



Looking Forward

2023-2024 Minneapolis Parks Foundation Annual Report



MINNEAPOLIS
PARKS
FOUNDATION

*"If you have faith in the future greatness of your city, do not shrink from securing while you may such areas as will be adequate to the wants of such a city... **Look forward** for a century, to the time when the city has a population of a million, and think what will be their wants."*

— Horace W. S. Cleveland, 1883

Celebrating 20 Years of Growth

Marking its 20th anniversary in 2023, the Minneapolis Parks Foundation saw its most successful fundraising year, securing nearly \$13.5 million from our generous community of donors. Since our start, your commitment to the Minneapolis Parks Foundation has helped to deliver more than \$42 million to parks, programs, and improvements through Minneapolis's world-class system. Thank you!

As we look to the future of the Parks Foundation, we are motivated by the goals laid out in our 2023-2027 strategic plan. Together, we plan to generate \$100 million of new philanthropic investment for our parks over the next 10 years in forms that complement public funding, deliver the greatest benefit to our community, and help lead to a more equitable park system.



A Passion for the Parks

An enthusiastic cyclist, swimmer, and parks supporter, Minneapolis Parks Foundation's new interim executive director Jocelyn Hale is also a nonprofit leader recognized for her work championing equity and inclusion.

"What drew me to the Minneapolis Parks Foundation," she says, "is that they're on fire these days with a visionary strategic plan that is focused on making sure everybody in our city has the same access to this great park system."



Thank You

We'd like to thank Tom Evers, who stepped down as Minneapolis Parks Foundation's executive director at the end of 2023 after serving the foundation for close to a decade.





Minneapolis Riverfront, looking south over the Lowry Bridge

“Through his great leadership and good cheer over the last decade, Tom Evers really put the Minneapolis Parks Foundation on the map as the lead philanthropic supporter of our city’s parks and as an independent voice and advocate for equity throughout our park system. A true believer for what’s possible through the parks, Tom championed visionary projects like the RiverFirst Initiative, pulled together a terrific team, and positioned the Parks Foundation for continued success as we dive into the North Commons campaign.”

— Dorothy Bridges
former board chair of the Minneapolis Parks Foundation

Dear Friends,

As we marked the Minneapolis park system’s 140th anniversary in 2023, and the Minneapolis Parks Foundation’s 20th year, it’s been a natural time to reflect on the fascinating history of our Minneapolis parks, and the visionary leaders who made it all possible.

Back in 1883, when the legendary landscape architect Horace Cleveland first unveiled his plans for building the Grand Rounds and revealing the natural features that now define our parks, he told commissioners that their greatest challenge would be in thinking beyond the standards of the moment, and holding space and imagination for what’s yet to come. Building beautiful parks and inspiring public spaces, he reminded them, “is a work for all time,” with rewards that may not be returned for decades or even generations: *“Look forward for a century, to the time when the city has a population of a million, and think what will be their wants.”*

At the Minneapolis Parks Foundation, looking forward is what we do best. From inviting international thought leaders to help us imagine a more equitable future through our Next Generation of Parks series, to the endowment fund we’re building with generous support from people like you. Our mission is about more than protecting and preserving the world-class parks we have today — it’s about ensuring they’re even better tomorrow.

Imagining the future of parks was also a great strength of our departing executive director Tom Evers, whose nine years of exceptional service helped to create the vision, the strong relationships, and the organizational capacity to support our innovative public/private partnership with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

That forward thinking is also the lens we’re using to support projects like the new Spark’d Studio at Harrison Recreation Center, meeting young people where they are today with state-of-the-art technology, and mentorship and training to take them where they want to go in the future. It’s the reason we love reading the submissions for our People for Parks Fund grants, and supporting new ideas for ensuring that diverse communities see themselves through the parks. Looking forward is also the fuel behind the recent launch of **Transforming North Commons**, the \$20 million capital campaign that’s about to demonstrate the myriad ways parks of the future can provide safer, healthier, and better connected neighbors and neighborhoods.

Creating parks that can serve us better now and long into the future is indeed “the work of all time,” and it wouldn’t be possible without the support of the people whose names appear in this annual report. Thank you for the creativity, trust, commitment, and generosity you bring to our exceptional Minneapolis parks.

