain gardens, bioswales, and other stormwater management areas with MPRB staff supervision. The current team has limited experience with maintenance of stormwater green infrastructure, such as rain gardens, due to staffing availability and priorities within the existing workload. There is interest in expanding the gardening team’s capacity, as well as creating specialized work crews in the asset management and natural resources departments. To serve as training areas, the stormwater BMPs would also need to be designed to accommodate a graduating scale of experience levels. There is cross over between the skills to manage stormwater green infrastructure and ecologically restored areas but managing a prairie or shoreland area requires different management techniques and knowledge



Stormwater management areas can double as public park amenities with diverse plant material and intertwined seating, walking, interpretation, and art. Towerside Park is a recent example of a district stormwater system that blends usable space with learning and demonstration areas.

The water reuse system associated with the regional stormwater system could provide an abundance of water for plant cultivation and care, and managing water levels in the stormwater areas



UHT can provide a place to learn advanced environmental management beginning with cultivated garden areas with native plants for less experienced crews and extending to restored areas that support hundreds of species.

MPRB Herbaceous and Small Plant Nursery

MPRB needs a steady supply of herbaceous (non-woody) plants and small trees and shrubs throughout the park system and is currently purchasing plants from outside sources. There is opportunity to fulfill an internal demand, particularly if MPRB can harvest and plant seeds from existing natural areas.

Running a nursery requires specialized knowledge and skills, particularly for greenhouse management, may offer a limited plant palette, and has the potential for a seasonal crop failure. While a nursery at the UHT site could supply plants for MPRB use, this effort would need to be funded as a training and educational program. The nursery may begin by focusing on easier to grow native plants that MPRB could use in natural areas for gardens, harvesting areas, erosion control, shoreline stabilization, and prairie/ woodland restoration. MPRB might particularly need native herbaceous plants, shrubs, and small/midsized trees for transplanting, dividing and propagating, and seed collection. A greenhouse or structures to extend the growing season could offer employment assignments in the winter.

MPRB Gravel Tree Beds

MPRB has previously stored trees in temporary beds for a season to allow bare root planting on a flexible schedule.. Bare root planting is a preferable method as the trees establish better, and the cost and environmental impact of moving plant material around is much lower. Reused stormwater could support this operation. Although there is not currently a need for additional gravel beds by MPRB Forestry, it may be possible to partner with the City Tree Program or another organization to expand planting efforts in North Minneapolis. Storing trees in gravel beds would likely be a temporary use for undeveloped park land at the UHT and could also provide experience for youth and adult workers.



New York City Park Department grows plants to be distributed to City parks every year



Indigenous and Community Growing, Harvesting, and Preservation

Community members desire a stronger relationship with the land; especially with areas to garden and harvest. These areas can support community health and access to food, and foster a deeper knowledge of plants and the natural world.

The current MPRB ordinance allows for harvesting of fruits and nuts in selected areas. MPRB may provide areas for cultivated gardens where it's clear that harvesting is expected. Another option is to support sustainable harvesting in ecological areas through seasonal programming. Similar to the JD Rivers' Childrens' Garden in Theodore Wirth Park, MPRB staff could work with local youth employees to grow and tend vegetable gardens and learn about harvesting and healthy food. Nearby residents may desire community gardens for homegrown produce. MPRB has worked with Indigenous plant experts to identify many plants that have cultural relevance and an interested in cultivated and medicine gardens.

Because foot traffic can damage ecological areas, particularly on slopes, pathways and plantings must work together to provide access. All areas for gardening and harvesting will need significant staff support and maintenance. In addition, advocates of Northside food organizations cautioned that MPRB needs to be aware of how growing food could impact the local food system. The park may be an appropriate place to explore food preservation and programming that supports, rather than completes, with local food growers.

Links to the MPRB Urban Agriculture Activity Plan and MPRB Community Garden Policies in the Appendix.



JD Rivers Children's Garden offers Pick Your Own and market produce while youth build growing and food preparation skills



2021 MPRB Green Team build mobile planters from recycled and non-toxic materials and planted them with native plants with cultural relevance.

Gardening and harvesting areas need consistent management and maintenance

Green Infrastructure Certifications

While a national green infrastructure certification program hasn't been widely adopted, such a certification would be a tangible benefit to some of the potential MPRB jobs. Two programs, the Green Infrastructure Worker Training, and the National Green Infrastructure Certification Program (NGICP) could offer a standard for training. The City of Minneapolis, MPRB, and MWMO have provided this training to employees and could incorporate this training into a green infrastructure workforce development.

[Visit National Green Infrastructure Certification Program to learn more.](#)

Outfitting Shop (bicycle/canoe/kayak/boat/winter gear)

A long-standing goal of the park has been to connect North Minneapolis residents to the Mississippi River. While there is tremendous interest in canoeing, kayaking, and boating, there is also concern that these sports, along with bicycling, are generally enjoyed by Euro-Americans. Without deliberate programming by, and for, BIPOC residents, they may be less likely to enjoy the trails and water access.

One idea is for the park to house an on-site outfitting shop where staff can provide equipment for check out, instruction on use, and guided tours. In addition to supporting community use, such a shop is an opportunity for employees to learn skills as instructors, tour guides, equipment mechanics, and administrators.

In addition to bicycle and river recreation, an outfitting shop could also provide supportive gear. Providing equipment is important to invite participation by people who cannot afford to own/rent and allows people to experiment with a new sport.

A full-time shop is a significant investment, and MPRB would likely begin with pop-up workshops and recreation events.

“I love to bike but I don’t know how to do maintenance and change flat tires. I’d love to have a good place to learn that”

—NORTHSIDE COMMUNITY MEMBER



A recent study on Black participation in sports shows that many people take up paddling after just one positive introduction

MPRB Existing Jobs and Career Pathways

MPRB has several existing employment and training programs that can be utilized to achieve some of the construction and employment goals outlined in this document. While it is likely that MPRB will also want to form partnerships with existing organizations, a combination of public sector and private organization tools will cover the widest range of possibilities. Unlike construction companies that often travel to the Twin Cities for work, MPRB employees tend to be from a smaller local radius.

Teen Teamworks employs youth and young adults ages 14 – 24 and helps them acquire relevant job skills. MPRB staff supervise youth as they gain hands on work and training and educational services in various career pathways. Specialized Teen Teamworks crews might be able to perform some of the construction and building work. Teen Teamworks might also be involved in some of the long-term site programming work once the park is open.

Mississippi River Green Team is a two-year employment and mentorship opportunity for youth to gain conservation skills and gain exposure to environmental careers. MPRB and MWMO collaborate on supporting the Green Team with youth recruited from North and Northeast Minneapolis as they build skills through hands on experience in the park system. MRPB and MWMO staff help Green Team ‘graduates’ secure green internships so that by the time they graduate high school they have had four years of green job experiences and are inspired to pursue post-secondary education for an environmental career. The Green Team is part of the MPRB’s Environmental Management work groups and may be able to help with planting installations, and environmentally focused maintenance.

Youthline is a year-round program that hires adults in full time positions to provide programming, mentorships, development, health and wellness, and outdoor adventure and recreation to middle and high school aged youth. Youthline staff would likely lead some of the onsite programming, especially if related to river access and bicycling.

Offering credit recovery through park programming and employment is also a way to raise the value of experiences for community members. MPRB offers online elective credits as a part of paid youth work; individual programs can explore additional ways for summer work to fulfill school credit requirements.

Operations and Maintenance Cost Implications

The O&M methodology included in the UHT plan utilized the work that PROS Consulting completed for the South Service Area Master Plan has been updated based on data supplied by the MPRB Asset Management Department. That effort focused on identifying unit costs, understanding how the current system is maintained, and realizing what is needed to maintain additional amenities and areas. The annual unit costs have been updated to reflect 2021 estimates.

