

# CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS TO THE POWER OF THE FALLS

AN INTERPRETIVE VISION FOR THE EAST BANK OF  
ST. ANTHONY FALLS

NOVEMBER 2013

ST. ANTHONY FALLS HERITAGE BOARD

MINNEAPOLIS, MN



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# Acknowledgements

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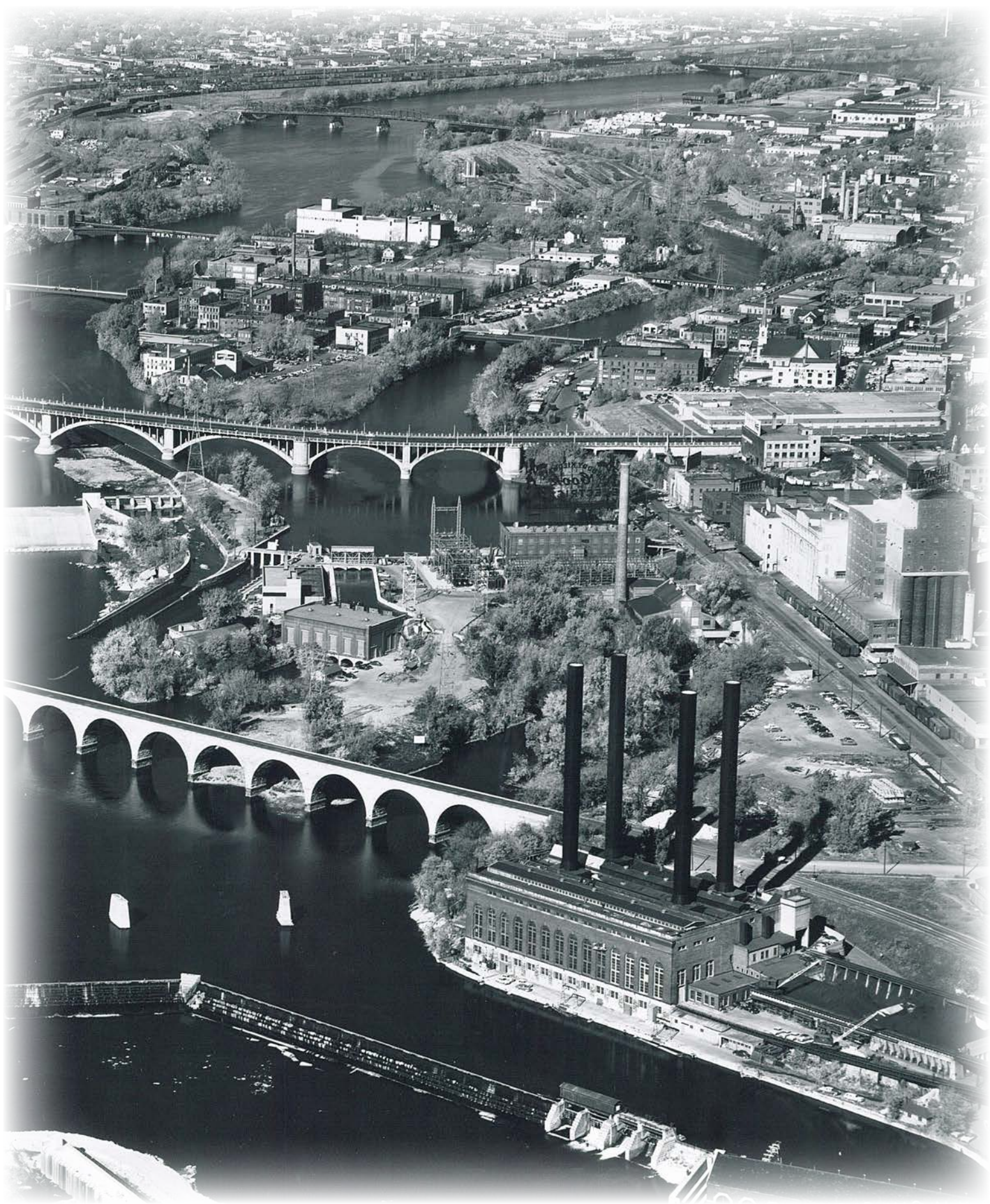
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*Aerial photo of East Bank area, 1955. Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board*



# Executive Summary

## EAST BANK OVERVIEW

### Project Objective

Create a new vision and plan for engaging the public in the scenic and historical resources of the East Bank of St. Anthony Falls.

The East Bank of St. Anthony Falls represents an unmatched collection of historical resources, compelling landscapes, and human stories. Within a half-mile-long stretch along Main Street visitors can find a remarkable density of offerings, from historic mills to quiet nature areas to cavernous tunnels beneath the streets. Bringing these resources, and the unforgettable stories they hold, to the public requires a comprehensive interpretive vision. Currently, the East Bank is bustling with activity on many fronts—from planning to construction. These activities are lending urgency

and providing opportunities for developing an improved visitor experience. The concepts described in this plan depict visitor experiences that will:

- Provide access to the area's historic resources with trails and landscape structures;
- Connect people and events through compelling narratives; and
- Extend exploration through online resources and location-based media.

This plan builds on years of research and many proposed visions for the St. Anthony Falls area. In particular, *The Power of the Falls: Renewing the Vision for St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone* (2009) sets forth a set of interpretive themes that acknowledge the value of reflection and personal experience in learning about this important place in our history. St. Anthony Falls, and the industries that have left their mark here, are parts of an even bigger picture that includes the Mississippi River watershed, vast transportation networks, and spiritual values that transcend the histories of milling and city building. Given the richness and complexity of these resources it is important that visitors are encouraged to explore on their own, guided by individual interests and values. Visitors will travel back and forth through time, encountering memorable stories along trails that inspire thoughtful appreciation of the area and the power it holds.



Aerial image of the East Bank highlighting the study area





## MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The East Bank of St. Anthony Falls presents unparalleled opportunities for visitor engagement. Many of these opportunities are site specific and very focused. Others have the potential to transform the overall experience. The following recommendations are inspired by the area's most compelling opportunities:

1. Honor this as a Dakota place and a place for learning
2. Establish a visitor orientation center
3. Use interpretive trails to connect locations and manage visitor access to historical resources
4. Integrate interpretive experiences between sites and subjects
5. Develop Main Street as an experience connector
6. Restore and highlight the East Falls
7. Employ a wider array of interpretive modes and tools
8. Provide guided experiences of underground historical resources
9. Continue to invest in the historic resources of the East Bank
10. Retain the wild nature of the East Falls ravine, preserving opportunities for nature-adventure experiences in the city.

The St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board (SAFHB) initiated this study by listing a set of important East Bank interpretive resources. This report contains detailed visitor-experience concepts developed around the following sites and subjects:

- East Falls
- River Ecosystems
- Chalybeate Springs
- Tunnels and Cave
- Hydroelectric Sites
- Pillsbury A Mill Complex

## INVESTMENT AND PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The year 2014 marks the 20th anniversary of the reopening of the Stone Arch Bridge. This transformational event brought new life to the area and reminded visitors and residents alike of the city's changing relationship with the Mississippi River and the Falls of St. Anthony. Few would disagree that the bridge added immeasurable value to an already important set of historical resources. This great project and those that have followed stand as reminders of what has been accomplished through vision and

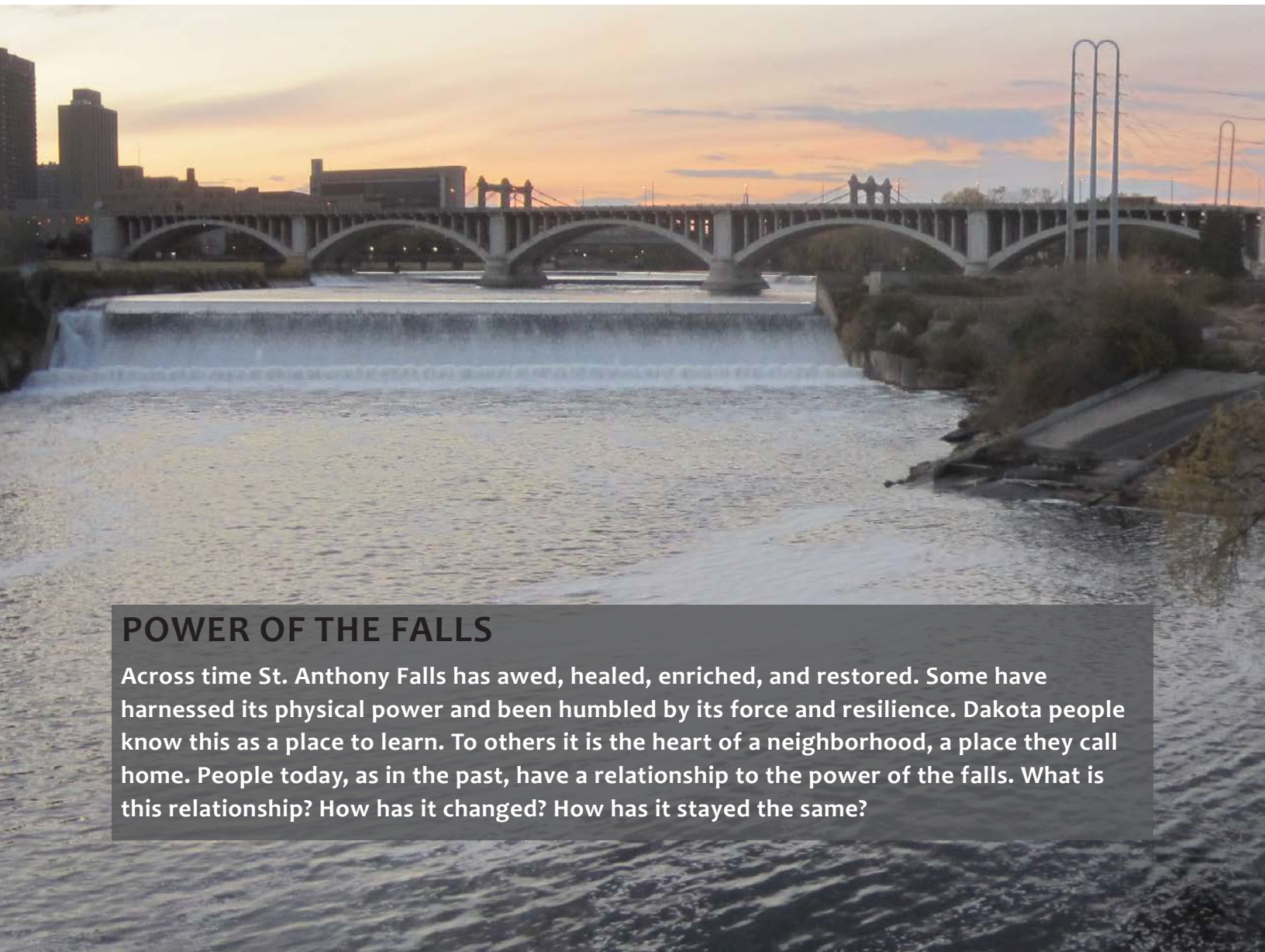


persistence. The concepts and visitor experiences presented in this report recognize and extend this legacy.

The work of the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board in the Minneapolis Central Riverfront has been a stunning success by many measures, not the least of which is as a driver of economic development. The Central Riverfront and the East Bank in particular have the potential to be world-class amenities, attracting an increasing number of tourists, residents and commercial investment in the urban core. The Metropolitan Council estimates more than 1.8 million visits to the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park in 2012, up from 1.6 million in the previous year's estimate. Growing residential communities downtown and expanding tourism audiences

assure that investments in this area will continue to return great value to city residents and businesses.

As demonstrated by the Stone Arch Bridge, Mill City Museum, Water Power Park, and Mill Ruins Park, partnerships are essential to development in the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Area. The East Bank is a patchwork of public and private landowners. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) owns most of the land and must be a willing participant for development to go forward. Other significant land owners include private developers of residential and commercial properties along Main Street (e.g. Dominion, Doran and Schafer Richardson) and Xcel Energy, owner of Main Street Station, a potential site for an East Bank Visitor Center.



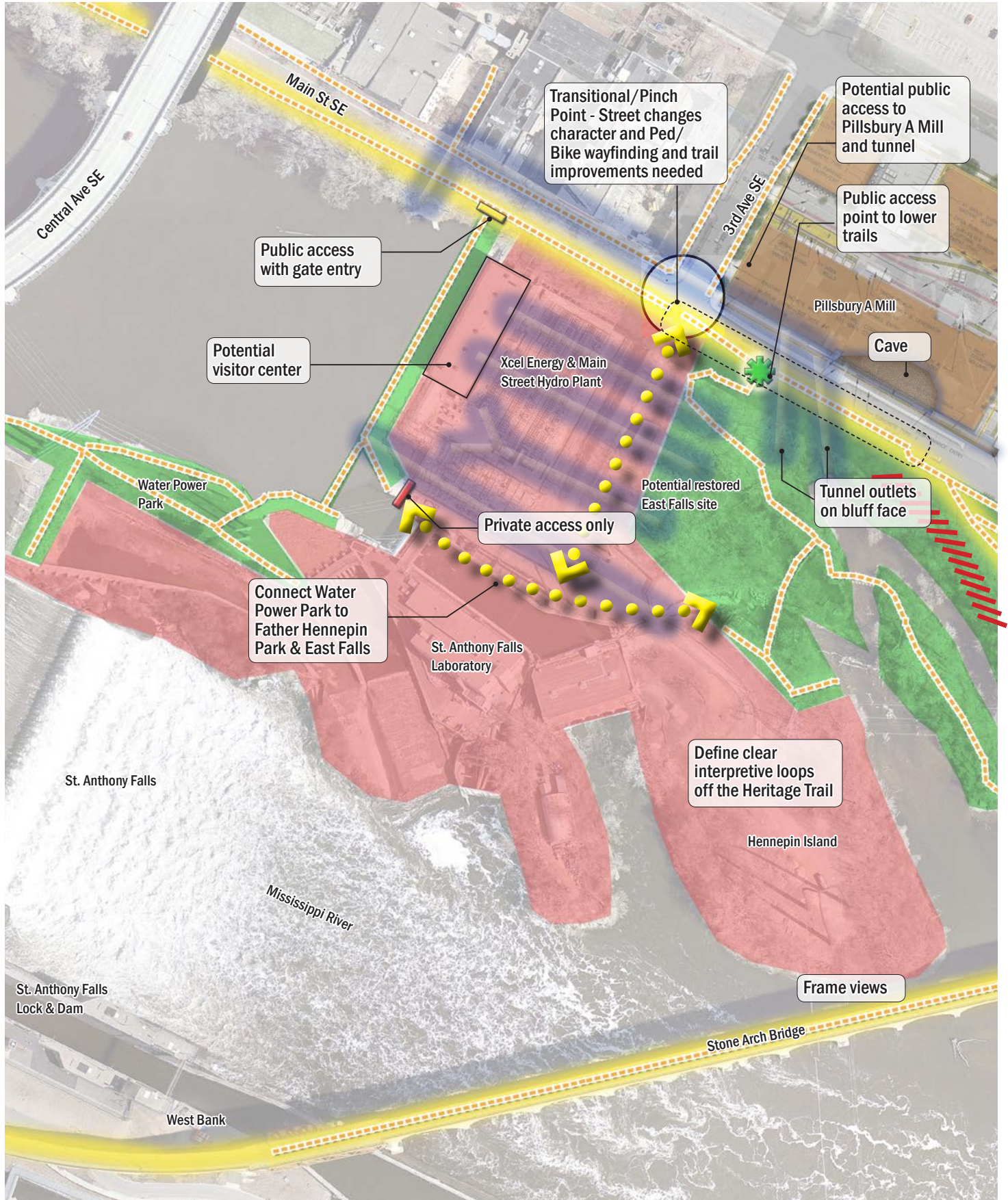
## POWER OF THE FALLS

Across time St. Anthony Falls has awed, healed, enriched, and restored. Some have harnessed its physical power and been humbled by its force and resilience. Dakota people know this as a place to learn. To others it is the heart of a neighborhood, a place they call home. People today, as in the past, have a relationship to the power of the falls. What is this relationship? How has it changed? How has it stayed the same?

