

POWER OF THE FALLS:

Renewing the Vision for St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone

St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board
December 14, 2009



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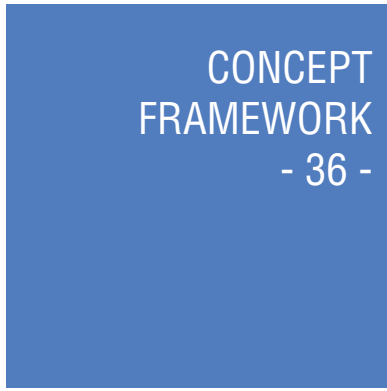


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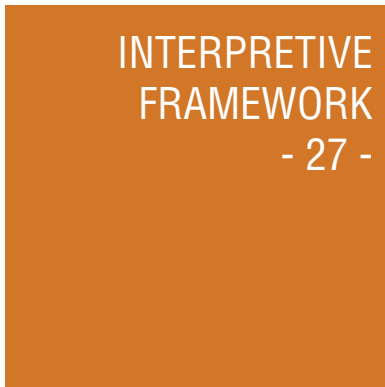
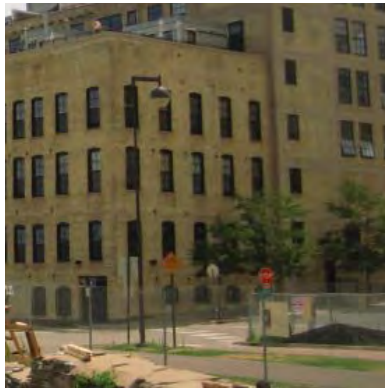


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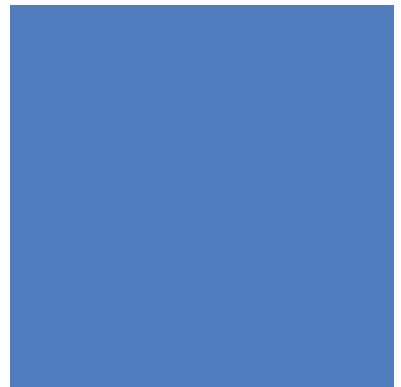
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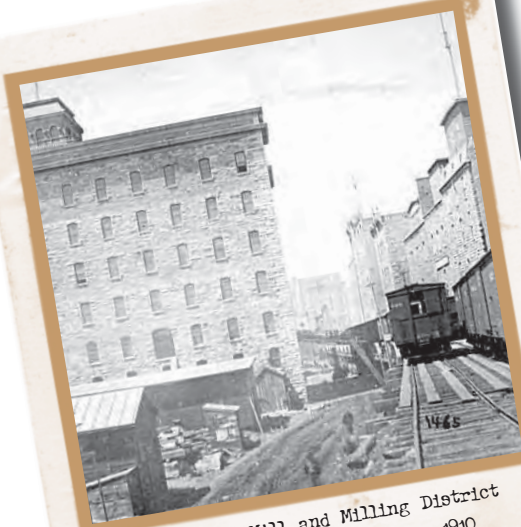
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INTRODUCTION

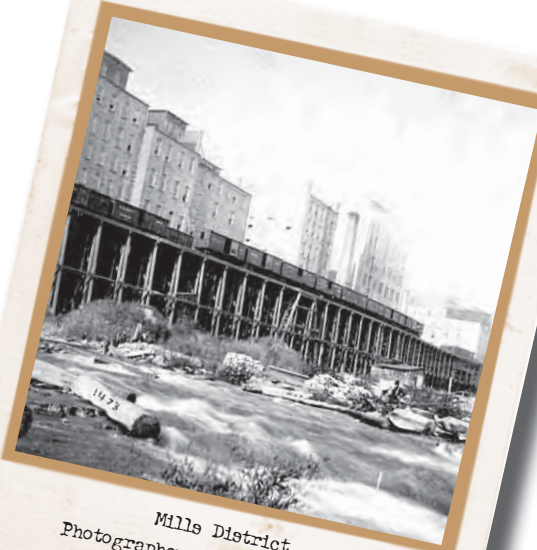


Washburn A Mill and Milling District
Photographer Collection ca. 1910
Minnesota Historical Society



Train crossing the Stone Arch Bridge
Photographer: Haynes Studio ca. 1910
Minnesota Historical Society

The St. Anthony Falls area is at a turning point in its development. With many of its most significant historical icons and landmark destinations open to the public, the area is poised to become a world-class destination. It has already taken its place as one of Minneapolis's treasured neighborhoods, and with added energy from new visitors and stronger community partnerships, it could soon be regarded as the heart of the Twin Cities. The goal of the new 2009 Plan is to demonstrate how the Heritage Board can build on its past successes, protect the qualities that distinguish the Heritage Zone, and meet the needs and desires of a growing audience.



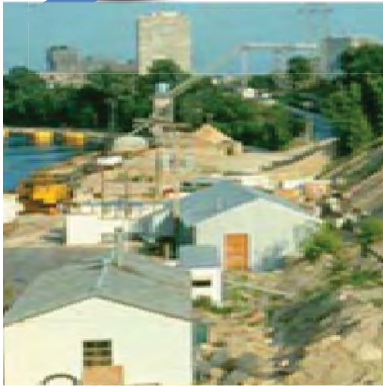
Mills District
Photographer Collection ca. 1885
Minnesota Historical Society



NEGLECTED

DESIRABLE

MEMORABLE



Again, as in decades past, the power of St. Anthony Falls is inspiring new plans for the area's future. The enduring sense of place that drew people here many hundreds of years ago is prompting new generations to embrace the riverfront and care about its future. The cultural and economic significance of the Heritage Zone continues to build. From the 1880s through the 1920s, industrial systems reshaped the river and changed what we eat. That revolution in food production marked the riverfront landscape and further magnified the area's significance. The power of this place is once again showing the potential to attract new economic investment. In recent years, each dollar of public funding has been followed by five dollars of private investment. Clearly, the area is becoming a new kind of economic center, one now defined by the confluence of history, culture, and nature in an urban setting.

The original interpretive plan for the Heritage Zone is a powerful demonstration of the capacity of a visionary plan to ignite imaginations and fuel progress. Since the plan's adoption in 1990, the Heritage Zone has undergone a major transformation, both as an historical landscape and as a Minneapolis community. The successes are notable. With the opening of the Stone Arch Bridge in 1994, for example, the St. Anthony Falls area has attracted new audiences as hundreds of runners, walkers, and cyclists cross the bridge daily, finding a comfortable trail loop comparable to the city's lakes. Equally significant, the bridge has emerged as a memorable icon of the Minneapolis riverfront. Many other concepts described in the 1990 Plan are now part of the riverfront experience, including Mill Ruins Park, First Bridge Park, Mill City Museum, and Heritage Trail. Cultural venues such as the Guthrie Theater, MacPhail Center for Music, and the Soap Factory have added yet another dimension to the historic district.



*Existing
Conditions*



In 2006, the Heritage Board commissioned an evaluation of the 1990 Plan to assess progress toward implementing the concepts and objectives of the original plan. As the 2006 evaluation authors noted: “It cannot be overstated how much the 1990 Plan, and the ensuing commitment of the Heritage Board to its vision, has created a broader context for today’s rejuvenation and vitality of the riverfront.”

This second-generation interpretive plan emerges from a context very different from that of the 1990 Plan. Today’s Heritage Zone is a vital urban community, visited by thousands of people for recreation and sightseeing and is home for thousands of residents. It is also a place influenced by changing demographics, new technologies, and shifting attitudes about nature in the city. In casting forward a new vision for the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone, it is important to recognize the area’s great promise as well as its challenges.

*Photo Credit at Right:
University of Minnesota
Regents*



St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board

In 1988, the Minnesota State Legislature recognized the “outstanding and distinctive historical and architectural resources” of the Minneapolis central riverfront by establishing the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board. This board was charged with developing and implementing a comprehensive interpretive plan for the Heritage Zone, an area that extends along both banks of the Mississippi River from Plymouth Avenue to I-35W. The Heritage Board is comprised of representatives from the following organizations: Hennepin County Board of Commissioners; Hennepin History Museum; Mayor, City of Minneapolis; Minneapolis City Council; Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission; Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board; Minnesota Historical Society; State Historic Preservation Office; and the State of Minnesota.

The 1990 Interpretive Plan

The original interpretive plan for the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone was completed in 1990. As directed by the Minnesota State Legislature, the plan included “significant historic and natural features such as the river, bridges, buildings, machinery that is part of the milling story, underground canals, stone paving, waterfall, railway components, and a heritage trail system that interlocks historic features of the zone.” The 1990 Plan focused primarily on the preservation and interpretation of historical resources, development of a heritage trail system, and planning for an orientation center. Developers of the original plan wove together a thematic approach based in social and cultural history, geology, and the history of technology to convey the many important stories of the river and the region. Over the years, the Heritage Board has relied on this plan to guide development of some of the area’s most important resources and to produce a wealth of research and interpretive materials.

This is a spiritually significant place for indigenous people. This relationship with the river is felt by many and is inspiring a new understanding of the river among others. St. Anthony Falls continues to be a place of homecoming for Dakota people.

Historically, it is one of our region's most important places. It is here that the Mississippi River makes its steepest drop—more than 40 feet. This waterpower once drove industries that helped build a city, shape the region's economy, and change how we eat.

It is widely admired for its unique scenic values. This is an urban landscape shaped by human and natural forces. The dramatic tension between these two forces resulted in a setting that is unlike any other in the region.

The Heritage Zone is still a work in progress.