UHT Plan

ASSET TYPE	ASSET NAME	LIFE CYCLE	UNITS	O&M COST ANNUAL UNIT COST	QUANTITY	ANNUAL O&M COST
Buildings	Mobile Building	20	sf	\$45	1	\$45
	Outdoor Storage	20	sf	\$6	2	\$12
	Picnic Shelter	15	capacity	\$34	15	\$510
	Restroom Building	20	each	\$45,000	1	\$45,000
Play	Nature Play	10	each	\$8,500	1	\$8,500
	Adult Fitness	10	each	\$2,800	1	\$2,800
Features	Community Oven	25	each	\$3,400	1	\$3,400
Circulation & Gatherings	Pedestrian Path	40	sf	\$.06	25,000	\$1,500
	Shared Use Path	25	sf	\$.22	60,000	\$13,200
	Non-Paved Path	25	sf	\$.22	0	0
	Service Area Paving	25	sf	\$.22	12,000	\$2,640
	Visitor Parking Lot	25	stall	\$45	24	\$1,080
	Ped/Bike Bridge	75	each	\$600	1	\$600
	Water Access Dock	20	each	\$3,400	1	\$3,400
	Stairs	40	step	\$250	12	\$3,000
	Multi-Purpose Lawn	40	ac	\$22,000	.71	\$15,620
	Multi-Purpose Plaza	40	sf	\$1	10,500	\$12,600
Furnishings	Benches	25	each	\$28	55	\$1,540
	Drinking Fountain	25	each	\$1,700	2	\$3,400
	Outlets	30	ls	\$2,200	10	\$22,000
	Bike Rack	25	loop	\$22	55	\$1,210
	Lighting	30	each	\$250	20	\$5,000
	Wayfinding/Signage	30	ls	\$2,200	1	\$2,200
	Receptacles	25	each	\$1,200	24	\$28,800
	Portable Restroom	15	each	\$1,200	2	\$2,400
	Water Craft Storage	40	each	\$1,200	1	\$1,200
	Railings	40	lf	\$4	1,200	\$4,800
Landscape	Lawn - Unirrigated	75	ac	\$5,000	.82	\$4,095
	Trees	75	each	\$28	250	\$7,000
	Prairie	75	ac	\$4,000	1	\$4,000
	Tended Landscaping	25	ac	\$22,000	.35	\$7,700
	Tended Garden	40	ac	\$135,000	0	0
	Shoreline	40	lf	\$3	4000	\$10,000
	Naturalized Landscape	75	ac	\$1,700	1.25	\$2,125
	Urban Agriculture Area	20	ac	\$17,000	.25	\$4,250
	Stormwater Green Infrastructure	20	ac	\$45,000	.5	\$22,500



Implementation

The process of implementation can operationalize many of the goals established during planning. MPRB should seek to maximize the environmental, social, and economic benefits by thoughtful investment into the local community as much as possible. In order to create a framework of community benefits to implementation processes and ongoing park operations, MPRB organized ideas around the existing Green Zone and Promise Zone goals.

While many of the ideas in this section are preliminary and will evolve, they provide both MPRB and community members a way to organize efforts for more equitable outcomes and local benefits.

See Appendix for additional ways park can align with Northside Green Zone and Promise Zone Goals

Opportunities for Investment

Who builds the park is a critical question. MPRB should not rely on civil rights contracting goals in the hopes that dollars will be invested in North Minneapolis. The adjacent chart lists a spectrum of strategies to encourage local and BIPOC participation in the park implementation process. In some cases, these procurement methods support capacity building, hands on experience, and other career pathways with the long term goal of diversifying the construction industry. Establishing pathways on this project for directing construction dollars more locally can set a precedent for many future projects.



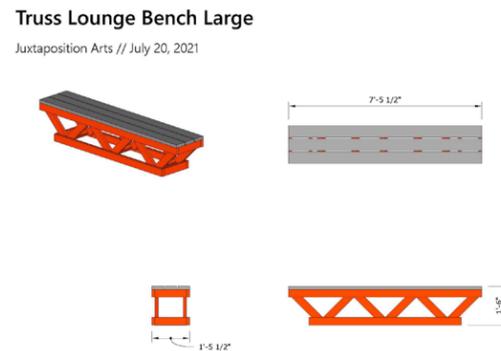
Prototyping Products and Methods

Testing out ideas, making connections, and setting up pathways for new ways of doing work takes time and experimentation. In 2021 MPRB initiated two prototyping projects to investigate youth design and building work as a part of the larger project.

Site Furniture Design and Fabrication

Juxtaposition Arts Enviro Design Lab designed and built prototypes of site furniture for use at the UHT site.

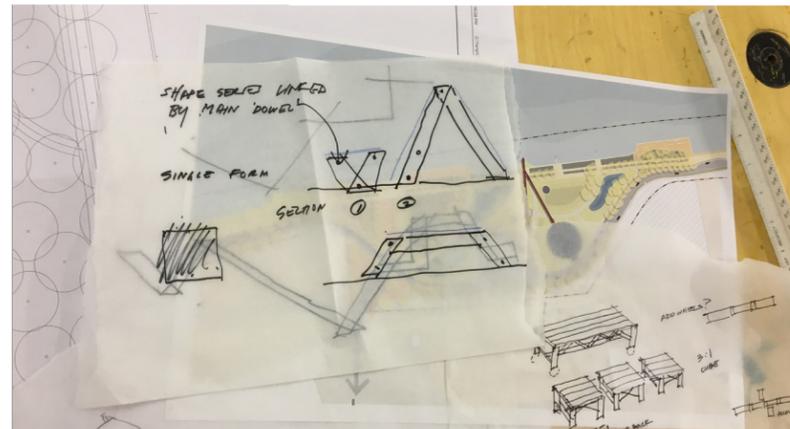
Prototype furnishing will be tested by JXTA and MPRB in various situations in 2021 and 2022 and the teams may find that the design needs to change. The furnishings may be used at events and in existing park spaces to further raise awareness of the UHT project.



Truss Lounge Bench Large
Juxtaposition Arts // July 20, 2021



Through the process of building prototypes, JXTA made changes to the design to reduce labor intensive or challenging aspects, minimize waste, and use available tools effectively



Truss design reflects the industrial structures at the UHT. Team is exploring ways to brand and personalize the furnishings.



Accessible picnic table with recycled plastic and wood top (in progress) under construction

Indigenous Architecture Applications for Site Structures

Summer 2021 work was to test a process as well as to try to create a usable product that could be built locally. The work continues as staff assesses the staff, consultant and budget needs of such programs, opportunities to blend engagement, design, and construction, and options for full build out in later years.

A specialized youth crew studied Dakota and Indigenous architecture and culture, built a prototype shade structure, and provided input into the UHT project.

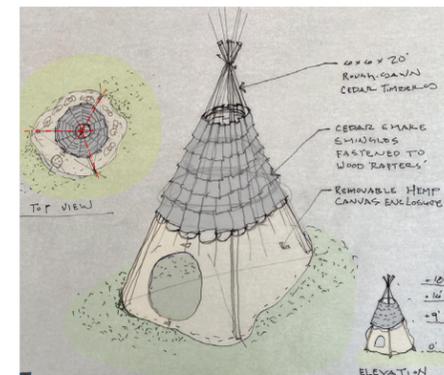
Shade structure will be tested for use in 2021 and 2022 and the teams may find that the design needs to change. The furnishings may be used at events and in existing park spaces to further raise awareness of the UHT project.



Study of tipi and Dakota bark houses and materials led to a variety of ideas to adapt Dakota architecture into a visible site feature and provide language and learning around each structure

“How do we make this park educational and interesting, but not a museum?”

—GREEN TEAM CREW MEMBER



Program included learning about Dakota culture and places in the area, learning about the UHT and other riverfront parks, learning about construction trades, collecting and sharing ideas for a meaningful park.

