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## MINNEAPOLIS PARK BOARD COMMISSIONERS TO VOTE ON RECOMMENDATION FOR DESIGN TEAM FOR 26<sup>th</sup> AVE NORTH OVERLOOK/GREAT NORTHERN GREENWAY RIVER LINK PROJECT, OCT. 3, 2018

### **\$1 Million Upper Riverfront park project will be funded through the Minneapolis Parks Foundation's RiverFirst Capital Campaign**

Once confirmed, an interdisciplinary design team led by TEN x TEN Landscape Architecture and 4RM+ULA Architecture will begin work in October

Minneapolis, Minn. - At its regular meeting on Wednesday, October 3, Minneapolis Park Board Commissioners will vote on a staff recommendation to retain an interdisciplinary design team to begin work on the first phase of the 26<sup>th</sup> Ave N Overlook, also known as the Great Northern Greenway River Link. The design team - led by TEN x TEN Landscape Architecture with 4RM+ULA Architecture - was selected through a competitive proposal process. If confirmed, the team will begin refining project design and preparing construction documents, ahead of an expected construction start in Spring 2019. The River Link/26<sup>th</sup> Ave N Overlook is a RiverFirst signature project and, along with Water Works, a primary focus of the Minneapolis Parks Foundation's current \$18 million RiverFirst Capital Campaign.

The River Link/26<sup>th</sup> Ave N Overlook project is located at the east end of the 26<sup>th</sup> Ave N Greenway, a recently completed project that connects the Grand Rounds at Theodore Wirth Regional Park with the Mississippi River through the heart of North Minneapolis. The River Link project will celebrate the Greenway's arrival at the river with a small but compelling public space that now is an unsightly and inaccessible dead-end street, where dense vegetation and a chain link fence blocks the river. The River Link project is a major step in transforming the entire river corridor through North Minneapolis into public parkland, parkway, and trails.

"For too long, neighborhoods in North Minneapolis have been cut off from the Mississippi River," says Tom Evers, Executive Director of the Minneapolis Parks Foundation. "With the completion of the 26<sup>th</sup> Ave N trail, the time is right to transform this industrialized shoreline into a welcoming destination. Once completed, we envision students from nearby Nellie Stone Johnson Elementary School walking the protected path to the river for a class outing; youth from Farview Park biking to the overlook for a picnic; and explorers of the Great River Road stopping to glimpse a Great Blue Heron or one of the Bald Eagles that frequent the site."

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With a budget of \$1 million, the project scope includes shoreline rehabilitation and a river overlook with inventive approaches to lighting, furniture, and art. A broader vision for the area includes connections to downtown and the West River Trails, and new parks stretching north and south along the riverfront.

The design team was selected for its expertise in designing impactful public spaces, passion for incorporating the community into the design process and creative yet disciplined approach. In addition to TEN x TEN and 4RM+ULA, the design team includes EOR civil and environmental engineers, Schuler Shook lighting designers, Mattson Macdonald Young structural engineers, MEP electrical consultants, and CPMI cost estimators.

“The 26<sup>th</sup> Ave N Overlook/River Link project is another important step towards fulfilling the RiverFirst vision for restored greenspace and increased access to the Upper Riverfront,” says Minneapolis Park Board Assistant Superintendent for Planning, Michael Schroeder.

The RiverFirst Initiative, a partnership between the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Parks Foundation, is a visionary multi-year effort to develop continuous parkland and robust riverfront parks on both sides of the Mississippi River from downtown Minneapolis to the northern city limits. RiverFirst signature projects also include Water Works, the Hall’s Island-Scherer Site, Upper Harbor Terminal, and the Mississippi East Bank Trail. Funding for this project is provided by RiverFirst donors including General Mills Foundation, Target, U.S. Bank, the Pohlad Family Foundation and many generous individuals who are passionate for completing the Grand Rounds as envisioned more than a century ago.

#### **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 and 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, including Little Free Libraries® at all recreation centers, through equity funding, and champions world-class design through its Next Generation of Parks™ Event Series. Learn more at [MplsParksFoundation.org](http://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 180 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 24 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, 2016, 2017, and 2018 by The Trust for Public Land’s ParkScore® Index.

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