Sincerely,



Sarah Duniway
Sarah Duniway
Board Chair



Jasmine Russell
Jasmine Russell
Board Vice Chair

Your support for the Minneapolis Parks Foundation helped bring more parks lovers together...

On Common Ground



José Gonzáles, *Healing Severed Connections*, Next Generation of Parks Event

Big Ideas for Even Better Parks

Our popular Next Generation of Parks Event Series returned to form in 2023, with presentations from thought leaders exploring the intersection of public design, social justice, and community health. This past year, renowned landscape architect Mikyoung Kim shared how parks and play can restore our post-pandemic world; Latino Outdoors founder José González explored how nature can heal severed communities; and MPRB Superintendent Al Bangoura reflected on the state of our parks as the Minneapolis parks system celebrated its 140th anniversary.



Cool Connections

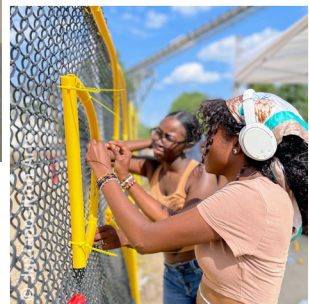
With Minneapolis Parks Foundation support, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board secured an historic easement along the riverfront that will make it possible to connect North Minneapolis through a new 1,000-foot trail link. When it's complete in late 2024, the trail will connect the Great Northern Greenway Overlook to the downtown riverfront and the 51-mile Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway, which runs through most of Minneapolis as a continuous dedicated bike trail and walking path.



Grand Rounds Biking Trail



Riverview, at 26th Ave N.



A New Riverview

Apprentices from Juxtaposition Arts' Environmental Design Studio found a fresh new platform for telling community stories, tying hundreds of recycled plastic conduits into the chain link fence at CenterPoint Energy's 26th Avenue facility. Spelling out the word "Riverview," the installation reflects on the site's past as the Riverview Supper Club, a storied North Minneapolis nightclub, while inviting viewers to see the Mississippi in a new way as more of the city's riverfront is reimagined as and transformed to park land.

Redefining a Rec Center

In 2023, the Harrison Recreation Center was transformed into a creative-technology makerspace, equipped with everything from audio mixers and 3D printers to video production equipment and art supplies. This Spark'd Studio was made possible with help from the Best Buy Foundation.



Spark'd Studios Summer Video Production Camp

Power to the Parks

From fresh veggie gardens and free sailing days on Bde Maka Ska, to bilingual fishing clinics and pickleball for all, the projects supported by the People for Parks Fund are all about removing barriers and encouraging people from all walks of life to see themselves in the parks. With your support in 2023, the People for Parks Fund awarded more than \$57,000 to 11 different programs, including free swimming lessons, and kayaking experiences for BIPOC communities.



Posters for Parks Show

Posters for Parks Show

The Posters for Parks event in October was another record-setter, with more than 885 participants who took home more than 970 limited edition original posters created by 44 local artists. With proceeds split 50-50 between artists and the Minneapolis Parks Foundation's People for Parks Fund, the festive annual pop-up party has become a favorite for arts and parks lovers alike.



Sailing on Bde Maka Ska

Improving the health of nearly 12,000 kids within walking distance of North Minneapolis's iconic park is just one of the reasons the Minneapolis Parks Foundation is making...

The Case for North Commons

"When that bell goes off they come streaming in," says Se'Anna Johnson, the Youth Specialist at North Commons Park. Everyday about 100 kids walk over from school



to play ball, do homework, horse around, and grab snacks provided in partnership with Minneapolis Public Schools. "For a lot of these kids, they're here from three to nine nearly every day. We're their home away from home."



What happens during those hours between school and home can make a critical difference in the physical, mental, and emotional health of kids. That's why healthy youth development has emerged as one of the goals the whole community shares when it comes to transforming North Commons Park for the next generation.