Park Programming

Potential park users shared programming ideas and identified community partners for park activation. Like the physical park, programming will be refined through use, experimentation, and feedback. The early park years are an opportunity to test many types of programming, including options that may evolve to have a permanent site presence. Any partner will need a critical mass of interest and there may be synergy in multiple partners. The table adjacent shows how important early preparation is to ensure that partners and programmers are rooted in the local community.

TIMING	ACTION STEPS	INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED
Before Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Partnerships Create Calendar Provide Training for Positions 	
Early Park Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pop Up Events (very short term event featuring local food vendors, bicycle rides and maintenance workshops etc) Pilot Programs (try for a season or two – river tours, food growing and cooking areas) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temp Storage Space Staff Touchdown Space Visitor Support (restrooms, shelter) Paved Staging Area Accessible Water Access Outlets and Basic Infrastructure
Future Park Phases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued Pop-Ups (temporary activation model can continue indefinitely) Continued Pilot Programs Onsite Partner Permanent Onsite Staffing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent Outdoor Covered Space Permanent Indoor Space Permanent Storage Space Established Infrastructure



Events are a way to experiment with food in the system; eventually a park may be ready for a permanent vendor

Partnerships

Both within MPRB and through partnerships, the park needs leadership, staffing, and organizations that reflect the diversity of North Minneapolis. Because both government, environmental science fields, and many types of active recreation are Euro-American dominated, making connections and building capacity must be done intentionally and before the park opens.

Transportation

Although the City of Minneapolis and Metro Transit are actively collaborating to improve access to the UHT site, transportation due to distance and unfamiliarity may still be a barrier. MPRB should support transportation, possibly with a dedicated shuttle for river programming.

“Our goal isn’t creating Black kayakers and bicyclists and river enthusiasts. We should try to make sure that the marginalized families see outdoor activities, nature and adventure as a strategy to build their kids and families.”

—BLACK OUTDOOR AND ACTIVE LIVING ADVOCATE

Budget: Current

SOURCES	AMOUNT	
Above the Falls (ATF) Regional Park Funds 2019	\$25,377.00	
Above the Falls (ATF) Regional Park Funds 2020	\$1,443,646.00	
Above the Falls (ATF) Regional Park Funds 2021	\$1,136,540.54	
Above the Falls (ATF) Regional Park Funds 2023	\$2,648,500.00	
MPRB Local Property Tax General Funds 2021	\$50,000	
MPRB Local Property Tax General Funds 2023	\$85,000	
ATF Regional Park Reallocated Funds	\$131,033.63	
Met Council Reallocated Sale Tax Funds	\$553,480.00	
Additional Project Funds (grants, philanthropy, partnerships, reallocated funds, etc.)	TBD	
DEED Grant (State Bonding)	\$6,000,000	
TOTAL	\$12,073,577.17	
USES	DEED	MPRB
Design, Engineering, Consulting, Testing, Fees, Misc. Soft Costs	\$500,000	\$1,500,000
MPRB Staff Time		\$250,000
Construction	\$5,500,000	\$2,250,000.00
Construction Contingency		\$1,073,577
Owner Contingency		\$1,000,000
TOTAL	\$6,000,000	\$6,073,577

Other Anticipated Funding Sources

If a funding gap in MPRB's \$6,000,000 match to state bonds remains after all philanthropic, partnership, grant, and other efforts have been exhausted, MPRB staff will propose a modification to the MPRB Capital Improvement Plan and bring it forward to the Board of Commissioners. The modification would re-allocate regional funds (regional bonds or Parks and Trails Legacy Funds) within the 2023 funding year to Above the Falls Regional Park for UHT Park implementation.

First Phase of Improvements:

Initial park work will establish circulation and land cover over the entire site. The extent and arrangement of some improvements will vary depending on construction costs and details. The park should support the key functions outlined in the design principles and shown in the park design concept with the 2022 – 2024 project work.

Amending This Plan

In order to remain a living, useful document for park planning, the plan for the park at the UHT must be able to change when necessary. Although the plan is designed to evolve, significant changes such as a new and permanent building, major changes to the remaining structures, modification to the riverwall, or addition of a substantial park amenity should be vetted through a community process and added to the plan through an action of the elected Board of Commissioners. Related tasks include:

- Conduct a public process for changes compliant with MPRB Ordinance and Policy
- Achieve MPRB Commissioner approval for the modified park plan
- Modify park plan in AutoCAD and replace basemap in network park folder
- Update VueWorks and other record keeping systems
- Modify this document to reflect the new design and note date and reason for amendment
- Update Operations and Maintenance numbers and budget forms
- Add the note "Amended, Month/Year" to the cover of the document



Appendix

Expanded Timeline

Upper Harbor Terminal Park Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
Primary Project Discussion

Upper Harbor Terminal Park Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
Individual Statements to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
Commissioners on the Proposed Park at the Upper Harbor Terminal

Upper Harbor Terminal Park Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
Recommendations to the Collaborative Planning Committee (CPC) and the City of
Minneapolis on Development and Impacts to the Park

Related Document Links

Northside Green Zone and Promise Zone

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Expanded Timeline

2011-2013 Area Planning

2011 – 2012 RiverFirst Initiative process included. The RiverFirst effort included extensive engagement including open houses, public meetings, surveys, outreach at events, work with existing community groups, and focus groups targeted toward under-represented community members.

2012 – 2013 Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan and Above the Falls Master Plan Update were collaborative planning processes conducted by MPRB and the City respectively. These actionable plans built on the RiverFirst work, adopted much of its findings into policy, and defined guidelines, strategies, and steps for implementation. The ATF plans continued the engagement work begun during the RiverFirst phase.

2015-2017 UHT Pre-Planning Engagement

In 2015 when the Army Corps closing of the lock prompted new energy around redeveloping the UHT property, the boundary for the regional park at the City owned UHT property was undetermined. It was critical to understand the nature of the redevelopment and allow for both park and development to work holistically. In order to gain insight into an uncertain real estate market, the City and MPRB agreed to seek a master developer to join the planning process. Staff initiated an upcoming planning process by raising awareness among community members, asking for general input on the project, and seeking specific input to inform a Request for Qualifications. After assessing one submission from United Properties, THOR Companies, and First Avenue Productions, the entire team signed a three-way exclusive rights agreement and the next stage of planning began.

Engagement Events:

- 2015-05-14 Northside Neighborhood Council meeting
- 2015-09-29 NorthFirst
- 2015-11-12 Northside Neighborhood Council meeting
- 2016-02-23 Above the Falls Community Advisory Committee
- 2016-03-12 Northside Housing Fair
- 2016-03-23 Victory Neighborhood Meeting
- 2016-04-02 Community Connection Conference
- 2016-05-05 HAMAA & Lao Assistance Center
- 2016-05-24 Urban League Open House
- 2016-06-15 Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities
- 2016-06-16 Folwell Ice Cream Social
- 2016-06-18 Southeast Asian Soccer Connections
- 2016-06-18 Juneteenth
- 2016-06-25 Folwell Park Open House
- 2016-06-29 Juxtaposition Arts Youth Ride and Kayak