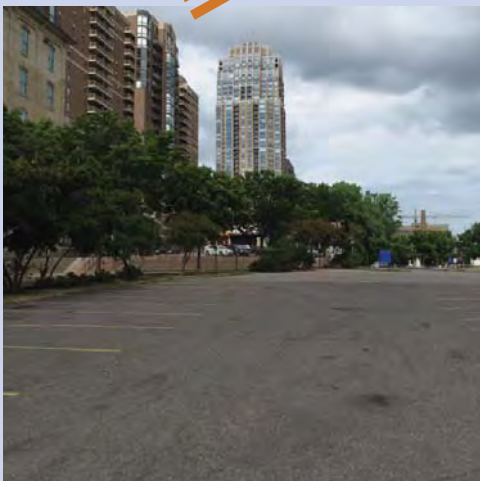
The Stone Arch Bridge is one of Minnesota's most iconic structures, but the gateway experiences at either end of the bridge are not pedestrian friendly and do not do justice to this magnificent structure. The east end of the bridge ends in a cul-de-sac and the west end of the bridge ends in a parking lot. Welcoming gateways at both ends of the bridge would greatly improve the overall visitor experience and help shape the area's identity.



East Side

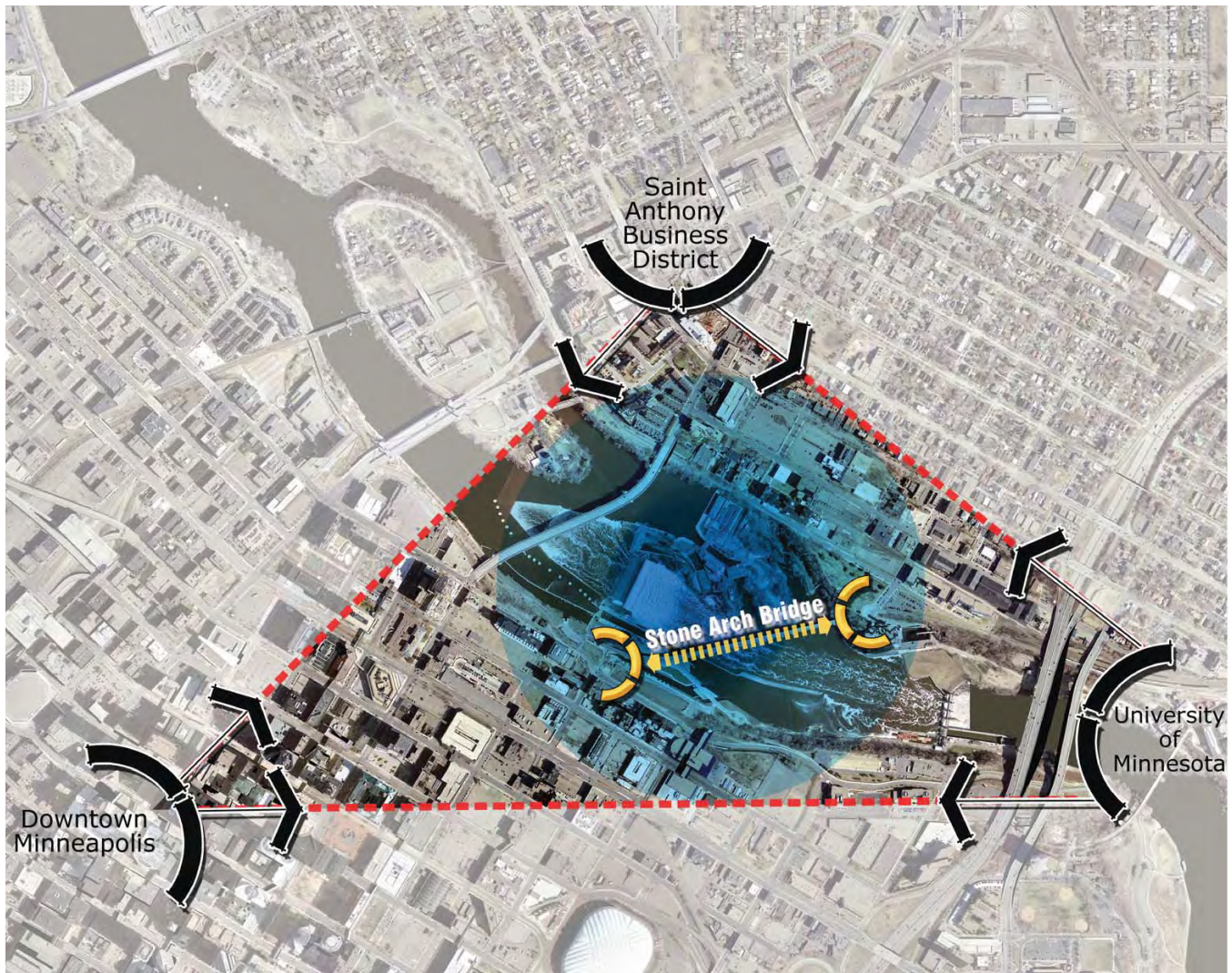
Stone Arch Bridge

West Side





SITE EVALUATION DIAGRAM



Despite its cultural and economic significance, and its history of redevelopment successes, the area still faces many challenges.

It lacks a strong and compelling identity. The St. Anthony Falls area is comprised of many disparate destinations—public and private. In the eyes of many visitors, it does not hold together as a cohesive, memorable location.

It is underutilized by visitors and businesses. Decades of public and private investment have built an infrastructure that could accommodate much more commercial and recreational activity. While not all sites within the Heritage Zone are suited to increased use, many are.

It has yet to achieve its full potential. While much has been accomplished in the past 20 years, the St. Anthony Falls area remains an unfinished project. Important historic features have yet to be uncovered and interpreted, trails have yet to be connected, and public access to the river is still limited in places. The overall visitor experience is uneven—bright



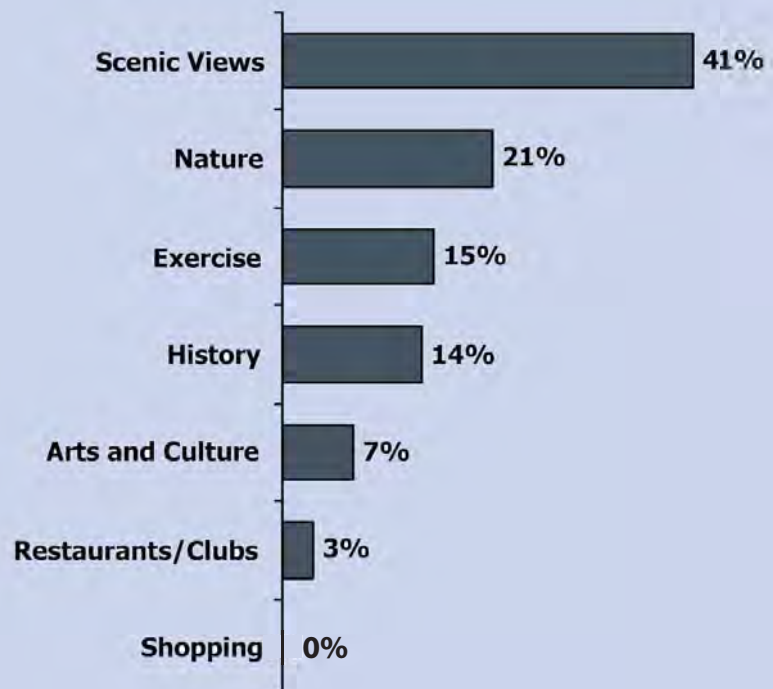
spots tempered by gaps in between.

Recognizing that much has already been done to document and preserve the area's historical resources, this 2009 Plan looks to the future with a broader focus on the needs and desires of current and future audiences in the Heritage Zone. The plan is not only a Concept Framework for physical improvements, but a plan for ongoing and future interpretation. Importantly, the Heritage Board requested a plan that would include strategic goals, strategies, and action steps for implementation.

The Cincinnati team conducted an audience intercept study involving more than 400 visitors to the area and 16 interviews with people knowledgeable about the area's current and potential audiences. In addition, the team interviewed community leaders and planners from riverfront cities around the country to identify models of success and better understand the elements that contributed to that success. This plan was developed through a series of facilitated meetings with the Heritage Board Technical Advisory Committee, which provided direction and helped shape the plan.



Most Important Riverfront Attributes:



25 YEAR VISION

FOR THE ST. ANTHONY FALLS HERITAGE ZONE

Detroit, MI →

Portland, OR ↘

St. Anthony Falls area will be a well-known destination filled with people engaged in a diverse range of activities morning to night—a valued and connected part of the city. Visitors and residents are pleased to be here and see others enjoying themselves as well. The riverfront is vibrant and active, on and off the water.

The power of the falls captures people's attention and feeds their imagination. This energy is also what draws people here, to recharge and re-focus. It is grand and iconic—known to locals and travelers alike, for the stories held by the falls and the Mississippi give it international stature and prominence. The spiritual significance of the place is felt and understood.

With scenic values of natural beauty and historic structures, it is a pedestrian-friendly place that has an identity distinct from any other. These are the daily rewards for the people who live, play, and do business here. The dynamic between nature and history gives the area its trademark identity and sustains its economic vitality.



Melbourne, AUS →



↖ Chatanooga, TN

↖ ↗ Boston, MA

↙ St. Paul, MN

London, UK ↓



Denver, CO ↑

Chatanooga, TN →

Boston, MA →



10 YEAR GOALS & STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: Create a stronger identity and sense of place

Despite its unique character and dramatic views, the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone attracts fewer visitors than one would expect. Only 1.6 million people visit the Minneapolis Central Riverfront Park area each year in contrast to more than 5.1 million who visit the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes. Visitors (surveyed in early summer) are mostly from local neighborhoods (33%) and from other parts of the Twin Cities (50%). These numbers do not reflect attendance at the area's restaurants, theaters, and other cultural venues.

Although much has been accomplished, the area has not yet lived up to its full potential. The Heritage Board has an opportunity to build on its success by maximizing what is there, protecting the qualities that make

it unique, and developing a clear identity that can be broadly promoted. The area has the potential for national and international significance, given the iconic Mississippi, three properties with National Landmark status, and its location in a National River and Recreation Area. Elevating its stature to a World Heritage Site is not outside the realm of possibilities. As the Heritage Board works to develop a distinct identity and brand for the area, it should adopt a name that resonates with current and potential audiences. ("St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone" does not work for marketing purposes.) As outlined in the Concept Framework, clear portals and efforts to physically unify the area through improved trails and design elements will also create a greater sense of place.



