

February 29, 2012

Parks and Recreation Commission  
City of Saint Paul

Dear Commission Members:

The Highland District Council was briefed by Don Ganje, a Saint Paul Parks and Recreation project manager, and was asked to support the Great River Passage Master Plan. While our district council is supportive of the Parks and Recreation Department's intent to create a long-term vision for Saint Paul's river area parklands, the final plan and process has raised several concerns:

- The length and complexity of the Plan along with the timeline for review and approval make it nearly impossible for neighborhood citizens and board member to thoroughly understand and formulate feedback.
- Although the Plan development process appears to be thorough, there is significant reaction at the neighborhood level that the process was not very inclusive or reflective of citizen input.
- It is not clear from the Plan document whether there will be a formal community notification and hearing process followed before individual Great River Passage projects are implemented or whether adoption of the plan constitutes blanket support and approval for all elements of the plan.
- Certain specific projects within the plan, such as the addition of on-street bike lanes, significant changes to vehicular thoroughfares, or major capital investments in flood areas, need more extensive vetting. Some of these changes have been dealt with in the past either through district council action or Small Areas Plans.
- There is significant concern with potential issues created by the Plan's "Chapter 7 – Implementation." The increased annual expense, expansion of the Parks department structure, creation of new authorities, prioritization of fund-seeking for new Great River Passage projects and the potential impact of all these developments on an already-strained City budget, along with a finite tax base, raises questions regarding the fiscal soundness of implementing the Plan at this time.

The Gorge, Hidden Falls, Cosby Farm, Watergate Marina and Shepard Road areas are predominant features of the Highland Park neighborhood. The Mississippi River defines more than 50 percent of the neighborhood boundary and runs for five miles within Highland Park. The Greater River Park plan has the potential for tremendous impact on our neighborhood and the Highland District Council has devoted more time and energy to this issue than any other in recent memory.

Overall, the Great River Passage Master Plan is an important initiative and contains many features that the Highland District Council fully supports. But because of concerns outlined here and the short timeline for review, input and approval, the Highland District Council cannot give its unqualified support to the entire Plan at this time. The Highland District Council has held multiple meetings and adopted several resolutions regarding the Plan which are attached. These resolutions do not reflect final positions of the Highland District Council and our organization will continue to review and provide additional feedback throughout the Great River Passage Master Plan adoption process.



Highland District Council  
1978 Ford Parkway Saint Paul, Minnesota 55116  
651-695-4005 Fax 651-695-4019  
Email: hdc@visi.com

### **Resolution Regarding the Great River Passage Master Plan**

Whereas, having accessible, well maintained parks are an important asset to our community in that they increase property values, provide recreation space for residents, aid in storm water treatment and air quality, and improve the overall quality of life in our neighborhood and the City of Saint Paul; and

Whereas, the City of Saint Paul initiated a project in 2010 to develop a long term Master Plan for the Great River Passage (GRP), the City's 17 miles of Mississippi River parklands, and created a Community Task Force to assist in the visioning process to become more natural, more urban, and more connected; and

Whereas, Highland Park has approximately five miles of riverfront within its district, including The Gorge, Hidden Falls Park, Shepard Road, and Crosby Farm Park; and

Whereas, a significant portion of the GRP parkland along the Mississippi River is within the floodplain and has flooded on a regular basis in recent history leaving river parkland inaccessible for significant periods of time; and

Whereas, the District 15 Highland Park Neighborhood Plan adopted in 2007, includes Parks and Recreation and Environmental goals of "protecting existing natural resources and park amenities" and "preserving and enhancing environmental amenities in the District;" and

Whereas, representatives of the Highland District Council participated on the GRP Community Task Force; and

Whereas, the Highland District Council adopted a resolution on February 4, 2011, which was submitted to the Community Task Force supporting a focus on the natural setting of the GRP within Highland Park; and

Whereas, the City of Saint Paul released the sizable and detailed Great River Passage Master Plan to the public on January 11, 2012; and

Whereas, the Highland District Council hosted a community meeting on February 2, 2012, where Don Ganje, GRP project manager, presented an overview of the GRP Master Plan and fielded questions from residents and board members; and

Whereas, the GRP Master Plan was presented to the Highland District Council and community as a vision and aspiration rather than an action plan; and

Whereas, the public process for consideration and adoption of the GRP Master Plan has not been completed as of the date of this Resolution; and

Whereas, members of the HDC have expressed significant concern over the lack of neighborhood involvement in the specifics detailed in the GRP Master Plan; and

Whereas, the Highland District Council will continue to review the GRP Master Plan and recognizes the need for additional discussion regarding the Master Plan's potential impact on Highland Park as the HDC prepares to provide testimony for formal public hearings;

Be it resolved, that the Highland District Council requests that specific changes or additions to park land or park amenities contained in the Great River Passage proposal be subjected to a formal process of public notification and hearings, before application is made to either plan or fund a specific project (similar to a Small Area Plan whereby there is a process of local district council and community notification and review, followed by formal public hearings and City Council adoption); and

Be it further resolved, that the request for further public input into the plan details does not imply Highland District Council support or opposition of individual projects currently identified in the GRP Master Plan.

Adopted on February 27, 2012  
By the Highland District Council



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1978 Ford Parkway Saint Paul, Minnesota 55116  
651-695-4005 Fax 651-695-4019  
Email: hdc@visi.com

**Resolution Recommending Removal of *Chapter 7- Implementation* from the GRP Master Plan**

Whereas members of the Highland District Council are concerned about recent recreation center cut backs and a potential future squeeze on funds for existing facilities and programming of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation from new development within GRP; and

Whereas the GRP Master Plan is meant to be a 20 – 30 year plan and may therefore evolve over time, the Plan codifies significant new changes to the City of Saint Paul’s Parks and Recreation Department’s structure in *Chapter 7 – Implementation*; and

Whereas, the GRP Master Plan has significant budget implications for the City of Saint Paul immediately and for the future; and

Whereas the GRP Master Plan’s description of funding sources are inadequate to assess budget impacts on existing Park programming and facilities and other departments in the City;

Be it resolved, that the Highland District Council recommends removal of *Chapter 7 – Implementation* of the Great River Passage final plan to be adopted by the Saint Paul City Council; and

Be it further resolved, that a new revised *Chapter 7 – Implementation Plan* be fully vetted in the City at such time as grant money and general fund money can be budgeted to pay for the GRP Master Plan’s implementation.

Adopted on February 27, 2012  
By the Highland District Council



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Email: hdc@visi.com

**Resolution Regarding the Gorge Regional Park within the Great River Passage Master Plan**

Whereas, The Gorge Regional Park portion of the Great River Passage is recognized as a critical natural area with unique geological and historical significance and stretches south to Highway 5, beyond that depicted in the GRP Master Plan maps; and

Whereas, the GRP Master Plan's focus for The Gorge area is on preservation of sensitive areas and recreation outside sensitive ecological areas; and

Whereas, a formal delineation between natural areas and active areas within The Gorge including Hidden Falls Park may serve to protect the critical natural areas of the GRP; and

Whereas, the Highland District Council recognizes the long-standing agreement between Highland Park residents and the City to limit bicycle lanes along Mississippi River Boulevard;

Whereas, the Highland District Council will continue to review the GRP Master Plan and recognizes the need for additional discussion regarding the Master Plan's potential impact on Highland Park as the HDC prepares to provide testimony for formal public hearings;

Be it resolved, that the Highland District Council opposes any potential new on-street bicycle lanes on Mississippi River Boulevard; and

Be it further resolved, that the Highland District Council recommends the City make it a priority to seek funding to obtain portions of the Ford site bluff area, main Ford site, and downstream from the Ford dam for the Great River Passage.

Adopted on February 27, 2012  
By the Highland District Council



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Email: hdc@visi.com

### **Resolution in Support of Shepard Road within the Great River Passage Master Plan**

Whereas, the Great River Passage Master Plan calls for Shepard Road to become an extension of the historic vision of the Grand Round; and

Whereas, members of the Highland District Council acknowledge that Shepard Road needs changes to make it safer for bikers and pedestrians and improve access to the river yet continue to serve as a major vehicular thoroughfare connecting the airport and points south and west with downtown Saint Paul; and

Whereas, the GRP Master Plan section on Shepard Road is consistent with the Shepard Davern Small Area Plan, which was completed in 1999 following a rigorous local community process, but acknowledging that the Highland District Council has requested that the Saint Paul Planning Commission initiate a review and possible update of the Shepard Davern Small Area Plan; and

Whereas, members of the Highland District Council are concerned over the lack of project cost estimates and timeline identified in the GRP Master Plan for Shepard Road; and

Whereas, the Highland District Council recognizes the need for additional discussion regarding the GRP Master Plan's potential impact on Highland Park and will continue to review and work to influence implementation of project details;

Be it resolved that the Highland District Council supports the general intent of the Shepard Road section of the Great River Passage Master Plan.

Adopted on February 27, 2012  
By the Highland District Council

To Whom It May Concern:

Having run out of time to review the 300+ page document, Great River Passage Plan, I would request that the public comment period be extended to allow the proper time to review all of the document. Having browsed through it and read only up to Chapter 3 by the close of the public comment period, I have only these comments to offer, but would appreciate the opportunity to comment on the entire document as there are many impacts to residents of St. Paul, including West Side residents like myself, among many other concerns with the plan.

1)Chapter 3

Restore Streams and Urban Stormwater Quality

Pg.44 references existing partnerships with watershed districts are to be utilized to achieve stormwater/water quality aims; however, much of the south side of the river (on the West Side) is not in a watershed district, and the existing water management organizations do not have hydrology standards.

How is the city going to ensure that "stormwater treatment areas" are selected and designed appropriately? For instance, in Lilydale park, there is mention of using the south west wetlands for stormwater treatment, however, the Wetlands Conservation Act would follow that you avoid using wetlands for treatment entirely, and yet it appears that is the first choice the city is making. This whole south side of the park area is not in a watershed district, yet the plan implies that it is in the Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District by indicating on the map, "Potential Stream Daylighting (Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District)".

2)The proposed continued use of Harriet Island for large-scale festivals is not equally addressed with proposed amenities to Harriet Island or the residential neighborhoods surrounding the park, including increasing parking facilities, road realignments, or other measures such as additional tree buffers or other natural barriers; therefore impacts to the residential neighborhoods surrounding Harriet Island are not adequately addressed in the plan. Whether it involves closing the Wabasha Street Bridge and Lilydale Road, or simply increased traffic on Plato Blvd., large-scale festivals, especially those that occur annually and for more than one day, cause great livability issues for West Side residents whose only means of getting home are those very roads and bridges that are closed due to the limited parking and bottleneck nature of Harriet Island. Additionally, noise, litter, and other impacts from festival-goers are not addressed. The city of St. Paul should have included measures that address these impacts to the residential neighborhoods surrounding Harriet Island if it wants to continue using Harriet Island for large scale festivals.

Sincerely,  
Amy Garcia



Overall, this appears to be a balanced plan that takes into account a diverse number of users while protecting natural resources. I value the continuous theme of "Touch The River," as I have observed how difficult it is to actually get to the river along most of its St. Paul stretches.

I like the addition of numerous nature-based recreation opportunities. I also like that additional opportunities for off-road bicycling are included, as well as opening up far more wonderful places to go and have a picnic. It also appears that the plan accommodates motor vehicle parking for those who need to use personal motor vehicles to get to and from the various park venues. While enhancing the ease of using public transportation, bicycling, or walking to access the various parks is important, including parking for those who choose to drive cars is a welcome change from so many recent planning efforts that attempt to eliminate automobiles.

One concern I have relates to skating, and specifically the skate park area proposed for downtown. I have no objection to including a facility for skateboarding, or to including a rink that can be used for either ice or roller hockey. However, our city has numerous facilities devoted to ice hockey, but no places dedicated solely to roller sports - i.e. speed roller skating and roller derby. Also, it is illegal to skate on the streets of St. Paul. I feel that any rink that is built must have access for these other sports during the non-frozen months of the year. I would also like to see, as a part of a skating facility, a concrete 200 meter banked track for inline racing, along with use of the smaller flat-track rink for short-track roller speed skating. The closest banked track to St. Paul is located about a 3-hour drive away in Couderay, Wisconsin. It is a wonderful facility, but located far from significant population centers, making it difficult for speed skaters to use it. The facility used for the Outdoor National Banked Track National Championships is in Colorado Springs. There is another facility in Florida. Building a banked track facility will attract skaters from Chicago, Madison, Milwaukee, Des Moines, as well as from throughout the Twin Cities and make it possible for more racers of all ages to effectively train for the Outdoor Nationals. In addition, having this facility can put St. Paul in the running to attract the Outdoor National Championships and all the tourist money that comes with it. Colorado Springs is far less accessible than St. Paul. The beauty of roller speed skating is that all ages can participate, from 5 year olds all the way up to senior citizens.

The flat track should not just be made available for speed skating but also for roller derby training. There are currently 5 roller derby leagues for women, one for men, and two for children in the Twin Cities Metro Area, plus many leagues for women and kids located throughout Minnesota. It is difficult for derby teams to find affordable space to rent for practices. An outdoor rink would be put to good use by derby skaters.

Skate parks that are designed only for skateboarding and hockey have limited demographic appeal. I regularly drive by the skate park in Merriam Park, and I have never observed any girls using it, only young boys. While hockey appeals to a larger demographic, there are already enough facilities for that purpose. Building a skating facility that includes a skateboard area, flat rink for short-track speedskating and roller derby, and a 200 meter banked track for inline racing would provide a facility that would be used intergenerationally, which reduces opportunity crimes committed in youth-only settings. Please do not build a youth-only skate park, build a skate park that is inclusive and appealing for all ages and both genders by including a place for speed skating and roller derby.

Benita Warns  
(2011 Silver Medalist, National Speed Skating Championships)

I'm in 100% agreement with Kent's perspective below. This GRP plan is a fraud. Point #2 spot on building on a floodplain?