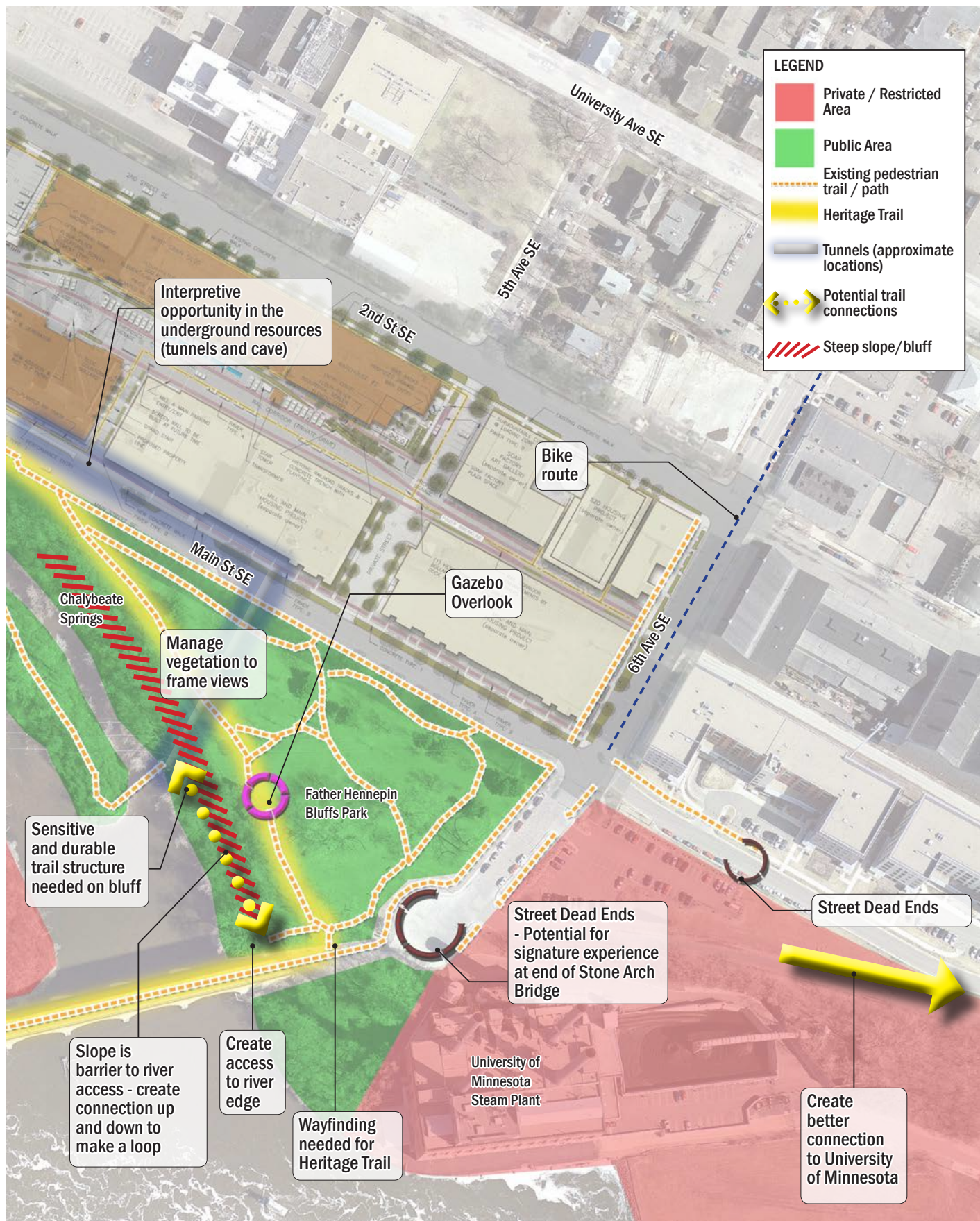


# CURRENT CONDITIONS DIAGRAM

The East Bank's historical resources are spread among many land owners, public and private. The area's topography adds interest and challenges accessibility.



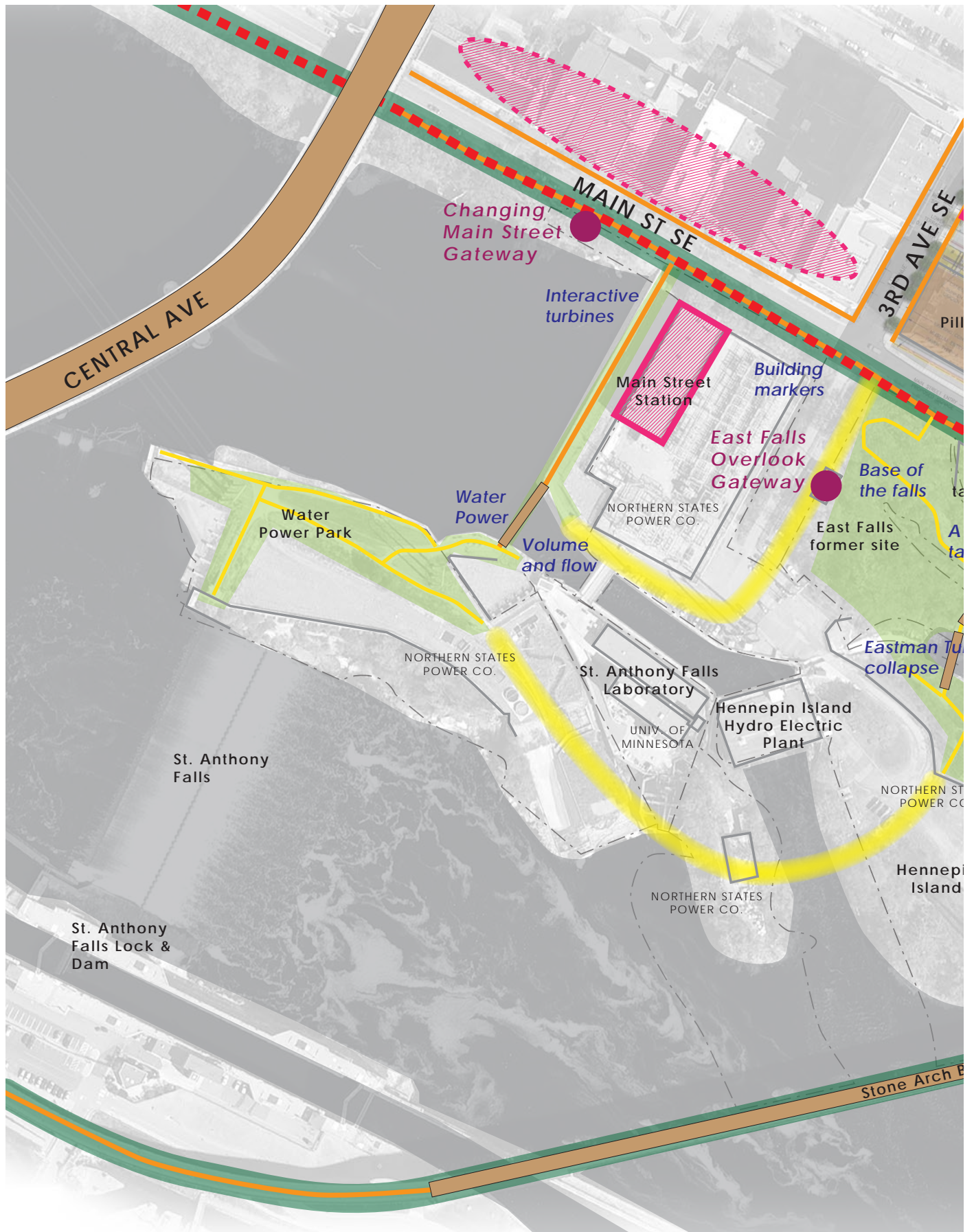




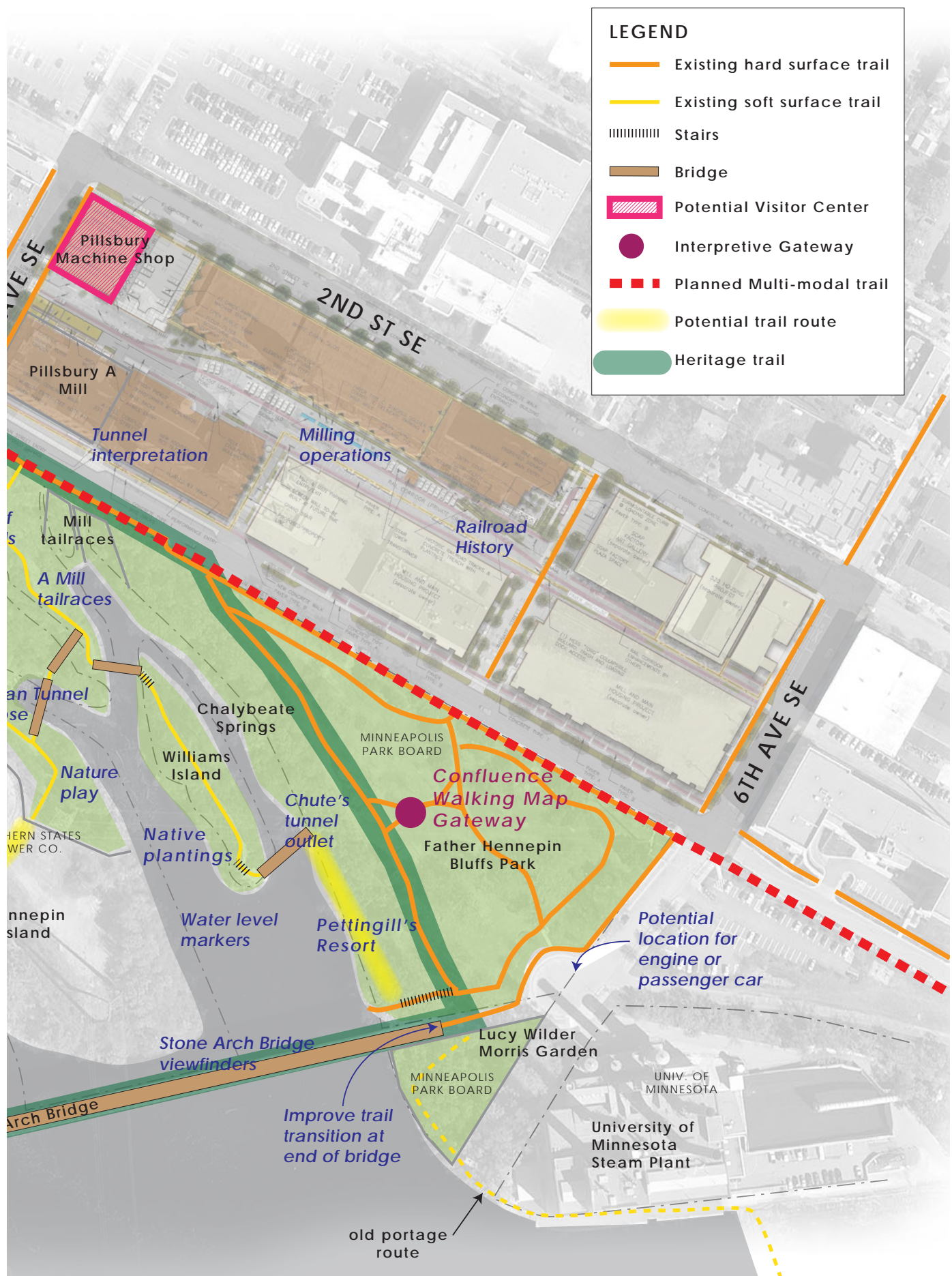


# POTENTIAL INTERPRETIVE LOCATIONS AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN

The East Bank holds an astonishing density of historical resources and attractions. Despite this richness, a system of unifying trails and integrated interpretation would greatly enhance the experience.