Strategies

1. Create a name and brand for the area
 - Focus on the Falls and Stone Arch Bridge
 - Develop local, national, and possibly international position
2. Strengthen the experiential cohesiveness of the area
 - Improve signage and wayfinding
 - Create inviting gateways/portals to the riverfront
 - Connect the destinations
 - Improve the pedestrian experience

GOAL 2: Build and broaden the audience

The Heritage Zone has far more capacity for use by its current visitors, and there are many reasons for the Heritage Board to develop and implement a plan to attract more people to the area.

- First and foremost, the area is the heart of the city and, in many respects, the heart of the region. It is worthy of public investment and the private investment that typically follows (\$1 in public investment generally results in \$5 of private investment).
- Without ongoing investment and efforts to create vibrancy, these kinds of public places can fall into disuse and deterioration.
- Making the area more active, fun, and safe for a larger number of people will help justify the expenditures to sustain and improve the area.
- The area has the potential to attract many more visitors, who will add life to the area, help

fuel commercial investment, and enhance the image of the Twin Cities.

- The area has the capacity to provide jobs and homes for more residents, adding to the vibrancy and economic power of the area.
- Currently, the audience is less diverse than many other public spaces in the Twin Cities, and efforts should be made to attract a broader audience.

As demonstrated in the Concept Framework, stronger physical connections to surrounding areas—downtown Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota Minneapolis campus, and east-side business districts, have the potential to attract more people to the area. The Heritage Board should create a comprehensive marketing plan that identifies target audiences and strategies for attracting them.

Strategies

1. Increase awareness through marketing and social networks; coordinate marketing across organizations and between public and private stakeholders
2. Strengthen physical connections to neighborhoods, University of Minnesota, and downtown core
3. Coordinate planning efforts with the University of Minnesota, especially with the University District Alliance program
4. Develop ongoing relationships with cultural communities and start implementing programs
5. Add features and programming specifically to attract potential future audiences that include communities of color, downtown workers, families with young children, and national and international tourists
6. Embolden the area's national identity to increase tourism



GOAL 3: Re-energize interpretive programming in the Heritage Zone

Public events, trail markers, and engaging destinations add value to the Heritage Zone experience. Current offerings, however, do not fully meet today's visitor expectations and hold little promise for increasing future visitation. To create a reputation as a first-choice destination, the area needs a new, highly energized and multi-dimensional approach to interpretation—with as much investment in events and facilitated programs as in permanent exhibits and trail signs.

Audience research has shown that current audiences are drawn to the area for its scenic values. The appealing landscapes and visual features are rich with stories—the

telling of which has only just begun. There are also the unseen stories that require more attention and bolder exploration on the part of visitors. The most successful programs will grow out of audience needs and interests, provide interaction with spectacular sights and events, and engage the natural and historic features of the area.

New and ongoing interpretation should build on established programs, features, and venues, and will be presented through a mix of formats—from live programs to trail markers—and with a new regard for digital media, on-site and on-line.



Strategies

1. Develop better access to historical and natural features
 - Create programs and infrastructure to get more people on the water
 - Develop new trails and improve existing trails
2. Deepen and diversify the stories told about the Heritage Zone, including those not represented by existing landscape features
 - Involve diverse cultural communities in the site's interpretation
 - Strengthen program partnerships with the arts
 - Integrate digital media components into all interpretation
3. Increase opportunities for discovery
 - Increase the on-site presence of the National Park Service, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Minnesota Historical Society, University of Minnesota, and other organizations
 - Increase the on-site presence of volunteers in various roles
 - Maximize and better coordinate efforts of public and private program providers
 - Engage area businesses in providing high quality interpretation
4. Develop and implement shared design guidelines for interpretive signage
5. Support winter activities and add indoor program venues



GOAL 4: Meet the fundamental needs of the audience

To grow and sustain the audience, the area must address the basic needs of visitors. The absence of these fundamentals in the Heritage Zone is obvious and striking. In a recent audience-intercept study, a majority (59%) replied in an open-ended question that they would like to see basic amenities such as public restrooms, drinking fountains, food choices, better lighting, and accessible parking. The Heritage Zone is a large site, and as more people use the area, the need for amenities will also increase. Visitors to any public area also expect safety and security, both perceived and real. They seek physical comfort through ameni-

ties such as benches and access to shade. Half of the surveyed visitors expressed high interest in a visitor and orientation center. Visitor information needs to be more visible and accessible. As shown in the Concept Framework, there are numerous opportunities for improved circulation and access. Wayfinding to and within the Heritage Zone would be significantly enhanced by implementing the 2004 Larsen Design + Interactive Signage and Wayfinding Master Plan.

Strategies

1. Improve visitor orientation
2. Increase options for non-automobile, themed transportation around the site (trolleys, bicycles, canoes)
3. Add public restrooms
4. Assess and improve accessibility
5. Improve parking and wayfinding
6. Connect visitors to the riverfront using the Light Rail System; station hosts and promotional and way-finding signage at multiple locations to improve links between stations and the river.
7. Provide for visitor comfort with shade and places to sit
8. Improve the variety and price options for food and drink
9. Assess and address safety concerns—real and perceived



GOAL 5: Identify and tap sources of financial support

To more fully realize the economic potential of the Heritage Zone, the Heritage Board must recommit to raising the necessary funds for physical maintenance and restoration of the area as well as programming to increase its vibrancy. The partnering organizations have viewed the area as a lower priority in recent years, believing perhaps that the work is done. As shown in the Concept Framework, the Heritage Zone has far more potential than is currently realized. New public investments will capitalize on previous investments and generate new private investment in the area, as demonstrated in the last period of revitalization.

The Heritage Board also has opportunities to identify and secure new revenue sources. For example, the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Constitutional Amendment passed by voters in the 2008 Minnesota general election provides approximately \$250 million per

year for 25 years in new funding. The Heritage Board should develop a comprehensive approach to access funds from multiple sources within the Legacy funds, including the Parks and Trails Fund, Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, Outdoor Heritage Fund, and Clean Water Fund.

With increasing urgency, the Heritage Board must look creatively at the potential for new partnerships that will open up new sources of funding for capital projects and operations. For example, deeper relationships with a variety of organizations (e.g. federal agencies, higher education, and businesses) could provide new revenue sources. The Heritage Board also may want to investigate the feasibility of a special taxing district, similar to the new district created for downtown Minneapolis.

Strategies

1. Recommit to raising the necessary funds for appropriate investments in maintenance, restoration, and new projects
2. Recognize the value of, and raise the commitment to programming in the area
3. Leverage partner investments with private resources
4. Develop a shared approach to raising funds with organizations such as the Minneapolis Riverfront Corporation, Mississippi River Fund, Minneapolis Park Foundation, National Park Service, City of Minneapolis, Metropolitan Council, University of Minnesota, and Minnesota Historical Society
5. Coordinate efforts to seek funding through the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment
6. Deepen relationships with other agencies that have the potential to invest in the riverfront
7. Explore sources of funding that have not been used in the past, such as special taxing

GOAL 6: Strengthen organizational infrastructure and capacity

The current Heritage Board has accomplished a great deal despite several inherent barriers to success. It meets very infrequently for relatively short periods of time, and the Technical Advisory Committee tries to move the ball forward but with very limited authority and increasingly less budgeted time available to work on Heritage Board projects and infrastructure. Individual partnering organizations often feel obligated to move forward with their own decisions and plans for the area without consulting with the other partners. There is a need to establish and adhere to guiding principles for the group.

To reinvigorate the effort, the Heritage Board should consider inviting new partners with energy and resources to the table. Potential new partners include the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the University of Minnesota, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

In addition, the Heritage Board has a major oppor-

tunity to advance its goals by partnering with the newly established Minneapolis Riverfront Corporation, whose advocacy, coordinating and implementation roles greatly complement the role of the Heritage Board.

A review of success models in other cities offers insight into the essential ingredients for success in creating great places:

- Presence of a non-profit advocacy, fund raising, and implementation group working in close partnership with the Heritage Board
- Private foundation support (leverages private business involvement, donations, grants, state and federal funds)
- A deep-rooted common vision that is easily articulated, understood, and used consistently
- Dynamic involved leadership (champions)
- A clear plan and funding source(s) for maintenance and replacement, addressing life-cycle costs along with capital construction costs



Strategies

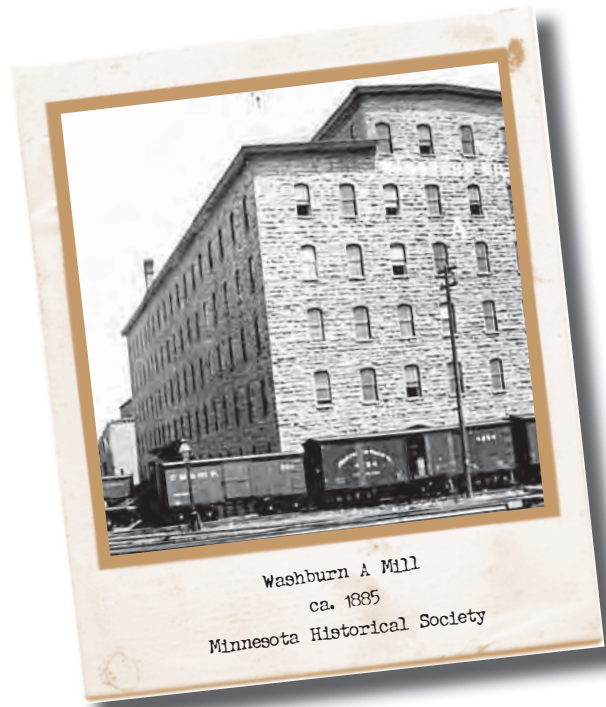
1. Strengthen the partnership and increase its capacity to do the work
 - Establish communication and decision-making processes among Heritage Board organizations
 - Establish regular reporting systems to evaluate progress
 - Create committees to move projects forward between meetings and consider increasing the number of Heritage Board meetings
 - Take steps to restore and deepen partnering agency commitment to the riverfront
2. Examine the organizational structure and role of the Heritage Board with regard to future planning and implementation in the Heritage Zone
 - Investigate possibilities for adding new partner entities to the Heritage Board, including Dakota and national representation
 - Hire dedicated staff to move the Heritage Board's work forward
3. Broaden participation
 - Promote and sustain private-sector advocacy for the riverfront
 - Align the Heritage Board's work with that of the Minneapolis Riverfront Corporation
 - Recruit and support new public and private sector champions for the Heritage Zone

