



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | November 30, 2017

Water Works continues to gain momentum with approval of schematic design and restaurant agreement with The Sioux Chef

Minneapolis Park Board's actions on Nov. 29 set the stage for the RiverFirst park project's 2018 groundbreaking

Minneapolis, Minn. – The [Minneapolis Parks Foundation](#) and [Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board](#) marked another important milestone in the [Water Works](#) riverfront park project yesterday, when the Park Board of Commissioners approved phase 1 schematic design and a Letter of Intent (LOI) with [The Sioux Chef](#). These actions ensure that Water Works stays on course for its anticipated fall 2018 groundbreaking and 2019 grand opening.

Water Works is a park development project overlooking St. Anthony Falls and the Stone Arch Bridge. One of the signature projects in the [RiverFirst](#) vision, Water Works will bring visitor services and recreational and cultural amenities to one of Minnesota's most highly visited destinations.

The LOI with The Sioux Chef formalizes the parties' intent to partner, [announced last September](#), on the Water Works restaurant and event venue. The Sioux Chef is a diverse, Indigenous-led team committed to revitalizing Native American cuisine and reclaiming an important culinary tradition that has been long buried and often inaccessible. The restaurant's working title will be Owamni: An Indigenous Kitchen and it will be the first year-round, full service food venue within the Minneapolis park system. In addition to the restaurant, The Sioux Chef plans to create events and educational opportunities to amplify diverse voices into a larger dialogue about Native American cultures, the river, and cuisine.

Water Works design development is being completed by Minneapolis-based [Damon Farber Landscape Architects](#) with [HGA Architects and Engineers](#) and a multidisciplinary team that also includes expertise in cultural resources, programming, and engineering.

"Through extensive community input, we've arrived at a plan and program for Water Works that will bring truly transformative experiences to one of our state's most storied sites. As we close out the year, Minneapolis Park Board commissioners have put all the pieces in place to move Water Works forward," says Tom Evers, Minneapolis Parks Foundation Executive Director. "More than a century ago, a group of parks visionaries foresaw the tremendous impact their investments would have on Minneapolis, and we are the direct beneficiaries of their generosity. Now it's our turn to take the lead and ensure that the benefits of our city's greatest natural asset – the Mississippi River – will reach all communities and transform lives for generations to come."

“Acquiring and developing the Minneapolis riverfront for everyone to enjoy is at the core of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board’s proud history and essential to our future vision,” says Jayne Miller, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Superintendent. “Innovative park developments like Water Works could not happen without successful partnerships. We’re grateful for the Minneapolis Parks Foundation’s hard work and generosity, and thrilled to see The Sioux Chef’s exciting concept move closer to fruition.”

Project funding

The philanthropic community is largely funding the Water Works Mezzanine Phase with contributions to the RiverFirst Capital Campaign. To date, the Parks Foundation has raised \$13.1 million to complete two signature river projects and anticipates raising the remaining \$4.8 million by June 1, 2018.

The General Mills Foundation made the lead corporate contribution to RiverFirst in 2016, with a \$3 million gift. More than a hundred individuals and companies have already joined General Mills in support of the campaign, including RBC Wealth Management and US Bank. Most recently, Target committed \$150,000k to the RiverFirst Campaign in support of Water Works and new connections from North Minneapolis to the Mississippi River.

Campaign gifts of \$100,000 or more are being matched by the Pohlad Family Foundation, though the Parks Foundation welcomes gifts of any size. Interested donors are encouraged to learn more about how to participate in this landmark campaign by visiting the [Parks Foundation’s Major Gifts page](#) on its website.

Schematic design details

The schematic design illustrates what will be constructed within the Mezzanine Phase of the Water Works project and is an important step on the path to construction. In undergoing schematic design, the design team makes choices about project details while holding true to the intent, program, and quality originally envisioned.

The pavilion will include a green roof, meeting room, and the restaurant. On the park grounds, and adjacent to the pavilion, city steps will provide a place for contemplation and programming, while a south plaza will be a gateway to the Central Riverfront. The wooded hillside on the north end of the site will retain its character and be enhanced with native vegetation, including plants with edible or medicinal value, and a direct trail link into downtown promotes access and circulation.

Site preparation work underway, continues into 2018

The Minneapolis Park Board has begun preparing the Water Works site for its 2018 construction start. Selective deconstruction of the Fuji-Ya building began in October and will continue through February 2018. Large timbers from the building are being salvaged and will be repurposed in the stair and lobby area. Excavation of mill remnants that have been filled with soil and debris for over 80 years will begin next April.

About the Minneapolis Parks Foundation

The Minneapolis Parks Foundation transforms human lives through parks and public spaces by aligning philanthropic investment and community vision. The Parks Foundation co-leads the [RiverFirst Initiative](#) with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board and is responsible for private fundraising and implementation of the [Water Works](#) and [Great Northern Greenway River Link](#) projects. The Parks Foundation also supports innovative Minneapolis parks projects through equity

funding and champions world-class design through its [Next Generation of Parks™ Event Series](#). Learn more at MplsParksFoundation.org.

About the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

The [Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board](#) is an independent, semi-autonomous body responsible for the Minneapolis park system. With 179 park properties totaling 6,804 acres of land and water, the Park Board provides places and recreation opportunities for all people to gather and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community and the environment. Its Grand Rounds Scenic Byway, neighborhood parks, recreation centers and diversified programming have made the park system an important component of what makes Minneapolis a great place to live, play and work. More than 22 million annual visits are made to the nationally acclaimed park system, which was named the number one park system in the nation in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 by The Trust for Public Land's 2016 ParkScore® Index.

###

Editors' Note: Project renderings are available via Dropbox link by request.