

Anne Gardner, project manager for Hidden Falls / Crosby Farm Regional Park Master Plan, gave the presentation. The purpose of the presentation was to provide an overview of the process to date and review the list of improvements and priorities that have been identified from the community engagement sessions and research on the park.

To open the meeting, we welcomed the Nibi Walks / Water Walks group, led by Sharon Day who leads a weekly Sunday morning water ceremony at Hidden Falls.

Sharon described her 2013 walk along the entire Mississippi River, and the evolution of the Nibi Walks group. Everyone is welcome to join every Sunday morning, 9 am at the Hidden Falls boat launch area. From Sharon “You may have seen a small circle of people there. We believe that every living thing has a spirit, but that the water has a spirit that connects us all. We take a small amount of water and keep it during the ceremony, then return it to the river. Water is very important and must be protected.”

Sharon, Emily, and Paul sang an Ojibwe song that speaks of the sacred nature of water.

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# Agenda

- **Welcome & Acknowledgements**
- **Project review**
  - Meeting 1 & 2 Review
  - Community Engagement Overview
  - Updated Map
  - Priorities
- **Next steps**
- **Questions?**

*Don't forget to vote on a construction project and fill out a comment card!*



**PROJECT TEAM**

**City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Staff**

*Design & Construction (Landscape Architects):*  
Anne Gardner  
Liz Hixson  
Ellen Stewart

*Natural Resources:*  
Adam Robbins  
Maggie Barnick  
Emily Dunlap

*Operations:*  
Karin Misiewicz  
Joe Buzicky  
Tom Hagel

**National Park Service:**  
Holly Larson, RTCA  
Barett Steenrod, RTCA

**Great River Greening:**  
Todd Rexine

The agenda and project team were mentioned: Staff from the City of St Paul, Dept of Parks and Recreation (Design and Construction, Operations, and Natural Resources), staff from National Park Service, and Great River Greening (prepared the Natural Resources inventory for Hidden Falls)

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## Project Summary

### Purpose of the Plan

- ensure that Hidden Falls and Crosby Farm park is meeting the local and regional needs
- adoption of the master plan with the Metropolitan Council
- provides a framework for future improvements and funding requests
- sustain public use and enjoyment of the park

### Guiding Principles

Respect the sacredness of his region. Acknowledge and celebrate the indigenous history of this location on the Mississippi River near the site of the Bdote (confluence) the birth of the Dakota nation

Preserve and sustain the ecological functions of these parks by managing and enhancing the critical habitat area

Upgrade park facilities for public use (bathrooms, signage, trails, lighting), improve safety features, and add new recreational opportunities to encourage healthy active lifestyle for all ages in balance with the "natural" character of the park.

Recommend and enhance pedestrian and multi-modal connections to draw regional and local users to the park space

Support partnerships with organizations who assist in bringing new user groups to the park and river and assist in building the ecological resilience of park adapting to a changing climate



#### Why do we need a master plan

- Required by the Metropolitan Council
- Allows city to request funding
- Respond to nearby development pressure
- Identify and reach out to new park visitors

#### Met council asks that every 10-20 years they review a plan that lists:

- boundaries and acquisition, stewardship, demand forecast, park development, potential conflicts, operations, public engagement, public awareness, accessibility, natural resources

#### As we began work on this park, we needed to

- Respect the sacredness and cultural history of this site near the Bdote
- Also preserve and sustain the ecological functions (MNRRA) and bluff habitat for animals, plant communities, and human enjoyment
- Upgrade facilities for safety and improved recreation use
- Acknowledge the changing trends with transportation and recreation and adapt the plan and connectivity of the park to the region
- Continue the relationships and partnerships with all of the organizations who know, love, use, and care of this park both to bring people here and to care for the environment