"The opportunity to make a real difference in the overall community health of North Minneapolis, especially for young people who depend on the park, has been a really compelling part of this project," Minneapolis Parks Foundation's project manager Shawn Lewis says about the years of community engagement that contributed to the \$35 million renovation/expansion plan. "We know there are some serious health disparities for people in North Minneapolis, and we believe that a healthy, thriving park with responsive programming is one of the tools we can use to close those gaps."

Life expectancy for the residents of North Minneapolis is lower than the city-wide average, while the rates of childhood obesity and asthma hospitalizations are two to five times more common. But Dr. Kevin Gilliam, primary care physician and medical director of NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center, says parks can be part of the prescription for better health.



© All project renderings by Locus Architecture (also known as FIHAN)



Water Park, Water Slide, and Lap Pool



Open Swim



Fieldhouse



Dr. Kevin Gilliam

“Our cultivated and natural space impacts our health broadly, and when there’s more ready access to those green spaces we tend to exercise and be more

active generally,” says Gilliam, who also serves on an advisory committee of local nonprofits and businesses looking at ways to leverage North Commons Park and its programs to provide more opportunities for youth development and community connections. “Any kind of work I can do to encourage people to engage more in natural spaces, the better.”

While improved park spaces can get the public moving more, new community gathering spaces planned for North Commons can also host inspiring wellness programs, like the series Johnson recently offered at the rec center with presentations on food and mood, yoga, food and mindfulness, and v-step, a hip-hop-centered aerobics class. “It’s good to remind people that you really don’t need to pay to get a good workout,” she says. “Just take a minute to dance a little bit, step it out, and you’re going to feel better.”

“The WEM Foundation has been a proud supporter of the creative and resilient communities of North Minneapolis. We know North Commons Park is a critical player when it comes to serving youth and promoting healthy connections for families, and we’re inspired by the community’s ambitious vision for the park’s future. By supporting the park, we’re also supporting the promise and potential of a new generation of North Minneapolis families.”

— Jim Hield
President, The WEM Foundation



North Commons Park

Record-Setting Support

Transforming North Commons Park is a \$20 million capital campaign to create a best-in-class neighborhood park, rec center, and water park for North Minneapolis. The largest investment ever made in a Minneapolis neighborhood park, the project has also secured the largest private donation ever made to the Minneapolis Parks Foundation—a \$10 million grant from an anonymous donor.

Leadership Donors

Carlson Family Foundation

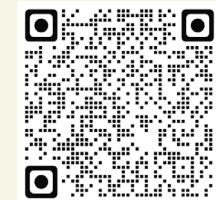
Martha Gabbert

Al and Kathy Lenzmeier

Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation

The Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies Fund of the Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundation

The WEM Foundation



Scan to learn more about the improvements made possible by Transforming North Commons Park, visit NorthCommons.org or call Jennifer Downham, Chief Development Officer at 612.822.3401.

From building excitement about next generation parks, to motivating more donors to make a commitment, early gifts to the Transforming North Commons campaign are...

Making More Possible

When it comes to deciding what to do with her charitable donations, Martha Gabbert looks for ways to make as much impact as possible. "My strategy for giving is to look for organizations whose objectives align with mine, and that have the organizational capacity to translate my gift to much larger gifts from people with greater capacity," she says. "That's why supporting the campaign for North Commons Park seemed so right to me."

A former board member for the Minneapolis Parks Foundation, and a long-time parks lover, Gabbert was eager to lend her support to the renovation of North Commons, making the very first gift to the \$20 million capital campaign after taking a tour of the current facilities with Minneapolis Parks Foundation staff members. "Parks matter to me, especially those that serve underserved communities," she says. "But I also admire the inclusive process the Minneapolis Parks Foundation has taken in working with the community to support what North Minneapolis neighbors want to see in their parks. That kind of process takes time, but I believe it will make for a better outcome."



Martha Gabbert (center) at the 26th Ave N Overlook with Tom Evers and Jennifer Downham

Gabbert's early gift of \$500,000 helped the Minneapolis Parks Foundation gather momentum during the quiet phase of the campaign, helping to leverage a challenge grant from the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation and leadership donations from the Carlson Family Foundation, the Margaret A. Cargill Fund at the Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundation, WEM, and Al and Kathy Lenzmeier. "From the start, Martha has been eager to support the North Minneapolis community through this project, and she saw clearly how her own generosity could generate interest and excitement from others," says Jennifer Downham, Minneapolis Parks Foundation's Chief Development Officer. "Thanks to that early support, we're halfway to our funding goal, and we're in a much stronger position to make our case to the wider community."