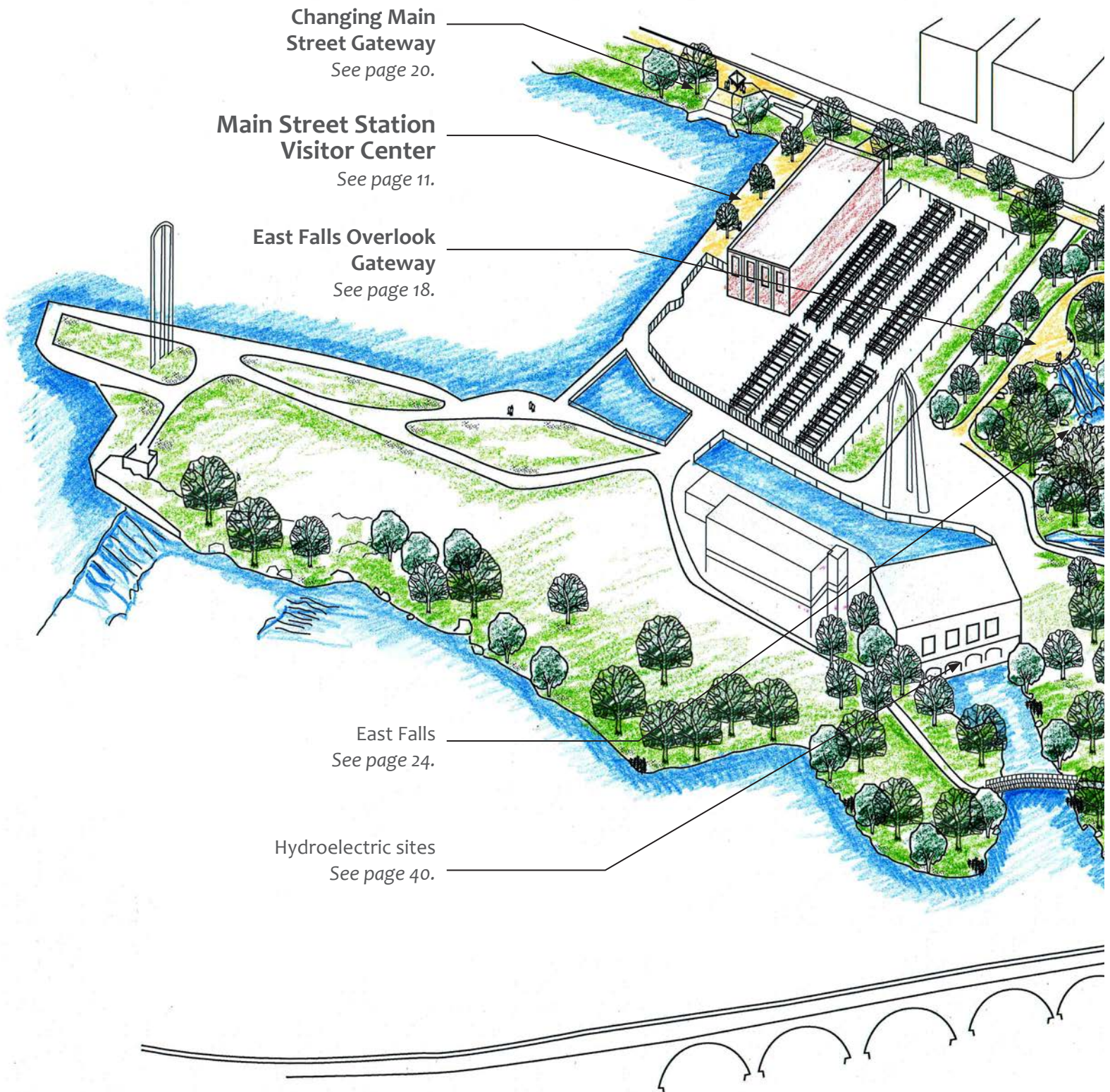






## A 25 YEAR VISION CONCEPT FOR THE EAST BANK

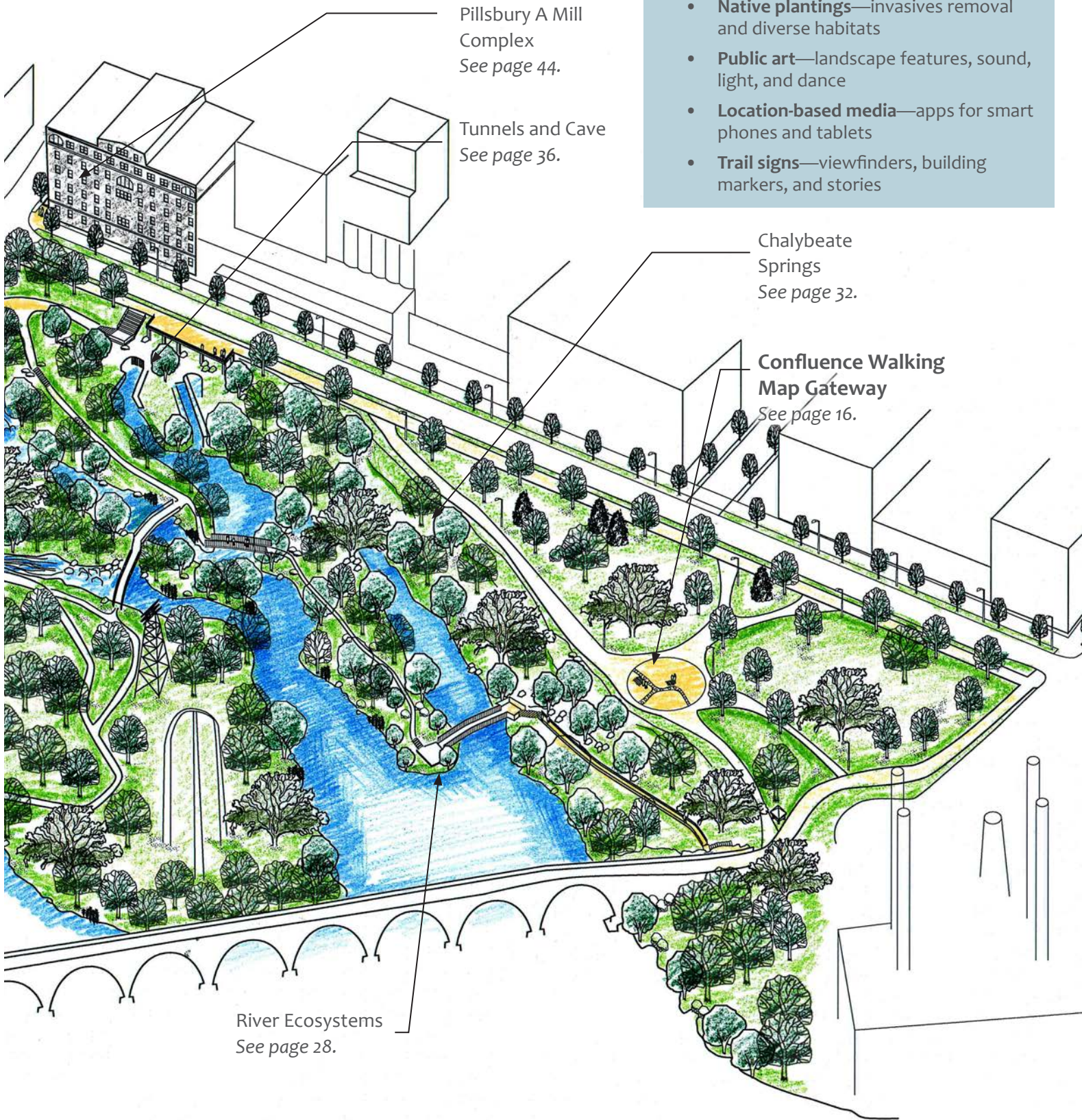
Various layers of interpretation will help new visitors see the big picture of the East Bank and provide frequent visitors with enough settings and stories to sustain lifelong relationships with the power of the Falls.





An enhanced system of trails connect upper and lower Hennepin Island with interpretive gateways and locations throughout the area, supporting visitor experiences with:

- **Changing programs**—tours, art events, and festivals
- **Native plantings**—invasives removal and diverse habitats
- **Public art**—landscape features, sound, light, and dance
- **Location-based media**—apps for smart phones and tablets
- **Trail signs**—viewfinders, building markers, and stories



Pillsbury A Mill Complex  
See page 44.

Tunnels and Cave  
See page 36.

Chalybeate Springs  
See page 32.

Confluence Walking Map Gateway  
See page 16.

River Ecosystems  
See page 28.



# Visitor Orientation and Engagement

The East Falls area of the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone is dense with interesting and important stories. Its many historical resources (structures, natural areas, and working facilities) provide uncommon opportunities for deep exploration. Also, the area readily supports broad overviews and messages for first-time visitors. This range of potential visitor experiences calls for a clearly layered approach to interpretation.

## **A Layered Approach to Visitor Engagement**

This report describes four distinct layers of interpretive experiences—from area-wide visitor orientation to specific locations for prolonged engagement and changing programs. Running through all of these layers is the idea that visitors learn through reflection as well as from new information. This layered approach is designed to satisfy a range of visitor expectations—from tourists who may visit only once, to locals who use the area's parks and trails frequently. The four layers are: 1) a visitor orientation center, 2) interactive gateways, 3) interpretive locations and trails, and 4) programs.



*East Bank St. Anthony Falls, 1860. Portage route on far right. Minnesota Historical Society*





# Visitor Orientation Center

In the 2009 St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board Visitor Survey of 400 visitors to the area, half of the respondents expressed high interest in a “visitor and orientation center.” A total of 29% said they were very interested in guided tours and 21% said they were very interested in audio tours. In addition, in an open-ended question about “any additions, changes, improvements or amenities” they would like to see, 25% asked for more restroom facilities and others cited a range of visitor amenities such as visitor/orientation center, information kiosks, maps and better signage, picnic areas and more/better parking. This research clearly identifies the desire for more information and for better visitor facilities.

School groups also represent an important audience for East Bank attractions—one that is currently underserved. A visitor center, with facilities for managing group tours and school programs, will be required if the area’s agencies and organizations hope to better serve this interested and diverse audience.

Minnesota’s changing seasons present many challenges for outdoor attractions, such as those at St. Anthony Falls. Winter also offers stunning scenes that include the changing Falls and diverse wildlife. For wintertime visitors, knowing that there’s a place to come in out of the cold adds immensely to the area’s appeal. A visitor center is also a place from which visitors can gauge the length of their walks, on chilly evenings as well as bright warm days. And by providing even a minimal program of events throughout the winter months, a visitor center will help maintain public interest and keep the area’s visibility high year around.

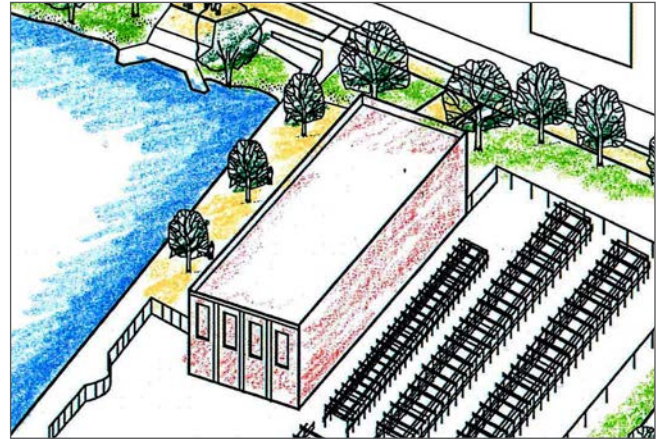




## AN ENDURING IDEA

For more than 30 years, planners have called for a visitor center at St. Anthony Falls. A 1981 study proposed developing the Main Street Hydroelectric Station into a centerpiece among the area's historical treasures. From 1995 to 2002, the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) operated a popular tour program from a storefront in St. Anthony Main. In many ways this facility served as an orientation center for much of the central riverfront until MHS shifted its resources and focus to Mill City Museum. The need for this kind of facility is clear and enduring.

Concept sketch of Main Street Station



Preliminary planning discussions have identified several possible locations for an East Bank visitor center, including: the Main Street Hydroelectric Station, owned by Xcel Energy; the Pillsbury Machine Shop, owned by Dominion; a Main Street storefront; and a newly constructed facility, location yet to be determined. When considering interpretive and operational needs, Main Street Station clearly stands out as an optimum site for a visitor orientation center.

A basement space in the Pillsbury A Mill, accessed through a small lobby area off 3rd Street SE, has been offered by Dominion for public program purposes. While this space has great potential as part of a facilitated tunnel tour experience, it does not provide sufficient space for a visitor center.

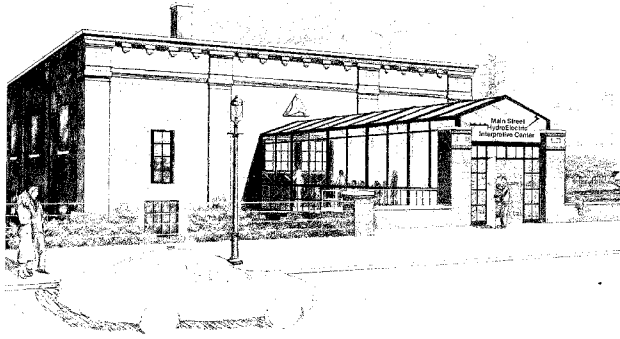
While the addition of a visitor center is important to the interpretive vision for the East Bank and is strongly supported by audience research, it remains to be resolved which entities are willing to take on the construction and operation of such a facility. Potential questions and challenges for future planning include:

- Who will own and maintain it? Who will provide staff to operate it?
- What is the relationship with potential food, tour, and rental vendors?

Visitors to the East Bank area will benefit greatly from a centrally located facility that provides orientation and basic amenities. An orientation facility would provide a clearly designated first stop for new visitors and for repeat visitors, a place to register for events and check up on what's new along the East Bank. A visitor orientation center could include or feature the following amenities and services:

- A place to organize and disperse school groups
- Ample views of area highlights and interpreted locations
- Direct experience with one of the area's historical structures
- Staff who can answer questions and help visitors explore their interests
- Public bathrooms, drinking water, and occasional food service
- An overlook high enough to see the entire site, comparable to the 9th floor overlook at Mill City Museum
- A place to hold indoor events and accommodate occasional facility rentals





Main Street Station, Interpretive Center concept, ca. 1981.  
Minnesota Historical Society/Northern States Power.