- 2016-07-09 Somali Independence Day
- 2016-07-11 North Regional Library Community Meeting
- 2016-07-29 Riverfest
- 2016-08-27 Urban League Family Day
- 2016-08-30 Community Organizations Roundtable
- 2016-09-10 Open Streets West Broadway
- 2016-09-29 UHT Redevelopment Community Meeting
- 2017-2019 Site Concept Planning
- 2016-12-08 Nexus Board and Commissions Leadership Training Institute
- 2016-11-03 Folwell Community Meeting – input on potential selection of development team
- 2016-10-27 Focus group #1 on Equitable Development Scorecard
- 2016-12-02 Focus group #2 on Equitable Development Scorecard
- 2017-01-06 Focus group #1 on engagement approaches
- 2017-01-13 Focus group #2 on engagement approaches
- 2017-01-31 MPRB Open House
- 2017-11-20 McKinley Community board meeting
- 2017-11-30 Housing meeting
- 2017 Site Visits and Tours Summary (engagement with approx. 100 people during multiple events)
- 2017 Food Focused Meetings Summary (engagement with approx. 22 people during two events)
- 2017 Public Festivals Engagement Summary (engagement with approx. 190 people during give events)
- 2017 Door-to-Door Engagement Summary (engagement with approx. 55 people in person, information and fliers left for all residents)
- 2017 Online Survey about potential destinations
- 2017 Above the Falls Community Advisory Committee Meetings (multiple)
- 2018-07-09 Drop in focus group meetings (multiple)
- 2018-07-28 FLOW
- 2018-08-15 UHT Redevelopment Community Engagement Meeting
- 2018-08-16 UHT Redevelopment Community Engagement Meeting
- 2018-08-17 Doorknocking in McKinley neighborhood
- 2018-08-20 Good Deal Oriental Foods Open Hours Session
- 2018-08-21 Webber Library Open Hours Session
- 2018-08-22 Serendipity Spot Open Hours Session
- 2018-08-22 Hawthorne EcoVillage Event
- 2018-08-28 UHT Redevelopment Community Engagement Meeting
- 2018-08-31 Doorknocking in McKinley neighborhood
- 2018-09-08 UHT Redevelopment Presentation and Council Member Cunningham Discussion
- 2018-09-15 West Broadway Open Streets
- 2018-09-25 Above the Falls Community Advisory Committee Meeting
- 2018-09-28 Community-Led Workshop
- 2018-10-02 Community-Led Workshop
- 2018-10-13 Coffee with Jeremiah Meeting
- 2018-10-16 Community-Led meeting re: co-creation
- 2018-11-30 Promise Zone Economic Development Working Group
- 2018-10-30 AFCAC meeting
- Online survey about draft concept plan (259 responses)
- Multiple small meetings with interested stakeholders
- 2018-10-30 Promise Zone Economic Development Working Group
- 2018-11-07 Citizens Environmental Advisory Committee (CEAC) meeting
- 2018-11-27 AFCAC meeting re: proposed park boundary
- 2018-11-30 Focus group meeting

In the spring of 2017, the expanded team including the developers and their consultants, began to explore the more detailed ideas to inform an overall UHT concept. As the remote nature of the UHT location made engagement difficult, the team focused much work on bringing people to the site through community bike rides, kayak tours, bus tours, and walking tours. In 2018 the team released a draft concept for public review, which was refined into a concept plan that the City Council approved in early 2019. MPRB's goal was to identify a park boundary that would allow for implementation of most of the community requests for park space, but also accommodate adjacent development that would help activate park areas.

2017-2019 UHT Concept Planning Engagement

- 2017-04-25 Above the Falls Community Advisory Committee
- 2017-05-30 Above the Falls Community Advisory Committee
- Cityview Open House and Online Survey Results 2017-06-27
- Above the Falls Community Advisory Committee
- 2017-06-29 Juxtaposition Arts Event
- 2017-06-30 Juxtaposition Arts - June Engagement Summary
- 2017-07-29 FLOW
- 2017-08-24 Business Community Meeting
- 2017-09-09 Open Streets West Broadway
- 2017-09-12 Friends of the Mississippi River "Connections" study event/walk
- 2017-09-21 Friends of the Mississippi River "Connections" study event/walk
- 2017-11-06 City of Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee
- 2017-11-16 City of Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee

- 2018-12-08 UHT Redevelopment Community meeting (hosted by Councilman Cunningham)
- -2018-12-11 UHT Redevelopment Community meeting

Link to 2015 - 2018 Park Comment Compilation:

<http://upperharbormpls.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/UHT-Engagement-Themes-Comments-v2.pdf>

Draft Coordinated Plan Engagement Timeline:

- 7/17/19 – Learning Table: Housing Options and Affordable Housing at Upper Harbor
- 8/21/19 – Learning Table: Housing: A Deeper Dive
- 9/18/19 – Learning Table: Housing: A Deeper Dive
- 10/23/19 – Learning Table: Public infrastructure/public realm and parks
- 11/20/19 – Learning Table: Workforce, Business and the Community Hub
- 12/18/20 – Learning Table: Design Charette around Land Use and Community Benefits
- 1/15/2020- Learning Table: Community Ownership
- 1/21/2020 - Ward 4 State of the Ward
- 2/1/2020 - Community Connections Conference
- 2/4/2020 - Marshall Terrace board meeting
- 2/17/2020 - Folwell Neighborhood Night
- 2/19/2020 - Learning Table: Community Benefits
- 3/5/2020 - Webber-Camden
- 3/10/2020 - Bottineau Neighborhood Organization
- 10/22/20 – Learning Table – Community Benefits Operationalized
- 11/22/20 – McKinley Community online conversation
- 12/8/20 – Insight News/KFAI w/ Al McFarlane
- 12/8/20 – Bottineau board meeting
- 12/9/20 – Victory board meeting
- 12/15/20 – City Online Open House #1
- 12/16/20 – Minneapolis360 on KMOJ
- 12/16/20 – Learning Table: Operationalizing Community Benefits
- 12/17/20 – Webber-Camden board meeting
- 12/20/21 – McKinley Community online conversation
- 12/21/20 – McKinley board meeting
- 12/28/20 – City of Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- 12/29/20 – AFCAC regular meeting
- 1/5/21 – City of Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee

- 1/5/21 – City Online Open House #2
- 1/7/21 – Hawthorne Huddle
- 1/9/21 – UROC/Public Policy Project/City online event
- 1/10/21 – McKinley Community online conversation
- 1/12/21 – Marshall Terrace board meeting
- UHT CPC met from 6/2019 – 7/2021

2019-2021 Park Specific Planning

In 2019 the City and MPRB planning process branched and MPRB began a focused effort to design the park. Some engagement events were shared across agencies and staff often attended meetings by other departments and groups.

- July 2019 – May 2021: 17 Community Advisory Committee Meetings with public participation and comment
- 2019 –2020 Multiple UHT Learning Tables convened by Pillsbury United Communities
- 2019-2020 Public Art interviews summarized in Public Art Master Plan
- 2019 – 2020 Small group and individual tours of UHT site and interviews
- 2019-08-17 TruckExtravaganza
- 2019-08-19 SlowRoll
- 2019-09-14 OpenStreets
- 2019-10-04 WCNO-Board
- 2019-11-08 EastAfricanFocusGroup
- 2019-11-22 LAOFocusgroup
- 2019-12-7 OpenHouse
- 2019-12-12 TransgenderEquity Council
- 2019-12-15 AsuncionChurch
- 2020-01-05 AsuncionChurch
- 2020-01-16/17 Park Design Workshops
- 2020-01-21 Stateofthe4thWard
- 2020-02-01 CommunityConnectionsConference
- 2020-02-04 Open Mic at Tori 44
- 2020-02-19 MACOPWD
- 2020-03-03 Open Mic at Tori 44
- 2020-03-05 Hmong Focus Group
- 2020-06-04 Green Zones Meeting
- 2020-06-15 Comp Plan Indigenous Panel
- 2020-07-27_ Black Focus Group
- 2020 Phone interviews with new and previous focus group participants (post COVID 19 restrictions)

CAC Primary Project Discussion

Staff compiled draft materials for the final CAC discussions based on previous statements and input from members. After two meetings to discuss diverging park directions, members elected to make individual statements rather than vote on a direction. The individual statements are in the following section and many refer back to the options below.

1. Do not proceed with park development at this time

Some CAC members did not recommend proceeding with park design and development due to concerns around primarily serving adjacent development rather than community members, contributing to gentrification and displacement, or needing further discussion with Dakota and Northside community members.