**From:** Kent Petterson [mailto:[terrace@winternet.com](mailto:terrace@winternet.com)]

**Sent:** Monday, March 05, 2012 2:59 PM

**To:** Kent Petterson

**Cc:** Kathy Carruth; Shawn Bartsh; Greg Campbell; Sarah Cooper; Mark Forsberg; Tia Anderson; Fay Hassie; Gary Thompson; Tim Puffer; Bischoff, Ethan R.; Yvonne Torres; John Lilja; Tim Swanson; Tom Brown; Patrick Bettenburg; Hal Clapp; Frank Jossi; Gary Findell; Martha Engel; Gloria Zaiger; Paul McDonough; John Yust

**Subject:** Great River Passage public comment for P & R Commission

Hi All

I have sent my personal comments to Diana Berchem at the Parks & Recreation Commission which are due by 4:30pm monday. I would also suggest opening direct communication with Commission members where you have that available. I have also sent my comments as an FYI to the Pioneer Press and Star Tribune.

Diana Berchem [diana.berchem@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:diana.berchem@ci.stpaul.mn.us)

Department of Parks and Recreation

400 CHA, 25 West Fourth Street

Saint Paul, MN 55102

Highland representative on the Park & Recreation Commission John Mountain  
[mountain@macalester.edu](mailto:mountain@macalester.edu)

Pioneer Press Watchdog at 651-228-5419 or email  
at [watchdog@pioneerpress.com](mailto:watchdog@pioneerpress.com)

Pioneer Press city reporter [fmelo@pioneerpress.com](mailto:fmelo@pioneerpress.com)

Jim Durkin, Star Tribune St. Paul News Team,  
email [jim.durkin@startribune.com](mailto:jim.durkin@startribune.com) or call him at 651-281-1199

If you are able, please express your own views.  
Best, Kent Petterson

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### 3-3-12 Great River Passage Comments for Parks Commission

Thank you for considering these comments that are offered in the spirit of making the GRP proposal better. At this point, I do not feel it is ready for adoption by the city council without significant improvement. As an advisory committee participant from the beginning I have sought input for understanding from staff, consultants, fellow advisory committee members involved and neighbors. Early on, I was charmed by a proposal I thought was going to be a 50-year vision for the city.

On Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> I found out the GRP document was an action plan with implementation not a vision plan. Implementation in Chapter 7 that had never been discussed with the Advisory Committee was included. I understood final decisions would be reserved for leadership. I did not expect that we would not be informed or allowed to comment on significant portions of the plan before it was offered to the city with our names attached and attributed with so much vis a vis an open informed process. I have been offended by claims of consensus that never existed and attribution of agreement in my case with a poorly written proposal important portions of which we never saw until Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>.

The following numbered comments are in no particular order and are included as I come to them but I will start with the first four numbered comments below that are responses to the Issues comments attached to the Agenda for the Feb. 29 meeting at Wellstone Center.

1 – More Natural - In relation to nature or passive based recreation, the comment is made that tension exists between those who want more detail and those that want less. This tension exists throughout the GRP document in all areas containing specifics or sometimes lack of specifics. If neighborhood approved specifics can be brought forward they should be included. Where no neighborhood approval exists it should not be implied. I suspect this is at the core of comments by Ramsey County Parks and Trails and the Highland District Council. Specifics are included that have not been approved via accepted city processes. Case in point, the soccer fields at Victoria Park had not been agreed upon by the Fort Road Federation neighborhood and therefore will be properly excluded from the GRP document. This is a pitfall that is repeated over and over again in GRP. Trust in the city is ebbing low regarding GRP and Parks. Parks claims to be seeking some sort of middle ground or sweet spot. I do not believe it is the responsibility of Park staff to find the sweet spot for these matters in this document. This potentially will be a source of continued conflict between Parks and neighborhoods should future claims of agreement to specifics be asserted by Parks via GRP.

2 – More Urban – Watergate marina proposed building. I would direct your attention to the discussion on pages 46-50 of GRP. This discussion of SITES has significant implications for GRP, which only adopts one chapter of the SITES program. Why adopt any of the program at this time, or why not adopt the entire program and all chapters? SITES is a project of the American Society of Landscape Architects, a piloted program around the country and is the outdoor landscape design equivalent, if you will, of LEED for buildings. It has been around since 2009 but to date has never been implemented at

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a project site in the State of Minnesota. The first chapter of SITES calls out four mandatory prerequisite criteria for site selection when doing a project. One relates to farmland, a second to wetland preservation a third to rare and endangered and a fourth says you must protect floodplain functions. This is getting into problematical territory in a built city and GRP consisting of 3500 acres much of which is in the floodplain. It shouldn't be ignored that it is healthy for normal flooding to occur where appropriate. The addition of buildings where flooding could occur or where rare and endangered exist such as the clam beds must be carefully considered. I have fewer problems if private entities want to risk their money when building in the flood plain as long as they don't ask taxpayers to bail them out. I do have a problem with a city plan that deliberately spends significant taxpayer money in the flood plain and then will probably have to ask for more flood mitigation structures that further extend those already in place in the built city, while at the same time calling into question a commitment to SITES.

3 – More Connected at Irvine Park via pedestrian (/bike) bridge at Walnut Street to Upper Landing. This is a specific piece of completion of bike paths in the city, which is a high priority for GRP. This particular trail overpass at Walnut was a key piece of connection for east west bike paths turning to the river. Despite claims of plenty of time, getting this kind of specific agreement was difficult without a formal process separate from or in the GRP to find approval. I checked with some neighbors and found some general agreement and have subsequently found that there may be an agreed upon local plan. Lacking that but going on Advisory Committee member comments the GRP version in June included an overpass at Walnut. Don G. says he got push back, so the December version had the Walnut overpass partially removed. The comment now is that the connection is via Eagle Street without specifics of how this works back to Walnut and the existing 35 E bike/ped bridge. Well, one might say damned if we do and damned if we don't. That is the challenge of doing a document in this way with specifics. My suggestion would be that if unapproved specifics are included, a statement in several proposal locations must be included to the effect that these specifics are visionary only and not intended for implementation without later and normal accepted process approval. Note page 22 shows a gap in the bike paths at Walnut that should be completed somehow.

4. New approaches to funding etc. – Page 176 of GRP says 'the majority of funds for operations and maintenance must be provided from the city's general fund.' I realize funds of land acquisition, construction etc. may come from grants but what is the size of this O&M budget taken from the general fund? Wouldn't this complete with and deprive existing parks and programming of funds? I find the entire plan discussion of budgets lacking an honest attempt to inform this process.

5 – Continuing on funding, what is expected for a first year GRP budget? When that high profile new director of the new river division gets hired, are we going to say there is no money? Do we hire and from what budget does that staff money come from. I realize that some of these budget specifics can be worked out, but where I am going with this is that the plan implements before there is money

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available. It should be the reverse, or at the same time. Money comes first then implementation.

6 – Raising money is important. Why is a preferred not for profit partner described with so little detail on page 178. Why is this partner not named? This partner should either be named or described with detail as to how it will be implemented. It is amazing that innocuous claims of power are made for the plan, when the plan on page 178 is clear about it's ambition for a body that 'will have the fortitude to withstand changes in administrations and governmental policies.' These are special provisions being requested for GRP. Staff wants to be protected from changes and have the power to implement its vision. I say this is very dangerous for democratic action in a town I thought believed in fostering the ability of citizens to affect gov't policy.

7 – I do not believe a Great River Passage Action Committee is needed and it should be removed from the plan. It is no coincidence that this body is called an action committee in an action plan. Same rationale as #6.

8 - The new River division, the fund raising arm and the action committee have been compared to Como Park and it's structure. I have yet to find anyone that can give me the comparable to the action committee at Como. The comparison also falls apart when considering the relative size of an isolated city owned campus at Como with the 3500 acres of GRP that consists of lots of interlaced neighborhoods, disparate interests, land uses and land ownership. I think patience and modesty of proposal are in order before implementation occurs.

9 – The GRP proposal is entirely deficient in it's discussion and illustration of the critical area of the National Park. This defined by statute and federal law area of the valley and the bluff is significant for informing plan readers now and in the future. A clear discussion of the known aspects of this critical area and an overlay are not included in the plan and must be added. See A6 of the appendix for a map that attempts to show this area. Is this really all the understanding we should have of the Critical Area? Since, in one location, the blue line of the critical area shown on A6 puts it about at the RR tracks in Victoria Park, it could change the entire discussion at Victoria Park. This map type on A6, in fact all map overlays, should be google based maps posted on the internet for future use that allows users to drill down to detail not available on these small printed maps.

Case in point exists at the northwest intersection of Otto and Shepard Road. The plan speaks extensively about protecting and advancing overlooks as a way of connection with the river. Two plan overlays refer to the existence of the critical area and one (A6) includes this parcel in the critical area. This particular parcel with the best overlook in the entire city is in play to be sold to the highest bidding developer. Here are a few thoughts.

a – The general understanding of the Exxon-Mobil agreement is that no buildings are to be built on the old tank farm site. Parenthetically, Don Ganje has drawn up plans for soccer

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fields that include buildings on the tank farm site, but for now I am going to accept that structures can't be built on the current park configured site. Why would the adjoining to be city owned property at Otto and Shepard where a park site building maybe could be built be taken out of the public realm? I would hate to think it is the almighty dollar driving this short sighted thinking.

b- If the critical area was on the mind of any of the planners the line going through the site would have been recognized as part of the critical area where the bluff must be protected. Instead the corner at Otto is on the auction block.

c- PED may be in the process of examining this oversight on this property. It should not be allowed to return this property to private hands without at least a conservation easement being retained at the bluff. (see #28)

d- If support buildings can't be built on the Victoria Park site, this entire parcel at Otto and Shepard Rd. should be retained by the city as part of Victoria Park, which was the case when it originally was proposed for housing. If a development site is absolutely needed for tax reasons, maybe another piece of the park could be offered instead of the prime park spot at the bluff. (see #28)

e- The bluff area at Otto and Victoria Park should be named Patrick's Bluff in lieu of a mound of construction fill further west on the site.

10 – For informational purposes, an overlay that specifically shows the 100-year flood plain should be included. It should also include a policy discussion that is in line with the emphasis of SITES pages 46-50.

11- A computer version of the plan should be implemented for future guidance for a finalized plan that is based on goggle or equivalent maps that allows exact detail to be determined at levels not available in the small format printed document.

12- The plan should call for a study of rare and endangered species. A complete inventory is needed for all reaches so mistakes are not made relative to projects if SITES is going to be respected.

13- An errata list for corrections is so yesterday. Modern computer based document editing processes should be used in real time to show deletions and additions. (see #9)

14 – For some reason the private land at the edge of the river that connects Victoria Park to the river bottom is not highlighted as private on page 176. Is this an oversight or a problem? Will we be able to link Victoria Park to the river bottom? I find the entire discussion of private property in the valley to be insufficient.

15- Since the river is inextricably tied to the city, it is only appropriate for all of the historical ties to be emphasized to the utmost. Native American sites, caves and historic buildings, Cascade Falls, Dred Scott, Crosby Farm, Pigseye, and Ft. Snelling all should

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be tied together in the story of the river. These aspects should be clearly articulated in GRP such that properly vested existing community interests could be brought to the table now before adoption or in the future. Given the lack of attendance by minorities and Native Americans at the advisory process stage, and I would also include senior citizens, I do not see that these interests received proper attention. There was also a lack of attendance by many district councils. Check the attendance sheets in the appendix. The irony is that the most strongly articulated plan opposition is coming from those that attended and know what is in or not in the plan.

16- I question the wisdom of using construction fill at the bluff of the river in Victoria Park for anything other than pollution mitigation or landscape contouring. (see #28)

17- Why are all parks connected to the river designated as river parks with one exception, that being Victoria Park? Victoria Park should be all River Park as far as I am concerned. If desired, the section to the NW of the railroad tracks can be designated as a community park. (see #28 below)

18- Page 18 has the word clarify? in brackets and I presume it should be removed after clarification.

19- On Page A101 I am KRP noting an error on page 26 of the June preliminary document. In the current and supposedly corrected document Pages 37 and 41 appear to be related to the earlier page 26 etc. maps, perhaps relocated maps. The same inconsistent notations defining character zones are confused and not consistently marked on pages 37 and 41. These pages related to Natural Areas are where an inventory of rare and endangered should be called for. Did I miss it somewhere else in the plan? Perhaps Objective 3 on page 36 could be inferred to call for assessments. Instead of during final planning and design, shouldn't a rare and endangered inventory (assessment) be done before any planning or design is done? This is as it would be required by SITES.

20- The access road from Victoria Park to the river bottom boat launch seems to be improperly located at a very steep grade location. (see my #28 below)

21- Raspberry Island is labeled on one map as a gathering place and on another as an urban promenade and on page 59 as neither.

22- The tan colored redevelopment areas along Shepard Road are rather casually marked. Is it contemplated to redevelop existing apartment buildings in these areas? This type of marking needs much more clarifying of intent and implications for private property.

23- Page 75 shows a black diamond for grade separation at Walnut. I believe this should be retained with a specific comment if it still needs local agreement. (see earlier #3)

24- On Page 79, why is there no completion of Victoria Park trails to the 35E bike trails just to the west?

25- Page 79 remove the overlook dot at Victoria Park represented by Patrick's Mound. Even if a mound is built, it will never be an overlook. If a much better option for a memorial overlook can't be achieved right away, I would convert the thinking to another land feature to be determined for memorial.

26- Page 122-123 etc. I believe the Environmental Education Center and expense of such a facility in the river valley is a mistake and should be removed in favor of supporting private investment at this and other locations on the flood plain. Highland District Council is on record with opposition. This should be respected and removed from GRP.

27- An Alternative Urban Areawide Review – Minnesota (AUAR 4410.3610) is being launched this summer for the Ford Site. This review appears to be necessary for GRP as well and should be initiated at the earliest possible time to inform the GRP proposal before adoption by the city and should include the Ford Review.

28- Page 129 and 131 have drawings and text that are not accurate in part because of the soccer field removal, but also because a) the configuration of a memorial Patrick's Mound has not been agreed upon in a separate advisory process, b) The note 3 access is improperly located, c) Victoria Park should be a River Park, not a Community Park at the bluff edge, d) property just below Victoria Park at the River edge is privately owned and not necessarily available for the uses shown, e) A Victoria Overlook is noted on the proposed development property (Page 131) at Otto at Shepard Rd. I would suggest this be accomplished either by retention of a conservation easement to retain the entire critical area of the bluff or preferably by keeping this area as a part of Victoria Park.

