



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

### Project Title: Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan Update

**MPRB Division: Planning**

**Project Manager: Andrew Caddock**

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

#### **Project Description and Background**

- This project will revise the regional park master plan ***Above the Falls: A Master Plan for the Upper River in Minneapolis*** for review and adoption by the Board, the City Council and the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC). When completed, the revised plan will reconcile with the original ***Above the Falls*** plan major elements from three roughly concurrent planning initiatives (see below for details on each initiative):
  - RiverFIRST (MPRB, MR|DI)
  - Above the Falls Policy Review and Implementation Study (CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS)
  - Above the Falls: Health Impact Assessment (CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS)

Since late 2011, staff from MPRB, City CPED and City Department of Health have coordinated these three initiatives to identify areas of efficiency in revising the plan. Shared strategies will include aligned project schedules, jointly-held public meetings, mutual shaping of consultant deliverables and coordinated approvals with respective elected officials.

- The Above the Falls Regional Park incorporates into one regional park the following parks along both banks of the Mississippi River stretching from Plymouth Avenue to the northern city limits: Upper River West Bank Park, Orvin “Ole” Olson Park, Sheridan Memorial Park, Gluek Park, Edgewater Park and Marshall Terrace Park. The regional park is recognized by the Metropolitan Council, making it eligible to compete for specific state funding pools.
- This plan revision is required by the Metropolitan Council’s regional parks policy. As noted in the Metropolitan Council’s ***2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan***,

“MN Statute 473.313 provides for the state mandate on master plans; however, it does not provide guidance on timeliness of revisions/updates. A plan is revised/updated when the regional park implementing agency submits a plan amendment to the Metropolitan Council to change its original proposal for acquisition and/or development, or when it has developed significant additional detail.”

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Much of significance has changed since the **Above the Falls** plan was adopted by the Board, the City Council and the MPOSC in 2000, over a decade ago. Then, the upper river was characterized by industrial uses and barriers to public access. The plan established an ambitious redevelopment and reclamation vision for the east and west banks of the Mississippi above St. Anthony Falls that called for a rich mix of land uses, allowing city residents to live, work and recreate along the river.

In 2010, three driving factors began to converge, leading to the specific need for plan revision:

1. Questioning some of the original plan's conclusions, the City began its **ATF-Policy Review and Implementation Study** process to "explore policy and regulatory strategies for providing existing property owners with clearer expectations about the phasing of long-range land use transitions."
  2. MPRB acquired the Scherer Bros. parcel, on the east bank, just north of Plymouth Ave., with the intent of creating a new park. In addition to providing additional access to the riverfront in underserved communities, a new park on the Scherer site forms a crucial connection between the Central Riverfront Regional Park and the Above the Falls area.
  3. RiverFIRST emerged as the winning entry of the Mississippi Riverfront Development Competition, casting a vision of the upper river as a connecting amenity, a natural and cultural resource, and a constellation of park lands to serve the city in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- **TIMELINE:**
    - 2000 The Board adopted the **Above the Falls** master plan.
    - 2000 The **Above the Falls Citizens Advisory Committee** (AFCAC) is formed to help steer implementation of the Above the Falls plan
    - 2006 The Board adopted the plan **Above the Falls Phase One – West Bank**, which explored schematic park designs and implementation steps for the west bank of the river between Plymouth Avenue and the BNSF Railway bridge.
    - 2006 The City produced the **Industrial Land Use and Employment Policy Plan** in response to questions concerning the practicality and cost of sweeping land use conversion along the upper river as suggested by the **Above the Falls** plan.
    - 2008 The Mississippi Riverfront Corporation is formed as a non-profit partner to advocate for a world-class riverfront. The name is later changed to Mississippi Riverfront Partnership (MRP).
    - 2010 The Minneapolis Riverfront Design Initiative hosted the Minneapolis Riverfront Design Competition. RiverFIRST is selected as the winning entry.
    - 2010 The City began its **ATF-Policy Review and Implementation Study** process.
    - 2011 The Minneapolis Department of Health initiated **the ATF Health Impact Assessment** to "ensure through sound research and effective community engagement strategies that the proposed changes and revisions to the Above the Falls plan and ultimately redevelopment of the Minneapolis upper riverfront will lead to a net-positive health impact on the area."
    - 2011 MR|DI engaged a broad range of stakeholders to develop the **RiverFIRST** vision.