Heritage Oak Society

Recognizing donors who have thoughtfully included the Minneapolis Parks Foundation in their estate plans.

- Bruce and Terry Anderson
- John and Laura Crosby**
- Jayson Drake
- Mary Ann and Harold Feldman**
- Sylvia and Robert Fine
- Meg Forney and Jon Fagerson
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- Rick Groger and Don Yager
- Jocelyn Hale and Glenn Miller
- Gary Hektner
- Steve and Sam Boren King
- Duane and Mary Alice Krohnke
- Leighton Ladd
- Mike Vennewitz and Rep. Diane Loeffler
- June Prange and Carolyn Schurr**
- Peter Steinert**
- Bill Wojcik
- Anonymous (4)

***Gifts realized*

Horace Cleveland Circle

Recognizing the significant contribution of donors who have made cumulative general operating gifts of \$50,000 or more.

- Sue Bennett
- David Dayton and Mary Bolla
- Judy Dayton
- Richard Erickson and Bonnie Bottoms
- Martha Gabbert
- Steve and Sam Boren King
- Mary McCarthy and Brian Zelickson
- Greg McNeely
- Kelsey Arneson Metzger and Tom Metzger
- Elizabeth Redleaf
- Paul and Mary Reyelst
- Dr. and Mrs. Paul L. Trump
- Frank and Frances Wilkinson
- Angus and Margaret Wurtele
- Anonymous

Since our founding 20 years ago, contributions from individual and institutional donors like those recognized below have totaled more than \$42 million for transformative parks.

Thank You, Donors

Institutional Supporters

\$100,000 and above

Carlson Family Foundation
Margaret A. Cargill Fund of the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation
Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation
The WEM Foundation

\$25,000 - \$50,000

Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Edward R. Bazinet Charitable Foundation
Manitou Fund

\$15,000 - \$24,999

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Carmichael Lynch
CenterPoint Energy
Minnesota Public Radio*
Saint Anthony Falls Heritage Board

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Larry Fitzgerald Foundation
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\$2,500 - \$4,999

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Mill City Museum*
The Minneapolis Foundation
The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board*
U.S. Bank Foundation — Matching Gift Program
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\$1,000 - \$2,499

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*In-kind donations

continues on page 10

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2023 Financial Statements

Balance Sheet 12/31/2023

Assets	
Cash & Cash-Equivalents	2,005,073
Pledges Receivable	2,500
North Commons Capital Campaign	11,528,823
RiverFirst Capital Campaign	240,418
Other Assets	18,348
Total Assets	\$13,795,162

Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	4,538
North Commons Capital Campaign	9,690,717
RiverFirst Capital Campaign	240,418
Other Liabilities	84,580
Total Liabilities	\$10,020,253

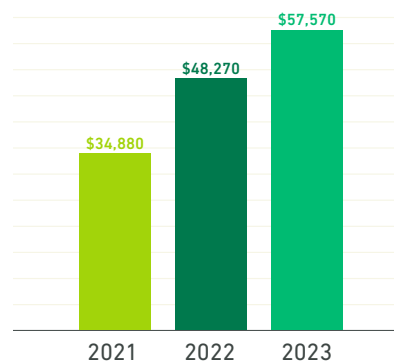
Net Assets	
Unrestricted	
Undesignated	1,896,966
Operating Reserve	491,000
Endowment	25,000
Total Unrestricted	\$2,412,966
Temporarily Restricted (Programs)	\$957,347
Permanently Restricted (Endowment)	\$404,594
Total Net Assets	\$3,774,907

Income/Expense Statement (Unrestricted) 2023

Income	
Contributions	933,603
North Commons Campaign Support	1,384,388
Government Grants	23,600
Fundraising Events	143,387
Investment & Other Income	508,995
Total Income	\$2,993,973