St. Anthony Falls Interpretive Program storefront, 1990s.  
Minnesota Historical Society



Main Street Station, 2013



National Eagle Center, Winona, Minnesota

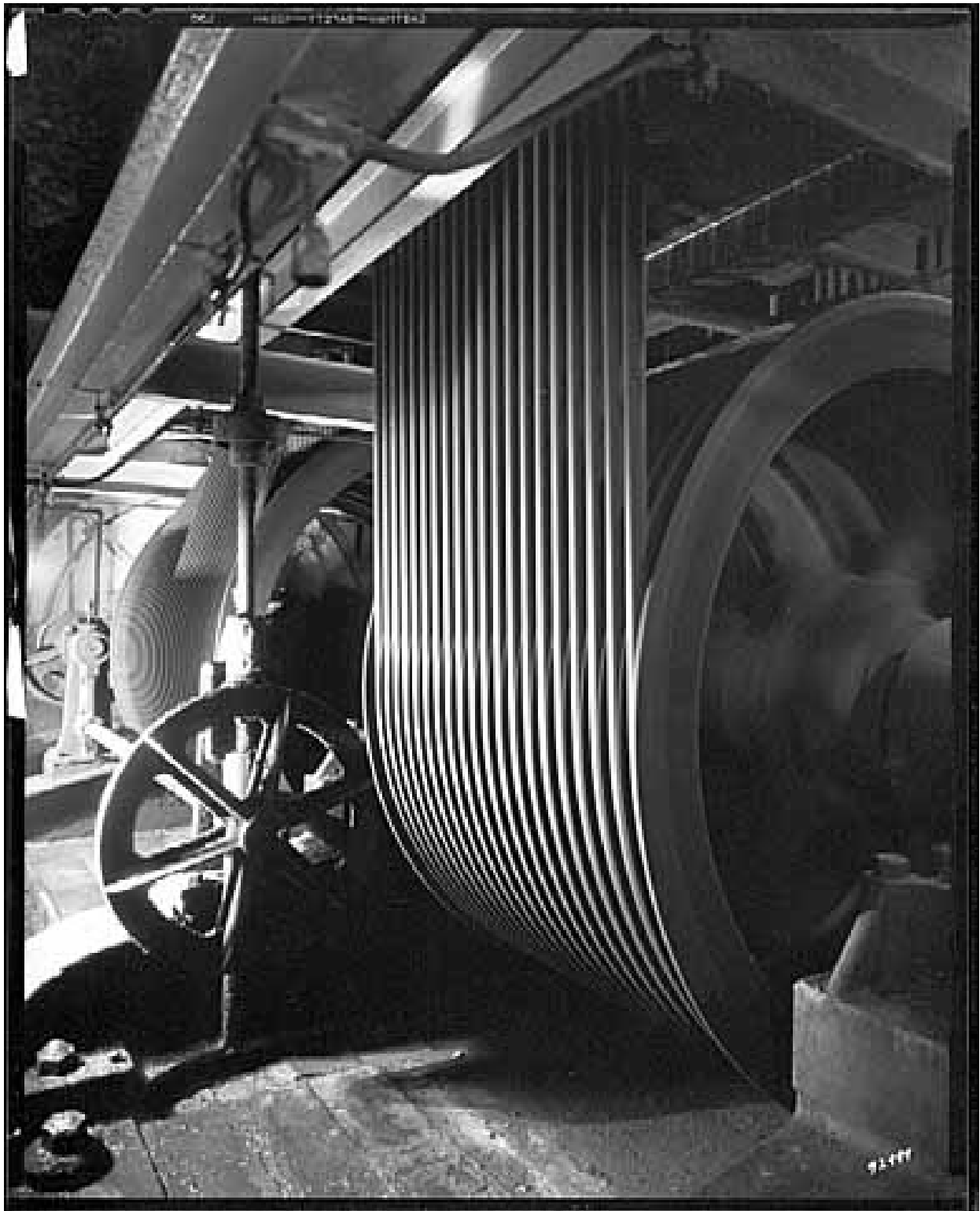


Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin



National Park Service Mississippi River Visitor Center, St. Paul, Minnesota





*Pillsbury A Mill pulleys, Minnesota Historical Society*



# Interpretive Gateways

Three proposed landscape structures—magnetic and welcoming—will provide visitors with easy introductions to the site and its offerings. For visitors weighing their choices, or deciding whether or not to invest their time in further exploration, these gateways provide time-and-place overviews along with visual previews of what the area has to offer—down at the water’s edge, inside a millrace tunnel, or shoulder-to-shoulder with a limestone bluff. It’s here that visitors are reminded that all around them the present-day landscape holds stories of people and events from the past.

These gateways can be expected to engage visitors in many ways, giving them a new experience with each visit, and evoking connections through time and across geography. Community artists, arts organizations, and other entities and loose partnerships could play key roles in developing and implementing the vision for these site-specific installations. They could draw on the many relationships sustained by the Falls and collaborate with storytellers, map makers, and historians to develop culturally specific artworks. Standard interpretive elements, such as trail signs and markers, can be integrated into the gateways to provide the historical words and imagery that draw visitors into the bigger picture of life around St. Anthony Falls.

Each of the three proposed gateways focuses on a particular set of stories, including subjects that are difficult to represent in an interpretive location or along a trail. Shared design elements among the gateways will help visitors recognize them as parts of a whole. As high-profile elements in the landscape—all easily accessed from Main Street—they can also serve an important role in area wayfinding.

Confluence Walking  
Map

East Falls Overlook

Changing Main  
Street



# Gateway 1: Confluence Walking Map



Concept graphic of walking map



A highly stylized map of the Mississippi River, embedded in the ground, invites visitors to walk along its route. The map and related graphics will help orient visitors geographically to the broader context of St. Anthony Falls. This is an important confluence of elements: the far-reaching tributaries from which the Mississippi gets its power; the people who have settled here, are passing through or returning; and the flow of commerce and enterprise.

Exhibits and trail signs will carry many of the stories, but above all, this should be an artwork with a vision put forward through the hands of artists. This large map will serve guided tours by providing an evocative structure for groups to pause and hear stories. As a nucleus around which large public gatherings can happen, this gateway will support events and festivals.



## ILLUSTRATING THE EXPERIENCE



Mud Island, Memphis, Tennessee



Schaars Bluff, Dakota County



Schaars Bluff, Dakota County

### Proposed stories:

- A portage route established by the Dakota ran from across the channel at the southern end of Nicollet Island down what is now Main Street to an alluvial flat just below the Stone Arch Bridge
- Controlled waterways of the Mississippi watershed, engineered depth and flow
- Railroads, commercial and passenger trains that connected to world ports
- Sawmills, turning trees from the north into lumber for cities to the south and west



## Gateway 2: East Falls Overlook



Concept graphic of East Falls overlook



From this elevated platform visitors can take in a 360-degree overview that includes the ravine below the Falls, the Pillsbury tailraces, William's Island, the Stone Arch Bridge, St. Anthony Falls Lab, and the Xcel hydropower plants. It's here that visitors are asked to imagine fast moving water flowing beneath their feet—over what is now dry land—and feel the drop of 40 feet to the ravine below.

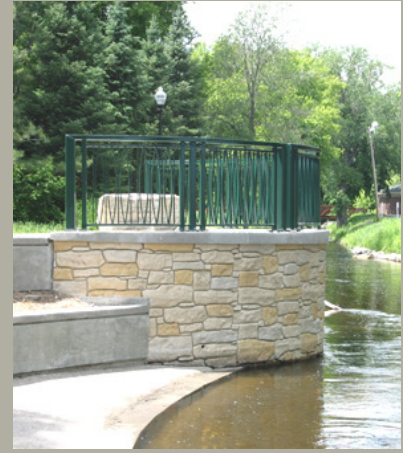
This gateway experience relies heavily on framed views and trail signs. The context provided by the sound and mist of the restored East Falls, however, will make the stories all the more engaging. With easy access from Main Street, this structure will also provide tour guides with an appealing destination, from which they can point to dozens of historical resources.



East Falls, ca. 1900.  
Minnesota Historical  
Society



## ILLUSTRATING THE EXPERIENCE



### Proposed stories:

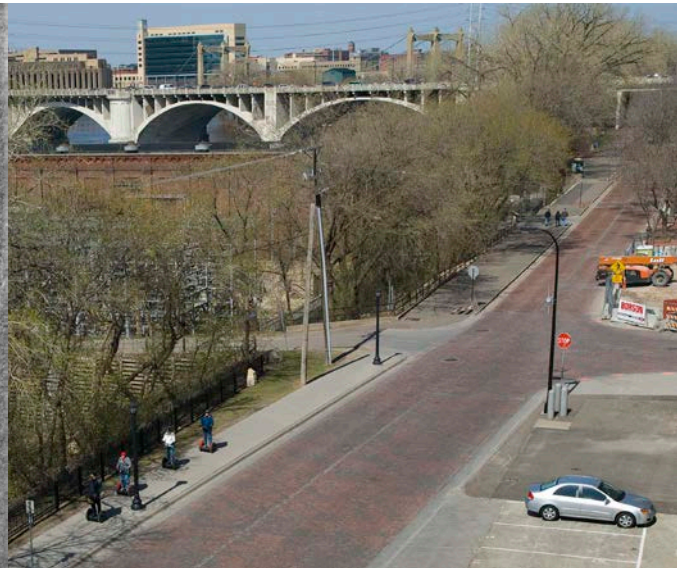
- Early years of sawmills and factories on the platform, ramshackle buildings built quickly to make money
- Dynamic river, destructive floods, wildlife, and geology
- Engineering the river for the control of waterpower, changing landscape natural and engineered
- Fires on Hennepin Island and the fast pace of rebuilding—bigger, better, faster
- The city's water supply
- St. Anthony Falls Lab, the Xcel plants, and the University of Minnesota coal-fired plant. What are these facilities? What do they do? How do they relate to one another?



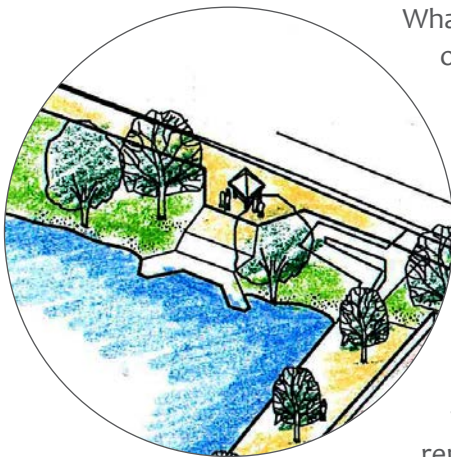
## Gateway 3: Changing Main Street



Oxcarts on Main Street, 1858. Minnesota Historical Society



Main Street, 2009, Jerry Mathiason. Minnesota Historical Society



What is now called Main Street has long been a well-traveled route. It was once the primary portage around the Falls. Today it's part of a historic urban neighborhood that attracts visitors much as it did in the 1850s and 1860s. This thoroughfare has long been marked by the constant flow of people, food, and commerce.

A series of viewfinders and viewing frames align contemporary subjects with historical images and interpretive text about Main Street. Seeing the past through various historical frames can be powerful—prompting imaginations to fill in the memorable details of color, sound, and movement. Beyond the existing landmarks, this gateway could engage added features, such as a sculptural representation of an inverted canoe placed downriver to evoke stories of the portage. Another viewing frame could be aimed down into the street as if to reveal a view into the Main Street headrace tunnel.

Where possible, these specially aligned views into the past could be accompanied by the words of people from the past and today, such as Dakota words engraved along pathways. Whether through permanent graphics or location-based media, visitors could read or hear from voices that evoke different relationships to the power of the falls over time. Like the Confluence Walking Map, this set of elements demands the vision of artists to prompt diverse and unexpected views into the past.



Concept graphic of Changing Main Street interpretive signage



## ILLUSTRATING THE EXPERIENCE



### Proposed stories:

- A portage route established by the Dakota and traveled by fur traders.
- Early tourism and the area's national reputation
- The great diversity of people who lived here and passed through this place over time
- Early Main Street businesses
- The Main Street headrace tunnel, just beneath the street





East Falls, 1858. Minnesota Historical Society



# Interpretive Locations & Trails

Of the six interpretive resources featured in this study only a few represent specific sites. Others are more thematic and borderless, yet all are connected by their relationship to the power of St. Anthony Falls. The integrated interpretive approach recommended for the East Bank area draws on the many intersecting timelines and themes that come to light when these resources are considered together as a whole. With each visit, people will discover new stories and find deeper connections between this place and the world beyond.

Direct experiences with people, places, and objects almost always provide the most memorable learning experiences. Giving visitors direct access to the area's historical resources is a major first step toward a successful interpretive program. Sometimes this is a story told face-to-face. Other times it is a perfectly aligned view or sequence of trail highlights in which visitors see features from unexpected perspectives. Whether standing at the base of a waterfall or touring an underground tunnel, visitors' attention is sharply focused and their understanding of the place is changed.

The proposed interpretive formats for the site's locations and trails include: trail signs and building markers, robust interactive exhibits, community art installations, landscape structures and plantings, viewing frames, and location-based media. Graphics in various formats provide access to reproduced maps, photos, and ephemera. Taken a step further, large, historical images, boldly placed on buildings, can provide visitors a kind of x-ray vision into the interior workings of the area's historic structures, especially where access is denied. Also, specially commissioned illustrations can help visitors see the complex systems and phenomena of the site in ways that photographs cannot.

Location-based media holds great promise for interpreting the historical resources of the East Bank and for building sustained relationships with audiences. Visitors with smart phones and tablets can download materials while on site, prompted by trail signs and markers, or they can obtain programs ahead of their visit through related websites. Location-based media is especially effective when it references and augments specific on-site experiences, providing sound effects and dramatic visualizations that cannot be delivered by other means outdoors. These media formats are also flexible, require no physical infrastructure, and are relatively affordable.

While some of the proposed interpretive formats provide contextual information and historical explanations, others are intended to simply fire up imaginations, prompt conversations, and encourage contemplation. St. Anthony Falls is a place for learning and there are many ways to learn.

East Falls	River Ecosystems	Chalybeate Springs	Tunnels and Cave	Hydroelectric Sites	Pillsbury A Mill Complex
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## INTERPRETIVE EXPERIENCES

### East Falls

River  
Ecosystems

Chalybeate  
Springs

Tunnels and  
Cave

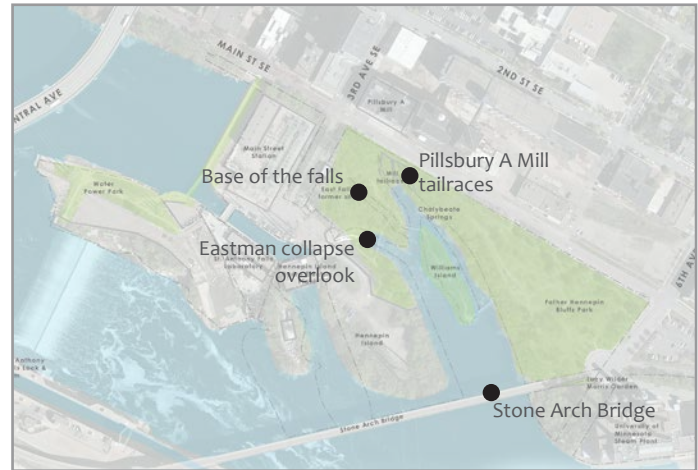
Hydroelectric  
Sites

Pillsbury A  
Mill Complex

# East Falls

The dynamic interaction between water and stone that once shaped the East Falls was, over time, halted in an effort to direct and control the river's power. The same cascade of water that powered sawmills and factories has long been a spiritual place for Dakota people. It has attracted sightseers from far away and nourished a river ecosystem.

A restored falls will have the power to re-engage visitors in the nature and stories of this remarkable place.



East Falls, 1862. Minnesota Historical Society





## INTERPRETIVE LOCATIONS



Barr Engineering, 2012.

### Base of the falls

At the restored East Falls people can feel and observe the powerful interaction of cascading water over layers of limestone. It's a place where visitors can experience the natural dynamic of a waterfall—the splash and flow of water, the current through the pool, and the distinctive plant and animal community that flourishes at the base of a falls. This is a place for retreat and contemplation.