GOAL 7: Preserve and maintain the Heritage Zone's existing assets

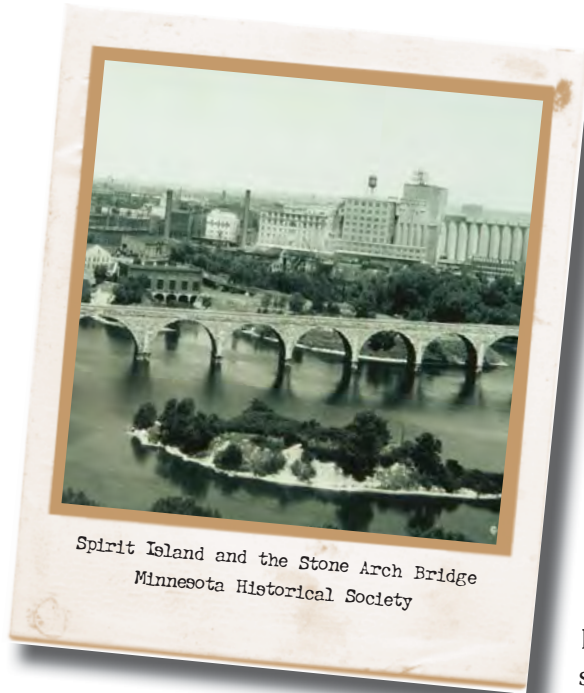
Much has been accomplished in the St. Anthony Falls area in terms of new features and programs, restored and adapted properties, and preserved landmarks that are now accessible to the public. These assets must continue to be recognized and cared for even as new projects draw attention and resources away from them. Maintaining these structures, places, and artifacts means not only assuring their physical presence, but also developing their operational and interpretive potential. They should be regarded as important pieces of the bigger story now and in the future.

Strategies

1. Develop design guidelines for future developments and improvements to the area
2. Recommend maintenance priorities for the Heritage Zone
3. Develop cross-agency budgets for operational, maintenance, and capital improvements
4. Revisit and update the 1990 list of resources for preservation
 - Evaluate current resources and amend the list to include places and features such as archeological remains, scenic views, transportation corridors, and landscape forms



INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

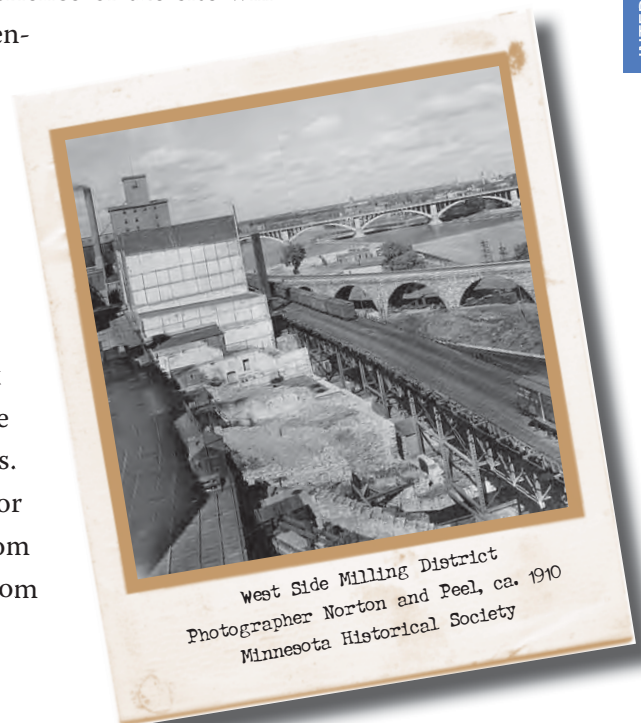


Spirit Island and the Stone Arch Bridge
Minnesota Historical Society

The stories of St. Anthony Falls reside in many sources and formats. Some are plainly visible in the landscape—the area’s dramatic geological past, engineering the river, railroad transportation, and flour milling. Some are deeply layered in documents and cultural memory—the lives of people, international finance, and the transformation of food. Other stories are found in the area’s natural systems—river dynamics, bird migrations, and changing water quality. Regardless of their source, all of these stories deserve a level of interpretation.

This stretch of the Mississippi River—centered on St. Anthony Falls and Nicollet Island—is an important, spiritual place for Dakota people. When many Dakota come to St. Anthony Falls, they’re not visiting a historic site, but are coming home to a place that is a part of their identity. Recognizing this perspective is an important step toward developing the true range of stories and meanings of the St. Anthony Falls area. Infusing this perspective into the site and into the visitor experience of the site will

require an approach less dependent on traditional sources and historical narratives. Rather than trail markers and exhibits, visitors could instead be given opportunities, in person or through various media, to ask Dakota people about this place—ask to hear a story, ask to see the place through different eyes. The site can present ways for local visitors and travelers from around the world to learn from Dakota people.



West Side Milling District
Photographer Norton and Peel, ca. 1910
Minnesota Historical Society



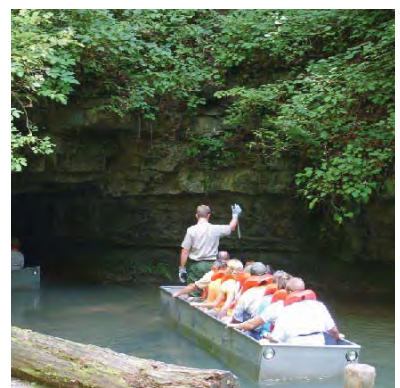
Facilitating the Experience

Few sites hold such powerful interpretive assets as those found in the landscapes and settings of the Heritage Zone. For many visitors, this experience begins with the extraordinary scenic views. People see an evocative and changing mix of history and nature that prompts curiosity, imagination, and exploration. From here, their encounters with various interpretive formats can help them see even more and open up new paths of inquiry to the site's deeper stories.

A key purpose of interpretation is to foster two-way engagement between people and the stories of a place. The St. Anthony Falls area offers a wide range of stories and a diverse set of places for interpretive experiences. This plan describes many locations where the views and accessible resources will provide optimal settings for interpretative experiences. Some of these settings are already in place, while others will require further design and development. Likewise, the formats for interpretation will include modes and techniques currently in use and others that will require further design as locations are developed.

In recent years, the St. Anthony Falls area has become a noted destination for the arts—as a venue for theater and music, and as an evocative element of art installations and performances. The structures and settings of the Heritage Zone also have great potential for becoming the subjects and backdrops for a variety of media. Each of the following interpretive formats not only holds a place for the arts, but relies on artistic perspectives to engage the broadest audiences, provide for public involvement, and bring to light untold stories.

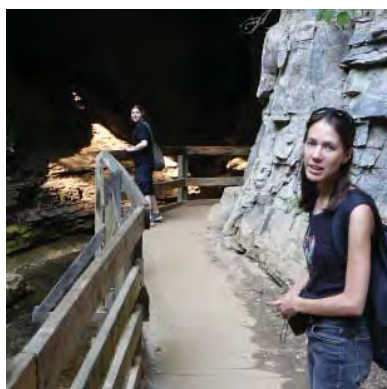
Person-to-Person—These individually facilitated experiences often include guided tours, group programs, storytelling, theatrical performances, and encounters with historical characters. They also include conversations with people knowledgeable about the site, such as Minneapolis Park and Minnesota Historical Society staff, trained volunteers, youth-program guides, and National Park Service Rangers.





Exhibits and Trail Signs—These fixed, stand-alone features are often permanent (ten to 15 years), and rely heavily on words and images to convey content and messages. Traditionally, trail signs have been relatively static. More recently, however, this format has become more sculptural and interactive, integrating viewfinders and digital media.

Structured Learning Environments—With few words and graphics, these full-body experiences engage participants through theme-based features, such as recreated river elements or railroad components. Among the more successful environments are those created through artist-in-residence programs that involve active, community participation. Often these environments are designed for children—especially for nature play—but they also hold great potential for adults wanting to explore industrial settings and geological features.



Digital Media—This represents a wide range of formats and sources effective both on site and on-line. Through website activities and social media, many audiences are already exposed to the Heritage Zone and its offerings. Since most content (writing, music, film, photography) is digitally produced, its dissemination is easy and accessible to an ever-increasing audience. Artists working in digital media might use the site as a kind of canvas, projecting images, voices, and sounds into and onto the site's various settings.

These interpretive formats represent many of the key ingredients of informal, free-choice learning. Ultimately, visitors to the Heritage Zone direct their own experiences without the structure of formal education. They choose to read, participate, or explore deeper. The key to successful free-choice learning is to connect with audiences on their own terms. This requires that program providers know who their audiences are, what is motivating their visit, and how they like to receive information.

Audience Definitions and Interpretive Strategies

During the early stages of planning, the Cincinnatus team conducted an intercept survey of more than 400 people in the Heritage Zone. Data from this study were used to define and describe the site's current audiences. Additionally, the team conducted interviews with people knowledgeable about current and potential audiences to provide more qualitative information about people who do and do not visit the Heritage Zone.

Defining audiences is an important step in focusing the energy and intent of a program or project. Audience definitions are most useful in formulating strategies for involving wider populations. They should not suggest exclusivity, as audiences will blend and change from place to place and over time. This plan recommends looking at three broad sets of audiences: current, potential future, and virtual (on-line).

