

NEWS RELEASE Thursday, April 18, 2013

Minneapolis Parks Foundation launches next phase of Water Works park development

RFP invites multi-discipline design teams to create design for dynamic site on the Mississippi River

Minneapolis, Minn. – The [Minneapolis Parks Foundation](#) is inviting design teams to respond to a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Water Works site on the Mississippi Riverfront. The selected design team will create the design for Water Works, a new four-season destination park on the Mississippi Riverfront in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota. The [Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board](#) is a Water Works partner. The selected design team will address a compact and complex site with multiple intersecting components – historic, economic, ecological, infrastructural – located on “America’s fourth coast” in the heart of Minnesota’s largest city.

Situated within a growing mixed-use downtown neighborhood, Water Works connects with existing city, regional and national parks, is permeated with Native American and industrial history, and forms the intersection of multiple streets and biking and walking paths. The four-acre site’s rich industrial past begins with lumber mills lining the river’s edge, followed by flourmills, each supported by the river and nearby rail for power and transportation; the city’s first municipal and fire pumping stations were located here. From before industrial settlement, the area has been a First Nation sacred site.

“The Mississippi River is ‘the source’ in Minneapolis. It is a natural wonder and economic engine, and it defines our identity,” says Minneapolis Parks Foundation executive director, Mary deLaittre. “We are seeking international-caliber teams whose work successfully addresses contemporary urban design challenges, while integrating the site’s and the city’s inherent characteristics with future-oriented parks programming.”

Design and development context

The Water Works project is concurrent with the Minneapolis Park Board’s revision of the [Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park Master Plan](#), and is a [RiverFirst](#) Priority Project. The design team will also consider a broader geographic context for Water Works, continuing about five blocks downstream to include Gold Medal Park and passing in front of the Mill City Museum and Guthrie Theater.

RiverFirst is a multi-year, multi-agency strategy to recreate the Minneapolis Upper Riverfront with 21st century parks and parks-supportive amenities. Within the RiverFirst context, the Upper Riverfront extends 5.5 miles from the Stone Arch Bridge to the city’s northern border. Water Works was identified as a RiverFirst Priority Project in 2012.

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The Minneapolis Park Board is revising the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park Master Plan to fulfill Metropolitan Council requirements. The Regional Park Master Plan will guide long-term Minneapolis Park Board policy by establishing design and program visions, project budgets, and implementation plans for each focus area within the Regional Park. Select areas adjacent to the Regional Park will also be addressed. The Water Works team will work collaboratively with the Regional Park team.

Key dates

Design professionals and professionals with supporting expertise are invited to respond to the Water Works RFP by Friday, May 17. The Minneapolis Parks Foundation will announce the shortlist of design teams on June 11. The shortlisted teams will complete jury interviews, June 25-28, during which time they may also make a public presentation.

The Minneapolis Parks Foundation will announce the winning design team on July 9, with design beginning in mid-Summer and continuing through early 2014.

To stay current on Water Works, the public and design teams are encouraged to visit <http://MplsParksFoundation.org> to subscribe to the Water Works blog feed and sign up for the Foundation's e-newsletter.

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. Since 2010, the Foundation has co-sponsored the globally renowned **Minneapolis Riverfront Design Competition** and debuted the **Next Generation of Parks™ Lecture Series**, free presentations by internationally known parks designers and developers. This year, the Foundation is expanding its impact through collaboration on multiple projects, including the **RiverFirst Initiative**.

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