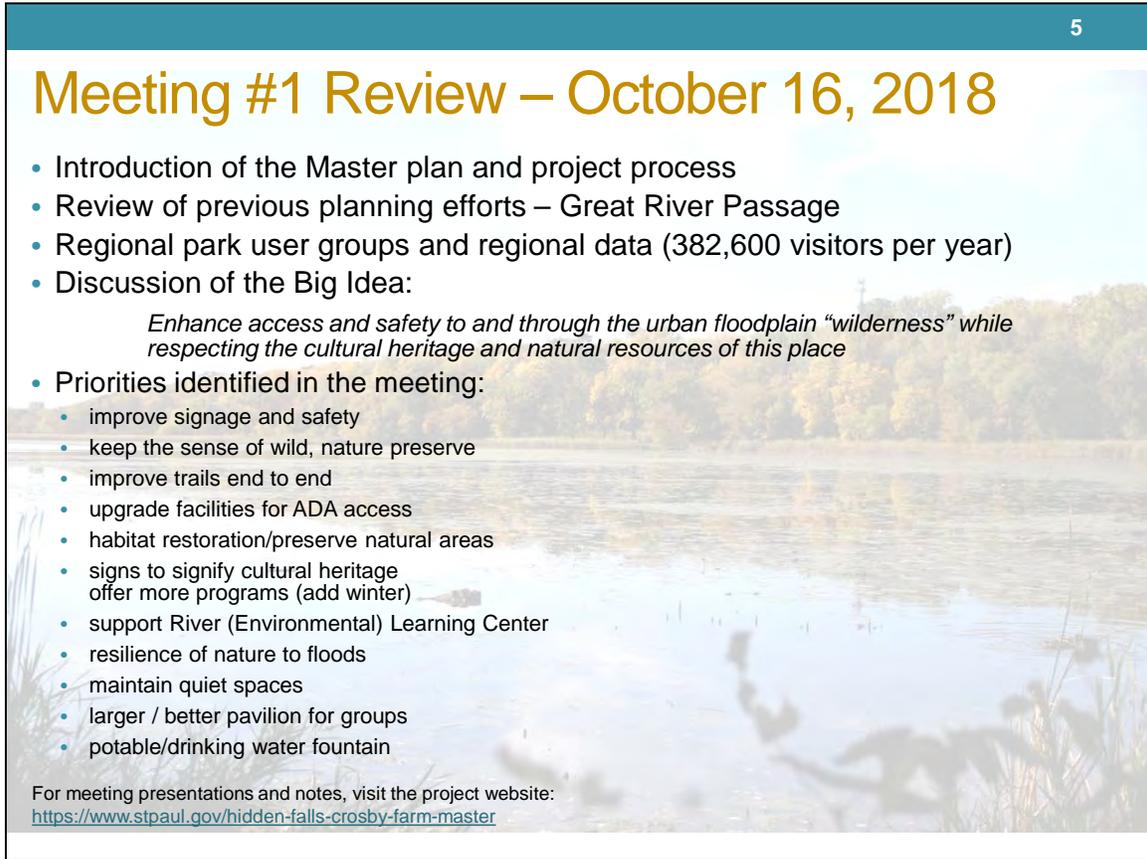
## Community Advisory Committee- THANK YOU!

- Shawn Sheely- Trails Advocate
- Emily Jarrett Hughes - Nibi Water Walks
- Ed Heibel- Resident and NPS volunteer
- Whitney Clark - Friends of The Mississippi River
- Sandra MacGuire – hiking walking
- Barb Lehn – lives on the river – resident
- Edric Lysne- Ice Climber and outdoor recreation enthusiast
- Thabiso Rowan - Disability Hub MN
- Shirley Erstad- Friends of Ramsey County Parks and Trails
- Kristine Gill –Highland District Council
- Mike Lindsay- Highland District Council Board Vice President
- Jeff Burton – resident, lives close to the park
- Emily Northey - Fort Road Federation
- Becky Rice – Highland resident
- Devin Olson - Minneapolis resident, Mountain bike rider
- Paige DeWees – resident, lives above Crosby Farm Park
- Tyler Teggatz – Highland District Council
- Steve Pope - neighbor, frequent parks visitor and hiker
- Joe Landsberger – resident & historian
- Adam Brunner – resident and avid fishermen
- JP Lindrud - Watergate Marina, Allied Management Co
- Hank Carlson, YMCA
- Gary Bruggeman, resident
- Becky Amidon, resident
- Renee Campion, Sleepy Hollow Montessori



We formed a community advisory committee after soliciting volunteers and interest through partner groups, public mailings, website postings and communication with neighborhood groups.

Two meetings were held in October and December 2018 - thank you to those who volunteered time and participated in the project.