Key points from CAC and community member discussions:

- Developing a park at this time will advance the adjacent development and cause displacement or other negative impacts to vulnerable Northside residents.
- It is premature to develop a park until more anti-displacement measures are in place
- Prior to proceeding with park development, MPRB should conduct discussions with Dakota community leaders and members to offer the land back or leadership to determine the outcome of the project.
- Prior to proceeding with park development, MPRB should restart the park process to allow for Northside community leadership.

2. Proceed with cleaning up the industrial site, restoring the land, and minimal circulation and improvements to make a safe public space but do not proceed with further park amenities

Some CAC members recommended doing very limited improvements and wanted MPRB to obtain the land from the City. These improvements would be at one end of the spectrum of park development to create a basic and linear park.

Key points from CAC and community member discussions:

- Proceed with land transaction so MPRB obtains the land from the City.
- Maximize site clean-up and removal of industrial structures.
- Focus on environmental healing by restoring the land with vegetation, stormwater management, and contaminated soil treatment.
- Provide minimal circulation such as a riverfront trail, and necessary safety measures such as railings along the existing river wall.

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3. Build just enough park to allow the site to safely function as a public place and support deliberate programming and staffing. Beyond basic improvements, focus on site clean-up and environmental restoration.

Some CAC members supported the creation of a park as they felt it was a way for both MPRB and community members to continue to protect public park land and interests, and to influence the long term project development. Although specific park improvements were not the focus, their vision generally included a park that could support more substantial public activity and use.

Key points from CAC and community member discussions:

- Provide necessary infrastructure to support engagement at the park, as well as staffing and programming. Physical improvements should include staff space, storage, basic circulation, flexible accessible (paved) area, flexible green space, restrooms, site furnishings, public shelter, vegetation, and infrastructure for lights, water, parking, etc.
- Physical improvements should be adequate and flexible enough to support commonly requested experiences such as picnicking, outdoor classes, informal events such as family gatherings, markets, performances, and other local events, individual use, and outdoor play.
- Maximize site clean-up and environmental healing: restore the land with vegetation, stormwater management, contaminated soil treatment, renewable materials selection, and strategies to mitigate climate change.
- With dedicated budget continue work with Northside and Dakota community members on more detailed park development ideas

The directions are different, but recommendations can be layered. CAC could identify #3 as the preferred park but still recommend that park process stops because of other factors.

Points along park Development Spectrum



#2: Road, parallel parking, riverfront trails, site clean up



#2B: Add parking, more pathways and seating, portable restrooms, lights, drinking fountain



#3: Add support features – indoor staff and storage space, restrooms, utilities, outdoor storage

#3A: Support basic experiences – add picnic areas, lawn, play, water access

#3A: Support basic experiences – add picnic areas, lawn, play, water access

#3B: Support staffing – add learning areas, gardens, green infrastructure

#3C: Support programming – add plazas

To: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
From: UHT Community Advisory Committee Individuals
Subject: Individual Statements on the Proposed Park at the UHT
Date: Summer, 2021

CAC Member Statements from the final CAC Meeting on May 16.

Note: Some statement reference Options 1, 2, 3 which are shown below. Because each CAC member spoke several times, staff consolidated statements for clarity and sent around for approval. Some CAC members made minor updates to clarify their statements after the last meeting.

CAC Member Statement:

I think we should do something on the land and I lean that way because MPRB doesn't own the land. I have concerns that the City will otherwise find someone else in the private sector to develop the land and by doing something now, it is an opportunity for MPRB to still have a say in what happens in the future. I vote for Option #2 with the intention that MPRB take over ownership and do minimal restoration (Option 2a which includes the parkway, parallel parking, riverfront trails, site clean-up, and vegetation restoration) and address other comments about the music venue and impacts on the park space.

CAC Member Statement:

It would be nice to see the river, it's our only opportunity to clean it up. Not doing something on this park will allow the City to develop it. I would like to see it opened up and made beautiful and I agree with Option #3. I have never been for the music venue or any of the other buildings. I've lived on the Northside a long time and this is an industrial wasteland. Across the river is a power plant. We owe it to Mother Earth to start cleaning it up. I want to see the river. If there is more land available for all people, I think that is great. I'd love to see a giant, open park that is full of life, wildlife, and people. This park feels whittled down. The freeway can barely handle residents, let alone adding in commercial developments. I want a park, want it cleaned up, want the relics cleaned up and gone.

CAC Member Statement:

I want to remind everyone that underneath the UHT is the rubble of the 1967 riots and the African American economy that existed in the City up until that time. Public transportation is not set up to service this site, not the park or amphitheater or anything. I want to caution MRPB from using public

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dollars for what will be a very non-public space. We are locking ourselves into yet another catastrophe and the misuse of public dollars. I am one of the originators of Option #1. Clean up the land, but we must make sure it is for public use. Council Member Cuningham said in an interview that this process was akin to flying a plane while building it. We have had two years of working together on top of years prior of community working on this; we are all still learning. I am concerned to hear is new engagement going on behind the scenes that we haven't heard about. I want to push everyone to look at the work of Scenic Hudson in upstate New York where an industrial space was brought back to nature and wild space. Wildspace, pollinators, bee keeping, regenerative, and cleaning the soil. Not a lawn for private developers, not space for queuing but and educational space with transportation stops.

CAC Member Statement:

My vote is for option 1. I urge the Park Board to pause this process, and identify who this park is for. If you choose to build this park now, then you are admitting that this park is for the developers and those who benefit from that development. Those who benefit are not the Northside community. They are people who will travel to North Minneapolis from outside the City and people who can afford to live in condos along Mississippi River. They are not Northsiders. They are the ones who will be using the park too. I want my tax dollars being used for a Northside park. This is not it! With no planned public transportation and this not being in a residential area, again, this is clearly not it. Our CAC began having discussions about land back and reparations, which are essential conversations to be had by the Park Board with the Native community and other impacted community members before any park or development occurs. Why is it that these discussions haven't occurred yet? We should be asking our Dakotah community how much land they'd like from any park land before we create a park, with this being the inaugural one. How many acres do they want? We have 39 tribes minimum in the Metro area, and there should be a group of elders from the different tribes being consulted by the commissioners rather than the staff for every project. Sovereign nation to sovereign nation, so to speak. Show them the respect they deserve, and ask them about land back and other reparations. Northside community members need to be engaged, as well, which hasn't happened. While site clean-up should happen, it shouldn't happen before all of this consultation and engagement with the community. The Park Board needs to show our land, Mississippi River and Northsiders and Native community members the respect they all deserve. Pause the development of the park, and come up with an engagement plan that goes out TO community (Little Earth, Morton, Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, Shakopee, White Earth, Northside, etc.). Then begin having the conversations about reparations to our communities of color as a whole. Thank you!

CAC Member Statement:

I favor option one because the entire idea comes from a place of privilege. Without aggressively and intentionally addressing environmental justice issues and providing opportunities for poor people of color to be presented with community benefits throughout this project and process we are perpetuating

racist policies that negatively impact the lives of the most marginalized and vulnerable. The people serving on this advisory committee and on the Park Board may or may not grasp what's at stake here.

CAC Member Statement:

This isn't the end of the conversation and we are at unique point in time. I am curious to hear what folks have to say about a layered approach where MPRB would first do Option #1 and stop the process, but ultimately do Option #2. Land back is bigger than this committee, but we don't want to skim over the fact that more engagement needs to be done. This CAC had an easier time agreeing about the problems and concerns about the site and development, but not about what to do about the park. We clearly do not have a consensus. I hope the commissioners know how challenging this process has been because of the ineffective and taxing systems we are trying to work within. It's impossible for a CAC devoted to one park to address some of the bigger issues such as land back, gentrification, who parks are for, lack of trust in the City, lack of trust that MPRB and the City are working together effectively. I have a lack of trust that MPRB will revisit recommendations or plans in the future. There is so little trust, which is merited, but it has lead us to a place where we don't feel like anything we say can stick and be heard and addressed. MPRB has a ways to go in earning community trust. The commissioners make news headlines for their dysfunction while staff work hard behind the scenes. This perception makes it hard for the community to trust MPRB.