29- I would like to see more emphasis of better image details at the Randolph Ave. corridor from W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street to Island Station and to the Schmidt Brewery site. The bike trail off Jefferson should be shown on the plan views of page 137 and 138 with a suggested route of connection to the Sam Morgan Regional trail through the Randolph Corridor area. I am willing to accept the vision details for Island Station given that they are suggestions, not the actual implementation details. (see discussion in #1)

30) I am leaving the specifics for other reaches to readers in those reaches, but would observe generally that all specifics are again a vision, not part of an action plan.

To conclude, I would add a personal observation about this process. There is a fine line between advocacy and guidance that has been not been fully respected since the beginning of the GRP process. A lot of money has been expended selling and seducing the city through staged events and an advisory committee process with subsequent claim of consensus for a city vision, when we actually got a vision with an action plan attached



and no consensus. In the process, I would observe that some have become too much of an advocate for what is implementation of a Parks structure and less that of respecting ideas generated in the community advisory and future city process.

I would point to the speed of adoption for the plan as designed, not to get GRP right, but  
Page 7

to get it approved before too many people get to know the specifics.

The main promotional brochure claim of 'A vision for the future' does not feel honest to me when the real plan is vision plus action.

Two events stand out for me as illustrating the staged and manipulative nature of the GRP process. The first was the last meeting of the advisory committee on Dec. 15th. It was a cordial meeting, a recap and hand out of hard copies of the plan to those that had requested one. We had all spent 16 months in preparation for what we were to see that day. It is regrettable to me that distribution of the plan was held until the end of the meeting and we were dismissed before we saw the plan. I thought afterward, it was rather strange that there was no interest from staff in what we might have to say. Many of us were very familiar with specifics and would know immediately where we stood on basic issues. I think staff did not want a gathering to start hearing of specifics and sent us off without a chance for group comment.

The second event is the event just held on Feb. 29<sup>th</sup> as a hearing of public comment in front of the Parks Commission. The event turned into a love fest for the plan on the part of city staff and vested interests that were given first opportunity to speak setting the tone for the night and I would assert suppressing public input. One person commented to me that in all their years of observing public forums they had never seen officials stand for a plan at a public comment hearing in that way. Wouldn't a good plan stand and speak for itself? Parks has badly played its hand. Will it continue to do so?

I respectfully request that the Park and Recreation Commission withhold its approval of the GRP proposal until all questions have been answered, corrections made, omissions included and an Alternative Areawide Review is completed.

Thank you, Kent Petterson  
Advisory Committee Member

# Great River Passage Plan

## Additional Issues and Concerns

### March 8, 2012

- **Pre-Historic, Historic, and Cultural Sites and Amenities:** All these sites and amenities seem to be buried in the Plan Document and not properly weighted or graphically illustrated. I think that this is a big mistake given Saint Paul's appetite for culture and history. This material should play a much more important role in this visionary plan. I would suggest a much more prominent approach that includes other collaborative entities such as: the Minnesota Historical Society, the Ramsey County Historical Society, the Saint Paul Historic Preservation Commission, Historic Saint Paul, the Preservation Alliance, the Minnesota Archaeological Society and the Cultural Corridor Institutions (such as: the Minnesota Science Museum, the Children's Museum, the Ordway, the Hill Reference Library, the Shubert Club, etc.) in order to successfully get Legacy Grant Money. I have previously mentioned Dred Scott's site and Fountain Cave. What about the rest of the sites? the Stevens House, Minnehaha Falls, Minnehaha Railroad Station, Camp Coldwater, the Black Duck Indian, Fort Snelling, Pike Island, Fort Snelling Ferry, Saint Peter's Stone Church, the Faribault House, the Sibley House, the Sibley warehouse buildings, the Dupuis House, the Lilydale Brick Yard, the Davern House, the Highland Stone School House, the Cullen Indian Agent House, the Funk Brewery, the Banholzer Brewery, the Stahlmann Brewery, the Bremer Brewery, the Bruggemann Brewery, the Fleckenstein Brewery, the Yoerg Brewery, CSPS Hall, the Stone Saloon, the Head House, Irvine Park, the Ramsey House, the Griggs House, the Hill House, the Minnesota Historical Society, the Minnesota State Capitol, Landmark Center, the Minnesota Science Museum, The Rowing Club House, Swede Hollow, the Hamm Brewery, Mounds Park, Carvers Cave, Kaposia Indian Village, etc.
- **Xcel Energy Park (Below the High Bridge):** Xcel's Park was omitted from the plan. Please include the current understanding of: access to the park, the handicapped kid's play ground, the dog park, and work out area.
- **Kellogg Park Restaurant:** A permanent four season's restaurant in the park is encouraged, in part because this could happen now, including: in-door dining, out-door terrace dining, a band shell for music (jazz, classical, folk, etc.) One of best examples of this kind of space is: Restaurant Kappeli on the Esplanade, in Helsinki, Finland. Google: [http://www.kappeli.fi/index.php?id=terrace\\_english](http://www.kappeli.fi/index.php?id=terrace_english)

## **Great River Passage Plan**

**March 5, 2012**

**John H. Yust, Advisory Committee Member**

### **Issues and Concerns about the current Great River Passage Plan, for Parks Commission**

- The onetime slave, Dred Scott, lived in Highland Park, Saint Paul, Minnesota while serving a physician officer at Fort Snelling (this was before his historic trial in Saint Louis, MO). The Great River Passage Plan needs to acknowledge this fact. Currently, there is little attention given to minority constituents. In the future, with the help of Legacy Fund monies, this historic site should be located and thoughtfully acknowledged.
- There are neighborhoods that are adjacent to the river pathways and trails that do not have adequate accessible sidewalks to connect to the River (e.g., the neighborhood bounded by West Seventh Street, Otto Avenue, Shepard Road, and Randolph Avenue). These concerns should be resolved in the Great River Passage Plan including commitments to rectify these deficiencies.
- Fountain Cave is an important Minnesota historic landmark located in Saint Paul and the Great River Passage Plan should to treat it similarly to the way Hidden Falls Creek is treated by the Great River Passage Plan. It is not sufficient to interpret this site only with the bronze plaque that currently exists. Fountain Cave was negatively impacted when a buried concrete culvert for channeling the water and landfill altered the site. Utilizing Legacy Fund monies, a team needs to be assembled (participants yet to be determined) to research and investigate this site, determine how land filling and construction of Shepard Road altered this site, and properly address the potential for interpreting this site.
- Develop and refine Randolph Avenue and graphically illustrate this in the Great River Passage Plan. This is West 7<sup>th</sup>'s "Gateway to the River" and should be a tree-lined green parkway with pedestrian paths and bikeway from West Seventh Street across Shepard Road, and ending at Island Station and the river.
- Reconstruct the stairway from the High Bridge to the Mississippi River paths and bikeways and comply with ADA requirements by being innovative in this frugal economy (this may mean a 24-hour call box for a free taxi ride per handicapped person paid for by the city and not an expensive elevator or ramp).
- Construct a pedestrian and bicycle bridge from Walnut Street, over the railroad tracks and Shepard Road to connect with the pathways along Shepard Road. This would complete a physical connection from Summit Avenue, to West Seventh Street, to Irvine Park, and terminate with the Head House at the Mississippi River.
- Encourage the vision for creating and refining future riverfront commercial space, such as restaurants, pubs, and coffee shops that face the river, including windows, patios, decks, and views at Upper Landing.
- Plan for the repurposing the sandstone caves, a unique Saint Paul asset. The caves should be used for private economic uses in a National Park setting (beer storage, cheese making, mushroom growing and etc.).

To: Diane Berchem, St. Paul Department of Parks & Recreation  
From: Linda Jungwirth  
Re: Comment on the Great River Passage Plan  
Date: March 4, 2012

As a participant in the plan process, I would like to acknowledge the time and effort that staff and the public contributed to this Plan. As someone who has spent the past eighteen years advocating on behalf of the Trillium Nature Preserve/Trout Brook Regional Trail Corridor, I am also submitting the following comment regarding the Plan's suggestion of a future roadway in the Trout Brook Regional Trail Corridor.

Adding additional roadway in an already high density area such as Lowertown, where multiple transit options (LRT, bus, bike/ped, trails, rail) will exist, is counterproductive. Massive transit investments are being made to reduce dependence on cars and the congestion and pollution they produce. Introducing a road to add vehicular traffic to the mix would not create a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists in the Trout Brook Corridor. Parking availability is already an issue. Since there is no apparent requirement for parking tied to downtown development, any new roads that would bring more vehicles into Lowertown would only exacerbate the problem of limited parking.

This trail/greenway corridor lies to the west of the Vento Sanctuary and, as complimentary natural areas in a very urban setting, any potential redevelopment opportunities would likely be minimal so as not to be detrimental to the sensitive nature of the Sanctuary. Creating additional roadway in a dense urban environment reduces existing and future opportunities for much needed and desired open space.

The Trout Brook Regional Trail is a major "arterial" connection to the Mississippi River, Union Depot, Farmer's Market, and Lowertown and Downtown venues for users from the many suburban municipalities to the north who will utilize this trail corridor. The vision for this "green" regional corridor is to connect the Mississippi River and Vento Sanctuary areas north to the Trillium Nature Preserve, Arlington Pond, McCarron's Lake, Vadnais/Snail Lakes areas, and beyond to the proposed Vento Wildlife Nature Sanctuary area in Arden Hills/Shoreview, and Rice Creek. Like the Vento Regional Trail Corridor, which connects to municipalities northeast of St. Paul, the Trout Brook Regional Trail Corridor will connect the municipalities to the northwest. Local trails from municipalities along both corridors will feed into these two arterials and funnel users from well beyond our city limits to the Mississippi River and Downtown destinations. This corridor should not be compromised by the introduction of a "ring road" or parkway for vehicular traffic. The pollution, noise, etc. from a road, even a parkway, next to the Regional Trail/greenway corridor would compromise its integrity and the enjoyment of trail users.

Including any suggestion in the Great River Passage Plan to build a road to provide a "more direct connection" to the river from Lowertown would be contrary to St. Paul's "liveable/walkable" philosophy.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comment on this component of the Plan.

Diana,

As I'm sure you have heard a lot of discussion about the plan and how the plan was presented to the community. Given the breadth and scope of the plan, I believe that the 60 day comment period was not adequate time for the public to review and address their concerns about the plan. Mr. Ganje was only able to attend the Highland District Council meeting to discuss the plan generally in early February, and the Highland District Council meetings are limited to about two hours - certainly not enough time to hear from the community and address all of the facets of the plan that directly cover St. Paul.

This "plan" has been presented as a "vision" over several decades, but it is clear that several portions of the plan are intended to begin construction in the next few years, including the renovation of Watergate marina. In a difficult financial time, where our property taxes have increased even though our property values have decreased substantially, we need to be prioritizing where taxpayer money is spent. A park "vision" should not be where that money is spent.

The "plan" includes budget specifics about most of the elements of the plan, but the budget costs of reworking Shepard Road are conspicuously absent from the plan. I have talked to many people who oppose the changes to the speed along Shepard Road to reduce the speed to 35. I believe that the issues concerning connecting people living in the area around Rankine and Shepard Road can be addressed by simply installing a traffic light at that exchange, or by building an overpass walkway (which I was told was not even considered). The unintended consequences of the changes to Shepard Road are an increase in traffic along W. 7th - likely resulting in unintended costs to upgrade W. 7th along with Shepard to handle at least 25% more traffic (current usage of W. 7th to/from the airport is about 30,000 vehicles, Shepard Rd is about 17,000).

The plan describes renovations to Watergate marina, which I largely support. However, there has been no consideration in the plan in the design shown of the area's history of flooding. The area has been closed at least 2 of the past 4 years. I think it is preferable to lease that land to someone else, let them redevelop the Watergate marina and take the insurance risks associated with operating a business in the floodplain, rather than the city taking that risk. The more the Watergate Marina is improved, the more it equally becomes both an asset and a liability to the city. For the amount of money this plan cost to develop, I would have expected to see a better designed Marina that mitigates some of the risks associated with its location on the river.

Finally, the plan largely focuses on residential development and entertainment. The river historically has been a center for industrial development. The plan in several areas mentions industry, but suggests in future years reducing the amount of land along the river devoted to industry. This is shameful. The city of St. Paul needs to increase the amount of sustainable, heavy industrial jobs in the area. The Ford Plant has closed with little to no hint of any other automotive manufacturer or other manufacturer taking over the facility and providing jobs. No one will move in to new residential developments in St. Paul if their jobs are elsewhere. The plan relies heavily on an increased residential tax base in the area. The service industry jobs are heavily dependent on customers with decent job. I am tired of the City and the State discouraging businesses from establishing manufacturing plants in Minnesota while spending taxpayer dollars to keep entertainment jobs in the area (Vikings, Twins, etc). If I were a company looking to add a manufacturing plant to the Twin Cities, I would be put off by the negative language in St. Paul's plan towards industry and consider other areas that are friendlier to industrial development.

I lived in Milwaukee that has really revitalized the river with a mix of industrial and residential uses along the Menomonee and Milwaukee rivers. I think this plan focuses too much on residential and entertainment, and not enough on industry.

Please reconsider this "vision" for the area. Our parks are certainly an asset, but we need industrial jobs to support a tax base that can afford to pay to maintain our wonderful parks. Nothing in this plan encourages that.

Sincerely,

Martha Engel  
Highland Park resident

## **Tom Dimond**

March 4, 2012

RE: Great River Plan comments

The Great River Plan is an important comprehensive plan for the river corridor. The plan should assist all of us in advancing natural resource protection, restoration and enjoyment. We are very fortunate to have such a wonderful asset literally outside our front door. The plan will help us pass this treasure on to future generations in better shape than we received it.

Key to implementation is the City Council making this a priority. An important step in that process is seeking a sizable allocation from the State bonding bill.

Below is a listing of some corrections, refinements and suggestions that should be considered as the plan is finalized.