Current Audiences

- Primarily from the Twin Cities (81%), white (83%), well educated, and middle aged
- Physically active—exercise is the predominant activity for 72%
- Visit an average of seven times per year
- Most visit alone and very few bring children
- Most love history (73%)

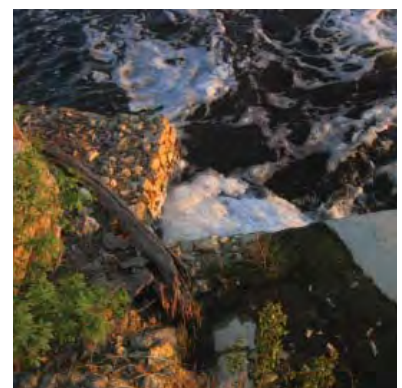
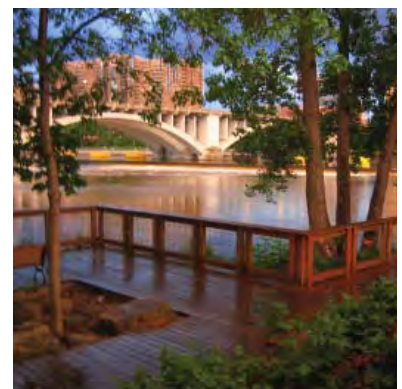
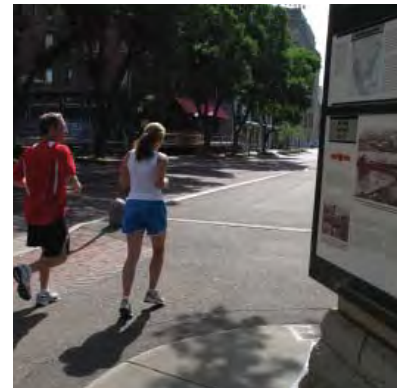
When current audiences were asked to select the riverfront's most important attribute, three out of five (62%) chose the area's scenic views and natural setting. And when asked about their interest in potential programs, three strong opportunities emerged:

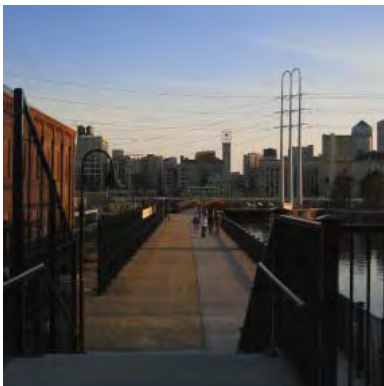
- Getting on the water in a canoe, kayak, or water taxi
- Information about the area's natural resources
- Programs and information about American Indians in the area

School groups are another important segment of the current audience. The already substantial school audience visiting the Guthrie Theater and Mill City Museum will likely grow larger. In the future, these groups can be expected to make even greater use of the area's outdoor spaces and programs, particularly as summer-school and after-school programs expand their use of the site. Service learning by groups and individuals can be integrated into programs such as archeological digs at Mill Ruins Park and river-system modeling at St. Anthony Falls Laboratory. Programs that get students on the water, such as Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures, will bring a new kind of activity to the area and require improved amenities.

Strategies for Engagement

While much of the current audience is aware of the area's historic status





(88%), most are not yet participating in the area's interpretive programs and destinations. They are visiting the Heritage Zone primarily for exercise, but they also expressed interest in the area's natural features. Greater participation in the area's cultural history may start with more in-depth exploration of the area's natural resources. By engaging with the river and its ecosystem, visitors will be closer to understanding the important role that these natural resources have played in the area's history.

- Improve trail access to the river
- Provide canoe access and supporting programs
- Create opportunities to talk with park staff or NPS rangers

Potential Future Audiences

With input from the Technical Advisory Committee, the Cincinnati team identified several audiences who are currently not participating in the Heritage Zone to the extent that reflects the makeup of the area's population. These audiences may not be aware of what the St. Anthony Falls area has to offer. Also, the area may not provide the amenities and attractions they desire.

Communities of color—Preliminary interviews suggest that some of these groups use public spaces in different ways than current audiences. They look for organized events and gather in large social groups and families. They sponsor and attend large sporting events and expect food and music to be part of their experience. Currently, the Heritage Zone has few facilities that support such gatherings.

The Twin Cities are home to an increasingly diverse gathering of cultural communities—new immigrants, indigenous people, and long-established ethnic and racial groups. Raising awareness of the Heritage Zone among these groups will take time. Developing relationships with these communities and getting them more deeply involved in the site will require focused action.

People who live and work downtown—This is a potential audience of 160,000 workers and 34,000 residents. They are less inclined to walk to the river now because of the physical isolation of the riverfront and there are few clear and pleasant routes.

Families with children—Currently, many cultural venues (e.g. Mill City Museum, Guthrie Theater, MacPhail Center for Music) attract families with children to the area. There is little, however, to attract this audience to the outdoor venues of the downtown riverfront. The lack of grassy play areas, shade, and easy access to affordable food and drink make this a much less desirable family destination than the city's lakes and other regional parks.

National and international travelers—This is a potentially large audience, with about 6 million visitors to the Twin Cities annually. While the Heritage Zone could become a first destination for out-of-town travelers, it is not an easy place to find or reach by public transportation.

Strategies for Engagement

New interpretive features, trails, and materials will play an important role in reaching many of these potential audiences. But in order to involve more people of color, the members of the Heritage Board must develop long-term relationships between the programs of the St. Anthony Falls area and people from the area's cultural communities. Additional strategies for engaging potential future audiences include:

- Develop themed gateway/portals and trails leading to the Heritage Zone
- Promote long-term projects and partnerships involving shared content and media
- Design and install history and nature-themed play areas
- Provide large areas for public celebrations

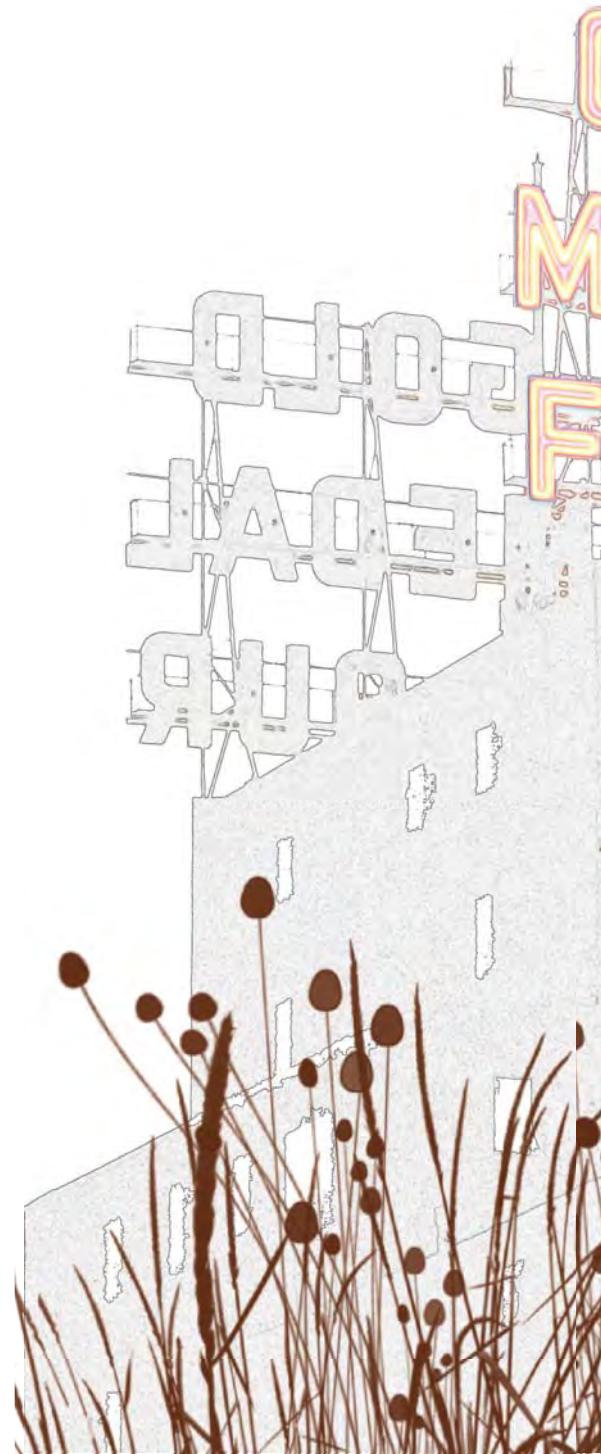
Digital Media Audiences

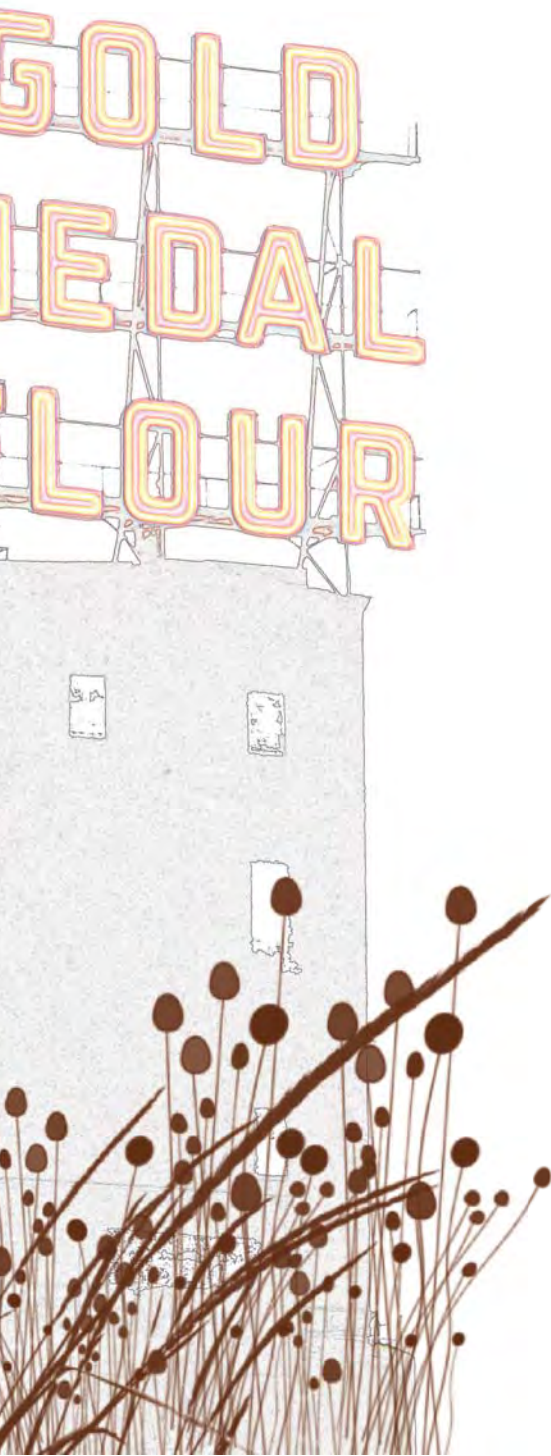
The St. Anthony Falls area already attracts the attention of audiences who may never visit the site in person. Travelers, researchers, and people simply looking for a place to eat may very well encounter links to the Heritage Zone, if they make the right connections. These people represent a potentially large audience. Groups and individuals engaged in social-media networks (email, blogs, personal web pages, etc.) may also encounter the places, stories, and events of the area without ever being on site. These are some of the groups likely to experience the Heritage Zone virtually, through digital, on-line media.