CAC Member Statement:

I am stuck with recommending Option #1. I look at THE 19.5 acres SPREAD OVER ABOUT A MILE WITH 4 ACRES AT THE FOOT OF A PRIVATE AMPHITHEATER, AND A ROADWAY IN THERE AS WELL WHICH IS a private roadway for THE commercial stuff TO BE BUILT BUTTED UP TO THE RAILROAD ROR.

I would like to see MPRB say "Thanks, but no thanks, WE DO NOT WANT TO PAY TO DEMOLISH AND THEN REMEDIATE FOUR ACRES THAT WILL SERVE AS OVERFLOW SEATING – A YARD FOR THE AMPHITHEATER . . . WE DO WANT TO TAKE THE 16 ACRE STRIP THAT WILL PROVIDE AN EXTENSION OF THE PARKWAY, SO LONG AS THE OWNERS GAINING ACCESS CHIP IN FOR CONSTRUCTION AND PROVIDE THEIR OWN PARKING.

I don't like how this process opens the door for commercial development, and also don't see the value in cleaning up the land for the private developments. I don't want to lose the riverfront or park space, but it's a shame the way this is being whittled down. North AND NORTHEAST parks will be built UNLIKE THE REST OF THIS INCREDIBLE PARK SYSTEM by selling land to private enterprise WITH SMALLER ADJACENT PARKS AS AN AMENITY, WITH THE CITY PROFITING AND THE PARKS PAYING.

THE similarlITY to the Yard downtown IS QUITE CLEAR, The "yard" which started as a City park AMENITY FOR THE STADIUM, AND WHEN TOLD THE CITY HAD NO PRIVILEGE TO DO SO GOT PASSED BACK AND

FORTH and is now EFFECTIVELY A CONTROLLED AMENITY OF THE STADIUM WITH THE PUBLIC PURSE PAYING UPKEEP AND THE PUBLIC ALLOWED TO WALK THROUGH IT — EXCEPT ON THE 80? DAYS THAT IT IS RESERVED FOR PRIVATE EVENTS.

To the extent that we need to do something, MPRB should ACCEPT what is offered, but should NOT join THE CITY PROCESS AND SO DECLINE THE 4 ACRE YARD. I'm very disappointed that the City is shaping what is being DONE WITH WHAT STARTED WITH A PROPOSAL FOR A 29 ACRE PARK PARCEL. PROPOSING THAT MPRB Clean up ANOTHER "YARD" FOR EFFECTIVELY PRIVATE USE is INSULTING. IF THAT IS THE RESULT The park will END UP AS THE front yard FOR A music venue – AVAILABLE FOR THE PUBLIC WHEN NOT OTHERWISE NEEDED. A VENUE which is close TO, BUT not facing the river or involved with the river IN ANYWAY BUT Just another commercial SPOT, LANDSCAPED COURTESY OF A REDUCED PARK.

Hopefully THE BOARD WILL REVIEW AND RETURN TO THE RiverFirst vision AS BEST AS IT CAN AND IN SPITE OF SHORTSIGHTED CITY PLANNING.

CAC Member Statement:

I lean toward Option #3 as I feel there is a certain level of expectation for a park and that going with #1 would lead to some disappointment for community members. Option #3 ensures that the CAC is providing what I feel the community is anticipating. The Highline in New York is an industrial concept converted over to a densely populated park to walk through. I don't think that turf lawn is a park; prairie grasses and other things that can be brought back to the space is a park. There should be a more robust and intentional effort that makes it feel less like a backyard.

CAC Member Statement:

I am in favor of developing park and support Option #3. I have heard that from park board representatives, and from surveys within my own community. But other CAC members statements also resonate strongly with me. I think the park is getting really ripped of the by the City with MPRB being asked to fund the rehabilitation of this site that will be complicated to use with the surrounding developments. The rehabilitation costs should be shared between the City and developer. We shouldn't spend park board budget without a clear sense of it benefitting the park; the cost to clean up the site doesn't have a lot to do with park use. This park needs to go forward, but think the MPRB needs to think carefully about what it accepts from the city and be creative about that. The Commissioners should think about what they accept and the costs they take on for rehabilitation. The development and not MPRB should pay those costs. At the same time, I think we're looking at this in a very forward thinking way, more than any other project in the City. Parks are being developed and proposed all over the Northside and no one is fighting against North Commons. How do we decide which of these projects will be the litmus test for everything progressive? It's frustrating that this one project has become an epicenter for every political complication; I don't know if that's fair to the Northside. I have concerns about access, but I think it's a mistake to say the park shouldn't be developed. MPRB does amazing

things, this park can be a destination that puts North Minneapolis on the map. I don't see it causing displacement, I think the park will welcome people.

CAC Member Statement:

I support Option #2 or #3 and I feel we need to get going with a park

for folks. There are so many variables, but I still feel that this needs to be a park for all and we still need to develop it. We should make sure there is robust access to the river, not just for kayaks and canoes which many people cannot use. I'd love to have a pontoon option and something that connects people to all the history and the river.

CAC Member Statement:

I want a park that services black and brown people of North Minneapolis. This park is a great opportunity that exposes Northside residents to the Mississippi River, the River of the United States. The river is a beautiful site full of history and culture that people should know be able to enjoy. There should be access to the river over 94West such as transit stops, pedestrian bridges so community members of the Northside can walk, bike and as well as drive to the river. This is a must to stop gentrification of the park. The park should be a place where community members utilize the park by the river. A park with picnic tables, playgrounds, areas of physical activity for youth to run and play, a recreation building for community education and exposure to culture history through art and indigenous plants and flowers, and local community events such as Juneteenth, Northside Art Crawl, Cinco De Mayo, Hmong New Year, etc. that encourage people to visit, stay and return to the park regularly. Most importantly community have EXPOSURE to the water through water sports and activities for all ages.

We need to work WITH Indigenous people to develop this space to represent them and who they are—there is a huge educational opportunity with this park. It was hard for us as a CAC to know and understand what the CPC was doing and what was happening with the development of the venue and housing. I don't want the venue because I am concerned about the impact it will have the river's animal species, birds and sound pollution. All development will have a big impact on the park. But I still want a park that serves the Northside. The detailed recommendations that staff wrote from widespread engagement and CAC points of view addressed a lot of the concerns and are important. Even though CAC members did not come to a consensus about the creation of the park many members do not want the venue at all or a venue next to the park.

I grew up in the parks and lakes of Minneapolis and know personally what a positive impact this park by the river will have on our children, youth and families in our Northside communities.

CAC Member Statement:

I would like to see Option 3; I believe we should have a nice green park space and hope to see it begin. I wish it didn't have to be connected with the amphitheater that the City is building. I also really want to see transportation improvements and public transit to this area as a bare minimum. I came here to listen to what the community on the Northside wants, and in previous meetings have heard community members wanting the park. But we've heard opposition to the park as well and the position of wanting the land back. There are a lot of complications that I didn't perceive at the outset. I appreciate the public comments about giving land back. I'm not sure what the process would be, or if that is possible, but I would love for the land go back to Indigenous people and move forward with the park in Indigenous hands.