### **Important elements of the plan**

1. Transformation of the River Road (Shepard/Warner) into a reduced speed parkway with amenities as part of the Grand Rounds.
2. Riverfront Park on the shore of the Mississippi where the former grain elevators were located near Mounds Park and the DNR.
3. Signalized intersection at the River Road and Fish Hatchery Road intersection and a new trail/parkway bridge connection to the Riverfront Park and Pig's Eye Lake. The plan includes restoring trails in Mounds Park and a parkway to Pig's Eye Lake.
4. South entrance to Pig's Eye Lake and trail bridge connection to Highwood and the MRT.
5. Transformation of the River Road at Hwy 61 as a gateway with improved public access and amenities.
6. Highwood bluffs and trail included in the regional park.
7. Battle Creek wetland restoration.
8. Pedestrian and bike access to the river at Broadway.
9. Green fingers for public access to the riverfront.

### **Proposed enhancements to the plan**

1. Parking and a small boat launch should be restored at the north end of Red Rock Road.
2. Trees should be planted in the boulevard along Childs and Red Rock Roads as part of greening the river and to help screen buildings and outside storage.
3. Daylight Battle Creek at Lower Afton and Ruth similar to the Hidden Falls proposal at Mississippi River Boulevard.

4. Highwood Pond should be included in the bluff acquisition map. The approved Highwood portion of the Comprehensive Plan calls for acquisition.
5. The plan should clearly identify a rail flyover at Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary as incompatible.
6. The plan for Lower Landing Park shows parking, dog park, skate park, picnic area and sculpted land forms. The area currently has wetlands, a picnic area and trees that are now getting to a nice size. There should be language about the importance of protecting the existing wetlands, trees and picnic area.
7. Floating docks should be provided at Broadway and Eagle to allow small boats to dock and boaters to access shops and cafes at Lowertown and Upper Landing.
8. Move the new parkway back from the bluff edge or provide a bridge to allow restoration of Historic Fountain Cave and daylighting of the creek. Fountain Cave is an important cultural site. Moving Shepard Road (parkway) back from the edge of the bluff would also provide improved access to the river and Island Station for the neighborhood and users of the Sam Morgan Trail.
9. The bluff edge at Victoria Park should be open space park land not soccer fields. The bluff edge park should extend to Otto.
10. Convert the former Ford rail line to a trail.
11. There should be a strong statement that supports acquiring all property on the river side of Mississippi River Boulevard not a statement to “explore” acquisition of “part” of the property.

#### **Corrections and technical changes**

1. The new access points at Fish Creek, Henry Park/South Pig’s Eye and Lower Afton are missing on some of the maps.
2. The riverfront park to be developed at the former grain elevator site is missing on some of the maps.
3. The plan should list all redevelopment plans that acquire existing commercial. There should be consistency. ADM and Ford are existing commercial uses not listed.
4. The maps identifying industrial and river oriented industrial should be corrected. Areas are shown as river oriented, that are not and areas that are river oriented are not included (ADM, Xcel Energy). A corrected map has been submitted separately. It shows the areas as defined by the City.
5. There has been much neighborhood discussion about the current bus stop at Lower Afton and Hwy 61 and the possibility of a commuter rail station in 2030. The plan should not show any parking lot south of Lower Afton. The area is a Native American burial site and includes a burial mound. The neighborhood has advocated for restoration of the site. The plan should use black diamonds to show a proposed Hwy 61 underpass/overpass and a red P at Point Douglas Road north of Lower Afton. The details of a parking lot or parking ramp and a underpass or overpass should be determined later as part of a neighborhood planning process.
6. Lower Afton is a limited bus stop with only weekday morning and evening service. It is possible it could have a commuter rail stop in 2030. Low projected

ridership projections for this location and low ridership on Northstar make it unlikely. Giving Lower Afton the same large green star designation as Union Depot is misleading. Union Depot and the proposed commuter rail stop should have different colored stars or a different symbol. The bus stop at Lower Afton should have a different designation. If the bus stop at Lower Afton is identified the bus stop at Battle Creek and Hwy 61 should also be identified.

7. Retain the SW corner of Shepard and Randolph as open space. This is bluff.
8. The trail bridge location shown on pages 154, 155, and 157 is not what was shown at the public hearing. The Parks Commission and public should be made aware of this kind of change so we all know what is being voted on. A trail connection is very important but the design and location can have significant negative impacts. The National Park Service, Audubon and a majority of people attending a public meeting raised concerns. These concerns included impacts to historic Carver's Cave, wetlands, wildlife, trails, conflict with critical area regulations and impact on views of and from the river. It was unfortunate that the handout given the Parks Commission and the public portrayed these concerns as a few people opposed to the aesthetics of the bridge design. You will note on page 155 of the Great River Plan the structure is located back from the river edge. By comparison the structure would encroach on the river edge and trail. On page 157 the structure is shown west of the wetland. By comparison the structure would overhang the wetland. Page 155 shows open views of the river from the wetlands and Carver's Cave. Moving the structure to the east would obstruct views to and from the river. Recently the failure of a similar bridge in Minneapolis caused the closure of rail and road traffic. Cable bridges of this design have been found to cause the injury and death of birds when located in a flyway near water. The decks of bridges have been littered with dead birds. The design combined with the shift in location raise real concerns about the death and or injury of Bald Eagles, Hawks and other birds in this major flyway. Building a trail bridge for a nature area that threatens to kill and or injury birds and impact natural and cultural resources does not seem in keeping with the stated goals of the Critical Area and Great River Plan. A trail connection is important but we need to do it in a way that minimizes impacts on the environment we are striving to protect.



WSCO  
One Water Street  
St. Paul, MN 55105  
651-293-1708



March 12, 2012

Michael Hahm  
Parks & Recreation Director  
City of St. Paul  
25 W. 4th Street  
400 CHA  
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Mr. Hahm,

This letter is concerning the continued development of the Great River Passage Plan and its impact on St. Paul's West Side.

It is important for all of us to remember that as we continue to revise this long term plan to improve St. Paul's beautiful 17 mile stretch of Mississippi River parks, it impacts not only the City of Saint Paul, but also the *neighborhoods* that share the river. WSCO is excited about the continued development of West Side resources over the plan's long term implementation, but we want to make sure that the West Side is not negatively impacted at the expense of broader regional development.

For these reasons, we cannot endorse a conceptual framework alone. Instead, we feel that we can only fully endorse a complete and final plan that shows our proposed changes reflected. This will ensure that the final plan implemented by the city expresses the community consensus of all West Side residents.

Attached please find a list of the more specific and detail oriented comments and corrections gathered from West Side residents. We will continue to communicate our comments and concerns, and we look forward to working with you to refine the Great River Passage Plan in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Elena Gaarder  
WSCO Executive Director

## **WSCO Great River Passage Plan Comments**

### ***Substantive Comments from Community Members***

#### **General Comments**

Community is concerned that approval of conceptual parts of the plan will count as approval of specific implementation strategies down the road.

There needs to be affirmation that regional destinations and parks are still part of the local neighborhood and will have local impacts.

There needs to be a balance between commercial development (more urban) and the environment (more natural).

#### **GRP Plan relationship to small area land use plans**

Clarification of the relationship of this plan to small area plans is needed. This is a park master plan, yet it is very specific about future land uses and planning for the West Side Flats. A few examples of where confusion might occur are listed below.

Page 5: The plan states that it includes “specific recommendations that will become an integral part of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and provide direction for future land use and development in the river corridor.”

Page 151: There is reference to updating (not extending) the West Side Flats Master Plan in the near future and that the update will ensure green connections to the river, which seems to refer to a green connection in a schematic plan for the area between Robert St, the river, LaFayette, and Plato.

Later on the same page, it states: “Extend the development patterns and intensity of uses of the West Side Flats plan proposals through the Riverview Industrial Park.” Extension of the West Side Plan development patterns and intensity implies it may have already been decided that the industrial areas between Robert and LaFayette should be re-zoned Traditional Neighborhood.

The caption: “Plan View – West Side” for the illustration on this page suggests that a plan is already in place. An approved plan is also implied by use of the same graphic design style as used for the approved Harriet Island/District del Sol and West Side Flats Master Plan. I’m sure it was done for visual consistency and readability, but it sends the wrong message.

The City is planning to engage WSCO in planning for the area between Robert and LaFayette/Plate and the river. To avoid confusion and misunderstanding, it might be helpful to:

Clarify the relationship of the GRP plan to small area plans, especially when updating existing plans or developing new plans.

Revise the caption of the illustration to read “Concept Plan

Request Lucy Thompson to provide written clarification on how all the different plans fit together and which takes precedence.

#### **River-oriented Land Uses**

Page 62: “Maintain the Working River and Balance it with the Environmental and Recreation Needs of the Community” - River-oriented industries: It appears that the plan calls for a slow phase-out of any industry that is not dependent on the river -- regardless of whether it is a good neighbor, provides good paying jobs, and increases the tax base. Less stress should be made on river-oriented over businesses that are environmentally sensitive: good stewards of their site, waste and pollution management, etc. Even river-oriented businesses may not make good neighbors or be mindful of emitting pollutants or even conduct general office recycling.

### **Parking and Parks**

Page 42-43: Proposed “Community Park” west of Wabasha — P. 42 has a paragraph defining community parks (conventional recreation programs and organized group activities) and states that generally such parks will not be located in the river corridor. The illustration on p. 43 identifies an area immediately west of Wabasha as a Community Park. (It should be noted that on p. 145, the Community Park area is identified as a Gathering Place and the area identified as a Gathering Place on the map on p. 43 is a Community Park on p. 145.) On p. 143, the Community Park is described as a future Skate Park and a Destination Play Area. Also on p. 143, there is major emphasis on activating Harriet Island by integrating “youth-oriented regional recreation facilities.”

If successful, all of these programmatic proposals — regional organized youth activities and destination play areas — will increase trips to the park(s). Although the plan does call for increased access via bicycle, transit, and watercraft, it is most likely that most of the new trips will be made with a car.

WSCO raised concerns about parking in 2011 (see A-106). Consultant’s/staff’s response that other parking lots and on-street parking will be sufficient to accommodate parking needs is not adequate. Transit service on the West Side is extremely limited during off-peak hours and weekends. During the weekend, the # 75 bus does not run; and during the week, off-peak service for both the #67 and #75 is reduced to an hourly basis. This level of service is not sufficient to meet the needs of a park that will draw significant usage on the weekends and in the evenings. Also, even with improved trail access to, within, and between the river parks, there is only one multimodal park access route identified on p. 71 that comes near the Community Park and Gathering Place, and it does not appear to have a direct connection to Harriet Island. Most of the surface lots on the flats are privately owned, and owners charge hefty fees for special event parking. This may make participation in recreational activities a hardship for low-income families. Finally, future plans for this area call for high-intensity redevelopment, which means even more potential demand for parking. Relying on existing surface lots and on-street parking may not be feasible in the long run. (I’m not sure, but I believe certain TN zoning no longer has parking requirements.) The GRP plan should, at a minimum, recommend that a short and long-term parking study be completed before parkland and park activities are expanded.

### **Harriet Island**

Page 95: Put “THE” in lower case. The city needs to balance the size and types of events on the Flats in coordination with other city parks.

Page 144: Private management vs. public access: Make it explicit in the plan that there will still be public access to most privately managed sections of the river.

Page 144: “Investigate acquisition of land south of the existing levee..” The community does not want to see the footprint of Harriet Island expanded for recreation purposes. How could you accomplish this goal in the current footprint.

Page 145: Is additional parking actually needed? Conduct a parking study prior to moving forward with an expansion.

## **West Side Project/West Side Levee Riverwalk**

Page 151 Riverwalk: Clear and open public access to rivers' edge along multiple connected public corridors (Vancouver as an example); Heights of buildings consistent with West Side Flats Master Plan; Consistent with flood plain basin standards.

Private management vs. public access: Make it explicit in the plan that there will still be public access to most privately managed sections of the river.

Page 151: The West Side Flats should stay mixed use. We need employment centers in the neighborhood.

Page 150: This illustration and the map on page 151 conflict with the objectives expressed on page 62: working river. Concern was raised that this picture showed a change of river use without discussion elsewhere.

### **Access**

Page 73: The Bicycle and Pedestrian Access section begins on p. 73. Three of the four objectives address bicycle access improvements, but only one addresses pedestrian access and it is heavily reliant on implementation of Complete Streets policies. Improvements to the pedestrian network and realm are especially important for the West Side. In addition to attrition of vertical connections (stairs) between the bluff and the river valley, the flats pose significant barriers to the pedestrian because of missing sidewalks and a harsh and often hostile pedestrian environment. Safety and security are major issues as well. The plan acknowledges this in several places however it would be helpful for the plan to call out the need for pedestrian studies as part of small area planning and for attention to the pedestrian realm as areas are re-developed. It would be even better if a pedestrian plan for the flats were developed so that pedestrian connections between the bluff, flats, and the river are thoughtful and intentional, not left to chance. The pedestrian plan could address such basics as benches for resting and shade trees, and it could even become part of future interpretive plans for this area.

The pedestrian section could address short term and urgent needs, such as safe pedestrian crossings on Plato and Water Street, especially west of Wabasha.

Page 152: Restore/build stairs — The budget includes only \$50,000. We know from experience with the Green Stairs and LaFayette Bridge planning that stairs will cost between \$1 and \$2 million, depending on whether or not there is an elevator. The budget amount should be revised.

Page 74: The plan refers to ped/bike overpasses. It is my general understanding that the transportation planners and engineers are moving away from overpasses. They are not as popular as originally anticipated. An overpass may not be the best solution for improving Shepard Road ped/bike crossings.

We need access to the river across both space and time

Access - Oakdale, Ohio Stairs, airport, Green Stairs

Lack of access at Southport - Need an opening at Barge Channel and an overlook at Southport

Should avoid closing Harriet Island Park to pedestrians on Thursday morning for weekend events (this is more of procedural point than specific to the GRP Plan).

System of trails and connectors for all parts of the neighborhood, especially Concord Street to the River.

Develop an access plan for areas that are not in West Side Flats plan -- Robert/Lafayette & Southport

System of water access similar to system of trail access

Cherokee Blvd as Park road not State Hwy.

Page 144: Add language to clarify continued public access

Page 15: Can green stairs be a trail connection; acknowledge trail connection; Ohio street stairs needs to be added, designate top of bluff as trail for green stair + Ohio Street stairs

Page 75 add access -- Oakdale as a bicycle route to have another link

Page 79 Map: The Park trail stops half way around the airport. It was noted that trail -- all the way around the airport -- was included in previous planning documents: the trail should extend down to Southport.

