



1 March 2012
NEWS RELEASE

Water Works Park conceptual development plan conceives vibrant “Next Generation” destination on Minneapolis riverfront **Three experiential zones emerge as places to engage, play and stay; public invited to comment through March 31, 2012**

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA – Five years from now, visitors to Minneapolis may find themselves exploring exposed mill tunnels in the morning and, that evening, dine with a stunning view of St. Anthony Falls and the artfully-lit Stone Arch Bridge. The [Minneapolis Parks Foundation](#) and its partner, the [Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board](#), presented the prospect this week – along with opportunities for toe dipping and concert viewing – as part of a new conceptual development plan for Water Works Park on the city’s Central Riverfront.

New York-based [HR&A Advisors](#) and Minneapolis-based [MS&R Architects](#) formed the design team responsible for identifying programming options, design concepts and preliminary feasibility for the unique study area.

“The Water Works study area is only three blocks long and one block wide, but its concentration of exciting features make it ideal for a four-season destination park,” says Mary deLaitre, President of the Minneapolis Parks Foundation. “This is one of the best opportunities in Minneapolis to create what we call the Next Generation of Parks™, through design and city-building strategies that bring to life vibrant public spaces around which people gather and communities thrive.”

The proposed park’s physical features include ruins of the original Minneapolis municipal Water Works, several historic mills and, more recently, the famed Fuji-Ya restaurant. It’s also situated within a growing mixed-use neighborhood, where it could form the nexus of regional parks along the Central Riverfront and provide a unique urban park experience on the bank of “America’s fourth coast.”

Unearthing “what could be”

Five themes of what the site could be emerged during the three-month design process, which began in December 2011 and included two public meetings. The design team summarized them as engage the ruins; interact with water; bring the kids; come in the winter; and take pride in design.

These five programming options, together with the architects’ in-depth research of the site, informed the design concept, which features three experiential zones:

South – Mill Ruins 2.0

Further excavate the area’s attractive Mill Ruins and invite the public to explore the channels and tunnels that characterize this segment of the park. Program new “rooms” created by exposed walls with Native gardens, children’s play areas, or other experiential spaces.

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Center – Convergence Zone

Characterized by the intersection of streets, riverfront pedestrian and bike paths, the lock and dam and the Stone Arch Bridge, this hub has a natural energy that lends it to active programming opportunities, such as a plaza street and water-based activities.

North – Park Pavilions

Wooded by volunteer trees, this slope overlooks the entire Central Riverfront, an ideal spot for a year-round restaurant and interpretive or cultural center, with services for park visitors.

Realizing the Water Works concept

The public is invited to comment on the Water Works conceptual development plan, now through March 31, 2012. Comments can be submitted online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/waterworks2012>.

“We are very excited about the Water Works park concept and the level of programming it can bring to the Central Riverfront,” says Andrew Caddock, Project Manager for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. “We see this as an opportunity to augment our existing Central Riverfront parks – which are rich in natural features rare in such an urban setting – with historical, cultural and service-oriented activities that attract visitors and give them reasons to stay.”

Water Works Park will be one of seven regional parks incorporated into the Park Board’s Central Riverfront Regional Park Master Plan, which is being updated to meet Metropolitan Council standards by 2013.

While the Park Board engages in the master planning process, the Minneapolis Parks Foundation is exploring options for maintaining the momentum generated by public enthusiasm for the proposed Water Works Park.

About the Minneapolis Parks Foundation

The Minneapolis Parks Foundation is focused on the Next Generation of Parks™, with an emphasis on parks design education, innovation and implementation. Beginning in 2010, MPF co-sponsored the globally renowned Minneapolis Riverfront Design Competition, the largest in the state’s history. In 2011, Parks Foundation projects included the Next Generation of Parks™ lecture series, the 4th Avenue North Playground along the Upper Riverfront, and more.

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