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## Meeting #1 Review – October 16, 2018

- Introduction of the Master plan and project process
- Review of previous planning efforts – Great River Passage
- Regional park user groups and regional data (382,600 visitors per year)
- Discussion of the Big Idea:
  - Enhance access and safety to and through the urban floodplain “wilderness” while respecting the cultural heritage and natural resources of this place*
- Priorities identified in the meeting:
  - improve signage and safety
  - keep the sense of wild, nature preserve
  - improve trails end to end
  - upgrade facilities for ADA access
  - habitat restoration/preserve natural areas
  - signs to signify cultural heritage
  - offer more programs (add winter)
  - support River (Environmental) Learning Center
  - resilience of nature to floods
  - maintain quiet spaces
  - larger / better pavilion for groups
  - potable/drinking water fountain

For meeting presentations and notes, visit the project website:  
<https://www.stpaul.gov/hidden-falls-crosby-farm-master>

A summary (detailed information on the website) of the information reviewed at meeting #1 was shared. In general, the Great River Passage (GRP) was the beginning point for this work and we utilized the base map, suggested improvements, and priority list and built off of those materials.

## Meeting #2 Review- November 27, 2018

- Summary of Survey Results
- Summary of Natural Resources Inventory by Natural Resources Staff
- Review of Project priorities lists developed from Great River Passage and revised by focus group discussions
- Small group discussion on priorities (reflected in current Priorities Boards 1 & 2)
- Big Idea revised to a Vision Statement:
  - *“At the place where the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers join together, Hidden Falls/Crosby Farm Regional Park brings people and nature together. The master plan honors the cultural significance of this area to the Dakota people, increases access to the parks in a way that strengthens wellness of people, plants, animals, and water and will maintain this place of healing and restoration for people and ecology, including those of the City of Saint Paul and the broader Metropolitan region.”*

For meeting presentations and notes, visit the project website:  
<https://www.stpaul.gov/hidden-falls-crosby-farm-master>

A summary (detailed information on the website) of the information reviewed at meeting #2 was presented including review of survey results, natural resources inventory, and an in-depth review and discussion of project priorities.

## Community Engagement Overview

- Online survey - 940 responders
- National Public Lands Day Pop-up Meeting 133 responders, 200 popsicles
- 6 community meetings and parks ambassador gatherings attended
- 4 focus groups (water, trails, gov. / non-profit, camps)
- 4 internal city meetings (rec centers, operations & maintenance, and Great River Passage division)
- Participation in water ceremonies with Nibi Walk and discussion
- WCCO and Fraser School Pulling Together event brings thousands of people to Hidden Falls
- This process is building on the momentum of Great River Passage, which was in 2012 and had 28 public meetings and 5 focus groups
- The City's Great River Passage Initiative continues to hold events and advocate for projects identified in the plan



An overview of the community engagement process was shared. Generally, parks staff worked through numerous venues to reach users and potential user groups at events, outings, and meetings to gather community feedback.

## Related Projects

- Ford Redevelopment
  - <https://www.ryancompanies.com/news/ryan-presents-vision-development-ford-site>
  - <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-economic-development/planning/ford-site-21st-century-community>
- River Learning Center
  - <https://greatriverpassage.org/projects/environmental-learning-center/>
- Lexington Parkway Realignment
  - <https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/roads-transit/future-road-construction-projects/lexington-parkway-west-7th-street-reconfiguration>
- Pedestrian Plan
  - <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/public-works/transportation/walking-saint-paul>
- Tribal Engagement and Cultural Resources Strategy at Indian Mounds Regional Park
  - <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/parks-recreation/design-construction/current-projects/indian-mounds-regional-park>



The related projects listed will have an indirect or direct impact on the park space. They are listed above and can be accessed via the website link. They are operating on various timelines and have different funding sources- we will maintain awareness of the projects and work towards understanding the impacts to Hidden Falls and Crosby Farm.

Two additional projects that should be added to the project - Highway 5 potential changes via public works (<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-economic-development/planning/highway-5-shepard-road-study>) and the Dam Removal study- <https://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/MplsLocksDisposition/>

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# Natural Resources Inventory

**INVENTORY, MAPPING, AND MAINTENANCE:**

- Identify and protect habitat for rare and endangered species
- Importance of the Mississippi Flyway to bird species
- Address stormwater, bluff erosion, and flooding concerns – and recognize the dynamic floodplain and river bluff ecology
- Strategies for maintenance – address invasive species, shelterwood planting, cottonwood regeneration, targeting Emerald Ash Borer
- Volunteer coordination – 248 people volunteered in both parks in 2018 (as recorded by St. Paul Parks & Recreation Natural Resources)