Digital media also has the potential to engage people on site, through experiences linked to actual places and features. While these audiences may be physically in the Heritage Zone, they might, for example, be connecting to the people and places of the site through hand-held devices or digital art installations. These audiences may stand with one foot in the physical setting and the other foot in the digital world.

Strategies for Engagement

Digital-media networks are already thriving. The challenge for Heritage Zone partners is to build stronger links between the St. Anthony Falls-area experience and relevant networks. Programs are currently in place (for example, the Bdote Memory Map and the U of M's Telling River Stories) that will provide vehicles for expanding networks and broadening the digital audience for Heritage Zone stories and events. Expanded digi-





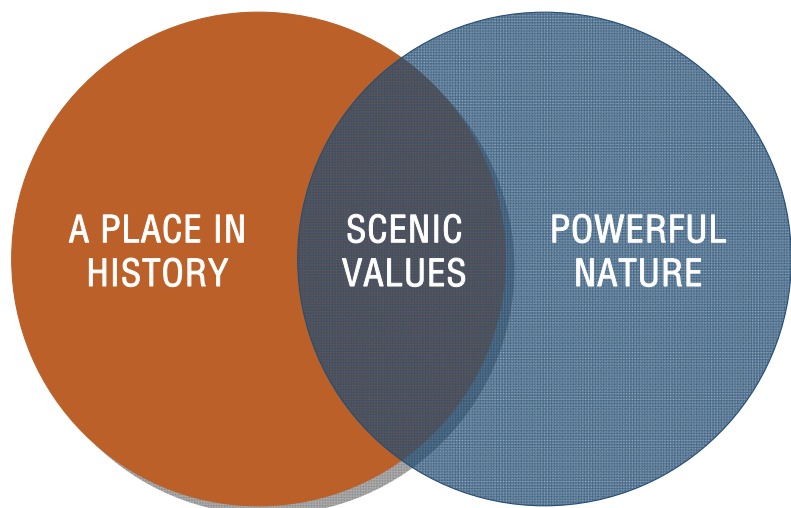
tal networks can also help build communities of people interested in the St. Anthony Falls area—from game developers and artists to networked parents sharing information about early learning opportunities on the river. Specific strategies include:

- Improve and monitor the on-line presence of the Heritage Zone, optimize search-engine functions
- Create a platform for collecting and disseminating digital content from community sources
- Promote the Heritage Zone among digital visitors through social-media networks
- Collaborate with tech-savvy, University of Minnesota communities
- Create easy access to digital historical resources (images, video, memoirs, etc.)

Interpretive Themes and Messages

Interpretive themes answer the question “What is this place about?” They hold the many stories gathered through time and hold meanings for the place that will carry well into the future. The overarching goal for interpretation in the St. Anthony Falls area is to provide transformative experiences rooted in the defining characteristics of the place. The 1990 Plan described these characteristics in terms of social history, geology, and the history of technology. This plan builds on those subjects and adds a new layer of thematic organization more attentive to potential cultural and emotional connections between the site and its audiences.

Today, the Heritage Zone is enjoyed as much for its nature as for its history. People are seeing a dynamic confluence of nature and history in ways seldom noted in decades past. This nature, however, is less about conserved wildlife habitats than it is about the changing relationship be-



tween people and nature in an urban environment. The St. Anthony Falls area is clearly marked by the stories of this change—along the skyline and along the shoreline.

As new programs are implemented and new exhibits developed, the following themes will help focus the choice of stories and selected messages. As new destinations and landscape features are developed, these themes will help guide projects and provide direction among competing ideas.

Power of the Falls

The same force of nature that captivated early industrialists also inspires awe and reverence among visitors today. The impressive weight and movement of water acting against concrete and steel commands our attention and shifts our focus to the river.

Spiritual Place

St. Anthony Falls is a spiritual place for indigenous cultures. It is a place that many people find restoring, healing, and revitalizing.

Resilient Nature

Despite the pressures of urban development, this place continues to support a surprising diversity of wildlife—on land and in the water. From the grand-scale falls to secluded areas of intimate nature, this is a living landscape that inspires and teaches. This natural resource, once exploited for industry is now something treasured and protected.

Iconic Mississippi

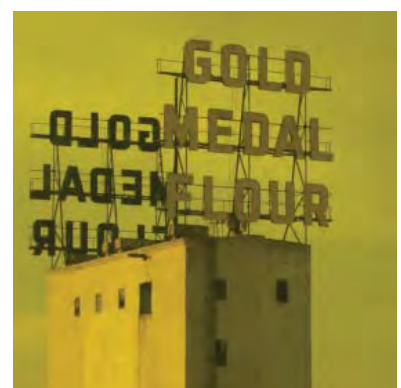
As a defining element of the North American landscape, the Mississippi River is unmistakable. A key waterway for humans and flyway for birds, its watershed drains a majority of the land between the Appalachian and Rock Mountains. As an icon of American culture, this river is known to people around the world. Its place in literature, music, performance, and the visual arts has made it the destination of cultural quests for generations.

A Revolution in Food

What started here as the transformation of wheat into flour grew into an international revolution in food production, distribution, and marketing. What happened here—for better or worse—continues to shape our world.

Life of a City

Over time people have been drawn to St. Anthony Falls for many different reasons. A city took shape here through cycles of growth, decline, and recovery. The historic riverfront holds memorable stories of city building and urban revitalization.





Confluence and Connections

This place is the geographical hub in a far-reaching network comprised of agriculture, transportation, waterpower, money, and people. Culturally, it's a place of origins and homecoming.

Transformative Experiences

Effective interpretation reaches deep and makes lasting impressions. When all of the elements are in place—visitor interest, good communication, rich environment, and evocative content—a simple conversation, or even an image on a trail sign can achieve a new level of personal meaning for the curious visitor. When that connection leads to a profound understanding of the place, the experience has been transformative. It is in these instances that people feel the extraordinary power of this place.

Sense of Place Examples

- A heightened sense of arrival
- Being awed by the Falls and the scenic views
- Feeling the spiritual significance of the place
- Participating in a ceremony
- Seeing the light change at dusk and dawn
- Watching evening concerts in historical settings
- Being surrounded by choreographed lighting effects on riverfront structures and water
- Spontaneous encounters with historical characters and artifacts
- Hearing a storyteller

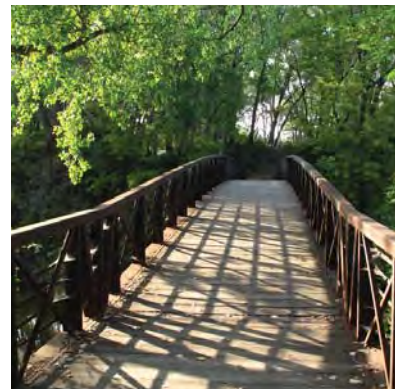
Exploration and Adventure Examples

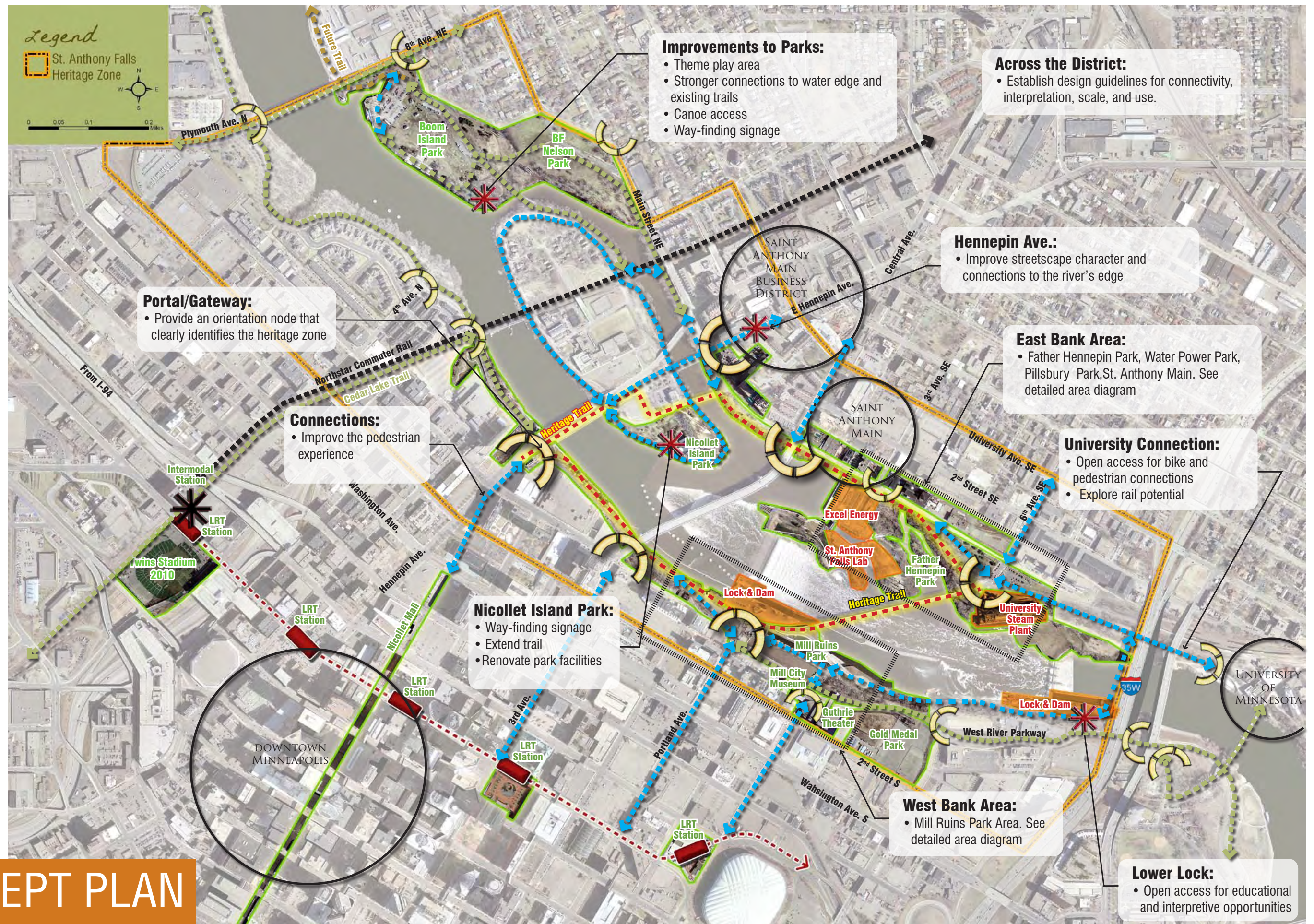
- Being on the water, getting into and touching the water
- Canoeing through the locks
- Observing unexpected wildlife
- Digging for archaeological remains
- Being immersed in mill ruins, drawn back to another time
- Being drawn by the setting from one destination to the next
- Behind-the-scenes immersion in astonishing industrial settings
- Exploring underground structures, tunnels, and caves
- Walking across the river on a suspended foot bridge
- Discovering the perceived risks found at the edges of “off-limits”