## **Water Quality**

Pickerel Lake water quality should be a top priority for implementation

Urban Stormwater -- Water/Resources: measure each choice natural/commercial against sustainable/environment

Lake & Bluff restoration should show up in water resources

## **Other comments**

Page 44: "Stabilize Banks of Mississippi" -- sounds less natural

Page 63: Fleeting map and definitions are confusing

The corner of Annapolis and Cherokee have safety issues relating to speeding traffic.  
How  
could this be mitigated?

Page 58: Increasing non-motorized boating: wonderful idea, but this should come with permits tied with training on boating rules, particularly as to right-of-ways. The river is narrow and barges are moving through the channel.

Page 74: In "Encouraging Pedestrian Supportive Development Patterns" it references "small size blocks." Any planning should look at business and residential needs as well as pedestrians." You can break up large blocks with mini-plazas, etc.

Page 152 Dredging float basin: Concerns over amount of dredging done and where to put dredged material -- especially if it's polluted. A plan should be made. Additionally, how will the city finance maintenance dredging?

Page 153: Restored float plane basin will require expensive maintenance dredging; and dredging off channel slips seems less, rather than more natural; and seems unnecessary to increase urbanity or connections.

### ***Plan Corrections from Community Members***

Street names on West Side on wrong places:

Robert Street label is one block west of where it should be;

George Street label is one block north of where it should be

West Side is often incorrectly spelled "West side," e.g. page 151

Mentions of REDA should stay if referenced to the development of the document but should be deleted with regards to the future (e.g. page 95)

Page 63 Map: On river-oriented industries, there was mentioned that the Xcel power plant depends on the river for cooling -- this seems to indicate a different color code is needed

Page 152: In the narrative portion identical weight (font size) is given for "West Side and "Levee Riverwalk." Should that be different since the West Side is a neighborhood and the Levee Riverwalk will be a part of the West Side?

Page 152: In the "West Side" paragraph, the last sentence seemed to be overly vague and/or an incomplete thought.

Page 175 Map: What are the "Acquisition Opportunities" for #8, the West Side Bluff. Is the opportunity at the bottom of the bluff or the top?

Dear Commissioners:

We have struggled over how to offer our thoughts on the proposed Great River Passages plan.

It is a lengthy document that offers many approaches that appear to be positive. Yet it also includes sections or comments that remain unclear or even troublesome. We generally second the comments of the Highland Park District Council, Friends of Saint Paul Parks and Trails, West Side Citizens Organization and others who have raised concerns about the plan and its need for further vetting.

The inclusion of so many "errata" is especially curious and confusing in a document that is intended to be a guide for Saint Paul's riverfront for decades to come. It is unclear how these "errata" are being added or screened by staff. Certainly the entire document and proposal can only be judged when it is entirely cleaned up and with enough time given for citizens to analyze the final product.

We find the sense of haste and obviously partisan testimony by city staff during this process of examining Great River Passages troubling. Their interest in promoting the plan might be purely professional but to see them parade to the microphone at a public hearing was curious at best.

Indeed, we cannot help but see worrisome similarities to how the Lilydale Park development plan was advanced. Like that process, the agenda and proposals were firmly in staff or consultant controls. We attended nearly all Great River Passages meetings and were constantly amazed at how many tables and places were dominated by either staff, consultants or potential contractors if the plan is enacted. Claims of widespread citizen input throughout the process are greatly exaggerated.

Community buy-in will ultimately determine the success or failure of Great River Passages. To rush ahead at this point risks unanticipated controversies or conflicts later. True citizen participation cannot be manufactured or hurried.

Additionally, we would urge the Parks Commission to consider asking for an Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) to be undertaken. This process under 4410.3610 Minnesota Rule both could resolve remaining environmental questions about Great River Passages and might actually in the long run save time and money.

Indeed, the AUAR is often seen as a positive tool for economic

development in that it removes potential doubts from individual projects that might otherwise face individual EIS or EAW reviews. As Highland Park's Ford Plant project is already in the midst of a AUAR and an EAW is also likely to be required under law in Lilydale Park it would make sense to extend an AUAR throughout the entire Great River Passages area.

We hope that these thoughts and suggestions will be received by the Parks Commission in the spirit they are intended - to help Great River Passages and our Saint Paul Parks system be the best they can possibly be.

Sincerely,

Jon Kerr & Grit Youngquist  
Citizen Advisory Task Force members





320 South Griggs Street  
St. Paul, MN 55105  
www.macgrove.org

Phone: 651-695-4000  
Fax: 651-695-4004  
E-mail: mgcc@macgrove.org

February 29, 2012

Diana Berchem  
St. Paul Parks and Recreation  
25 W. 4th Street  
400 City Hall Annex  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55102

Re: Great River Passage Plan

Dear Saint Paul Parks & Recreation Commission:

The Housing & Land Use Committee of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council met in response to the Great River Passage Plan on Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>. After thoughtful consideration of the recommendation from the Housing & Land Use Committee, the Community Council's Executive Committee passed the following motion:

*Whereas the District 14 Community Council recognizes that the river belongs to everyone and having a comprehensive master plan for how to best utilize Saint Paul's 17 miles of riverfront will benefit not only current residents and visitors but many future generations of residents and visitors of Saint Paul; therefore be it resolved that the District 14 Community Council supports the approval of the master plan for the Great River Passage; further, we encourage the City to be creative in pursuing sources of funding outside the usual revenue streams. We also encourage the City to continue to invest in current park and recreational facilities that make our neighborhood a great place to live, work and play.*

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation. Please contact me with any questions at 651-695-4000.

Sincerely,

Afton Martens  
Executive Director

As members of the Great River Passage **Community Task Force**, we are committed to making the **GRP Master Plan** the best it can be. We share the concerns that Highland Park District Council 15, the Friends of the St. Paul-Ramsey County Parks and Trails, and others have with the draft plan before us, including the pace at which the approval process is moving. There are **major areas of concern** that must be properly addressed before we can give support to the GRP plan and include our names in the final document:

- What/Who are the proposed **funding sources**? What are our spending **priorities**? Are we committed to maintaining our **existing** park facilities throughout the city, along with undertaking new initiatives?
- Have we been sensitive to the **cultural and historical significance** of groups like Native-, African-, European-, and Latin-Americans, Civil War veterans, and other communities that have contributed greatly to the Saint Paul river valley's past? Are their perspectives fully included in future Passage plans and activities?
- Who are the **private property owners** in the valley, and what are their rights? How will the City acquire property? What may or should be **preserved, demolished, or built** and what criteria will be used to determine how investments are made?
- Where does the **100-year floodplain** overlay on the plan? What are the implications of the natural flood process? Are we committed to the complete or only partial adoption of **SITES** criteria?
- Have we suitably addressed the potential risks to **rare and endangered species** of plants and animals and their **habitat**?
- How will the plan impact all **17 districts** in Saint Paul? When will all of them have time to thoroughly analyze the plan in terms of both potential benefits and potential risks in an era of shrinking public resources?
- Is the City committed to moving forward on building new and improving existing **connections** from all neighborhoods to the river? Where can we commit to creating **paths, stairs, and water access** with connection opportunities for all our citizens?

Considering these **uncertainties**, we therefore urge this Commission and all public bodies approving this plan to keep public hearings open and **withhold any decision** until a final plan containing answers to these and other major questions is made available, with the opportunity for **full citizen analysis**.

History has shown us that plans to control the **Mississippi River** have often had unintended and destructive consequences. We should not now rush forward with a flood of ideas that may wash away things that have made our city and park system great.

<u>(Richard Arvey)</u>	<u>A.M. Fine</u>	<u>Art Youngquist</u>
<u>JOHN ULVEN</u>	<u>John Ulven</u>	<u>Art Youngquist</u>
<u>John Ulven</u>	<u>John Ulven</u>	

5 March 2012

Dear Saint Paul Parks Commission:

As you deliberate the issue of the Great River Passage plan, please consider these points:

- I understand that a lot of the process is driven by money, as evil as it may be. I am very pleased the State has created a Legacy Fund and I enjoy making use of it very much. But let's be honest about how it might be used in this plan, who stands to benefit and who stands to lose, and which groups' input into the GRP process is influenced by their potential to get funding.
- Private enterprise will be necessary to open the restaurants and bars that we crave. The efforts made by Parks & Rec to attract private investment are unclear.



- As disappointing as it was to lose the Xcel Energy "Turbine Gallery," Xcel has been a good partner. It is generally known that they own one of the rare beaches in Saint Paul, but what is not so clear is who owns the rest of the property in the GRP plan. Dealing with railroads and ADM may be like negotiating with another country, but we ought to know more about them than we do about North Korea. More facts and openness in this area would be appreciated.



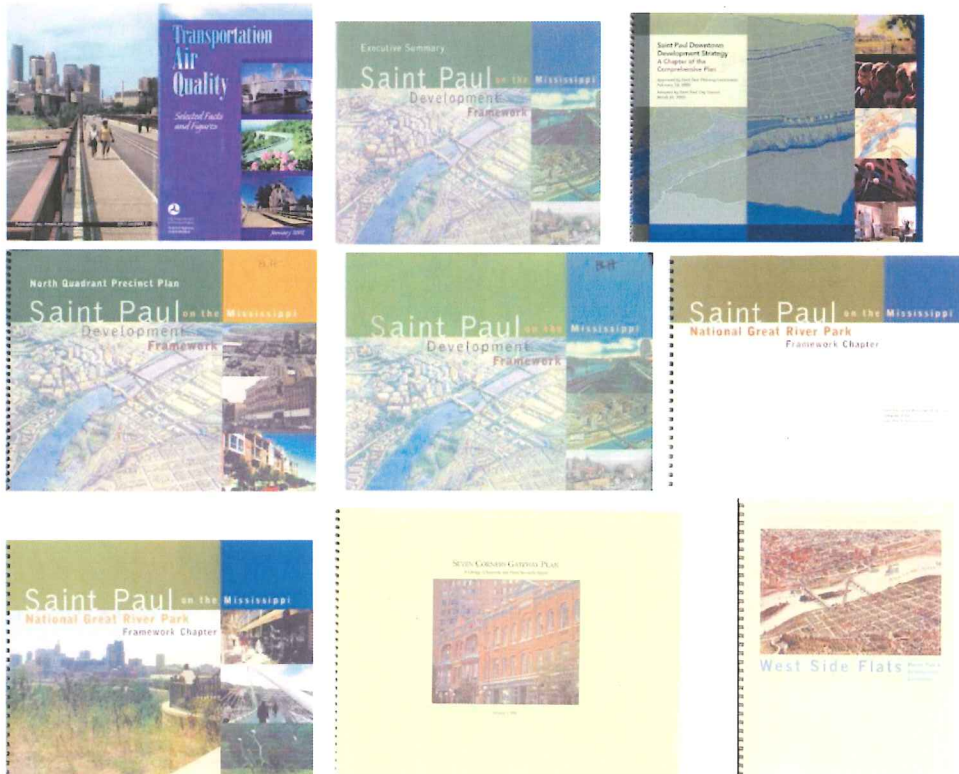
- Let's be clear about where the City stands on sets of criteria and principles like SITES, AUAU, LEED, EAW, EIS, CPTED, etc., and what the City can expect to hear from government entities such as the DNR, MN/DOT, MPCA, MAC, EPA, County Sheriff, Metropolitan Council, etc. Groups like Visit Saint Paul, the Chambers of Commerce, the Rotarians, Elks, Eagles, Moose, VFW, and the large medical community have been fairly quiet. A statement from each of them is in order.



- Parks & Rec seems to have established quite a good working relationship with the Saint Paul Port Authority. It is saddening to see viewsapes ruined and prime river land developed with mediocrity at River Bend, and visitors to Saint Paul have said as much. Considering the apparent lack of interest in Beacon Bluff, it is not unreasonable to suggest Parks & Rec pursue a sports complex of some sort on the East Side, and to move River Bend occupants there as well.



- Many feel any plan released by the City will be difficult to alter in the future, so it needs to be sufficiently flexible and adaptable. The not-so-sneaky inclusion of artificial soccer fields exposed the tactics the City will not hesitate to use to get their way. It showed a blatant disregard for the Public's efforts and created a lot of mistrust. This was not the Public's doing and are not to be blamed. While Parks & Rec would eventually do the right thing and remove this idea from the plan, their damage had been done and need to be more honest and transparent in the future.



- Volunteers such as me have put a lot of energy into planting the Shepard Road/Xcel Energy trees; Friends of Parks & Trails have planted the Upper Landing; kids have helped to build BVNS; buckthorn and garlic mustard have been cleared from Crosby and Mounds ParkS; countless hours have been put in by Friends of Lilydale and other citizen groups. The list goes on. We are naturalists, scientists, artists, lawyers, designers, engineers, social workers, teachers, marketers, economists, business owners, gardeners, ..., you name it. We aren't children, and we aren't

ignorant. Sometimes a plan needs a fresh set of eyes to improve upon things – that just happened at my job today, and we avoided a big mistake. Parks & Rec generally has a good track record and a fine reputation, but mistakes have been made. Please keep this in mind next time a citizen red flags a bad idea.



- It seems we sometimes have difficulty taking care of what we already have. The thought of such a huge amount of resources going toward this massive plan makes many of us wonder if we will not properly maintain our existing facilities. If that has been planned for, we'd like to know.

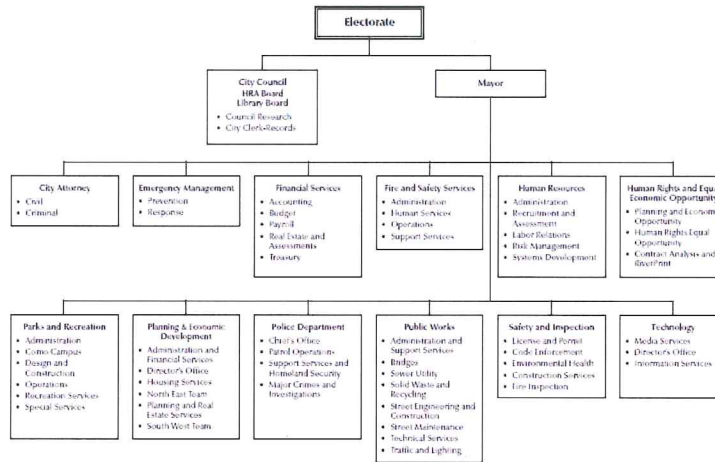


- Let us look at both good and bad examples of local park features and do an honest, self-critique of what is and isn't working. Brushing past mistakes under the rug does no good, nor does ignoring unique assets like the caves.