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

St. Paul's Environmental Services Unit protects, enhances, and provides access to the City's natural areas. Services include the monitoring and research of natural resources in parks, the restoration and management of vital and unique ecosystems, and the provision of interpretation and education. The Unit also works with citizens, nonprofits, and governmental agencies to coordinate efforts that enhance the natural environment of Saint Paul.  
<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/parks-recreation/natural-resources>

**Habitat Ranking**

- A:** Good: Areas of native plant communities with moderate disturbance but nearly intact species diversity
- B:** Fair: Areas of native plant communities with high level disturbance or invasion of exotic species
- C:** Poor: Not an example of a native plant community or dominated by exotic/invasive species
- NA:** Not ranked: Due to a lack of recent data
- NA:** Due to sparse vegetation

Great River Greening, 2018      St. Paul Natural Resources, 2019

This is a composite of two maps produced for the master plan. At left is a map created by Great River Greening that assesses the habitat quality in Hidden Falls. We added to a map at right created by St. Paul Natural Resources showing the same data for Crosby Farm.

- Endangered species (Threatened: Paddlefish, Mucket, and Purple Wartyback)
- Importance of the Mississippi Flyway to bird species
- Stormwater, bluff erosion, and flooding concerns – the dynamic floodplain and river bluff ecology
- Strategies for maintenance – shelterwood planting, cottonwood regeneration, targeting Emerald Ash Borer
- 248 people volunteered in both parks in 2018 (recorded by St. Paul Parks & Recreation Natural Resources)

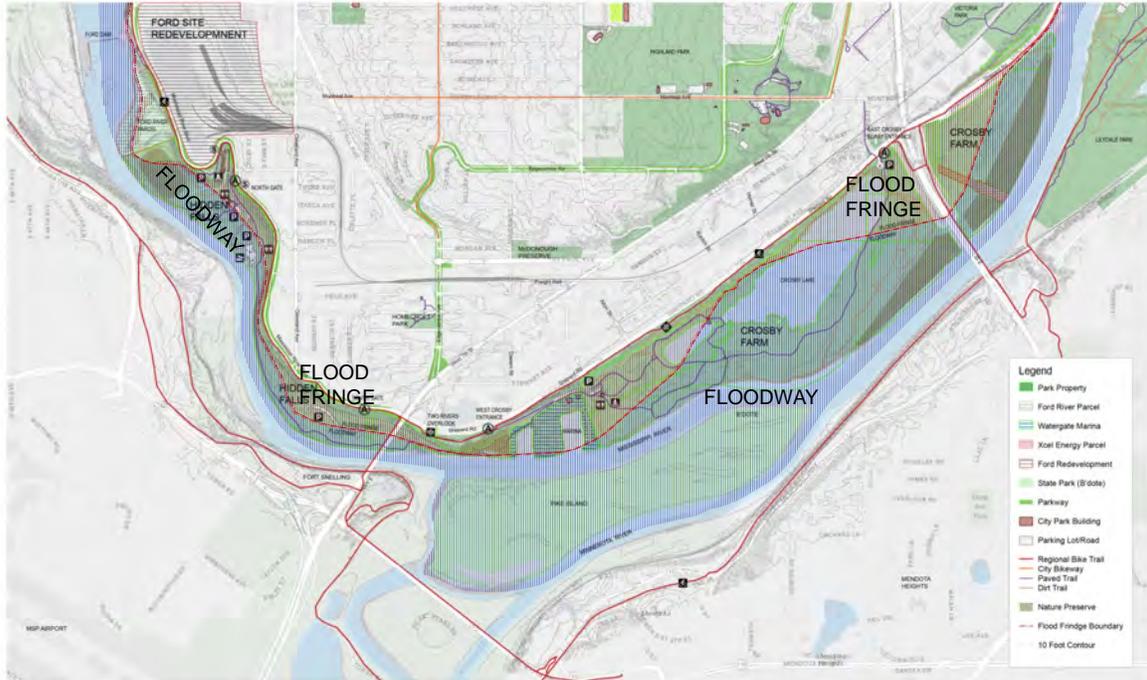
A quick overview of the Natural Resources report was given. The inventory was prepared by Great River Greening (Hidden Falls) and the Natural Resources group. The images on the board show current efforts, including goats grazing buckthorn and shelterwood plantings

This is a dynamic floodplain and the river bluff has a unique ecology.