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To: UHT Collaborative Planning Committee (CPC)
From: UHT Park Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
Date: January 11, 2020
Subject: Recommendations on Development Concerns that impact the Public Park at the UHT

The following recommendations were developed by the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members in order to address development concerns that may impact whether current Northside residents and ADOS (American Descendants of Slavery), Dakota, and other BIPOC people will connect with the park and river

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1. MPRB should not build a full waterfront regional park amenity until ADOS (American Descendants of Slavery), Dakota, and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) residents are confident that the park will serve them as measured by being open and accessible at all times. The following language has been used to justify the project: Unfortunately, Minneapolis and the region also rank high in the level of disparities between white and black residents on a number of success factors. The Northside neighborhoods across I-94 from the UHT site suffer from many of these disparities, and an important goal of the site redevelopment is to help address at least some of these disparities, including the lack of access to a waterfront regional park amenity. If park users are mostly non-Northside residents, their presence may create a park that feels unwelcoming to Northside community members and they will then not truly have access to a waterfront regional park amenity.
2. Adjacent development is important because it will greatly impact who uses the park and whether current Northside residents and ADOS, Dakota, and other BIPOC users feel connected with the park. The CAC recommends a flexible and incremental (described as Just Green Enough below) approach to the park as displacement of vulnerable residents and negative impacts from gentrification are a significant risk. Achieving community goals requires cooperation and partnerships across agencies and property lines. Some of the ways that this park and development could be approached cooperatively are suggested in this document.
3. The CAC recommends against a privately operated multi-thousand seat venue adjacent to this park as we feel that it will have a significant negative impact on the park and its enjoyment by North Minneapolis residents in particular. In 2019 CAC Members recommended that the City of Minneapolis explore alternative options to the venue and offered a willingness to partner on a public performance

area that is sized and operated in a manner that works on park land. Should the venue be built, attendees may overwhelm or inhibit the enjoyment of the park by Northside residents. While attracting users from the wider region to the park is often framed as an asset, these users could easily make this park feel like a space inhabited by White people. There are many examples of these White public spaces and this perception influences security, assumed rights for white people to police others, and overall experiences for ADOS, Dakota, and other BIPOC park users. Because of the scale of the venue, the impact of the ticket holders may be the dominant force that shapes the park experience during the evenings and weekends. The park should provide a public benefit, targeted to public users, without feeling commercialized or consumer oriented.

4. If the City moves forward against the recommendation of this CAC and builds a privately operated venue, we insist on the following accommodations by the venue and its operator:
 - a. Pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular access to the park should stay open, regardless of events at the venue or elsewhere in the private development. Any traffic management or event management plans should not close Dowling Avenue or other direct access routes to the park including the public parking area.
 - b. Traffic congestion caused by venue events may deter neighborhood park users, negatively impact the neighborhoods, and contribute to air pollution. The venue should be responsible for evaluating these issues and developing management plans that minimize congestion in the area before the Coordinated Plan is approved.
 - c. The primary route for vehicles serving the venue or accessing parking should not be adjacent to the main park space at the end of Dowling Avenue. The primary entrance to the venue should not encourage people to travel through the park.
 - d. All transportation vehicles serving the venue, including buses and shuttles, should not be allowed to idle along the parkway and adjacent to the park space.
 - e. Public parking in the park is dedicated for park users; parking should not primarily serve adjacent development. Park users should be able to access the main park parking area during events at the adjacent venue. Paid parking will deter park use and parking for public park users should be free.
 - i. No special use parking permits should be given to the venue for parking within the park
 - ii. Public park parking times should be strictly enforced on evenings of events in order to deter use by venue ticket holders
 - f. Noise from the venue may impact park enjoyment by the general public. The venue should be responsible for containing sound, possibly beyond the standard requirements once the impacts are fully understood.

- g. Queuing at the venue may impact park use and damage portions of the park; the venue should be responsible for directing people in line to stay on the sidewalk across the parkway.
- h. Security for the venue will have an impact on the adjacent park and who feels comfortable in the park. There should be a way for the public to have input into the hiring and oversight of venue security particularly when large numbers of participants might be in the adjacent park.
- i. The perimeter of the venue is important to the park. The venue should maximize transparency and outward facing amenities, such as concessions, and minimize solid blank walls. The venue should be designed so that the spaces can be integrated with the adjacent park when not in use for a private event.
- j. There is a clear desire for public performance and community events, however MPRB cannot fully develop such a space without knowing how the adjacent venue will operate. The first phase of the park improvements should include a flexible space that can support community performances and events and allow for future changes to this space. Should the adjacent venue change, MPRB and the City should explore a performance/event area on park land that is suitable as a public park amenity.

5. Some critical and specific statements about development impacts to the park include:
 - a. Only if housing is deemed environmentally safe to be constructed on the site, all housing that is provided must be affordable to those making incomes equal to or less than the median income of those in the surrounding North Minneapolis community. Without this commitment the CAC is concerned that the park will serve white middle and upper income users, as other market rate housing may be built in the area.
 - b. The CAC is concerned about industrial uses that are not supportive of park uses, defined as uses that increase pollution, truck traffic, and buildings that are dominated by blank walls. Industrial uses that are compatible with the park would be those that are “green”, defined as those that emit minimal pollution of all kinds, have low truck traffic, and focus on agricultural, clean energy, small scale making, or non-noxious recycling. In every case, industrial buildings, should they exist, should have many windows, doors, little or no parking that faces the park.
 - i. Commercial and industrial businesses included in the development should be owned and operated by Northside residents, employ Northside residents, and not contribute to environmental pollution that inhibits enjoyment of the park. Many businesses have promised Northside jobs, but until we know who is working at this site, and under what conditions, it is premature to know who the adjacent park will serve.

- c. All development should adhere to the Shoreline Overlay Plan, and the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Ordinance Requirements and be built to bird-safe standards. One goal of the park and the entire Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan is to restore the environmental corridor and create high quality habitat. Providing this habitat directly adjacent to taller buildings, more nighttime illumination, and more glass may negatively impact migratory birds and other river life.
- d. Public funds, via the Minneapolis Parks and Rec Board's investment in this future park, should not be directed towards creating a space that is effectively a private amenity for surrounding private development and patrons of the venue. We are concerned that this park, like Downtown Commons, could be a misuse of public funds and public property based on the current development plan. There should not be special use of public space with the expectation of monetary participation, such as purchasing a concert ticket.
- e. Before the Coordinated Plan is voted on, the multiple requested studies listed in this document need to be completed and widely advertised for public and agency comments as part of the environmental review process. Community members and policy makers need to understand and consider the impacts of noise, air pollution, and traffic congestion on the people, the wildlife, the land, and the river before making decisions on the development. Post public comment period, the City should share how they are going to respond to the public concerns and defined impacts before approving a plan.
6. In order to create a park that is truly connected to Northside residents, the CAC recommends that the City and other agencies - with support by MPRB - should make the following transportation improvements:
- a. Improve Dowling Avenue, 33rd Street, Washington Avenue, future parkway connections, and the river itself as important transportation corridors. These corridors should get physical improvements for better connectivity, but also be treated as cultural Northside corridors that clearly link current residents with the river.
- b. Transit to the UHT site will support residents in existing North Minneapolis neighborhoods to access the park and river. Because transit is likely to be supported by demand related to the new development, as a part of the Coordinated Plan the City must show how transit options and better physical connections to the existing Northside neighborhoods are envisioned and will be implemented with each stage of the park and development. The City should also make communications with Metro Transit public and seek to make joint projections on how transit service will be rolled out. (Given the existing transportation barriers and distance the CAC may recommend that MPRB should not rely on other agencies, but also provide transportation for park programming from Northside pick up points. While the park alone is unlikely to generate demand for transit, a development well served by transit will support park and green space users as well as workers and residents.)
- c. New safe and accessible routes to the site from North Minneapolis via walking and biking that do not force people to cross auto traffic, via a highway bridge or tunnel, should be added.
7. All parties should collaborate across property lines for better environmental restoration and management.
- a. No development or venue should be approved until all environmental review processes have been completed and that these processes find that safe conditions for the building of these structures exist.
- b. The City/development partners should collaborate with MPRB, and MWMO (Mississippi Watershed Management Organization) to support a regional and district stormwater management system that protects the river and enhances the environmental corridor. Seek to maximize opportunities for ADOS, Dakota, and BIPOC youth to build careers in related environmental careers.
- c. The City/development partners should work with Indigenous ethnobotanists and other partners to incorporate culturally relevant native plants on the privately managed land parcels. Allow for harvesting and use by Indigenous people and incorporate language and education as appropriate. These plantings and uses would be complementary to planned vegetation restoration and activities at the public park.
8. While it is premature for MPRB to make any permanent decisions about a park building, the CAC sees potential benefit of having indoor park space within development that is community oriented.
- a. If the housing on Parcel 1B is subsidized for residents who are low income, MPRB should pursue a long term sharing of ground floor public spaces within the building. MPRB should provide amenities that are supportive of these residents as well as the general public. Should the housing plan be changed to market rate housing, MPRB should revisit whether sharing a building is advisable as the priority consideration should be the needs of residents living in supportive housing.
- b. If the Hub or other community space is relocated south of the park, MPRB should explore how the park and community space should interface – including sharing indoor park spaces.