- The river valley is quite literally common ground, and we hope to find the figurative version with Parks & Rec. It is our duty as Americans to preserve, protect, and enhance our communal property, and many of us take that role very seriously. "The Electorate" is at the top of the City's org chart and is by no means comprised of second-class citizens. They deserve to be treated as any boss would expect, and The Golden Rule applied to them.

**City of Saint Paul, Minnesota**  
 (form of Government: "Strong" Mayor, with Seven Councilmembers Elected by Ward)



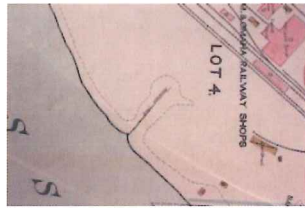
- There are rare and endangered plants and animals in the valley. We must do better to identify and protect them.



- The sesquicentennial of the "Minnesota-Dakota War" has been difficult to address this year. The least we can do is to make sure that those who lived here before us are properly recognized. Their culture is found nowhere else on earth and deserves respect, as do any artifacts of theirs still hidden in the valley.



- Traders, trappers, Civil War soldiers, blacksmiths, brewers, coopers, and other early residents also deserve recognition; at least as much as we give to gun-toting gangsters. The Works Progress/Project Administration is enjoying new interest lately, and the WPA remnants in the valley ought to be identified and preserved to remind us of a unique and successful time in American history. The ignorance of Fountain Cave bordered on offensive. As sad as the loss of life has been in Saint Paul's caves, it pales in comparison to other tragedies and should not be reason enough ignore their full recreational and economic potential.



- There are plenty of “low-hanging fruit” opportunities, and we would be encouraged to see certain things move forward without regard to the GRP plan. Examples include winter trail grooming, implementing a citizen plan at Bay Triangle, building sidewalks along Randolph Av, making more and better use out of City House, installing benches at Lilydale, and canoe racks.



- If the vacant building at BVNS is the preferred location for an interpretive center, let’s move toward that end and pursue new ideas for Island Station and Watergate. Building new structures on the floodplain is a very unpopular, but a floodable re-use for Island Station would be most welcome.



- A person would be hard-pressed to find another place on earth where planes, trains, automobiles, boats, and bikes all move along next to each other. As with so much around here, this is because of the Mississippi River. It’s a unique situation; one that could be exploited, promoted, improved, and celebrated.



- The valley is “home” for many homeless people, and their plight should be on the front of our minds through this process. Ignoring them will not make them go away, and there should be talk of how to help them should we turn their front yard into our playground.



- A Public Hearing is meant to be for the Public. They have never been meant for City staff to promote their agenda. Please ask employees from the Departments of Public Works, Parks & Rec, Planning and Economic Development, and all other staff to no longer use up the Public’s time at future hearings.



- The City has an Environmental Policy Director, and I’d like to know what the City’s environmental policy is.

Sincerely,

Andrew M. Hine





# District 1 Community Council

---

2105 1/2 Old Hudson Road, Saint Paul, MN 55119  
www.district1council.org      district1council.blogspot.com

**Community Council Office**  
(651) 578-7600 (phone)  
(651) 578-7404 (fax)  
district1council@aol.com

**Police Storefront**  
(651) 578-7400 (phone)  
(651) 578-7404 (fax)  
district1CPC@aol.com

To: Saint Paul Parks Planning Staff  
Re: Great River Passage Park Master Plan

February 29, 2012

Mr. Ganje,

The District 1 Community Council Board of Directors was pleased to have a chance to hear about the Great River Passage Park Master Plan at our January board meeting. Our executive director sent an earlier response with editorial suggestions for the sections dealing with our district. We hope those comments have been incorporated into the final version.

With respect to the sections specific to District 1, we support the draft plan and appreciate its emphasis on helping our area's residents connect more directly and easily to the resource that is the Mississippi River, Pigs Eye Lake, and associated park lands. Protection of the riverine resources along with access to and education about them is vital to this neighborhood. Integrating both active and "passive" recreation, understanding of the working character of portions of the river, and developing ways to participate in improving the quality of the riverine environment are among the key values held by our community and our organization.

We are happy to support the Master Plan.

Betsy Leach  
Executive Director for the Board of Directors



## Great River Passage Plan

The Friends of the Parks and Trails believe that there are any good recommendations in the Great River Park. Some of them are:

25TH ANNIVERSARY  
1985-2010

1621 Beechwood Ave.  
St. Paul, MN 55116  
651-698-4543  
Fax - 651-698-8761  
www.friendsoftheparks.org

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David Lilly

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Mike Hahn

Eriks Ludins

Greg Mack

Terry Noonan

Jennifer Read

Executive Director  
and Secretary

Peggy Lynch

- \* Converting Shepherd and Warner Roads to parkways.
- \* Day lighting as many streams as possible
- \* Stream rehabilitation efforts - Fish Creek and Battle Creek.
- \* Providing the bridge trail access on south end of Pig's Eye Lake.
- \* Continued protection of bluffs in Highwood area through acquisition.
- \* Restoration of wetlands.
- \* Restoration of the Shadow Falls area.
- \* Restoration of Hidden Falls Creek.
- \* Conservation of the BNSF Soo RR Line into the Midtown Greenway- St. Paul Extension to provide an off road alternative and additional crossing of the Mississippi River into Minneapolis.
- \* All references to improved facilities for walking/pedestrians
- \* Improved signage system.
- \* Providing continuous public access to River's edge.
- \* Coordinated planning for improved recreational access to the river, especially on the east side.

The Friends recommend the Great River Passage Master Plan be amended as listed below:

- \* Add protection for the exposed St. Peter sandstone bluffs which are unique to St. Paul which and very fragile. We are especially concerned about the area between Chestnut and Jackson Streets.
- \* Remove references to specific recreational activities such as dog parks, mountain biking, skate parks, etc. and replace them with references to areas suitable for

recreational facilities or areas in the corridor designated as natural areas. Because this plan will be implemented over 50 years, designating some of the recreational activities specifically, should be decided on when the more detailed master plans are developed for each park. There is a precedence for this request because all references to the soccer fields at Victoria Park have been removed from the plan at the insistence of the neighborhood.

- \* Build no new buildings in the floodplain unless it is on the footprint of current structures. The proposed development at Watergate will change the character of the park. In the past couple of years the park has been closed for a number of months because of flooding. If the buildings themselves are flood proof, but no one can access the park because of flooding, the buildings are useless. A better location of the Watergate building might be on the Ford property on the river side of the Mississippi River Boulevard. It could be accessible all year round, even in periods of floods.
- \* Develop environmental education plans for the corridor in conjunction with other entities that also provide environmental education. This includes the National Park Service, the Science Museum, Ramsey County, Federal Fish and Wildlife Service, Ft. Snelling State Park and the City of Minneapolis.
- \* Daylight Battle Creek at Lower Afton and Ruth similar to Hidden Falls at Mississippi River Boulevard.
- \* Identify open space along the Mississippi River Boulevard at the Ford Plant site to provide an opportunity to move the roadway to the east in order to expand public space on the river side.
- \* Provide information regarding the cost of all new buildings in riverfront parks, how they will be maintained over time, needed staff and the method of funding before any new buildings are built.
- \* Create interpretative trails throughout the natural areas of the parks in the river corridor. For example, Crosby Farm Park could have self guided tours with brochures available describing various trees and plants found in a floodplain forest.
- \* Accurately reflect additional auto parking that is needed in areas where use is expanded in a park. Implementing the plan anticipates expanded use that would warrant more parking.
- \* Remove reference to storage at Hidden Falls as boat storage exists at Watergate Marina.

- \* Include trails in any plans for roadway through the Ford Plant property.
- \* Support recreational rental equipment enterprises, such as bikes, cross country skis, snowshoes, etc. in close proximity to river corridor.
- \* Establish fishing facilities along river corridor. The plan should encourage shore fishing.
- \* Provide parking at the north end of Red Rock Road and reopen the ramp for small boats, canoes and kayaks to have water access.
- \* Remove abandoned barge docking and fuel offloading facilities along the edge of the river below Victoria Park.
- \* Provide boat parking with signage in the downtown area to connect boaters, bikers, and others to nearby restaurants. Partner with restaurants to further develop this.

Errors:

- \* Many of the maps are incorrect or misleading.
  - Map of Watergate p. 120 and p. 121. does not show any automobile parking. Everything looks green. Where will the parking be located and how much more parking will be needed if the lagoon is used for canoes and kayaks?
  - p. 129 - no parking shown on the map. It gives an inaccurate picture of what the park will look like if proposed development is built.
  - P. 99 map shows some industrial land identified incorrectly as river oriented industry.
  - p. 151 - 153 incorrectly identifies land as river oriented industry .
  - p. 163 - East Side Riverside Park not identified in all of the maps.
- \* Greenspace should be continued on map on top of bluff all of the way to Otto Street in Victoria Park.
- p. 58. Reference to restaurant in Kellogg Mall Park should be removed. This park is linear and a permanent structure in the park will cut off the view of the river valley and opposite bluffs from downtown St. Paul. This restaurant is not listed on p. 148 under strategies and projects.

- p. 143. The current playground at Harriet Island not mentioned in text or on maps. This playground should be retained. Was this an oversight?
- p. 161 . Little Pig's Eye Lake was formerly identified as Fish Hatchery Lake. What is the correct name?
- p. A35 - Samuel H. Morgan Trail starts at Mississippi River Boulevard and ends at Battle Creek Park.   ?   miles. Text says it is 7.7 miles and extends from downtown St. Paul to Mississippi River Boulevard. This is incorrect and very confusing text.
- p. A36 - Harriet Island - last two sentences beginning - Harriet Island became... do not make sense.
- p. A51 - The chart does not make sense if the agencies are not identified.
- p. A53 to A57 - These pages are not of any use because the small size of the type renders them unreadable. They should be made legible or eliminated.
- p. A64 to A78 - Type on many pages of appendix too small to read. These pages should also be made legible or be eliminated.

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

To: Saint Paul Parks & Recreation Commission  
From: Upper River Services, LLC

RE: Great River Passage Plan Comments

These comments on the plan to date are from the perspective of harbor boat operators.

**Navigation Safety**

Boating safety is mentioned on pages 52 and 58, listing a requirement for ongoing coordination to maintain adequate levels of safety, along with the goal of developing a river boating management plan.

The plan must list which agents will be coordinating; their various responsibilities; and, define adequate levels of safety.

The plan must define a maximum allowable number of boats at Harriet Island events, similar to a safe occupancy number for any public space, and who will be responsible for adequate traffic control on the water.

If safe boating is our goal, we must require that users of boat launches within the Great River Passage prove knowledge of navigation rules.

As recreational boating volumes increase, public safety costs **on the water** will increase. Ramsey County Sheriff, Saint Paul Police, and Saint Paul Fire will bear the brunt of these increased costs. These agencies and the additional costs need to be part of the river boating management plan.

**Barge Fleeting**

Barge fleeting is proposed to be removed from Island Station, pages 136-139, and from the West Side Levee, pages 150-153. We disagree with this part of the plan. There is no plan comment on this reduction of industrial capacity and no mitigation, and this diminution in industrial operating capacity conflicts with the Working River Goals and Objectives from page 62.

We oppose the plan to reduce or reposition river transportation capacity as part of the Great River Passage.

**Dredging Costs**

The plan proposes dredging at Watergate Marina, Island Station, Float Plane Basin, Pickerel and Pigs Eye Lakes, and maintaining both Upper and Lower Harbors of Harriet Island. If so, the plan must include management of dredged materials. The plan must estimate the volume and potential level of contamination of material to be managed. The plan must also coordinate with the Saint Paul Port Authority and US Army Corps of Engineers to see whether placement sites are available, and how to best manage the ongoing, long term costs of dredging.



## Wilderness Inquiry

February 29, 2012

Mr. Michael Hahm  
Director  
City of Saint Paul  
Parks and Recreation  
25 4th St W 400 City Hall Annex  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Mr. Hahm:

Wilderness Inquiry has been an enthusiastic partner with the City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department in the support of our Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures program. This program provides outdoor education and recreation on the Mississippi River, complete with canoe trips, overnight camping, and environmental education programs for public school youth and members of their communities.

We support the Great River Passage plan and agree in the importance of revitalizing this section of the corridor for the benefit of the community and the environment. The planning process has been inclusive and open; welcoming participation from community members and partners.

This plan shares in our goal of encouraging outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship. We will bring thousand of people each year to these sites as a resource for education and to connect people to the natural world.

We believe that this innovative plan will support our efforts and we are committed to working with the City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation for the benefit of park users to come.

Thank you for your consideration,



Greg Lais  
Executive Director



# Dayton's Bluff District 4 Community Council

798 E. 7th Street, Saint Paul, MN 55106 - Phone 651-772-2075 - Fax 651-774-3510  
Visit our web site at [www.daytonsbluff.org](http://www.daytonsbluff.org)

February 20, 2012

Michael Hahm  
Saint Paul Parks and Recreation  
25 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
Saint Paul MN 55102

Dear Mr. Hahm,

On February 6, 2012 our board of directors passed a motion in support with our feedback on the Great River Passage Master Plan. We would like to thank you for coming to our board meeting and for all the wonderful work on the plan.