The inventory guides the following:

- Propose strategies for maintenance
- Identify volunteer coordination and partnerships
- Identify habitat for rare and protected species
- Address stormwater runoff, bluff erosion, flooding concerns

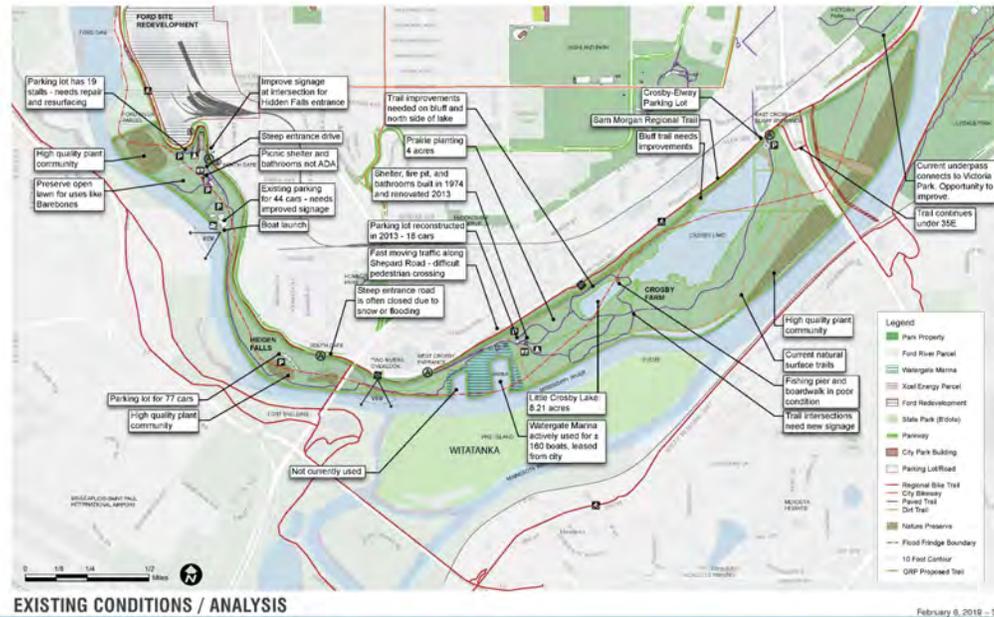
## Updated Map – Existing Conditions



Hidden Falls / Crosby Farm Regional Park - 2019 Master Plan DRAFT - City of St. Paul Parks & Recreation

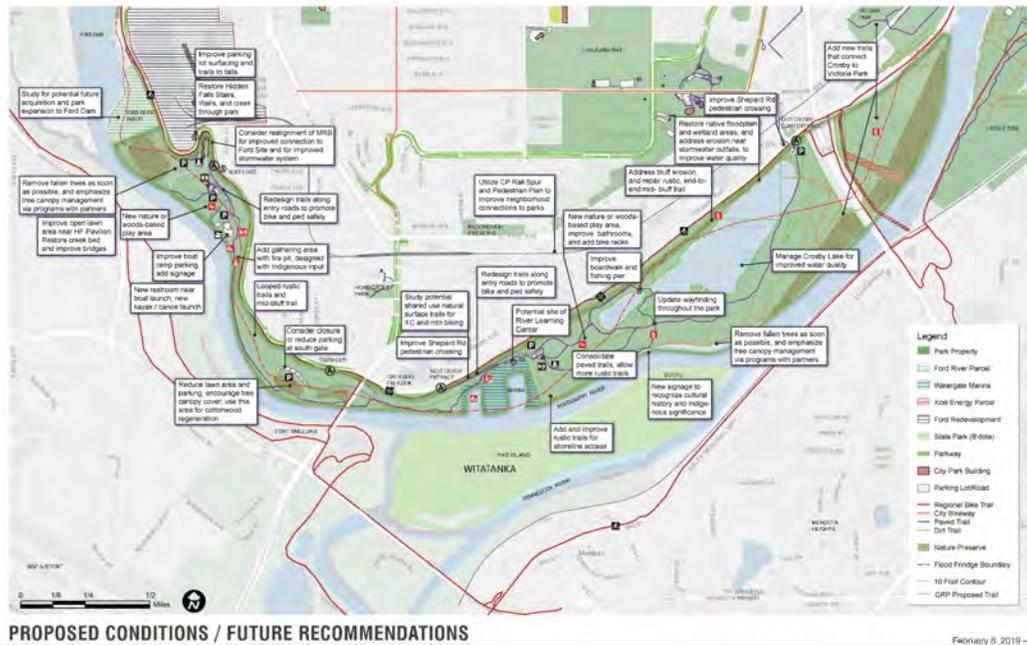
The study of existing conditions builds upon the Great River Passage map and has added more detail representative of what exists at the park. The floodway shows the limit of where structures can be built as it is the zone for flooding. (see presentation PDF for detailed existing conditions map)

## Updated Map – Existing Conditions



Notes on existing conditions map reflect what the project team observed and noted, and heard from community conversations and input.