CONCEPT FRAMEWORK

Once disconnected and isolated, the Heritage Zone is now a desirable place to live and a valued recreational resource for many. The future development of this rich landscape requires new perspectives and guidance. To this end, the Heritage Board requested a plan that would provide a renewed vision for the area with interpretive themes, strategic goals, and experience concepts that will help guide the work of the next 10 to 20 years. This Concept Framework provides a physical plan to support the themes and experiences. It is based on the following principles:

- Optimize scenic values
- Recognize and engage existing investments (Mill City Museum, Guthrie Theater, etc.)
- Maintain a focus on the falls
- Give priority to pedestrians and non-motorized transportation
- Enhance safety
- Promote visual cohesiveness throughout the area
- Optimize access to the river
- Promote physical connections that draw people from one destination to the next
- Emphasize the blending of history and nature
- Promote a welcoming atmosphere
- Facilitate public access to interesting behind-the-scenes features and settings
- Recognize and respect the historical resources
- Protect the natural resources





Concept Plan

The Heritage Zone exists in a dynamic, urban context. Its connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and urban centers—University of Minnesota, downtown core, and east-side business districts—all contribute to its vitality. Strengthening these linkages to the surrounding city will be critically necessary to increase the area's utilization.

The University of Minnesota is an especially vital link for the St. Anthony Falls area. As an institution, it conducts world-renown research at its historic laboratory on Hennepin Island. It also supports relevant projects in the arts, urban planning and design, and education to name a few. As a community, the U of M is home to current audiences of the St. Anthony Falls area, as well as potential future and digital-media audiences.



Enhanced physical connections to the Minneapolis campus—and strengthened relationships with students, staff, and faculty—will further heighten the stature of the Heritage Zone locally and globally.

While much of the Heritage Zone is accessible to the public, many areas are either off-limits or are not welcoming. These “dead zones” contribute significantly to the area’s lack of coherence. With enhanced public connections to and around riverfront facilities such as the locks and dams and power plants, the area will feel more unified.

Enhance pedestrian friendliness

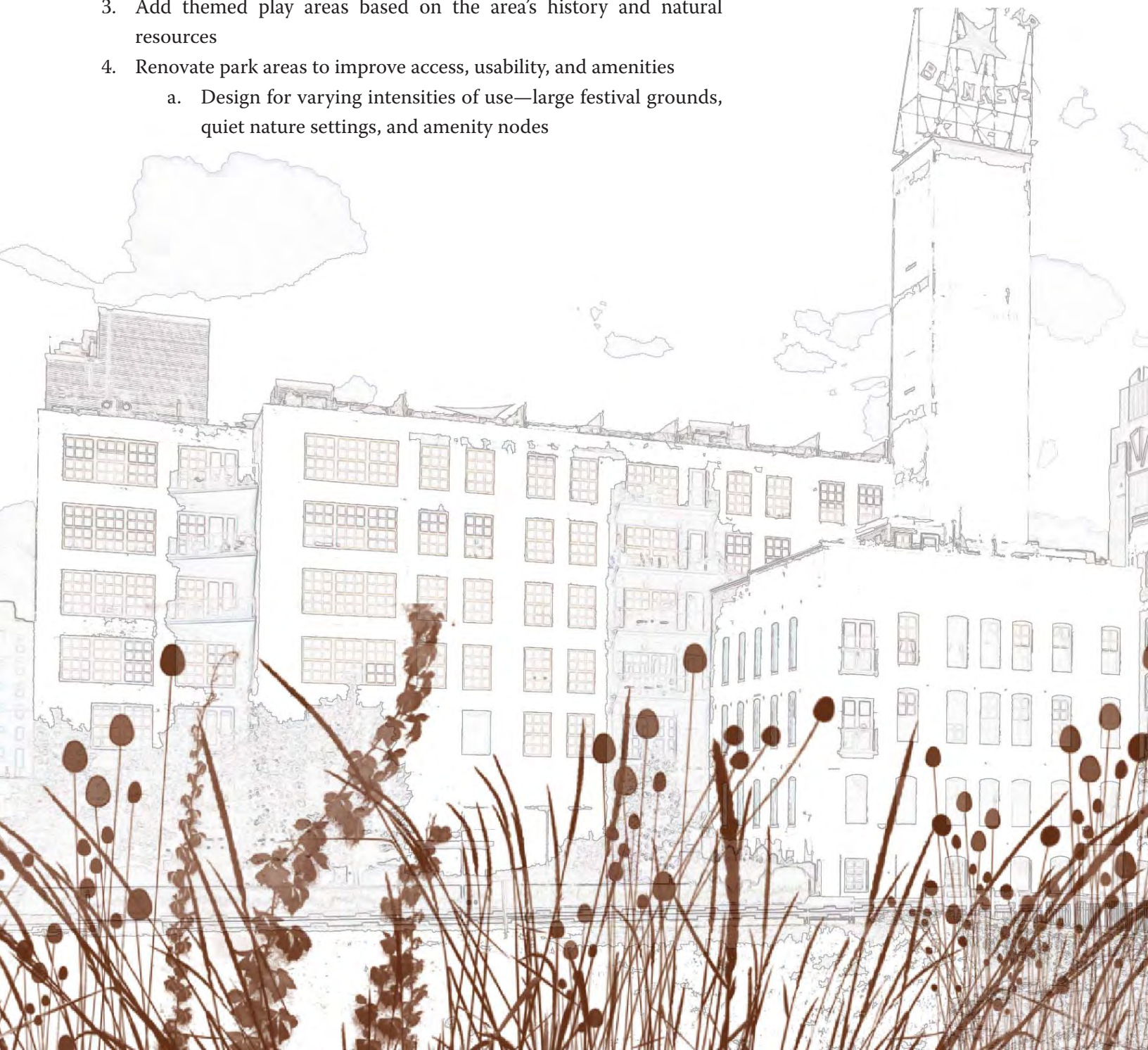
1. Improve walking connections to and around the area
 - a. Create pleasant routes from the downtown core, LRT stations, east-side business districts, and the University of Minnesota through enhanced walkways, bikeways, streetscapes, and landscaping
 - b. Increase safety along circulation paths
2. Develop clear and welcoming portals and gateways to the area
 - a. Create plazas and sculptural features that mark entrances
 - b. Install wayfinding and interpretive elements, and provide for welcoming encounters with staff and volunteers leading into the portals (for example at LRT stations)
 - c. Provide restrooms, seating, shade, drinking fountains, and visitor information
3. Improve connections within the Heritage Zone
 - a. Improve the legibility of sidewalks and bike trails
 - b. Complete loop trails to improve safety and enhance viewing opportunities
 - c. Develop revenue-supported themed transit, such as trolleys, bike and canoe rentals, water taxis

Create a cohesive identity and memorable sense of place

1. Improve accessibility and wayfinding
 - a. Install directional signs to help motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists find and get to the Heritage Zone
2. Connect riverfront destinations and features with green space
 - a. Extend trails and plantings to create a continuous park-like experience on both sides of the river
3. Connect more destinations with loop walking routes
 - a. Design for powerful visual connections that draw people from one experience to the next

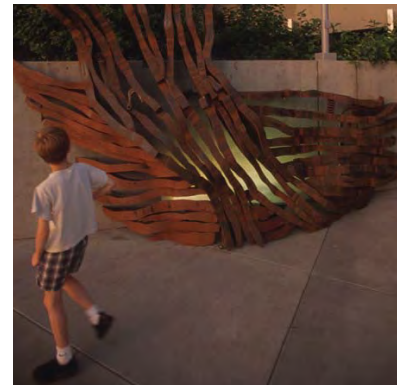
Add attractions for all ages and cultures

1. Open up hidden experiences of history and nature
 - a. Develop access to underground features
 - b. Support the archeology programs of Mill Ruins Park
 - c. Support family programming, such as successful family days, at Mill City Museum, and strengthen partnerships with organizations to provide more family events
 - d. Develop access to interesting, but currently off-limits locations such as the St. Anthony Falls Laboratory, the locks, and power plants
2. Provide greater access to the river—from shoreline features to canoe landings
3. Add themed play areas based on the area's history and natural resources
4. Renovate park areas to improve access, usability, and amenities
 - a. Design for varying intensities of use—large festival grounds, quiet nature settings, and amenity nodes



HERITAGE ZONE CONCEPTS

With the promise of larger audiences and additional features in the Heritage Zone, it is important that areas be developed for multiple uses that occur over the course of a day and throughout the seasons. This plan recommends an overall focus on St. Anthony Falls and the Stone Arch Bridge. This area features the most prominent destinations and has the greatest capacity for serving both large crowds and quiet experiences. Also, the areas at either end of the Stone Arch Bridge are among the least attractive and underutilized sites in the Heritage Zone. This focus on the falls, however, must enhance rather than disregard other key destinations north and south of the Stone Arch Bridge. This plan suggests developments that will unify the entire site and strengthen the appeal of destinations from Boom Island to the 35W bridge.



