



## **Great Northern Greenway Overlook Design Will Open North Minneapolis to the River Through a Dynamic New RiverFirst Park Feature**

Minneapolis Parks Foundation invites the community to help support riverfront parks with a generous matching grant from the Schulze Family Foundation

**Minneapolis, Minn.** – The Minneapolis Parks Foundation and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board shared the updated vision for the Great Northern Greenway Overlook, which will link North Minneapolis to the Mississippi River through an iconic new park destination. Along with the announcement, the Parks Foundation has extended an invitation to the public to participate in the RiverFirst Capital Campaign, which will bring \$17.9 million in philanthropic contributions to create transformative parks on the city's Upper Riverfront. The two RiverFirst projects supported through this public campaign, Water Works and the Great Northern Greenway Overlook, are expected to break ground in 2019 and be open for the enjoyment of all in 2020. Community members are invited to become a part of the historic effort – the largest philanthropic campaign to create new parks in Minneapolis – by contributing any amount at [MplsParksFoundation.org/SupportRiverFirst](https://MplsParksFoundation.org/SupportRiverFirst). Every gift through December 31, 2019, will be generously matched by the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation, up to \$250,000.

RiverFirst is a Minneapolis Park Board-led vision for regional riverfront parks and trails that will transform the Minneapolis Upper Riverfront into a world-class cultural and recreational destination for residents and visitors, as well as an economic engine for the Twin Cities region. Other RiverFirst projects include the riverfront park at Upper Harbor Terminal, Hall's Island restoration, and Graco Park.

"Today marks an important milestone in our efforts to provide access to the Mississippi riverfront for North Minneapolis residents," said Minneapolis Parks Superintendent Al Bangoura. "This project is a demonstration of what we can accomplish when we all work together. I'm incredibly grateful for all of our public and private partners, especially the Minneapolis Parks Foundation and the City of Minneapolis."

The Parks Foundation launched the RiverFirst Campaign in 2015 and has raised 93% of the goal, or \$16.7 million, from philanthropic contributions. RiverFirst gifts include a \$3 million lead corporate contribution from the General Mills Foundation and a \$1 million Anchor Grant from Bank of America, as well as generous contributions from more than 100 families.

"Through the RiverFirst Campaign and the partnership between the Parks Foundation, the Minneapolis Park Board, and the community, we are able to create new iconic parks that celebrate and strengthen the human connection to one of our state's most vital natural resources – the Mississippi River," said Tom Evers, Executive Director of the Parks Foundation and a RiverFirst contributor. "It's a bold vision for a more connected, creative, and inclusive Minneapolis parks system, and we're inviting the community to join us in bringing the vision to life and completing the masterpiece by contributing to the RiverFirst campaign."

In addition to giving online at [MplsParksFoundation.org/SupportRiverFirst](https://MplsParksFoundation.org/SupportRiverFirst), donors interested in supporting the RiverFirst Campaign can contact the Parks Foundation's Chief Development Officer, Jennifer Downham, at 612.822.3401 or [JDownham@MplsParksFoundation.org](mailto:JDownham@MplsParksFoundation.org) about other ways to give.

### **Project Details: Great Northern Greenway Overlook & Water Works**

The **Great Northern Greenway Overlook** – which is the first project in a larger multiphase **Great Northern Greenway River Link** plan – is located at the east end of 26<sup>th</sup> Ave N where the City of Minneapolis recently completed an off-street bike and pedestrian trail that connects the Grand Rounds at Theodore Wirth Regional Park with the Mississippi River through the heart of North Minneapolis.

The project scope includes shoreline enhancements and a river overlook with inventive approaches to lighting, furniture, and art. An interdisciplinary team led by [TEN x TEN Landscape Architecture](#) and [4RM+ULA Architecture](#) is developing the design, which creates opportunities for visitors to discover the Mississippi River as a sensory experience. Features will include an oval loop trail that will perch like a nest above the riverbank, a 50-ft-tall beacon, visible from a distance of half a mile or more, and opportunities for “pop up” interactive experiences and temporary art installations. Elements of the Overlook concept are informed by engagement and design ideas developed by Environmental Design Studio apprentices at [Juxtaposition Arts](#), a partnership brought to the project by the Parks Foundation.

The broader vision for the project includes connections to downtown Minneapolis and West River Road trails, together with new parks stretching north and south from the Overlook along the riverfront. Once complete, the full River Link will unite downtown to North Minneapolis along the river, open up a new 40-mile trail loop in Minneapolis, and eventually reach to Northeast across the river.

The Overlook's companion project is **Water Works** in the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park. Already home to iconic landmarks, including St. Anthony Falls and the Stone Arch Bridge, Water Works will be an expansion of Mill Ruins Park and become a much-needed destination for the more than 2.5 million annual visitors to the area, a number that is expected to double in the next decade. Among the new amenities will be a park pavilion with a restaurant by James Beard Award-winning [The Sioux Chef](#); revealed and restored historic mill remnants; a city steps gathering and performance space; and places to picnic and play.

Both projects are expected to break ground in late summer or early fall of 2019. The Overlook's grand opening is anticipated in spring 2020, with the Water Works grand opening to follow in fall of the same year.

### **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](https://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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