Below are the comments that our board members had on the plan:

- ❖ We would like to see natural areas stay that way, not bring in tennis/soccer courts
- ❖ There should be no conflicts with other nearby plans as it crosses boundaries with other districts
- ❖ The plan is kind of nebulous
- ❖ Not many specifics on things like getting from Indian Mounds Park to the Mississippi River; want details on connecting East Side with the river
- ❖ We want alternatives to hyper modernistic bridge proposed for the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and it is very expensive
- ❖ Highly modern proposed bridge takes away from old world essence of Saint Paul; could lose what we wanted – the context of historic buildings, etc.
- ❖ Stairway to river would not be accessible for people with disabilities.
- ❖ Elevator type things would not be acceptable to Native American community.
- ❖ Trams up (like in Pennsylvania) are a possibility that should be explored.
- ❖ Be gracious in our support of the plan

For more information email or call me at 651-772-2075.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Karin DuPaul*

Karin DuPaul  
Community Organizer  
cc. Don Ganje

#####Creating a sense of place and a place that makes sense#####





# Friends of the Mississippi River

360 North Robert • Suite 400 • Saint Paul, MN 55101 • 651/222-2193 • [www.fmr.org](http://www.fmr.org)

*Working to protect the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities area*

February 26, 2012

Jonathan Carter  
Chair, St. Paul Parks & Recreation Commission  
c/o Diana Berchem  
400 City Hall Annex  
25 W 4th St  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Chair Carter and Parks Commissioners,

We are writing today to share our general support, and specific suggestions, for the Great River Passage Master Plan. In the roughly 130 years since Horace Cleveland began systematic protections of St. Paul's riverfront, no plan has proposed such a comprehensive and detailed agenda for St. Paul's spectacular and beloved riverfront. Indeed, few cities have attempted to put together a parks Master Plan on such a scale. The breadth of your work is unprecedented; we commend you, your staff, and consultants for their work over the last year and a half.

We have been encouraged to provide detailed comments once more for consideration by the Commission. Many of our comments here build on our past insights and recommendations. As in the past, we start at the northern end of St. Paul's corridor, and move downriver.

The plan proposes several major changes to the area of **Hidden Falls Regional Park**. We were disappointed, however, that the plan does not call for remediation of the significant pollution on the land currently owned by the Ford Motor Company, riverward of Mississippi River Boulevard. This land is intended as an addition to the Park as a donation by Ford, which makes great geographic sense. Decades of paint sludge and other debris have been buried at the site directly adjacent to the river. Over time, the buried contaminants are poised to contaminate the river that runs directly adjacent to them. We would strongly urge that the Plan should not be silent on the Community's desire to excavate the dump, remove the toxic waste and restore the natural topography of the bluff and floodplain in that location. The plan should advocate this remediation be accomplished before investments are made in permanent recreation in the area. Even if this goal is not easily realized, it should, at the very least, be expressed as a goal in the plan, so it can provide the City important leverage in its negotiations around revitalization of the Ford Plant, and keep an important ongoing public concern squarely in our minds. If the City does not even recommend this goal in its master plan it will make it harder to credibly negotiate for cleaning up the site during the redevelopment process.

We continue to have mixed feelings about the nature of the active recreation that the Plan currently shows on the site, and specifically the inclusion of a mountain biking trail in that location. On the one hand, it would bring additional people and eyes to a part of the park that might benefit from additional eyes. At the same time, the space for such a trail seems very limited, both in terms of the limited width between the river and bluff, as well as the potential length.

The trail depicted in the plan covers just over a mile (as the crow flies), and doesn't provide for a full loop, at least as depicted. This would be the shortest trail of any metro trail detailed on the Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists wiki; most are 5 miles or more in length, and only one (Terrace Oaks in Burnsville at 2.5 miles) approaches the limited scope this trail would take. Minneapolis park staff felt their 4.5 miles of trail at Wirth Park generally worked well, but was fairly limited in scope, and requires multiple loops for a typical hour to hour-and-a-half workout. We continue to wonder if a system of this limited size makes sense, and are concerned about the impacts a larger trail might have on this segment of the park.

If the trail continues to be included in the plan, we would encourage the plan to reference the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) best practices, and call for a partner in the mountain bicycling community, such as the Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists (MORC), be cultivated as a steward to promote best practices. We also hope there is an expectation maintained that if the site ends up causing more ecological damage than first anticipated, that the City will remain open to the potential of closing the trail. Minneapolis' experience with trails at Wirth Park has been positive, but that may also be in part because cycling enthusiasts understand that having a trail there is a privilege.

We also have some concern about the adventure sports that had been proposed for the site. The current draft of the plan appears to refer to this as a "nature-based recreation area," which from our perspective is an improvement over previous drafts. Still, we would hope the plan could be more specific about the nature of the adventure sports facility being promoted.

Activities that are more intense in scope, require especially tall or massive structures (such as climbing walls), feature brightly-colored facilities that would not blend well with the surroundings, or have a heavy ecological footprint, seem better-suited for areas like Island Station, where you have also depicted similar facilities. Without more specificity, we see much opportunity for conflict – with the character of the park, hiking trails, and the surrounding ecology. Those impacts need to be considered and addressed in planning in order to win our support.

We are generally pleased with plans for **Crosby Park**. We like the idea of re-conceiving the core of Crosby as one of the hubs of activity along the corridor. Currently, Watergate Marina feels cordoned off from public use and is wholly unattractive. The plan's proposal for an environmental education center, equipment rental and café at this location bring people to an underutilized location in a park that has occasionally generated safety concerns. Likewise, we understand the impetus for dredging the lagoon for canoe and kayak usage – so long as this area is managed for use by non-motorized recreation, we approve. This part of Crosby is one area that can accommodate additional activity gracefully.

The plan proposes adding stone veins to the riverfront in Crosby Park, roughly across from the southern tip of Pike Island. We have noted the significant erosion in this area over the years, and are unsure of its source. One of the notable features of Crosby Park is its consistent graceful, natural connection to the riverfront. Thus, we would encourage the City to pursue the least-intrusive remediation needed to stabilize the shoreline in this area. Stone veins would be more intrusive than, for example, a regrading of the shoreline and associated new plantings.

We could not be happier with the proposed redesign of **Shepard Road**. The redesign of crossings is vital to integrating the Park into south Highland Park. And we are particularly pleased to see the plan call for the lowering of speed limits on Shepard Road to 35 mph throughout the length of the road. This is a desperately needed change in order to successfully integrate the Great River Passage with the life of the neighborhoods around it. We know there will be pushback in some quarters about this change, but policymakers should rest assured that we have seen uniform constituent support for it in meetings with neighborhood representatives.

At the same time, as we seek to make our neighborhoods “more connected” to the river corridor, we were disappointed to see a new connection that at one time had been contemplated between south Highland Park and the center of Crosby Farm Park dropped from later drafts of the plan. South Highland Park is easily one of the two most diverse neighborhoods adjacent to the Great River Passage, and is among the densest neighborhoods. Unfortunately, the entrances to the park depicted in the plan are currently 1.6 miles apart. Many people in the area do not own cars, and so expecting them to walk this distance to get to the riverfront seems fundamentally at odds with the goal of being “more connected.” Figuring out how to both protect the sensitive bluff ecosystem and get pedestrians up and down the bluff will require thoughtful planning, and not all funding sources support stairs without ADA accessibility, but we think the plan should call for an additional stairway in this area.

We are unable to endorse soccer fields at **Victoria Park** as depicted initially in the plans. We understand their representation will be taken out in future drafts, as specified in the errata list, and that future plans for the site will be incorporated. We are concerned about placing active recreation so prominently on a bluff in the river corridor, and also concerned about the height of the lighting standards needed to light the field, and their intrusion into the river corridor.

However, we suggest there may be practical alternatives. Since the discussion around soccer fields in this area began, the expected surrounding use has changed from housing to a mix of park and school. While soccer fields may not have been a comfortable complement to residential redevelopment, they seem likely a welcome and natural complement to a school. Therefore, we suggest moving some or all of the soccer fields to the opposite side of the railroad tracks, nearer to West Seventh Street.

We would still be more comfortable seeing two soccer fields on each side of the railroad tracks, and having light standards as short as possible (around 60 feet, as we understand) lighting the fields nearest the river. In that scenario, the fields on the river side of the railroad might be turned 90° to parallel the railroad tracks, thus leaving a little more area near the bluff edge to use as a blufftop picnic and viewing area, along with space for vegetation that could grow to help screen any visual impacts created by placing the soccer fields on the blufftops.

We like the location of adventure sports at **Island Station**. Thinking of this site as a hub for the National Park Service and other outdoors-related organizations makes good sense to us. The ecosystem around this site is already substantially impacted, and the bay behind the peninsula creates a sheltered access point for boating facilities.

With these improvements in mind, we are surprised at the minimal attention given in the plan to the connection between Island Station and the commercial hub and renovated brewery around West Seventh Street and Randolph Avenue. The Randolph Avenue corridor seems likely in the long run to hold great promise, and yet today doesn't even have sidewalks, let alone complimentary development worthy of such a significant connection. Other parts of the plan

address private redevelopment when it supports the goals of the larger effort, and we think it was an important oversight that this area was not given somewhat more emphasis in the plans and diagrams as well.

At the **Esplanade Site** on the West Side (between Robert Street and the Lafayette Freeway) we continue to be concerned about the relationship of the riverfront's public spaces and private spaces. The plan depicts private development fairly close to the river's edge. In order for the riverfront to continue to read as a fundamentally public space, we must be very careful in our treatment of this area.

The plans remain silent on the exact setbacks from the riverfront, a change we have supported in the past. Still, we think the current illustrated plan places the buildings closer than we would like to the promenade.

We would be more comfortable with the reduced setbacks if we could be certain the river-adjacent uses would be publicly-oriented and complimentary to the river – such uses might include a public plaza, retail, or restaurants, including outside dining. We would encourage the plan to we suggest that the City retain ownership of these first-floor commercial spaces as a commercial condo in the larger development, much as the City retains ownership of the Wabasha frontage of Lawson Commons, to maintain control and ensure these key spaces are put to a public use that takes appropriate advantage of the riverfront location.

As one important way of mitigating this impact, we previously embraced the idea of “green fingers” reaching from the riverfront deeper into the area. However, the scale of these “green fingers” is critical in their success, and in winning our support. They are represented in two different, and possibly contradictory, ways in the plan. In the top diagram below, they appear to be substantive parks, nearly a block in width, that reach into the site from the riverfront. But other diagrams, notably the two in the second row below, these parks could be construed to depict the green connections as simply a wide boulevard running down the middle of street connections. We understand the intent in all three is to promote a park space that is more substantive than simply a wide median with trees, but revisions to the diagrams, or new text would help better clarify the intent as we refer back to this document in the future.





We wholeheartedly embrace the proposal to undertake a small area plan for this area in the spirit of the existing West Side Flats Master Plan.

We like many of the larger-scale changes on the east side. Plans to provide access to the **Pig's Eye Regional Park** area are welcome. We have appreciated planners' work wrestling with the best way to get access to the site and create a trailhead in the area. The plans to insert a continuous trail into the **Highwood Hills** area enhances the weakest portion of St. Paul's segment of the Mississippi River Trail.

In tandem with this new trail, we would urge more focus on enhancing the City's connection to the **Fish Creek** area in the City's far southeastern corner. Between Point Douglas Road and the City limits, there is just under 1/3 mile of trail along Fish Creek. This is one of the hidden gems of the St. Paul Park System, where this scenic creek gurgles in a small limestone gorge. Just beyond the City's border, Maplewood is in the process of completing the purchase of a large tract of former farmland adjacent to Fish Creek with views to the river. Maplewood intends to develop the area into a larger park, and hiking trail corridor. St. Paul's portion of the existing hiking trail has some ongoing maintenance and management needs, including shoring up several smaller WPA-era in-stream structures. We also encourage the plan to include a better-marked trailhead to guide visitors to the area. If you have not already, we suggest talking with planner Ginny Gaynor in Maplewood (651-249- 2416) for information on plans for their portion of the Fish Creek area, and to include some indication of those plans in sketch form beyond St. Paul's boundaries to underscore the interrelatedness of these efforts.

We were disappointed that detailed maps did not provide any special acknowledgement of the area, nor propose an improvement to the Fish Creek area, even though some trailhead improvements clearly seem both warranted and desirable to accentuate this unique and very under-appreciated amenity.

Finally, in terms of **Implementation**, we concur with your recommendation to set aside a specific division within Parks & Recreation to oversee implementation of the plan. Any plan as ambitious as this, with such a long timeline for implementation, and as many varied parts, requires a supporting organizational model designed to provide momentum for the long-term implementation of the vision. Your suggestion for a division within the Parks department created to oversee the management and implementation of the plan seems to us both necessary and appropriate to the goal of realizing the plan's objectives. As you note, a similar

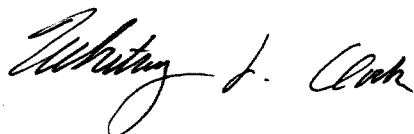
(if not identical) such model already exists around another jewel of St. Paul's park system, Como Park. In tandem with that effort, we also concur with the idea of convening outside stakeholders in some ongoing venue to oversee implementation of the plan, and the Great River Passage Action Committee seems an appropriate response.

One weakness we see in the implementation section is the lack of emphasis put on the cultivation of partners in realizing the vision of the park. The larger Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, of which the Great River Passage is a part, conceives of itself specifically as a "partnership park". The nature and expanse of the river corridor is such that the visions that have been set forth for it are only fully realized by the simultaneous actions of a wide complement of for-profit, non-profit, governmental and community stakeholders who have been invested in, and generally agree with the plans for the river corridor. That those stakeholders have not been given more emphasis in the plan seems a shortcoming that should be rectified through the addition or expansion of an acknowledgement of the importance of many partners in realizing this vision.

The sometimes-passionate debates taking place in neighborhoods up and down the City's riverfront these last many months are testament to the deep and meaningful connection people have with their parks and their riverfront. These connections have been cultivated over generations, as the City has gradually reoriented itself to embrace the Mississippi as one of its greatest assets. Though there remain some details to work through, we're confident the City of St. Paul is well on its way to advancing a plan deserving of the rich history, diversity, beauty and ecology found throughout St. Paul's riverfront.

We are pleased to have been given the opportunity to play a constructive role in this dialogue, and would always be happy to talk more about our comments, or answer any questions. You may call me or River Planner Bob Spaulding at 651-222-2193 anytime.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Whitney L. Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Whitney L. Clark  
Executive Director



## United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Mississippi National River and Recreation Area  
111 E. Kellogg Blvd., Ste. 105  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1256

IN REPLY REFER TO:

February 29, 2012

Jonathan Carter  
Chair, Saint Paul Parks & Recreation Commission  
c/o Diana Berchem  
400 City Hall Annex  
25 West 4th Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Chairman Carter:

I am writing to express support for Saint Paul's Great River Passage Master Plan, a wonderful vision for Saint Paul's Mississippi River. The National Park Service here at the Mississippi National River & Recreation Area is a proud partner with Saint Paul. The Great River Passage is a terrific example of a city embracing its most important natural and cultural feature.