### Eastman collapse overlook

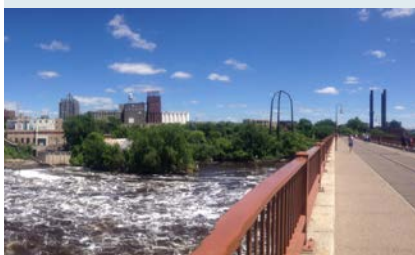
From a vantage point above the water, visitors can imagine facing the unruly torrent of water resulting from the collapse and washout of the Eastman Tunnel in 1869. Location-based media provides dramatic visualizations of the force and volume of the water gushing from beneath the limestone ledge.



### Pillsbury A Mill tailraces

These tunnel openings provoke curiosity about the hydropower system that once powered the Pillsbury A Mill. Channeling the outflow of water from the mill's turbines back into the river, these impressive structures provide a downriver bookend to one of the area's most intriguing waterpower stories. Location-based media provides visualizations of the entire hydropower system of tunnels, dropshafts, and turbines.

For the safety of visitors and the security of these historic structures, trails and interpretation should be designed to provide excellent views of the tailraces while restricting physical access. One option is to extend the proposed bluff-edge catwalk (see Chalybeate Springs) further upriver to include direct sightlines into these structures.



### Stone Arch Bridge

Trail signs and small viewing frames prompt passers-by to stop and piece together the many stories visible in this viewshed. From high above, visitors can see the broad expanse of the falls, making this an excellent place to see visualizations of the falls retreating upriver into a series of rapids stretching past Nicollet Island.

## HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS: DISCOVERY UP CLOSE AND SPECIFIC

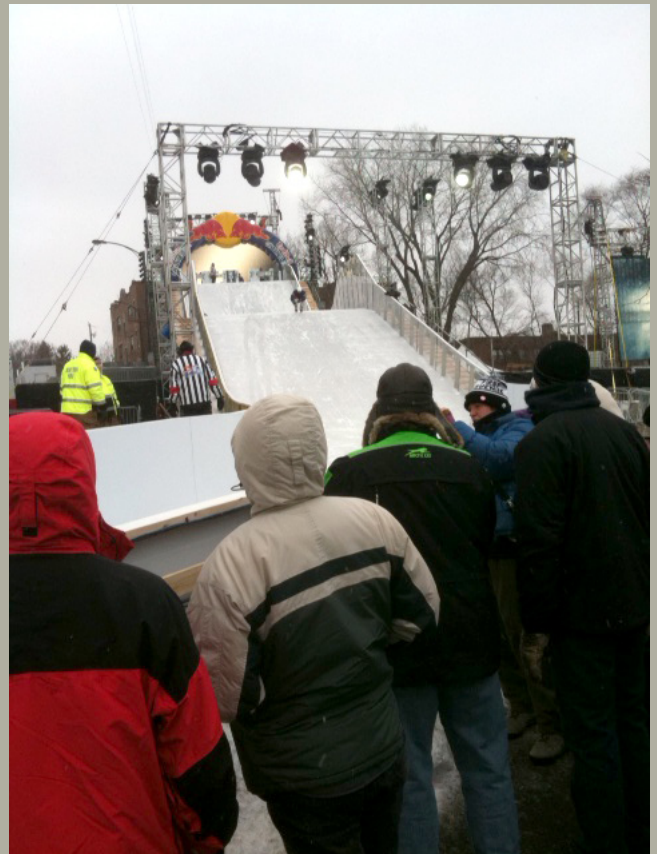


Remnant foundations of the Pillsbury steam plant with imbedded labels that describe the towering stack and massive machinery that once stood on this spot.



A limestone bolder broken away from the edge of the falls more than a hundred years ago is labeled with episodes from its story—formed on the seafloor 450 million years ago, tumbled from the edge of the falls in the 1850s, used to anchor a waste sluice from a lumber mill in the 1870s.

## ILLUSTRATING THE EXPERIENCE





## STORIES OF THE EAST BANK

.....

### View from the Bridge

*"It was no surprise that first year after it opened . . . we were counting 17,000 people a week using that thing. What a success. It restored itself to icon status that first year. I think it was another case of really restoring something to its proper role in the community. The riverfront really wasn't a new creation in its relationship to the public. It was a recreation of an earlier relationship. We were the river city."*

*David Wiggins, Minneapolis Riverfront Redevelopment Oral History Project, 2009*



StarTribune, 1994



Photos of publicly accessible Stone Arch Bridge grand opening, 1994, Minnesota Historical Society

The Stone Arch Bridge has been a riverfront icon since the early days of its construction in 1882 – 1883. When completed, it astonished visitors with its sheer scale and beauty. For train travelers it also provided optimal views of the river, the falls, and the many islands that braced against the fast moving water.

When the restored Stone Arch Bridge opened to the public in 1994 it fulfilled a great desire among locals and visitors. They had always wanted to see the river and the falls from this vantage point. This was the sensation they had always wanted to feel.

Until the bridge opened to pedestrians and bicyclists, the engaging views of Hennepin and William's Islands that we now appreciate were far out of reach. From the bridge, visitors can see into the ravine and places that hold many stories. As a stage for interpretation, the bridge is far from reaching its potential.

## INTERPRETIVE EXPERIENCES

East Falls

### River Ecosystems

Chalybeate Springs

Tunnels and Cave

Hydroelectric Sites

Pillsbury A Mill Complex

# River Ecosystems

The industrial landscape at St. Anthony Falls is imposing, yet the sweeping vistas of trees and water readily bring visitors back to the beauty and surprise of the area's natural landscape. In the early 1970s, when planners encouraged city residents to "Think River," the area was cleaned up and trails and walking bridges were constructed. Throughout the area today there are signs of resilient nature, especially in the ravines and channels beneath the East Falls. Dakota sources and accounts from early Euro-American travelers can provide the knowledge to continue restoring this vital landscape. With missing species returned and returning, there will be many places to reflect on the relationships between plants, animals, and people.

In October 2013, the U.S. House approved a bill that would close the upper locks at St. Anthony Falls to help protect Minnesota's northern waters from invasive Asian carp. This closure, should it happen, will be a significant event in the history of the Falls and a critical change in the ecosystem of the area.

Sustaining the natural areas of the East Bank will require community involvement—not just to maintain the resource, but to engage with it. Monitoring programs such as Citizen Science and peer-to-peer learning programs will bring different perspectives to this important resource.





## INTERPRETIVE LOCATIONS



### Water level markers

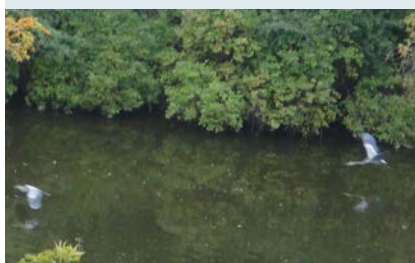
Some water-level changes are frequent and subtle, such as when the locks open and close. Other changes have occurred over decades. Seen from various positions on land, markers can draw attention to changing river depths. Other markers, closer to shore, can indicate the conditions of a century years ago, showing that much of what is now a water-filled ravine was once a floodplain meadow.



### Native plantings

Along the East Bank, many native plants have survived the stresses of industry and urban development. By removing invasive species, room can be made for the remarkable diversity of plants that once flourished here.

Plant names can be effective interpretive elements. They often provide meaningful information about a plant, such as red-twigged dogwood and cottonwood. Dakota names—provided on labels and trail signs—could remind all visitors of the different relationships people have with these plants. Whether labeled or not, native plants should be accessible to visitors—for close study, to support a conversation, or to inspire a story.



### Mississippi flyway

From William's Island, visitors can see multiple bird habitats: river shoreline, steep river banks, high perches, open water, and shrub layers. An excellent place for bird watching, the East Falls ravine provides a seasonal show of resident and migratory song birds, water birds, and raptors.



### Nature play

At one or two locations in the ravine a few well-placed logs, stumps, and boulders provide inviting opportunities for families to pause and play around with the materials and settings at hand. A shallow and protected location in the ravine could also provide a place for visitors to step out onto large, steady rocks, look for signs of life in the water, and touch the river.

## ILLUSTRATING THE EXPERIENCE



Trailhead, Duluth





# Riverbed Survivors

*“Ironically, this reach of the Mississippi River between the Twin Cities and Hastings, MN, once nearly a dead zone, may now be one of the last big river mussel refuges in the Midwestern United States.”*

Dan Kelner and Mike Davis, **Mussel Survey of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area Corridor**, 2000-01.



Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee



Star Tribune

In 2000 – 2001, researchers at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources conducted a statewide survey of mussel populations, including the pool above St. Anthony Falls. There they found surprisingly diverse and abundant communities of freshwater mussels. Among the 16 live species collected from the pool, 10 were recent arrivals, having colonized these waters within the previous 10 years.

Mussels are important indicators of ecosystem health. They are also beautiful and intriguing—no doubt why they’ve been given names such as deer toe, plain pocketbook, mapleleaf, pink healsplitter, fragile papershell, and strange floater.

Today’s St. Anthony Falls may be getting as much attention from biologists as it once got from engineers. After decades of heavy industrial activity and urban pollution, the power of the river is still generating ecological renewal.

# Chalybeate Springs

All along the rocky bluff below Father Hennepin Park there are many small seeps and springs. One of these springs—flowing clearly and steadily for hundreds of years—was known for its curative qualities. The spring results from a geological formation that defines the St. Anthony Falls landscape. All together, the Chalybeate Springs, the eroded limestone bluff layered with soft sandstone, and the river below tell an important story of landscape change brought about by people and nature.

The primary visitor-experience platform here is an elevated catwalk that runs along the face



of the bluff from the Stone Arch Bridge up to the Pillsbury tailraces. Visitors walk above an unimpeded flow of natural elements—ground water, broken bedrock, and wildlife. Along the way they encounter trail signs and viewing frames that reveal some surprising changes along the bluff.



Concept graphic of catwalk trail along the bluff



## INTERPRETIVE LOCATIONS



### Below the Stone Arch Bridge

Obscured by higher water levels and the construction of the Stone Arch Bridge, this area once looked very different than it does today. Trail signs and location markers will provide historical views of this place below the Falls, connecting it to the portage landing downriver from the bridge and the once-grassy floodplain at the foot of the bluff just upriver from the bridge.



Minnesota Historical Society

### Pettingill's Resort

From 1875 to 1881 a resort was situated on what today is a steep bluff. The resort traded on the curative powers of Chalybeate Springs and the scenic values of the Falls. Location-based media offers a period soundscape from an evening at the dance pavilion just below the hotel.



### Chute's Tunnel and Cave

Toward the upriver end of the catwalk, visitors are asked to imagine a large tunnel entrance eroded into the sandstone layer beneath the roof of limestone. At one time, tourists could book a tour by boat into the mysterious cave. Location-based media could provide a virtual tour of the tunnel and cave as they exist today.

More ambitious plans for the cave and its associated tunnel call for reopening the tunnel entrance and offering boat-tour access, similar to the tours once offered by Pettingill's Resort. This idea will require more study to determine feasibility and cost.

## ILLUSTRATING THE EXPERIENCE



*Cor-ten steel bridge.*



*Brandywine Falls walkway at Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Jack Rigby.*



# Resort among the Sawmills

*“The band played at the springs every Saturday evening, and with the grand old Mississippi rolling and tumbling at your feet, the scene is a beautiful and impressive one.”*

*Advertisement, Saint Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer-Press and Tribune, August 26, 1876*



Minnesota  
Historical  
Society

Pettingill's Amusement Resort (1876 – 1881) was an unlikely tourist destination. It sat among the city's industrial giants and faced a river that was often strewn with mill waste and broken structures. But it was also in the center of activity and comfortably nestled against the bluff in a beautiful setting not unlike today's East Falls ravine.

The resort featured a hotel, an ice cream parlor, cigar stand, restaurant, and photograph gallery. Among its most notable attractions were Chute's Cave and Chalybeate Springs, a mineral spring thought to have great rejuvenating properties.

## Saint Anthony's Falls Mineral Springs.

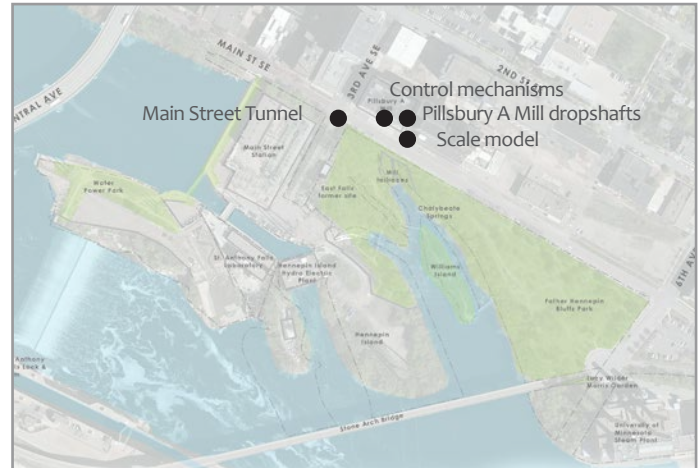


PETTINGILL & NOWACK, Proprietors.

# Tunnels and Cave

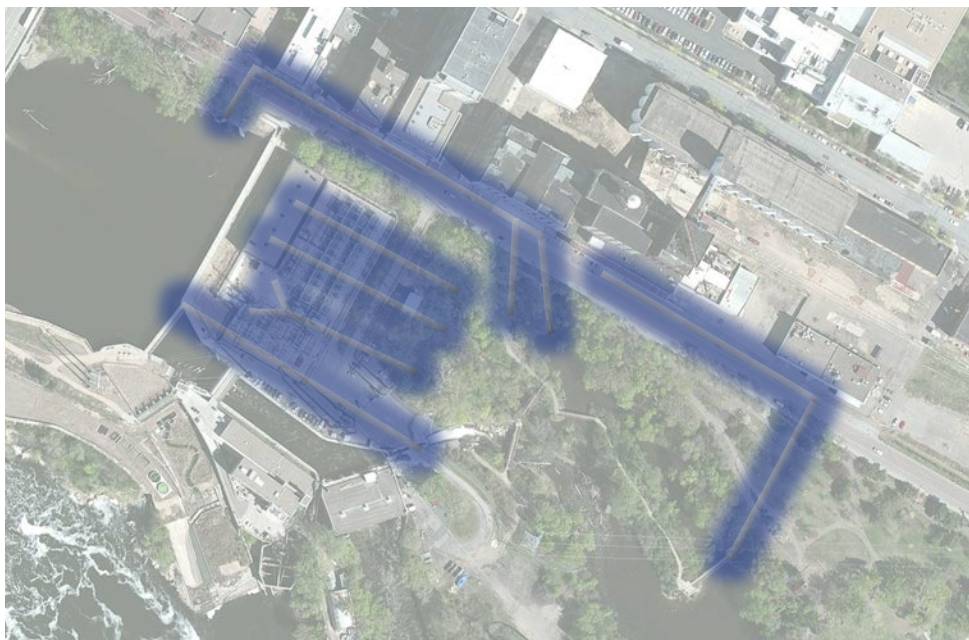
Minneapolis would not have become the milling capital of the world without the complex of tunnels that harnessed the power of St. Anthony Falls. This was, after all, the largest direct-drive waterpower system the world had ever known. Yet today, little of this vast system of tunnels and dropshafts is known among the public. Fortunately, major components of the East Bank tunnel system are still intact and potentially accessible for interpretation. By highlighting these resources in the overall visitor experience, an important piece of the waterpower story would be finally brought fully into the story of St. Anthony Falls.