# Updated Map – Recommendations



Notes on the trail improvement and proposed recommendation show the intended improvements to the park. (see open house boards PDF for detailed map)

# Project Priorities

## Priority Key

- High - near term, very important
- Med-High - within 5 years (+/-), significant
- Medium - within 10 years (+/-), desired but not top
- Low-Med - within 10 to 15 years (+/-), preferred
- Low - must be sequenced with other improvements

Priority	Proposed Priorities
High	Increase budget for invasive species management and coordination. [both]
High	Continue to program cultural events such as "Barebones Halloween Puppet Show". [both] (1)
High	Address the off-leash dog problem by signs and education. [both]
Med-High	Add more bluff-top land to the park, from Ford Site by curve at Mississippi River Blvd. [HF]
Med-High	Install video surveillance to reduce theft from parked vehicles and increase safety. [both]
Med-High	Continue exploring development of a River Learning Center at Watergate location, with partners including the National Park Service, Indigenous communities, and nearby neighborhoods. [CF]
Med-High	Acquire adjacent riverfront land and holdings as they become available. [both]
Med	Add programming on paddling and water safety. [both] (A) (H) (F)
Med	Additional surveillance via police and park security patrol. [both]
Low-Med	Improve transit access by working with adjacent neighborhoods and Metro Transit. [both]

Priority	Proposed Priorities
High	Add looped rustic nature trails, including the mid-kiln trail, that provide a varied experience and connect to existing mile loops. [both] (1)
High	Add rustic trails with access to streamside (shorter-loop trails). [both] (A)
High	Alleviate the trail network, improve accessibility throughout, and provide clear access and signage to trail heads. [both]
High	Add new park trails from Watergate to Lower Crosby Farm (east side), connect to new parking areas and to Victoria Park. [CF]
High	Improve and extend park trails at Hidden Falls, improve trail from pavilion to falls area. [HF]
High	Redesign bike and pedestrian trails along entry roads. [both]
High	Improve Shepard Rd. crossings. [CF]
High	Improve all pedestrian access points, giving consideration to neighborhood access, and connections from Victoria Park and redeveloped Ford Site (WPA area (Wicks Progress Administration) staircase.
Medium	Improve safety and sight lines at Mississippi River Boulevard entrances. [both]
Medium	Improve boardwalk and fishing pier. [CF]
Low	Improve parking areas at Hidden Falls (especially near pavilion, which is not emergency vehicle accessible). [HF]
Low	Reduce pavement, by removing some of the access roadway at Hidden Falls at both entrances. [HF]

Priority	Proposed Priorities
High	Add interpretive signage for boat safety, natural history, and cultural history of Native American presence. [both] (K)
High	Improve signage at boat ramp parking lot, provide directions to nearby launches, designate area for boat trailer parking only. [HF]
High	Implement signage and wayfinding systems in Crosby Farm and Hidden Falls (develop short walking tour with clear and easy to follow signs). [both]
High	Add signage/locks to mark entry point to parks (West Crosby Entrance, and along Mississippi River Blvd. Hidden Falls North and South Entrances). [both]
Medium	Improve Hidden Falls pavilion and make restrooms accessible. [HF]
Low-Med	Construct two small boat storage areas at Hidden Falls Park. [HF]
Low	Build a shelter/shade for summer grills. [HF]
Low	Could be eliminated from priorities if River Learning Center built.
Low	Year-round, minimal maintenance bathroom (composting if food/paper rules allow). [both]

Priority	Proposed Priorities
High	Add gathering area with the pit designed to accommodate and recognize Native American heritage and culture (HF) (similar to Pitt Knolls)
High	Develop linear mountain bike trails using International Mountain Bicycling Association best practices. [both] (M)
Med-High	Add Cross Country (XC) skiing trails to accommodate classic style skiing (use grooming equipment from park system or partner). [both] If feasible, design to be multi-use natural surface trails. (1)
Med-High	Improve boat ramp and trailer parking. Separate casual storage racks and cars without trails from boat ramp area. [HF]
Med-High	Improve meadow near Hidden Falls Pavilion to allow passive recreation and picnic areas for large and small group events. [HF]
Med	Construct a new nature-themed or woody play area (non-traditional). [HF] (1)
Med	Add (2) canoe/kayak landing areas (separate from boat ramp) at Hidden Falls South Gate and Crosby. [both]
Low-Med	Develop public group tent/camping area for permitted events, with a potable water source. [CF]
Not ranked	* Only feasible when River Learning Center is built.
Not ranked	Study feasibility of allowing and improving access for ice climbing.