East Bank Concepts

East Falls/Hennepin Island

The sound and movement of water cascading over the restored east falls will draw people to the area and sharpen the connection between this place and its history. In many ways, this small part of the Heritage Zone is like an outdoor museum filled with artifacts, landscape features, and stories from the past. Historic structures, such as the waterpower tunnels, present extraordinary opportunities for guided exploration, and shoreline trails around Hennepin Island will provide intimate nature experiences in a setting that already feels set apart from its urban surroundings.

Father Hennepin Park

This park holds the promise of becoming a new center of activity and a lively gateway link between the Heritage Zone, the U of M Minneapolis campus, and the Marcy Holmes neighborhood. Also, it is one of the few large, open spaces in the area, easily accommodating an event and celebration space. The Park is prominently located amidst residences and close to University Avenue, making it highly suitable for permanent art installations and a structured play area for families with children.

Pillsbury A Mill

Architecturally one of the most significant structures in the Heritage Zone, the Pillsbury A Mill is ideally suited to house a first-stop destination for visitors seeking information and orientation on the east side of the river. Just as Mill City Museum provides a starting point for visitors on the west side, so could the Pillsbury A Mill become a visitor hub for the east side. A street-level facility, staffed by National Park Service Rangers, could anchor a variety of interpretive functions in and around the mill.

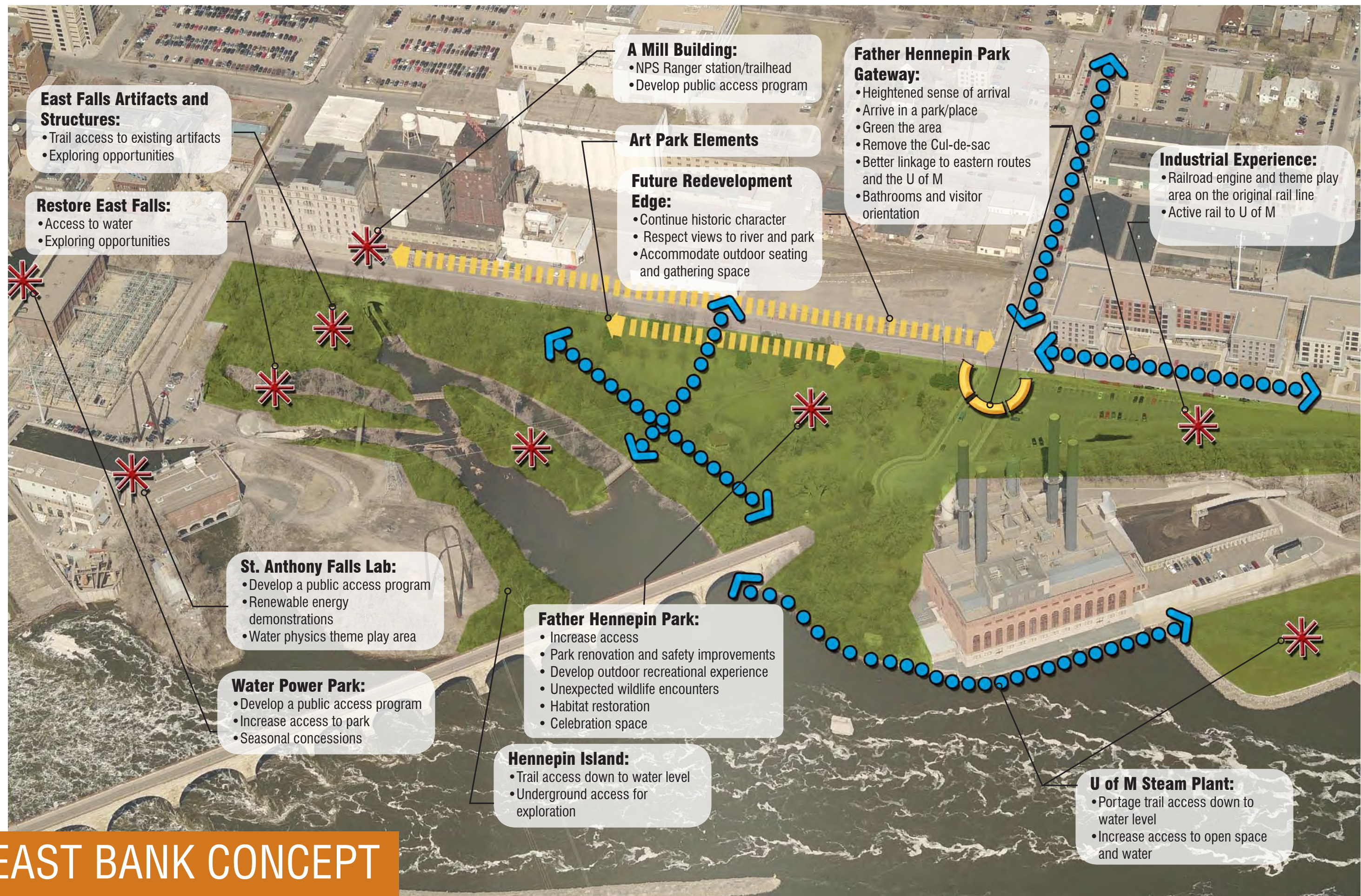
Water Power Park

This riverfront park, with its industrial look and feel, provides some of the best available up-close views of St. Anthony Falls. It is also a good place to see the working side of the Mississippi and the falls. Much more can be done to give visitors a deeper experience with the work still being done at St. Anthony Falls—river and energy-related research, generating electricity, and navigation. A more welcoming entrance and public access to the facilities in and adjacent to Water Power Park would greatly enhance the experience and help build awareness for the important work still being done at the falls.



*Photo credit - 2nd from bottom:
Pillsbury A Mill ca. 1886
Minnesota Historical Society*

EAST BANK CONCEPT



West Bank Concepts

Portland Avenue Gateway

Where Portland Avenue intersects the riverfront is an ideal location for a first-stop orientation hub and gathering place. Currently, the site is dominated by a parking lot and access to the Stone Arch Bridge is largely undeveloped. It does, however, provide outstanding views of the area and is easily connected to many west-side destinations. During the summer months, this site could take on the look and feel of an urban park, with places for food vendors, benches, lighting, and shade trees

River's Edge

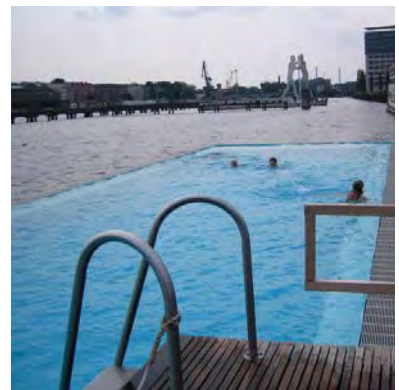
Sheltered from river traffic and the swift current, this section of riverfront is well suited for public water access. It could provide a mix of activities from paddle-boating to a swimming barge. This is also the site of the former main canal gatehouse, where water from the river was channeled into the turbines that once powered the mills. A structural feature reminiscent of gatehouse would provide an effective tool for deeper interpretation of water power on the site.

Mill Ruins Park

Visitors are keenly interested in these exposed mill ruins and in the structures that still lie beneath the surface. This small park could be expanded—north and south—to feature ongoing archeology programs and a ruins-themed play area for families with children. Over time, Mill Ruins Park could become a continuous chain of destinations along the riverfront—from the Fuji Ya site to the north, down past Mill City Museum.

Main Canal

One of the last major milling structures to be restored, the main canal is also among the most compelling and distinctive features of the Heritage Zone. Currently buried beneath the plank-road section of West River Parkway, this canal once brought water power to the most productive flour mills in the world. No single structure could better demonstrate the scale and historical significance of water power at St. Anthony Falls. One concept, a tunnel-like passage that takes visitors from Mill City Museum down through a portion of the excavated canal and out among into Mill Ruins Park holds great possibilities.



*West side Canal ca. 1890
Photographer Henry R. Farr
Minnesota Historical Society*



Main Canal:

- Opportunity for parkway re-alignment
- Potential re-use of plank road area
- Open main canal (wet or dry) for public access

Lower Lock Trail:

- Connection between Mill City and lower lock along water's edge

Mill Ruins Parks:

- Opportunity to develop outdoor performance space with scenic views and pedestrian linkage to Guthrie Theater/Mill City Museum

Spillway:

- Pedestrian bridge over spillway
- Canoeing through the locks

Mill Ruins Park:

- Expand and excavate area with trails
- Connect to lock area
- Underground exploration
- Add shade
- Ruins themed play area

Portland Avenue Gateway:

- A heightened sense of arrival
- Take advantage of the scenic views
- Develop portal/approach at Portland (two-way traffic)
- Better connections from Mill City

Gateway Orientation Node:

- Develop orientation node with concessions and bathrooms
- Opportunity for tunnel to connect to the river

River's Edge:

- Reinforce and improve river edge
- Opportunity for gathering and scenic views

River's Edge Gate House:

- Recreate gate house structure

River's Edge:

- Swimming barge above the spillway
- Water themed play area

WEST BANK CONCEPT

GOLD
MEDAL
FLOUR



SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Many interim reports and presentations were produced during the development of this plan. The following documents are compiled as an appendix to this plan and are available at [www.mnhs.org/places/safhb/index.shtml]:

The St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone Experience: Gaining Insights from Existing Research, June 2009

Qualitative Research on Current and Potential Audiences for the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone, June 2009

Models of Success Profiles, June 2009

Visitor Intercept Study for the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone, July 2009