Few historical attractions could match the experience of entering the 500-foot-long Main Street tunnel or peering down a 50-foot-deep dropshaft in the Pillsbury A Mill. These underground structures have the potential to



become a signature attraction—regionally and nationally—for Minneapolis and the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone.

Guided tours will be the most effective format for engaging audiences in the places and stories of these waterpower resources. They will limit the impact on the historical structures and provide deeper, more visitor-centered interpretation. Dominion has set aside a 3,000 to 5,000 square-foot space in the basement of the Pillsbury A Mill for public programming. This space is accessed from a small street-level lobby off 3rd Avenue SE.



*Approximate locations of existing tunnels on the East Bank*

Location-based media can extend the experience to visitors not taking guided tours. Virtual tours can also provide glimpses into parts of the system that are not accessible to the public, such as Chute's Cave, adjacent to the A Mill complex. Although Chute's Cave is off limits to visitors, it provides a clear demonstration of an important geological phenomenon—eroding sandstone beneath a rooflike layer limestone—that plays out in many other stories at the Falls.



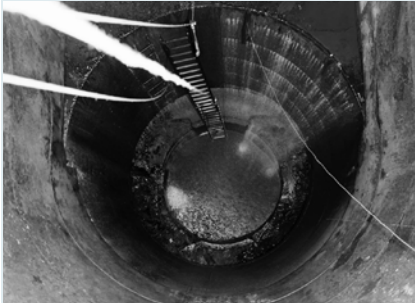
## INTERPRETIVE LOCATIONS



Dan Pratt, Minnesota Historical Society

### Main Street tunnel

If safe, ADA-compliant access can be provided through guided tours by a responsible party, the awe-inspiring scale of this space will surely inspire visitors to think about the overall magnitude of the hydropower system at St. Anthony Falls. Even a short walk along a catwalk inside this tunnel reveals an impressive and mysterious underground world.



### Pillsbury A Mill dropshafts

The forebay in the basement of the A Mill houses two dropshafts, one of which will be used for a hydrothermal heating and cooling system. If safe access can be provided, visitors looking down into the 50-foot dropshafts can experience, first-hand, the reason that the Falls generate such power. Although the A Mill's hydrothermal system will not be accessible to the public, it does present an interesting story that could be told in words and illustrations. It holds an important message that the power of the falls is now being harnessed for a different kind of energy.



### Scale model

Seeing the entire East Bank waterpower system in one three-dimensional model will help visitors grasp the scope and complexity of the system. This walk-around model reveals the millraces, dropshafts, and direct-drive in clear relation to one another, showing how this astonishing feat of engineering worked. Further animating the model with flowing water or moving lights could demonstrate not just the scale of the system but its changing modes of operation. Consideration also could be given to providing information about the underground waterpower system on the west bank.

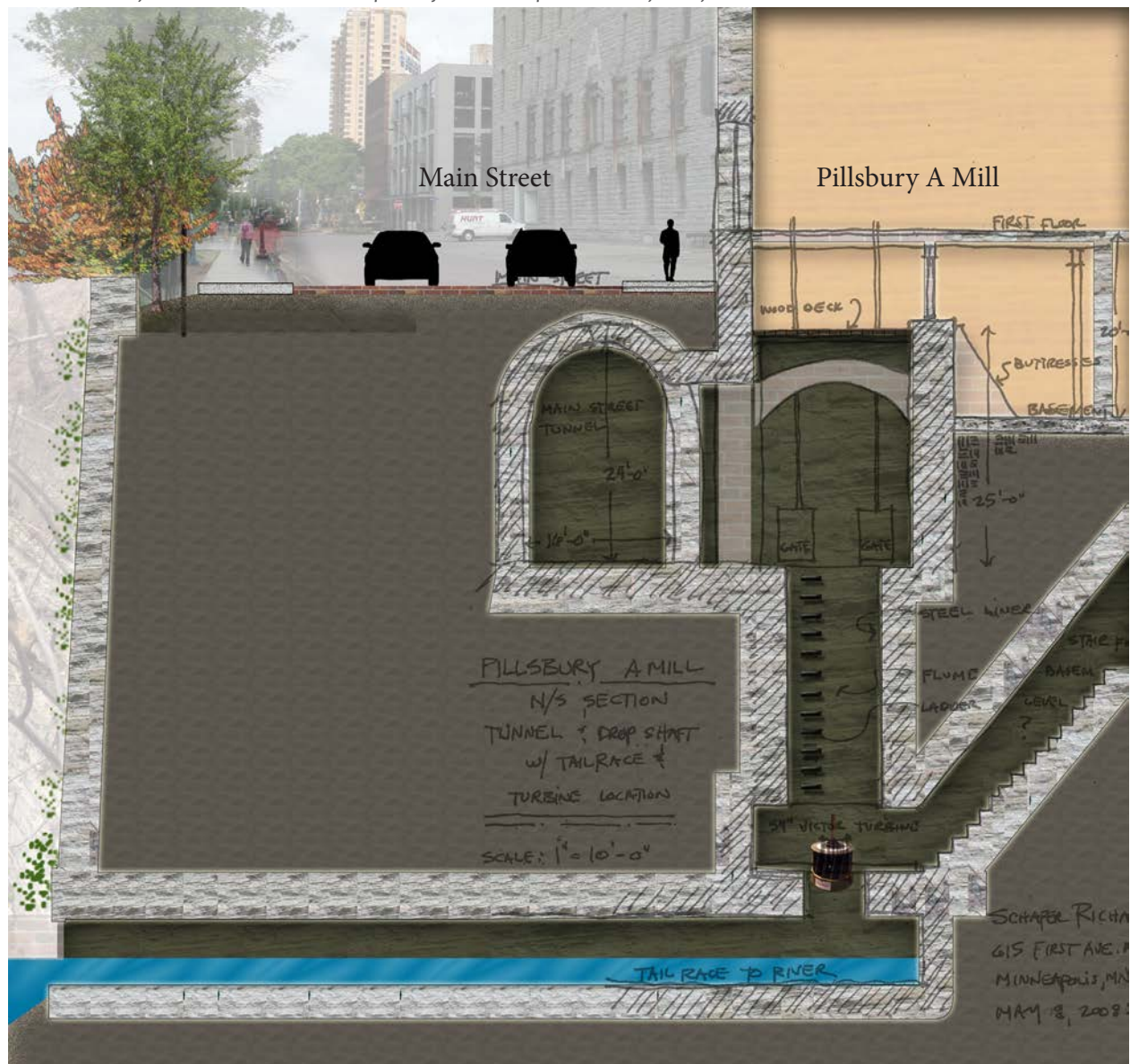


Minnesota Historical Society

### Control mechanisms

Remaining artifacts in the basement of the A Mill help visitors imagine the array of pulleys, shafts and other rope-drive mechanisms that transferred power from the spinning turbines to the various operations in the mill.

Cross section of A Mill tunnels. Sketch adapted by HKGi with permission of Schafer Richardson.



## ILLUSTRATING THE EXPERIENCE



Mammoth Cave National Park, National Park Service



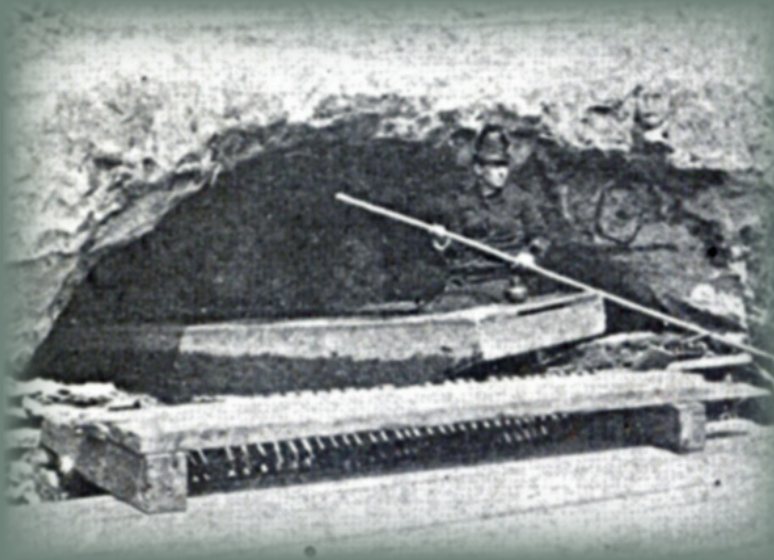
StreetMuseum/London Museum



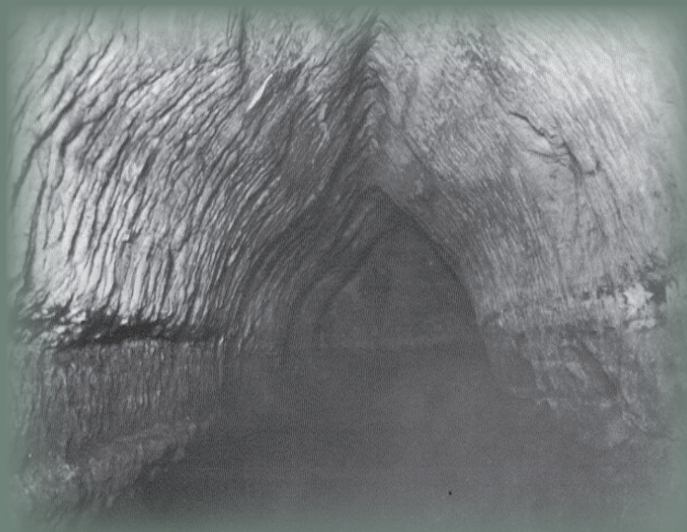
### Curious Discovery

*“Glimpsing a flowstone medusa and beautiful crystal-lined pools, I continued. Finally, the crawlway opened up into a vast sonorous chamber, and I tumbled down the slippery shale slope leading into it. Chute’s Cave at last!”*

Greg Brick, *Subterranean Twin Cities*, 2009



Chute’s Tunnel boat tour, 1870s. Minnesota Historical Society



Metropolitan Council Environmental Services

In 1866, unbelievable accounts of a lost-in-time cavern began flying out of Minneapolis. The cave and its associated tunnels were vast and deep and held otherworldly wonders including great fountains and sculpted human figures. Born of a hoax, the legend of St. Anthony’s Cave faded from the news until 1875, when Mannasseh Pettingill opened a resort at Chalybeate Springs. During the summer of 1876 he advertised “Chute’s Cave—A Boat Ride of 2,000 Feet Under Main Street.” The attraction flourished for only a few years before construction of new tail races and a sewage tunnel severely degraded the area’s resort-like atmosphere.

The cave collapsed in 1880, producing a large sinkhole just east of the Pillsbury A Mill complex. The once cavernous space below was largely filled in by chunks of limestone and fallen debris. With today’s higher water levels, it is difficult to imagine the cave’s entrance as it appeared to thrill-seeking tourists in the 1870s. Despite its hidden and inaccessible nature, the cave continues to sustain the curiosity of many.

# Hydroelectric Sites

St. Anthony Falls holds an important place in the early history of hydroelectric power in North America. Today, after more than 150 years of water-powered industry at the falls, hydroelectric is the only business still drawing mechanical power from these waters.

The first hydroelectric-power central station in the U.S. went online at St. Anthony Falls in September 1882. Within a few years, the city could boast 232 electric street lamps. In 1894, the first Main Street Station was built over the east-side dam, providing electricity primarily for city streets. By 1908, when the still-operating Hennepin Island Hydroelectric Plant was built, the falls were generating four times the horsepower they had in the 1880s. Extraordinary feats of engineering were extracting enough power for milling and electricity.

On January 6, 1911, just when Minneapolis residents thought they could take well-lighted streets for granted, their streets went dark. A fire at Main Street Station left the city in darkness. Power was restored temporarily while the Minneapolis General Electric Company began rebuilding Main Street Station and a new municipal power grid, bringing even more reliable electricity to the streets of Minneapolis.



Main Street Station was taken out of service in 1968 and has only been used minimally since. Today it remains a significant East Falls landmark, not only for its place in history but also for the physical resources preserved beneath its floors. The 1911 plant was built on the foundations of the 1894 facility, using the same tunnels and turbines. Although the turbines and generators have been removed, the century-old waterpower structures are still intact. Main Street Station's hydroelectric history, location, and architecture contribute to its potential as a visitor orientation center.



## INTERPRETIVE LOCATIONS



Mill City Museum, Minnesota Historical Society

### Interactive Turbines

Many different waterpower technologies have been employed at the East Falls. From the undershot waterwheels that powered early sawmills to the turbines that generate electricity today to experimental designs for river-friendly turbines, there is an interesting story of change. At a site along the up-river side of the Main Street Station, visitors see and interact with large-scale models of waterpower turbines. Given the appropriate location and flow of water, visitors could see a working model of an undershot waterwheel.

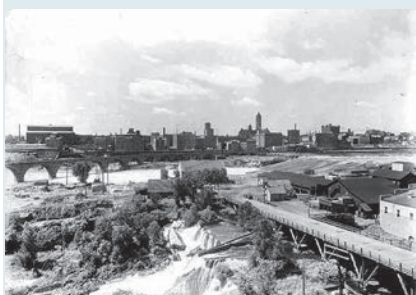
Supporting interpretation in the form of illustrated graphics will help visitors see the differences between the direct-drive systems once used to power sawmills and flour mills and the hydroelectrical generation still in use today.



Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

### Volume and Flow

At the headrace to the Hennepin Island Hydro Electric Plant visitors see channeled, turbulent water flowing by at a remarkable rate. From here it is easy to imagine the many channels and tunnels that once carried water to the mills and power plants. Instruments that measure flow rates and volume provide visitors with real-time data on the river, either on site or on line.



Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

### Available Waterpower

As the river of a hundred years ago approached St. Anthony Falls, its current was parceled out for distribution into the many headraces and lined its banks. A large stylized graphic facing the east-side pool illustrates the complex mapping of water rights that once ruled the falls.