Priority	Proposed Priorities
High	Reforest open areas, encourage development of a continuous tree canopy, and remove some parking along road at Hidden Falls South Entry. Use this as an area for community engagement. [HF]
Med-High	Remove fallen trees from trails as soon as possible, and emphasize tree canopy management via programs with partners. [both] (1)
Med	Address bluff erosion at cliff-top, following Natural Resources Inventory guidelines (add materials for falls trail) with utilize water flow, resist compaction and disintegration, and reseed water away from trails. Re-vegetate slopes where feasible. [both]
Med	Restore native (scapan and wetland areas, and address erosion near stormwater outfalls, to improve water quality. [both] (1)
Med	Selectively manage understory of invasive vegetation species, in passive security areas. [both]
Low	Restore Hidden Falls Creek to incorporate water quality treatment and habitat enhancement. Plan for this restoration to be timed with Ford Redevelopment. [HF]

The list of priorities is expanded from the Great River Passage.

- 1 management category (red)
- 4 construction categories

The priorities also show a column with the rankings of priorities.

- high- near term- very important,
- med-high- within 5 years,
- med- within 10 years,
- low-med within 10 years,
- low-med within 10-15 low- need to sequence with other projects

The priorities are written out with pictures nearby that illustrate some of the priorities, both existing conditions we want to maintain and new ideas brought up throughout our planning process.

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### Activity: vote on a construction project

The City of Saint Paul has requested \$500,000 for "Hidden Falls-Crosby Farm Master Plan Implementation" from Parks and Legacy funds (\$100,000 in 2019 and \$400,000 in 2020)

**What should the City do with the first \$500,000?**

- Add cultural signage and develop wayfinding signage plan
- Trail system: improve rustic trails at bluff and shoreline
- Trail system: redesign bike and pedestrian connections at entry roads
- Add gathering space for indigenous culture events and recognition
- Reduce lawn area and redesign parking area at Hidden Falls north lot

Voting exercise – the meeting participants are asked to vote on construction priorities, these are five items we consider buildable with the first round of grant funding from the Met Council.

Results from the voting:

1. Trail system: redesign bike and pedestrian connections at entry roads- 49 votes
2. Trail system: improve rustic trails at bluff and shoreline- 37 votes
3. Add gathering space for indigenous culture events and recognition- 22 votes
4. Add cultural signage and develop wayfinding signage plan-18 votes
5. Reduce lawn area and redesign parking area at hf north lot- 13 votes



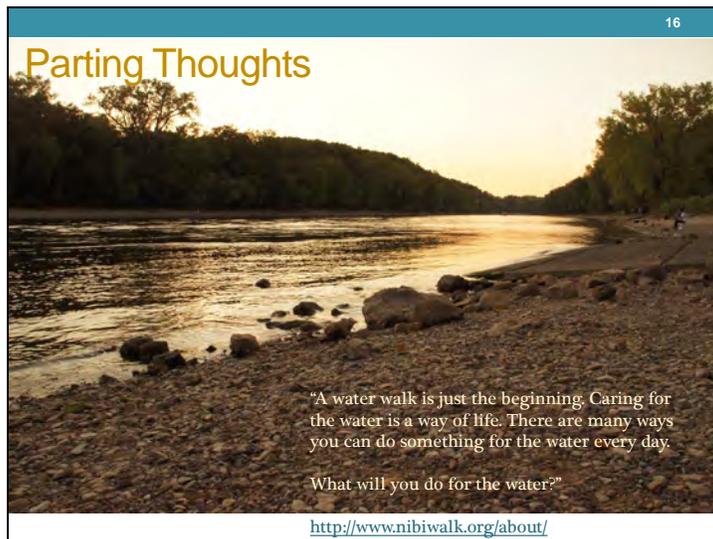
## Wrap Up / Next Steps

- Open House January 2019 to review the draft report
- Plans Available February 7 online
- Draft report available Feb 23 - March 22 for public comment
- Submit report to Parks Commission in early March
- Submit report to City Council in mid-March
- Submit report to Metro Council in early April 2019
- Complete report approved June 2019

Please discuss this project with your representative groups and email us with responses or comments

**THANK YOU!**

- For up to date information, visit the project website:  
<https://www.stpaul.gov/hidden-falls-crosby-farm-master>



Questions:

Q - Trails, what do you mean in the description/priorities "rustic" and "engineered"?