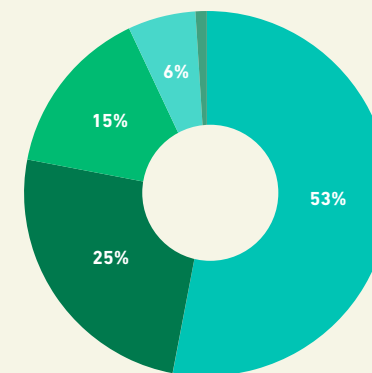
Expense	
Program Expenses	1,175,899
Core Mission-Support Services	
Finance, HR, Board, Operations	372,926
Development	266,948
Total Expense	\$1,815,773
Change in Net Assets	\$1,178,200

People for Parks Fund Grant Investments



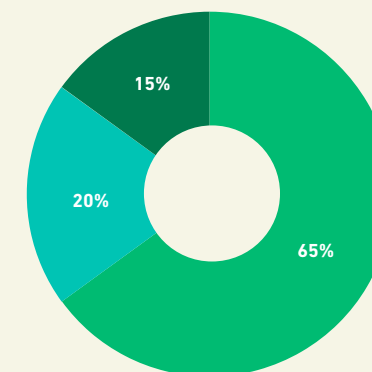
The People for Parks Fund exists to advance under-supported projects and programs in Minneapolis parks. Since its start four years ago, the fund has delivered nearly \$150,000 in grant support for community-driven ideas.

Sources of Income



Foundations	53%
Individuals	25%
Investment Income	15%
Corporations	6%
Government	1%

Expenses



Program Management	65%
Fundraising	20%
& General	15%



MINNEAPOLIS
PARKS
FOUNDATION

4800 Minnehaha Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55417

mplsparksfoundation.org

@MplsParksFoundation

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@MplsParksFndtn

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Medtronic

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and Corporate Secretary
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Hortensia PLLC

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Padilla

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The Financial Services
Consulting Group (TFSCG)

Todd Western
Senior Donor Advisor
Greater Twin Cities United Way

Craig Wilson
Founding Partner
Green Your Bottom Line

Pahoua Yang Hoffman*
Senior Vice President of
Government & Community Relations
HealthPartners

* Completed term in 2023

** On leave from board in 2024

Ex Officio

Al Bangoura
Superintendent, Minneapolis
Park and Recreation Board

Jacob Frey
Mayor, City of Minneapolis

Charles Rucker
Commissioner, At-Large
Minneapolis Park and
Recreation Board

Becka Thompson*
Commissioner, District 2
Minneapolis Park and
Recreation Board

**North Commons
Campaign Committee**

Karin Birkeland
Shelley Carthen Watson
Sarah Duniway
Aretha Green-Rupert (CO-CHAIR)
Keith Holloman
Kate Lamers
Mallory Mitchell
Becka Thompson
Karen Trouba (CO-CHAIR)
Todd Western

**People for Parks Fund
Advisory Committee**

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Marisa Bhargava
Jay Halvorson
Judy Hohmann
Kelsey Johnson
Irene Jones
Kymberly Jordan
Miluska Novota (CHAIR)
Daniel Peterson
Randy Randolph
Jasmine Russell*
Jennifer Herman Spiller
Marsha Yang*

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Jocelyn Hale
Interim Executive Director
Madeleine Koski
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Shawn Lewis
Project Manager
Lizzy Lynn
Development &
Database Coordinator
Shelly Maguire-Kuyatt
Business & Administration Manager
Christine Moir
Director of Development

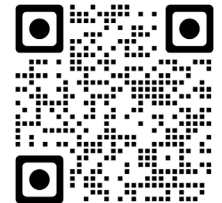


Transforming
North Commons Park

A Next Generation Park

An iconic neighborhood park that serves one of the youngest, most diverse and most densely populated communities in the state, North Minneapolis's North Commons Park is about to become a Next Generation Park with exceptional youth programming, inviting green gathering spaces, and innovative places to play and connect on common ground.

Join the community movement that's making the largest investment ever made in a Minneapolis neighborhood park by making a gift today at NorthCommons.org.



The Minneapolis Parks Foundation transforms human lives through parks and public spaces by aligning philanthropic investment and community vision.