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Northside Green Zone Goals

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.”

MPRB staff has used the framework established by the Northern Green Zone Task Force as an organizing tool for park development strategies that support Green Zone goals.

Promise Zone Objectives

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. In the Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan, MPRB identified a Promise Zone objective, and three goals that have the most synergy with a park development project.

- 1. 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.

Promise Zone Goals with key connections to UHT Park Planning

- **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 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.

Green Zone Goals	Park Design and Planning	Park Implementation	Park Programming, Operations, and Management	Impacts of Parks on Surrounding Land
<p>Clean soil, water, redevelop brownfields</p> <p>Improve air quality, livability, pollinator habitat through vegetation, clean energy, energy efficiency</p> <p>Increase 'green' jobs and career opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phytoremediation for healing of soil, public art and Indigenous communication opportunity • District stormwater treatment areas to enhance ecology within the site • Native vegetation and habitat along riverfront - entire slope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek alternative sources of plant materials to support Indigenous and Northside growers • Establish internal growing program at MPRB to reduce waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community science - testing and monitoring of plants, soil, water for contaminant cleaning process • Seed selection and propagation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces pressure on stormwater infrastructure in region • Treats additional runoff • Cross pollination for healthy plant genetic diversity
<p>Improve air quality, livability, pollinator habitat through vegetation, clean energy, energy efficiency</p> <p>Increase 'green' jobs and career opportunities</p> <p>Improve air and environmental quality in business and transport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar energy for electrical use • Water reuse system to provide recycled water for project use • Test MPRB green infrastructure initiatives on undeveloped park space • Include basic programmable space and long term space for a permanent outfitting shop (bike, watercraft, winter gear) • Include accessible water access, storage, staff area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile solar panel installation for first phase. Explore training options for installation • Internal teams plan and build infrastructure elements • Community build options for bicycle and watercraft infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore training options for management and maintenance • Supports possible nursery and plant growing programs • Plant cultivation and building options could support jobs and training • Hold community clinics to support bicycling and basic maintenance and water access • Test bicycling and water access programs for permanent structure, partners, and staff presence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore electric tools and hand labor • Reduces overall potable water use • Supports local seed collection and growing system • Plant cultivation options could reduce use of plastic containers and transport • Experimental space to test new and green materials could provide usable products for MPRB needs • Supports bicycling among greater North Mpls community
<p>Increase access to healthy, affordable food, support local growing, production, distribution</p> <p>Foster community healing from historical trauma and root shock, using community-based approaches to healing and health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and promote local food vendors during engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide flexible place for food growing, harvesting, and education. Link to food justice movement and Indigenous food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPRB youth crew, general public, and partner organization training and education (similar to JD Rivers in Theodore Wirth Park) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of local food system

Green Zone Goals	Park Design and Planning	Park Implementation	Park Programming, Operations, and Management	Impacts of Parks on Surrounding Land
<p>Advance environmental awareness and education in community and schools</p> <p>Organize community to develop ecological consciousness, foster healthy future that takes care of earth, takes care of people, takes care of the future we create together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities for restorative construction and infrastructure practices during design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek partnerships with schools and training organizations for construction and green infrastructure jobs Provide meaningful jobs and development opportunities with implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing maintenance and replacement opportunities Educational opportunities around sustainable materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gardens with food available for harvesting from a variety of areas. Combination of Indigenous food and native plants and non-native vegetable gardens.
<p>Foster community healing from historical trauma and root shock, using community-based approaches to healing and health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thread meaning throughout the project with Public Art Master Plan Amplify Indigenous voices and perspectives throughout park development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use public art process to hire local artists to design and build specific installations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onsite programming and support Onsite places for reflection by river, supportive green jobs Outdoor classes for learning about history, culture, natural world (any topic) Use programming and activation to provide positive community presence Support holistic local food systems as a point of community gathering Provide meaningful jobs and development opportunities with implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for community leaders and healers Onsite jobs provide environmental education and experience

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Related Document Links

Alternative Urban Area Wide Review (AUAR)

<https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/business-services/planning-zoning/environmental-assessments-worksheets/eaw-upper-harbor-terminal/>

MPRB Comprehensive Plan

Much of the UHT work happened along with Parks for All, the MPRB Comprehensive Plan which was published in draft form in early 2021. Parks for All represents our agency policy direction based on values shared with community, agency staff, and elected officials. Many of the topics critical to the UHT process were greater than any one park planning project and needed to be addressed by the agency as a whole. Staff shared information across project boundaries and occasionally combined engagement to better connect community concerns between individual efforts. The Parks for All plan is still in draft form with MPRB consideration pending at the time this document is published.

https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/pfa_indigenous_land_people_and_nations_acknowledgement_presentation.pdf

Virtual Park Summit: Indigenous People and Nations Acknowledgement at MPRB

https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/pfa_indigenous_land_people_and_nations_acknowledgement_presentation.pdf

Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan and RiverFirst

This park is part of the Above the Falls Regional Park, a priority area for the park board to provide access to the river and green space that serves the residents of North Minneapolis. Particularly because Black, Indigenous, and People of Color have been underserved by disinvestment, pollution, structural racism, and barriers such as the freeway and industry, this park is welcome to all, but needs to benefit these residents. Aligned and balanced with this goal is the park boards commitment to protecting the river, rebuilding ecology, and providing habitat along this important international corridor.

Link to RiverFirst:

https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/riverfirst_schematic_design_summaries.pdf

2018 Park Comment Compilation:

<http://upperharbormpls.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/UHT-Engagement-Themes-Comments-v2.pdf>

Theodore Wirth Regional Park Master Plan and North Service Area Master Plan

In the years between 2010 – 2020, MPRB set out to establish strategic guidance for regional and neighborhood parks throughout the system. Many areas within the park system had not been master planned for over half a century, and MPRB recognized to the need for larger community conversations to ensure that improvements were wanted by community members and were well thought out and coordinated. In North Minneapolis, MPRB conducted significant engagement to establish the Theodore Wirth Regional Park Master Plan in 2015 and the North Service Area Master Plan in 2019. These two projects guide physical improvements in the Northsides other large regional park and neighborhood parks. The UHT project included a review of engagement and master plans so that this newest park was considered in context.

Link to North Service Area Master Plan:

https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park_care__improvements/park_projects/current_projects/north_service_area_master_plan/

Link to Theodore Wirth Regional Park Master Plan:

https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/wirth_park_masterplan_revised_w_appendices.pdf

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MPRB Systemwide and Activity Plans

Many of the overlapping topics of particular interest during the UHT process, such as urban agriculture, ecology, and recreation and programming, have been explored through other planning processes across the entire park system.

Link to MPRB System-wide and Master Plans:

https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park_care__improvements/park_projects/master_plans/

Link to Community Garden Policy:

https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/parks__destinations/parks__lakes/gardens__bird_sanctuaries/community_gardens/community-garden-policy/

Link to Urban Agriculture Activity Plan:

https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park_care__improvements/park_projects/current_projects/ecological_system_plan

Link to Ecological Systems Plan:

https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park_care__improvements/park_projects/current_projects/ecological_system_plan/