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2012 The Board formally approves ***RiverFIRST: A Park Design Proposal and Implementation Framework for the Minneapolis Upper Riverfront*** as a vision document, and directs Staff to pursue next-steps toward implementation.

**Project Funding Source(s)**

<u>Capital Sources</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Expiration</u>
n/a	-	-

<u>Consulting Budget Sources</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Expiration</u>
General Fund	\$36,000	n/a

**Engagement Recommendation** (provide responses to the following)

• **Level of Engagement: COLLABORATE**

1. The community engagement goal of this project is to work with stakeholders for advice and innovation in revising the regional park plan, and to incorporate recommendations to the maximum extent possible.
2. Since this project updates a master plan for a regional park, an appointed community advisory committee is required by the MPRB’s Community Engagement Policy. An Appointed Community Advisory Committee Charge and Composition will be presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval per the Community Engagement Policy in April 2012.
3. The community engagement process specific to this plan revision will overlap with that of two other initiatives: ATF-PRIS and ATF-HIA. It also will draw from the community engagement conducted by MR|DI in 2011. The intent is to share, not duplicate, public outreach methods to increase efficiency and efficacy. For example, public meetings will be hosted jointly by the three initiatives, thus maximizing stakeholder opportunity to participate in the initiatives while minimizing stakeholder time commitments.

	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Partner</b>
<b>Engagement Goal</b>	<i>To provide stakeholders with factual, balanced, and timely information to help them understand the project.</i>	<i>To obtain stakeholder feedback on project analysis, alternatives, or decisions.</i>	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that perspectives are consistently understood, considered, and reflected in project decisions	<i>To partner with stakeholders in each aspect of decision making in order to develop and implement collaborative project solutions.</i>
<b>MPRB Promise to the Public</b>	<i>The MPRB will keep stakeholders informed.</i>	<i>The MPRB will keep stakeholders informed, listen to and acknowledge feedback, and work to ensure stakeholder feedback is reflected in alternatives developed.</i>	The MPRB will work with stakeholders for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate recommendations to the maximum extent possible.	<i>The MPRB and partner entity will be accountable to their roles as negotiated in the partnership and regularly evaluate overall success of the partnership.</i>
<b>Approved Methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News Release</li> <li>• Staffed Information display Information</li> <li>• Meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys: Exit/Follow-up, In-Person, Intercept, Mailed, Telephone, Online</li> <li>• Comment Card</li> <li>• Public Hearing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Public meeting</li> <li>• Workshop</li> <li>• Study group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract</li> <li>• Partnership</li> <li>• Agreement</li> <li>• Friends Groups</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open house</li> <li>• News conference</li> <li>• Postings</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Email subscription</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus Group</li> <li>• Public Meeting</li> <li>• Interview</li> <li>• Direct conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design Charrette</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant Agreement</li> <li>• Memorandum of Understanding</li> <li>• Memorandum of Agreement</li> </ul>
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• **Anticipated Project Outcomes:**

- The intended outcome of the project is to revise the Above the Falls plan so that it reflects the goals and concerns of the Board, the City Council and the broad spectrum of stakeholders engaged.
- The Above the Falls plan revision is supported by the MPRB Comprehensive Plan:

**Vision Theme:** *Dynamic Parks that shape city character*

**Goal:** *Parks shape an evolving city.*

**Strategy:** *Continue to expand physical access to the Mississippi River in a manner that is aesthetically compatible with the riverfront and sensitive to ecological function, giving priority to the Above the Falls Master Plan.*

**Vision Theme:** *Urban forests, natural areas, and waters that endure and captivate*

**Goal:** *People and the environment benefit from the expansion and protection of natural resources.*

**Strategy:** *Balance public access to natural areas throughout the city, giving priority to acquiring, developing and/or restoring areas in north and northeast Minneapolis.*

**Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities**

All stakeholders are expected to work collaboratively to create and refine design concepts and provide input toward final project recommendations for approval by the Board of Commissioners. Participants are expected to engage in the process in a manner that promotes respectful civil discourse and enhances mutual understanding of all stakeholder viewpoints. Any requests for public or project information should be directed to the project manager.