A- *"Rustic" means non-paved trails: earthen, gravel, or rock surface. "Engineered" trails will be designed and built with sustainable details and will address erosion and runoff but does not mean all trails are paved.*

Q - Marina, how does it fit in the city, if River Learning Center moves forward, are there private slips left at the site, what happens to all the investments made at the marina, would that open the gates to the public?

A-*This is to be determined. We do not have information on this at this time. Reference the Great River Passage (GRP) website (<https://greatriverpassage.org/>) and sign up for the newsletter for updates.*

*Key Points from the Great River Passage Initiative:*

- *As a part of the Great River Passage Master Plan process, City staff conducted extensive community engagement surrounding the Saint Paul River Learning Center (formerly Environmental Learning Center).*
- *The Great River Passage Initiative has reviewed that community input and is working with partners to determine whether they will proceed with the project.*
- *If the City and partners decide to move forward, the GRP Initiative will begin the design process. This will include engaging the public to determine what the River Learning Center will look like, what programming will be offered at the site, and more.*
- *Saint Paul Parks and Recreation is currently in discussion with the existing contract partner at Watergate Marina to reach a 2-3 year contract extension agreement.*

Q - Marina has problems with security already, and controlling access. People walking up and using our lawn chairs to go fishing. Anyone can just walk in, what is City doing about security and safety?

A-*Signage is in place on site. The plan does not intend to create new paths into the marina area during the current use in which the site is fenced off. This does not propose to make the marina less secure.*

Hidden Falls Crosby Farm Regional Park Master Plan

**Open House** – February 6, 2019

Draft Meeting Minutes

Additional Information since the open house: The management agreement with Allied Management Company specifically states, "3.10 ALLIED will provide and be responsible for security coverage for the Property."

Q - Great River Passage, if they are leading the River learning center process, will they have public meetings? When?

*A - If the City and partners decide to move forward, the GRP Initiative will begin the design process. This will include engaging the public to determine what the River Learning Center will look like, what programming will be offered at the site, and more.*

Q - Are you taking possible Dam Removal into account, what would that change about the plans?

*A- We know this is a possibility and are tracking discussions. The Army Corps of engineer website states that it is in Phase II of the disposition study and will release a draft report in June 2019*

Q - If GRP and RLC move forward, and you have "improve trail access to the marina" listed on your plans, that makes us feel unsafe. We want to understand how "public" this area will be.

*A- We do not have information on this at this time. Reference the Great River Passage website and sign up for the newsletter for updates.*

Q - What are you doing about Shepard road and Crosby Farm exit? We want a framework that addresses traffic safety. Bikers don't yield even though they have a stop sign. Want improved safety at road crossings.

*A-This is on the list of priority improvements to redesign the intersections and improve safety.*

Q - Intersections are very difficult for both parks. Can they be improved? Should be a study of the whole area to figure out. Should be a safe system for peds, bikes, cars. We want safety first.

*A- We are proposing that intersections are improved for safe connections for pedestrians and bikers. Some of these projects require a multi-department approach working with PED and Public Works.*

Q - The trails are beat up, in rough shape. Is there money to fix them?

*A- Trail improvements are a top priority for this park. We will request funding in the future for trail improvements.*

Q - How do volunteers sign up? I saw you have 248 last year in the parks

*A - Maggie Barnick from St. Paul natural resources answered that there are numerous opportunities to volunteer in the park. Contact the volunteer coordinator for opportunities:*

*<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/parks-recreation/natural-resources/volunteer-resources>*

Q - I saw a note "manage lakes for water quality" on the map. What does this mean?

*A- Capitol Region Watershed District has been monitoring the lake in Crosby for water quality. They have provided recommendations for improving water quality by addressing stormwater outflow from adjacent neighborhoods. Some work has been completed (infiltration basins along Sam Morgan Regional Trail), but still need more can be done. The Watershed district is a great partner and we will work with them to find opportunities to fund and implement projects that improve water quality in the park and for the river.*