### Building Markers

Where possible, interpretive trails bring visitors close to Main Street Station and the 1908 power plant where they see large photographic plaques featuring contemporary views into each of the buildings. Like windows into the working spaces of these facilities, the photos help answer common questions about what went on inside these intriguing buildings. Building markers can also provide prompts to location-based media programs.

## ILLUSTRATING THE EXPERIENCE



Water Power Park



History tour, Mill City Museum



Main Street Hydroelectric Station, 1926. Minnesota Historical Society



# From Horses to Hydroelectric

*“Few events in Twin Cities history in the nineteenth century can compete in significance with the electrification of the street railway system and its subsequent effects on growth and development.”*

*John W. Diers and Aaron Isaacs, **Twin Cities by Trolley**, 2007*



*Minneapolis Streetcar. Minnesota Historical Society*



*East Bank, 1920s. Minnesota Historical Society*

In 1889, anxious to be done with horse-drawn trolleys, the Minneapolis City Council pressed for an experimental electric streetcar line. Within months an electrified system was spreading throughout the city. After two years, the horses were gone.

By the 1920s, much of the electricity produced at St. Anthony Falls was used to power the city's streetcars. Hennepin Island Hydro Electric Plant and Main Street Station were principal suppliers to the extensive streetcar system that once stretched from Lake Minnetonka to Stillwater.

The power of St. Anthony Falls was carried by wire from downtown Minneapolis out to the far corners of the metro area, shaping neighborhoods and influencing where people lived, worked, and played.

## Pillsbury A Mill Complex

## St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board



## INTERPRETIVE LOCATIONS



### Flour milling, rail corridor, trail signs, and site maps

Maps show the network of destinations and the far-reaching influence of what happened here. Location-based media offer soundscapes that evoke times of peak flour production.

Many different milling operations occurred at this site and each structure had specific functions. Site maps of the complex, which identify all of the key operations, will be installed on trail signs at various locations along the corridor. Illustrations—possibly 3D—will reveal the flow and conveyance of materials in and through the complex.



### Railroad artifacts

Both freight and passenger trains were once predominant features on the East Bank. As passengers on James J. Hill's Great Northern Railway crossed the Stone Arch Bridge they were given exceptional views of the East Falls and the Pillsbury milling operations. Today's visitors see similar scenes from the bridge, if not from a train. As planning continues, the SAFHB and its partners could consider the feasibility of locating an engine or passenger car on the west-bound route to evoke the perspectives of travelers heading across the river more than a century ago.



### Building markers

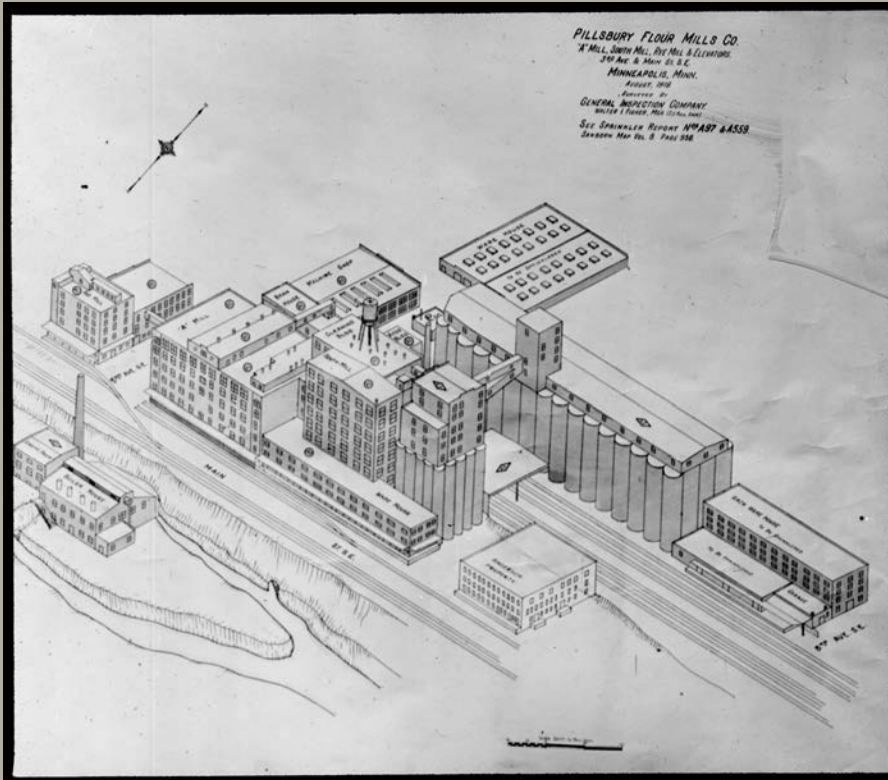
Simple plaques identify the structures and recall specific moments in time through photographic images. Where possible, these plaques could feature historical photos of building interiors, revealing as if by x-ray vision the inner workings of the various structures.



### Architectural landmark

Location-based media offers quotes from 1881 and from today, praising the A Mill's architectural design. Illustrated quotes from architectural historians describe how the timber-framed structure began to fail within years of completion. The concave façade and heavily buttressed north wall provide evocative prompts into the untold stories of this stalwart structure.

## ILLUSTRATING THE EXPERIENCE



Pillsbury A Mill  
 complex, 1919.  
 Minnesota  
 Historical Society.



Living History Tour. Minnesota Historical Society.



# The Humphrey Manlift

*“In an ecstasy I watched the thing take shape and nearly perished with joy when it quietly buckled down to its work and performed as I had claimed it would. Every minute formerly spent laboring on the stairs was replaced by a minute of rest on the elevator.”*

Seth King Humphrey, *Following the Prairie Frontier*, 1931



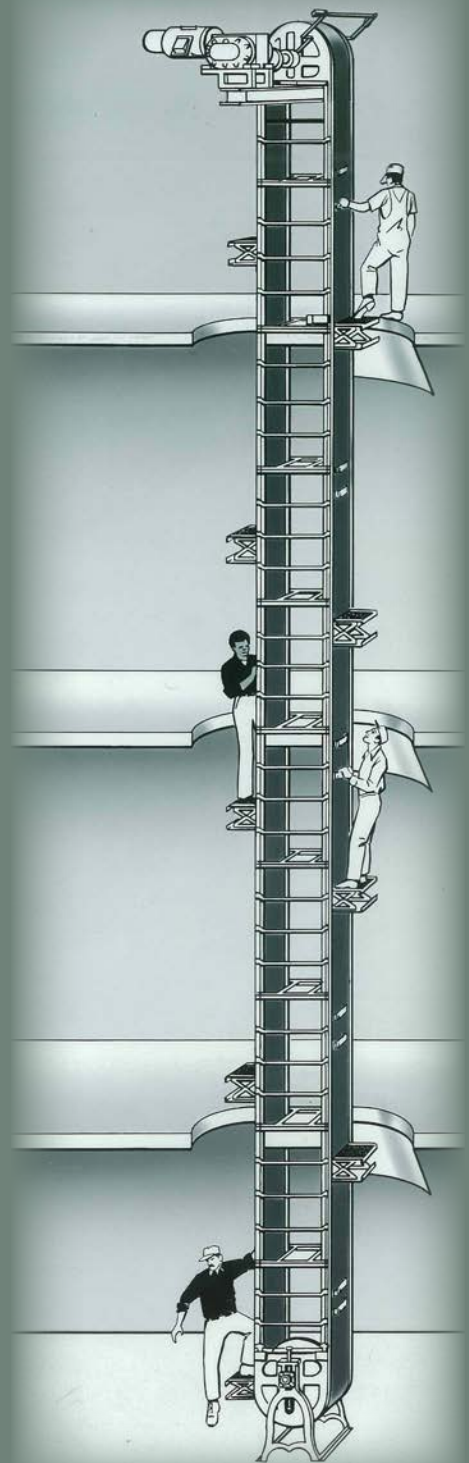
Pillsbury A Mill Manlift, Minnesota Historical Society

Until a young inventor showed up at the offices of the Pillsbury A Mill in the spring of 1887, mill workers everywhere spent long shifts running from one floor to the next tending machinery. The invention that came to be known as the Humphrey Manlift not only relieved tired mill workers; it brought new speed and efficiency to the overall milling operation.

Like a vertical conveyor belt for people, the Manlift featured a

continuous loop of small platforms and handholds that workers could easily step on to and off of. It moved at a constant, slow speed up through the floors of a mill, providing a quicker, less tiring way to move from floor to floor.

Seth King Humphrey's first order came from the Pillsbury A Mill. "Possibly one reason," he recalled years later, "why Mr. Charles A. Pillsbury owned the largest mill in the world was that he had a superintendent who knew how to keep his plant a few jumps ahead of all competitors. That individual frowned at my sketches, . . . said the idea was simply great, and ordered an elevator for the Pillsbury A." Within a few years, the Humphrey Elevator was standard equipment in mills across the country.



Manlift diagram, Minnesota Historical Society



# Programs

Programs for local residents, school groups, and tourists continually bring new audiences to the East Bank by providing new experiences—from week to week and from year to year. In the East Bank area, programs are offered by various organizations including the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Minnesota Historical Society, National Park Service, and the University of Minnesota among others. Increasingly, visitors are drawn to facilitated events where encounters with talented guides, teachers, and storytellers get people excited and strengthen their relationships with the power of St. Anthony Falls.

Fulfilling these expectations in the future will require an expanded line-up of programs and the supportive spaces and facilities needed to make them happen. This interpretive vision for the East Bank describes a number of venues that will provide dynamic settings for a variety of programs, such as the proposed visitor center and the interpretive gateways. Additionally, many of the interpretive trails and locations will be ideally suited to guided experiences.

Already, the field of program providers is diverse, including for-profit companies and public/private partnerships. It is important that the East Bank and its public program amenities are welcoming to various program presenters, neighborhood groups, businesses, and loose partnerships.

## EXAMPLES OF CURRENT AND FUTURE PROGRAMS

Naturalist Classes

Community Special Events

Outdoor Concerts and Movies

Youth and Volunteer Programs

Culturally Specific Events and Programs

Tours and Living History Programs

Winter to Year-round Bird Watching

School Programs

Festivals and Social Gatherings







Art Shanties, Medicine Lake



Pop-Up birding program. Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board



Pillsbury Tour, 2006.



Paris Sewer Museum

# Investing in the Visitor Experience

The work of the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board in the Minneapolis Central Riverfront has been a stunning success by many measures. Most notably, it has been an important driver of economic development. The opening of the Stone Arch Bridge (1994), construction of the Mill City Museum (2003) and Mill Ruins Park (2003-2005), and other public investments have yielded private investments estimated at four dollars for every one dollar of public investment. Today, the Central Riverfront is a vibrant heart of the city and a focal point for tourists, thousands of residents, and many more residents soon to move in.

Continued investment in the East Bank is needed to not only build on the work that has been done but also to fill important gaps in visitor amenities and accessibility as well as historical interpretation. The Central Riverfront and the East Bank in particular have the potential to be world-class destinations, attracting an increasing number of tourists, residents, and commercial investment in the urban core. The Metropolitan Council estimates more than 1.8 million visits to the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park in 2012, up from 1.6 million in the previous year's estimate. Visits to the area have steadily increased in recent years and are likely to do so in the future, especially with the strategic investments called for in this plan.

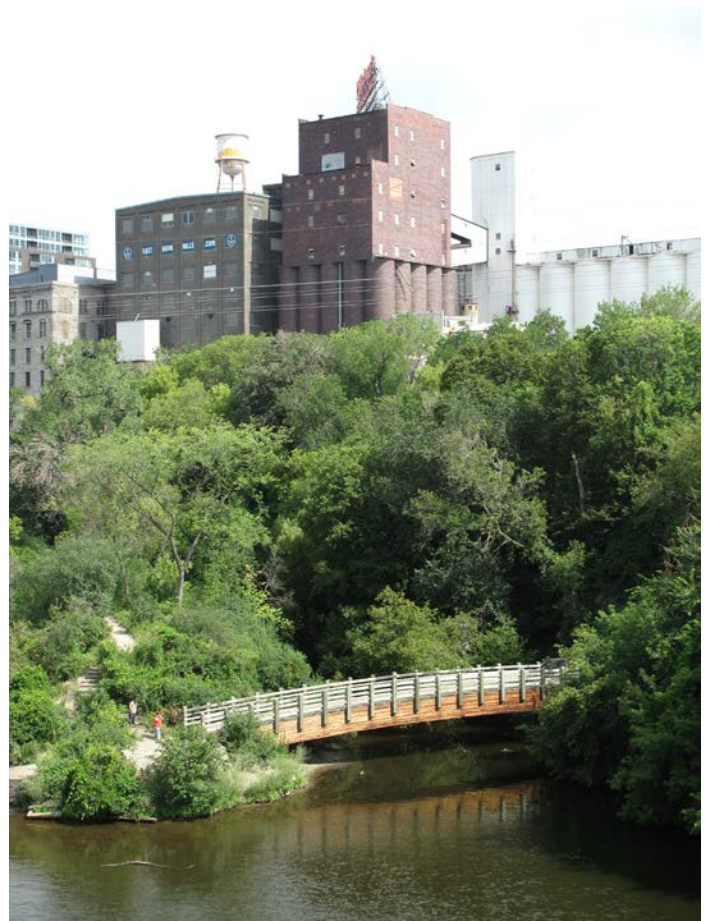
Investors in this endeavor can be assured that current visitors to the area would greatly value future developments. According to the 2009 *Power of the Falls* visitor survey:

- 60% want to learn more about the area
- 73% love history
- 63% want to learn more about the natural resources
- 52% want to learn more about American Indians
- 59% would like to see improvements to the amenities in the area

In addition to casual visitors, growth is likely in school-group audiences as well. Before booking field trips, teachers and principals look for the ways in which a visit will support educational standards across a range of disciplines—from history to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math). The East Bank, with the right mix of interpretive facilities, could easily address multiple standards in ways that are fun and memorable for students and teachers.

## A Desirable Destination for Tourists

Great cities provide unique and memorable experiences for visitors, and the East Bank has the potential to offer the greatest concentration of one-of-a-kind experiences in the downtown area. Its combination of centrally located historical and natural resources offers travelers the kind of authentic, unique, and concentrated experiences they are seeking. Short walks leading



View of East Bank from Stone Arch Bridge.





*Mill and Main development.*

visitors from one unique feature to another, opportunities to experience nature in the heart of the city, and abundant photo opportunities will delight first-time visitors and draw them back again and again.