**Identification of Project Stakeholders**

In addition to various local, state and national government agencies, community stakeholders that may be affected by the project’s outcomes include residents and visitors of Minneapolis – a diverse population comprising many cultures, age groups, recreational user types and even language groups. Fittingly, the process to engage stakeholders in revising the **Above the Falls** plan will require both broad outreach and intensive connections with specific stakeholder groups. The project area includes the following:

Neighborhoods	MPRB Community Service Areas	MPRB Commissioners	City Council
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Webber-Camden, McKinley, Hawthorne, Near North, Columbia Park, Marshall Terrace, Bottineau, Sheridan, St. Anthony West	CSA #1 CSA #3 CSA #4	Dist. 1, Wielinski Dist. 2, Olson	Ward 1, CM Reich Ward 3, CM Hofstede Ward 4, Pres. Johnson Ward 5, CM Samuels
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### Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

- Staff recommend that the AFCAC serve as the appointed CAC for this project. This dedicated group of volunteer community members will be an invaluable resource in several areas. First, as work progresses towards public meetings, AFCAC will advise Staff and the Consultant in shaping questions and in vetting information and options to be presented before they are presented to the public. This will be done in concert with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), through coordination by the project manager. Second, AFCAC will provide critical assistance as staff works to identify and contact specific stakeholder groups through more targeted engagement techniques such as focus groups or interviews.

### Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

- Staff recommends that the long-standing **River TAC** serve as the TAC for this project. The River TAC includes representatives from MPRB's major agency and non-profit partners, and is a wealth of expertise, shared history and mutually supported priorities. This project will be discussed on the regular River TAC agenda and at specially-convened meetings.

### Project Advisory Committee (PAC)

- Staff will convene a PAC of MPRB staff, including representatives from maintenance, environmental operations, forestry, recreation, community outreach and park police. The PAC will meet regularly throughout the project to advise on operational and enterprise issues.

## Outreach and Research Methods

- This project will rely heavily on the following approved outreach and research methods:
  1. Advisory Committees: Community, Technical (agencies) and Project (MPRB Staff)
  2. Public Meetings co-hosted with City of Minneapolis CPED and Department of Health
  3. Focus groups and interviews will be used to engage with stakeholders who, for a variety of reasons, are disinclined or unable to participate in public meetings or committees, or who otherwise merit special outreach. Such stakeholder groups might include business associations, church groups, non-English-speaking community members or seniors.
- Parallel to this project, the City of Minneapolis Health Department is conducting a **Health Impact Assessment** to identify health factors in the plan. The HIA will use methods such as an extensive literature search and many one-on-one interviews that require time resources go beyond what staff can devote to this project. Thus, the HIA will benefit this project in two ways. First, its findings will highlight areas where the revised *Above the Falls* plan can strengthen its attention to human health issues (air & water quality, urban connectivity

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etc.). Second, the HIA's outreach efforts will broaden the stakeholder engagement of both this project and the City's ATF-PRIS.

### **Project Schedule**

- Currently, Staff is working with partner agencies to refine the schedules for the three shared projects (ATF plan update, ATF-PRIS and ATF HIA). The project has these broad schedule goals:
  - 2012 Q2 assemble committees, select Consultant, convene **first public meeting**
  - 2012 Q3 refine plan content, conduct special outreach, convene **second public meeting**
  - 2012 Q4 Finalize plan update and deliver to Park Board and City Council
  - 2013 Q1 deliver final plan update to the Met Council

### **Resources**

- Staff anticipates that some additional resources could be needed, including translators, interpreters. Such needs will be determined as the collaborative work plan for the three shared initiatives is finalized with City staff.

### **Evaluation Summary**

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

**Summary Statement:** *Statement pending plan completion.*