I would like to compliment Saint Paul for designing and delivering this master plan after a thoughtful public involvement process to truly explore what the various stakeholders envision for our Mississippi River. Challenges are many but the product is a worthy outcome that articulates an amazing vision for a complex resource such as North America's greatest river.

The National Park Service will continue to be a project partner as phases of this bold plan work towards implementation. We will always work at reminding our project partners about the shared responsibilities of stewardship necessary to restore, maintain and improve the natural, cultural, recreational and economic features of our Mississippi River. The Great River Passage will continue Saint Paul's legacy as a great river city and set the best example of how a community can protect and appropriately develop its riverfront in ways that recognize important overlays like the Mississippi River Critical Area and National Park designation.

Great opportunities lie ahead. As the nation turns back towards the heartland and rediscovers the treasures of the Mississippi River, Saint Paul is setting the bar high with this creative blend of natural, urban and connected spaces that will define this great city for the next century. Prominent features like the Mississippi River Trail and The Great River Road facilitate the connections from Saint Paul to the rest of America. As a centerpiece within this National Park, the Great River Passage will define how a vibrant, accessible and protected riverfront makes sense for sustainable long term health for Saint Paul and the entire region. Congratulations!

Sincerely,

Paul Labovitz  
Superintendent

651-293-8454  
Paul\_Labovitz@nps.gov

1900 Landmark Towers  
345 St. Peter Street  
Saint Paul, Minnesota  
55102-1661



Tel: 651-224-5686  
Fax: 651-223-5198  
Toll Free: 800-328-8417  
www.sppa.com

March 2, 2012

Mr. Jonathan Carter, Chair  
City of Saint Paul Parks Commission  
25 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
400 City Hall Annex  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Michael Hahm, Director  
City of Saint Paul Parks Department  
25 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
400 City Hall Annex  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

**RE: Saint Paul Port Authority Comments on the Draft Great River Passage Plan**

Dear Commission Chair Carter and Director Hahm:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments, both through testimony and this letter regarding the planning process and contents of your draft Plan. We very much appreciate it.

**Planning Process**

I appreciate the opportunity to have been personally involved in your planning process. This was a very well-orchestrated process that provided significant opportunity for input from wide variety of individuals and organizations. I believe that this process has been one of the most inviting, comprehensive, and well-run series of meetings on this matter that I can recall.

**Industrial Development is Thriving and Growing**

We are concerned to see on page 11 of the Draft Plan, the following: "the decline in industrial activity along the corridor once again allows the City to renew its relationship to the River in ways that support the livability and economic vitality of the community as well as the enhancement of the natural realm."

Nothing could be further the truth, and we ask that you delete this statement from the Plan.

In fact, we continue to experience strong market demand in the Saint Paul Harbor. Our approximate twenty fleeting areas are fully operational and secured through long-term leases. Additionally, since we have finished construction on our new dock wall on the north side of the Southport slip, we have experienced significant demand from growing businesses that wish to locate there, expansions that were not able to occur prior to dock wall development.

Our port facilities in Saint Paul provide a gateway to the world for a variety of Minnesota commodities. And the Panama Canal expansion will certainly grow this activity substantially. It is important that this Plan recognize these facts and the many benefits of river transport. Some of these include the environmental benefits of consuming less fuel, reducing highway congestion, and serving as an environmentally friendly alternative to other modes of transportation. River shipping also saves a significant amount of wear and tear on our highways, and another important economic benefit is the improvement of transportation economics for shippers of Minnesota commodities that move into and out of this Port of Saint Paul.



I have attached for your information a Saint Paul Harbor Informational Overview and Map of the Fleeting Areas that provide important information, some or all of which should be included in Chapter 4.4, "The Working River", in this Plan.

This Plan depicts the Mississippi River corridor as a Regional and National Park. It is also true that this Harbor is a Regional, National, and International shipping facility, and not just a Saint Paul Harbor. The Plan needs to clearly recognize the regional and global industries that operate here.

Please add language to your Plan that outlines these important points.

#### **Barge Terminal #2 Use / Trails / Port Authority Land Donation**

Over the past year the City Parks Department and the Port Authority have collaborated on a new trail that would proceed southward from the Downtown riverfront area through our Southport River Shipping Terminal area. We came to understand that this is a very important component of the larger Saint Paul Trail System Plan. And as we were working at the same time with Mr. Hahm on our plan to maintain our Harbor Operator's Home Base at Barge Terminal # 2 (located on the right descending bank between the Wabasha and Lafayette Bridges), we were delighted to provide both the easements in our Southport District that accommodate the Trail Plan, and add inventory to parks and open space of about 16 acres.

The Saint Paul City Council, as you are likely aware, approved these three components in August, 2011.

#### **Specific Plan Language and Map Concerns**

Our concerns with the substance of the Plan language and map information are many. We request that you consider all of these concerns carefully and provide amended language and maps.

***Plan Video Industrial Message:*** We have a significant concern with one of your video introductions to the Great River Passage Plan. We believe that it contains a statement along the lines of "as industrial uses and railroads leave the valley, especially near Downtown, there is an opportunity to rethink what these areas should be". We are somewhat heartened that the visual along with this statement shows the vacant former NSP power plant; however, overall, this message provides the wrong impression about industry activity.

In one of the other introductory videos, the speaker indicates that changes in industries along the River that have caused them to leave the area present new opportunities for new jobs, green areas, shopping, and new places to access the River. Unfortunately, this message as well gives the impression that on a significant basis, industries are leaving.

Industry is not leaving the Saint Paul Harbor. Our lease terms range from 20 to 50 years, and Port Authority fleeting areas and properties are under lease. We urge you to reflect this fact in the revised document, such that the specific language counters the inaccurate message of industry leaving this River corridor.

***Plan Language and Map Depictions:*** We appreciate the language contained in Chapter 4.4 regarding the Working River. However, we do have some concerns and reservations in several other areas in the Plan, especially given our discussion over the past year with Parks staff on previous draft language.

One general concern is the disconnect between Objective 2 in Chapter 4.4 regarding maintaining current areas designated for river-dependent industrial uses, which is distinct from our reading of many of the maps that appear to show the elimination of industrial uses at Barge Terminal #2 (page 151 and several other maps), and the disruption of industrial production space in Barge Terminal #1 (page 63 and several other maps).

The Plan language needs to be changed to reflect the continuance of all industrial production land and River shipping fleeting areas. As Ms. Louder mentioned at the February 29 hearing, our thought is that perhaps these maps are "stylized", and may concern us more than need be; our interpretation of these maps at this time though, leads us to be concerned with the apparent objective of substantially diminishing the critically important industrial business and jobs growth activity in the Saint Paul Harbor.

Please add language to the Plan that indicates that all industrial land and fleeting areas should remain for future business growth and job creation. This is consistent with the testimony of the WSCO representative, Elena Gaarder, who emphasized that the community really needs jobs and that they appreciate industry in the River corridor.

Some of our concerns about Plan language also include the following:

- **Fleeting:** The apparent elimination of approximately 14 fleeting areas in the Harbor, all of which are secured by a long-term lease. It is vitally important that we maintain the Working River including all fleeting areas.
- **Water Taxi:** A Water Taxi is proposed to terminate across the River at Barge Terminal #2, an active industrial area for River shipping.
- **Recreational Barge:** The swimming barge proposed for Barge Terminal # 2 will interrupt industrial/shipping uses.
- **Road:** A new road proposed to be located in the industrial shipping east end of Barge Terminal # 2, which would interrupt shipping operations.
- **Deletion of Active Industrial Businesses:** Elimination of Cemstone, Pier Foundry, and Northern Metals companies, which are Port Authority tenants in Barge Terminal # 1, should be corrected.
- **Trail:** The continuous walking trail along the edge of the water will interrupt the industrial/shipping uses at Barge Terminal #2. Previous plans depicted the trail on the levee.
- **Street:** A Street or public access trail is depicted on the maps on pages 151 & 153 that enter onto Port Authority industrial property, which is leased to Upper River Services. This should be deleted from the Plan, since it is very important to keep separations between the Working River and industrial uses on the one hand, and specific areas for recreational use on the other. It should be noted that the design workshop conclusions for the new URS facility on its leased property include an overlook to the west of the property, which will help with providing River views.
- **Green Fingers:** The green strips depicted between heavy industrial uses at Barge Terminal #1 must be removed, since safe access cannot be assured, and the mixture of recreation and industrial uses is inappropriate.
- **Land Use Maps:** These seem to show depletion of river-related shipping uses at Barge Terminal # 1 and Southport (at the end of the slip). The green space depicted at Southport should be amended to be the appropriate size, thereby showing an accurate description of the industrial and adjacent open space areas.

We would appreciate understanding from Parks staff when the language and maps will be corrected.

**Keeping People Out of Harm's Way**

We suggest that River access for the public can be provided at the float plane basin, the tip of the Southport slip, and at look-out and other areas in non-industrial locations along the River.

It is critically important that the Port Authority maintain the Working River, including all industrial production land and River fleeting areas in the Saint Paul Harbor. Further, the Port Authority cannot be a funding partner to develop a River walk along industrial areas.

We hope the Parks Commission and Parks Department staff will agree with the Port Authority about the importance of keeping appropriate and safe separations between the Working River and industrial uses, and areas used for public access and recreation. This concept includes the concern we have about the incursion of public access green fingers through industrial areas.

We look forward to conversations with the Parks Department Staff and the Parks Commission about important amendments that should be made to this otherwise very fine Plan. Thank you for consideration of these comments.

We would appreciate your written response as soon as practicable.

Sincerely,



Louis F. Jambois  
President

Attachments

cc: Lorrie Louder  
William Morin  
Kelly Jameson  
Charles Derscheid

## SAINT PAUL HARBOR INFORMATIONAL OVERVIEW

As you know, the Saint Paul Harbor is a Minnesota regional gateway to commerce along the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. Access through Lock 1 also adds the Minneapolis Upper Harbor area. It is important to understand tonnage originating or destined to or from any of these areas is handled in Saint Paul's Harbor enroute.

Our harbor is a hub providing Midwest producers access to our country's inland waterway system and the worldwide markets. Attached are some "quick facts" and informational material regarding operations.

**Tonnage:**     1 Barge = 16 Rail Cars = 70 Truck Trailers

1 Tow (15 barges) = 216 Rail Cars with 6 Locomotives = 1,050 Truck Trailers

The following tonnage figures are from MnDOT Waterways Division for the year 2010.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Inbound</u>	<u>Outbound</u>	<u>Total Tons 2010</u>
Saint Paul & below	2,650,770	2,509,350	5,160,120
Minneapolis	447,498	144,906	592,404
Savage	716,075	1,695,286	2,411,361
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,814,343</b>	<b>4,349,542</b>	<b>8,163,885</b>

- Last year, our Harbor Operator, Upper River Services and others, facilitated the movement of 8,163,885 tons of commodities through the Saint Paul Harbor.
- Annual tonnage through Lock No.1 ranges from 500,000 tons to 1.5 million tons.  
     1.5 million tons = 1,000 barges  
     1,000 barges = 16,000 rail cars = 70,000 truck trailers
- A loaded barge carries 58,333 bushels of wheat; enough to make almost 2.5 million loaves of bread.
- Major export commodities moving through the Harbor include grain from Midwest producers, metro aggregates and recycled metals. Major imported commodities include fertilizer, salt, cement, and coal.
- A barge can move 1 ton of product 576 miles per gallon of fuel;  
     Trains can move 1 ton of product 413 miles per gallon; and,  
     Trucks can move 1 ton of product 155 miles per gallon.
- The value of Minnesota agricultural commodities in 2009 was about \$3.5 billion. More than 60% of Minnesota's agricultural exports are shipped down the Mississippi River annually. That represents about \$2.1 billion in exports for 2009.
- Minnesota's agricultural industry generates \$55 billion in total economic impact through the so called "multiplier effect". According to a recent State of Minnesota Jobs Task Force, this economic activity supports approximately 367,000 jobs- or roughly 1 in 5 Minnesota jobs.

## **Local Businesses Located in the Saint Paul Harbor and Terminal Areas:**

Hawkins Chemical: Water treatment & purification chemicals (3 locations)

LaFarge Corp.: Cement (2 locations)

AMG: Recycled metals

Gavilon: Grain, fertilizer, livestock feed, steel products and potash

Barton Enterprises: Asphalt & Bituminous

Simcote Inc.: Industrial coatings for structural "I beams"

Gerdau Ameristeel Corp.: Recycled steel & specialty materials

Alter Corporation: Recycled metals, salt and fertilizer

Krupenny & Sons, Inc.: Roll-off container service

All-Wood Products: Wood recycling center

Mudek Trucking: Public transfer station for materials recycling

City of Saint Paul Police & P/W Departments: Automobile impound & evidence lots

District Energy: Public utility service

Westway Trading: Molasses, vegetable oil, bio-diesel, and livestock feed (2 locations)

Flint Hills Resources: Petroleum products

Aggregate Industries: Sand, aggregates, and crushed stone

Northern Metals Recycling: Recycled metals, coal, and fertilizer (2 locations)

Morton Salt: Salt

Cemstone: Cement

Cenex-Harvest States: Fertilizer and phosphates

Archer-Daniels-Midland: Grain

Upper River Services, LLC: Harbor services, barge cleaning & dry dock (2 locations)

Portable Barge Service, Inc.: Marine contractor & services (2 locations)

L-S Marine, Inc.: Marine contractor & services

Saint Paul Yacht Club: Private Club & marine docking facilities

City of Saint Paul Municipal Marinas (2 locations)

Padelford Packet Boat Co.: University of Minnesota Showboat, public & pvt. charters & seasonal entertainment venue

Magnolia Blossom Cruises, LLC: Seasonal private charter service & entertainment venue

# SAINT PAUL HARBOR

Port Authority River Shipping Terminals & Fleeting Areas

Barge Terminal Number 2

Barge Terminal Number 1

Southport Terminal

Red Rock Terminal

## LEGEND

Fleeting Areas  
Terminals

  
Saint Paul Port Authority  
1900 Landmark Towers  
345 St. Peter Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55102  
Fax: 651-223-5198  
Phone: 651-224-5696  
Toll Free: 1-800-328-8417  
E-mail: info@ppa.com