Development of the East Bank comes at an opportune time as local tourism organizations are stepping up efforts to attract and serve the growing number of tourists. Meet Minneapolis is promoting Minneapolis as a “city within a park.” Their strategic plan calls for an increase in the annual number of visitors from 27 million to 37 million. In addition, the Metropolitan Airports Commission has launched an effort to make it easier for the 17 million travelers who come through the airport each year to get out of the airport and experience the Twin Cities.

### **A Growing Downtown Residential and Commercial Community**

More than 35,000 people reside in and near downtown Minneapolis and many more residences are under construction. The Minneapolis Downtown Council 2025 Plan calls for 70,000 residents, double the current population. Minneapolis will require more recreational amenities to meet the needs of this growing downtown population. The Downtown Council’s Plan also calls for creating and sustaining green infrastructure, connecting downtown to the river and showcasing the riverfront.

The East Bank is a focal point, connecting three residential neighborhoods and an evolving commercial area of restaurants and shops that serve tourists and residents of the area. Public investment in the East Bank will continue to stimulate private investment in the area, contributing to Minneapolis’ tax base and enhancing real estate values in the surrounding community.

# Partnership Opportunities for the East Bank

As demonstrated by the Stone Arch Bridge, Mill City Museum, and Mill Ruins Park, partnerships are essential to development in the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone. Similarly, partnerships will provide powerful vehicles for developing the East Bank, providing rich and unique visitor experiences, and creating the marketing and promotion required to build audiences.

## Land Owners

The East Bank is a patchwork of public and private landowners. The willing cooperation of some of them will be vital to achieving this interpretive vision. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board owns most of the land impacted by the plan and must be a willing participant for future implementation. As owners of the Pillsbury tunnel system and the A Mill, Dominion would be a necessary and key partner in the implementation of the Tunnels and Cave experiences and the related Pillsbury A Mill interpretive concepts. Since all of the potential visitor-center locations are privately owned, one of those owners would also be a necessary partner for this idea to move forward. Land owners must be willing partners for any project to move forward. In many cases, additional partners, including financial and program partners, also will be needed to bring these projects to fruition.

## Program Partners

Numerous organizations are in a position to play a programming role in the East Bank, and in many cases, landowners will not be program providers. Each organization will want to participate in a way that builds on its strengths and mission. Examples include:

- The Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), which has been the leader in historical interpretation, particularly on the west side of the river. The East Bank offers the Minnesota Historical Society an opportunity to extend its offerings and deliver its mission in new and exciting ways.
- The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has provided leadership in recreational use and is likely to do so in partnership with a myriad public and nonprofit partners who offer programs in parks throughout the city.
- The National Park Service (Mississippi National River and Recreation Area) has offered interpretation and programs in the area in the past and may want to lend its knowledge and expertise to interpreting the East Bank.
- The University of Minnesota offers interpretive programs in the area and supports several river research projects.

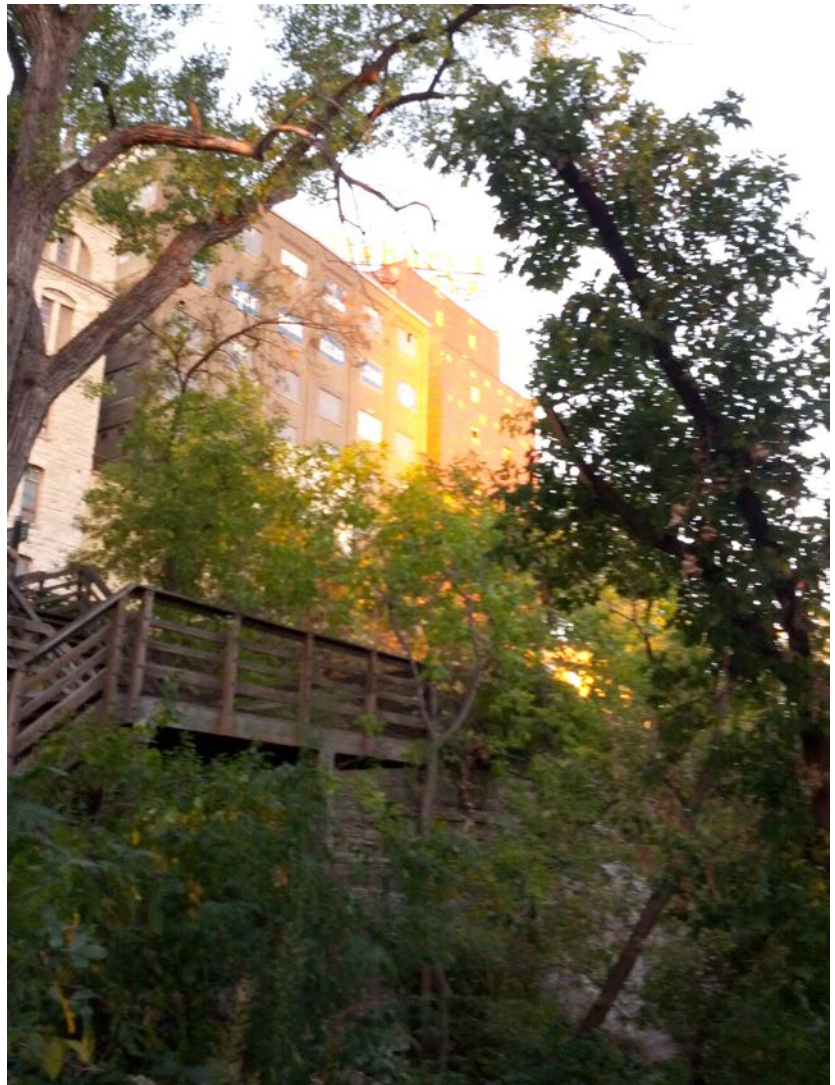
Additional programming partners could include:

- Xcel Energy
- City of Minneapolis Public Works Department
- Preserve Minneapolis
- Minnesota Segway Tours
- Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association
- Native American Community Development Institute
- Works Progress
- Forecast Public Art
- The Soap Factory
- The Film Society of Minneapolis
- Aster Café
- Wilde Roast Cafe
- Pillsbury A Mill resident artists
- And many others



## Promotion and Marketing Partnerships

A key recommendation of the 2009 *Power of the Falls* study was to “build and broaden the audience” in the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone. The study described great potential to build audience, particularly among local and non-local tourists, residents of nearby communities, and diverse populations who are underrepresented in the area. Although the Metropolitan Council’s estimate of 1.8 million visitors in the Central Riverfront is an impressive number, it is far fewer than the nearly 5.4 million who visit the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park. To grow the audience and achieve the full benefit of the *Power of the Falls* vision, more investment in promotion and marketing is needed. Fortunately, the East Bank is in a position to benefit from many organizations who are implementing plans to drive tourism and build local audiences. Meet Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Downtown Council and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport all have new plans to boost tourism. Many more entities are positioned to drive audiences to the area through a variety of media, including evolving web-based marketing, such as Explore Minnesota, Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership, and existing riverfront attractions.



## Financial Partners

Major projects in the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone have exemplified the power of public and private financial partnerships. Public and private sources stepped forward to reopen the Stone Arch Bridge and build Mill City Museum and Mill Ruins Park. Based on that history, there is every reason to believe a variety of organizations would be willing participants in an exciting future for the East Bank.

In the immediate future, there is a need to continue current planning, most especially for feasibility of public access to the tunnels, location of a visitor center, and interpretive planning collaboration with Central Riverfront design projects. The St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants (Legacy Funds) are likely sources for ongoing planning support.

Funding for physical development of the East Bank Vision will likely involve numerous financial partners. Examples include the following:

- Minneapolis Parks Foundation
- State Bonding (through MHS, MPRB, etc.)
- Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants (Legacy)
- Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (Capital Funds)
- Hennepin County (Transit Oriented Development program, the Affordable Housing Incentive Fund, and the Environmental Response Fund)
- Various Corporate Foundations

The East Bank's unique natural habitat in the heart of Minneapolis will likely inspire investment through grants for habitat restoration from sources such as:

- Legacy Funds such as Outdoor Heritage Funds, Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and Clean Water Fund
- Parks and Trails Fund
- Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission
- Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (e.g. Stewardship Fund)
- McKnight Foundation (water quality initiative)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Urban Waters Small Grants)

Financial partners for programming will include many of the previously listed organizations plus a host of others, both public and private. Private vendors have enjoyed success in a variety of Minneapolis parks, providing services ranging from food and entertainment to various recreational opportunities such as Segway tours. A revitalized East Bank will attract more visitors and spawn the amenities and services that visitors need and desire.



## COST ESTIMATES

Many of the visitor-experience concepts described in this interpretive vision will require further study for feasibility and costs (e.g. Tunnels and Cave). The following estimates are based on typical per-unit costs associated with these kinds of projects.

Visitor Center (12,000 s.f.)	\$6 – \$8 million (renovation and exhibits)
Pillsbury Tunnel Orientation Facility	\$2 – \$2.5 million (renovation and exhibits)
Site-wide Interpretive Signage	\$300,000 – \$350,000 (70 – 80 units)
Site-wide Location-based Media	\$250,000 – \$450,000 (4 – 6 programs)
Public Art (allocation)	\$300,000 – \$400,000 (2 – 3 installations)
Public Programs	\$5,000 – \$25,000 (per program)



# Action Steps in A Dynamic Context

## NEXT STEPS

### Tunnels

Conduct a design and engineering study to determine options and costs for public access.

### Location-based Media

Develop an area-wide plan, including prototypes for testing with visitors.

### East Bank Visitor Center

Begin discussions with potential property owners and operating partners to develop workable scenarios.

### Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park Master Plan

Incorporate planning concepts from this study.

### Public Programs

Expand program offerings, especially around river ecosystems and habitat restoration.

In calling for this East Bank Interpretive Vision and Plan, the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board asked the consultant team to take a long term, 25-year view; however, given the many studies and plans underway and the substantial interest apparent in the East Bank, it is likely that many facets of the plan have the potential to move forward in the shorter term. Many concurrent studies and initiatives present immediate opportunities for early action and momentum.

Most importantly, the MPRB is preparing a new master plan for the riverfront area between the Plymouth Bridge and I-35W. The **Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park Master Plan** is scheduled for completion in December, 2014. This plan will build on previous studies such as the *Power of the Falls* as well as this interpretive vision for the East Bank. A critical next step for the SAFHB is to work with the MPRB to incorporate the recommendations of this interpretive vision into its new Master Plan. As in the past, the Regional Park Master Plan will guide and spur investment in the physical infrastructure in the riverfront area, including trails and amenities in the East Bank.





The **Pillsbury A Mill Tunnel System Condition Study**, begun in 2013, is expected to shed light on many feasibility issues regarding interpretation of these important underground resources. Major challenges lie ahead in planning for public access to the tunnels. The structural modifications needed for safe access will be significant, especially in light of historic preservation considerations. It is important that the ultimate, far-reaching vision for this project is clearly articulated and endorsed by all of the parties involved.

Renovation of the **Pillsbury A Mill Complex** into artist lofts began in October 2013. Approximately 3,000 to 5,000 square feet of first-floor and basement level building space is reserved for future public functions with potential access to the underground tunnel network. More work is needed on design, feasibility, and a pro-forma business plan. Plans for this space must move forward soon, as the historic tax credits available to Dominion will expire some time in 2015.

**Planning for an East Bank Visitor Center** should begin with conversations among potential partners to gauge interest and feasibility. The consulting team has begun to make a case for a visitor center, but for the process to move forward, multi-party discussions around issues of ownership, costs, and operations will be needed. Should any of the project partners want to seek state bonding support, the pipeline for projects can take many years.

**The St. Anthony Falls East Bank Waterfall Feasibility Study**, submitted in March 2011, suggests a highly engineered solution to getting water over the East Falls. Many have expressed dissatisfaction with the proposed solution and would like to pursue different alternatives that produce a more natural-looking cascade. An important next step will be for the SAFHB to revisit the study in light of this interpretive vision and recommendations that result from the Central Mississippi Regional Riverfront Park Master Plan. Does the proposed solution support the overall scope and vision for the East Bank? Should another approach be studied? From an interpretive point of view, the restored falls must evoke the look and feel of the cascade as it appeared in the mid 1800s. It is important that the restored falls reveal a clear and physical connection between the existing geology, the upriver pool, and the downriver confluence with the main channel of the Mississippi River.

Opportunities abound for **location-based media throughout the East Bank**. Regardless of what, if anything, is built in the East Bank area, location-based media can enliven interpretive experiences without a large investment. Prime opportunities include visualizations of the 1869 Falls collapse and the “what if” scenario of the falls receding into an upriver span of rapids. Programs and applications for hand-held devices can be flexible over time and are relatively cost effective ways to get stories on the ground well before expensive infrastructure is in place.



# Community Input

## ADDITIONAL PEOPLE WHO GAVE THEIR TIME AND THOUGHTS TO THE EAST BANK INTERPRETIVE VISION

We would like to thank the people who contributed their ideas by participating in individual and group interviews during the planning process:

Jewel Arcoren (First Nations Composers Initiative)

Melissa Bean (Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association)

Jack Becker (Forecast Public Art)

Ginger Cannon (Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board)

Bill Deef (Meet Minneapolis)

Mary deLaittre (Minneapolis Parks Foundation)

Steve Dietz (Northern Spark)

Ben Erickson (St. Anthony Falls Stream Lab)

Ben Heywood (Soap Factory)

Monique MacKenzie (University of Minnesota, Capital Planning)

Owen Metz (Dominium Development)

Pam Morlock (University of Minnesota Community Relations)

Michael Murnane (Northern Lights/Northern Spark)

Kit Richardson (Schafer Richardson Development)

Arik Rudolph (Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board)

Doug Snyder (Mississippi Watershed Management Organization)

Suzanne Smith (University of Minnesota Capital Planning and Project Management)

Shane Stenzel (Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board)

Melissa Surdyk (Northeast Business Association)

Jim Surdyk (Northeast Business Association)

Melvin Tennant (Meet Minneapolis)

David Tinjum (Mill City Times)

Diane Wilson (Dream of Wild Health)





Members of the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board who participated in a focus group early in the planning process:

Edna Brazaitis

Kathleen Clarke Anderson

Council Member Diane Hofstede

Linda Mack

Jody Tableporter

Commissioner Scott Vreeland

Commissioner Liz Wielinski

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a large, multi-arched stone bridge. The bridge is constructed from rough-hewn stone blocks and features numerous rectangular windows of varying sizes, some with multiple panes. The bridge spans a body of water, and the surrounding landscape is visible in the background. The image is in black and white, with a slightly grainy texture.

# CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS TO THE POWER OF THE FALLS

AN INTERPRETIVE VISION FOR THE EAST BANK OF  
ST. ANTHONY FALLS

NOVEMBER 2013