

Date of Report: March 3, 2000  
LCMR Final Work Program Update Report

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**I. Project Title: North Minneapolis Upper River Master Plan 9(e)  
LCMR Work Program Update**

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**Total Biennial Project Budget:**

\$LCMR	\$300,000	\$Required match	\$100,000	\$Additional match	\$200,000
-LCMR amount		-Required match		-Additional match	
spent	300,000	amount spent	100,000	amount spent	200,000
\$LCMR balance	\$0	\$Req. match bal.	\$0	\$Add'l match bal.	\$0

- A. Legal Citation** ML 1998, (The availability of the appropriations for the following projects is extended to June 30, 2000: Laws 1997, Ch. 216, Sec. 15, Subd. 9, paragraph e, NORTH MINNEAPOLIS UPPER RIVER MASTER PLAN \$300,000 9(e)

**Subd. Impacts on Natural Resources**

This appropriation is from the future resources fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to develop a master plan addressing greenspace and trail development, riverbank restoration, and stimulation of river-oriented land uses within a corridor along the east and west banks of the Mississippi River from Plymouth Avenue north to the Minneapolis city limits. This appropriation must be matched by at least \$100,000 of nonstate money.

**B. Status of Match**

The required \$100,000 match is comprised of \$50,000 appropriations from the City of Minneapolis and Minneapolis Community Development Agency. Hennepin County is contributing an additional match of \$200,000.

**II. Project Summary and Results**

The Mississippi corridor from Plymouth Avenue to the Minneapolis city limits were studied and a master plan developed addressing greenspace and trail development, riverbank restoration, and stimulation of river-oriented land uses. Connections to adjacent neighborhoods and parks, as well as the potential relocation of inappropriate functions currently located along the river, were also explored.

### III. Progress Summary

**January 8, 1998:** Coinciding with the beginning of the LCMR project funding period, two new staff persons were hired by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to act as project manager and assistant for the Upper River study. This team developed a Request for Qualifications for this project which was sent in late July, 1997 to 105 local, national, and international firms. Responses were received from sixteen teams, each of which was typically comprised of multiple firms. From that pool, seven teams were invited to respond to a detailed Request for Proposals. Proposals were reviewed by a Technical Advisory Committee comprised of Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board planning staff and staff from the other agencies involved in funding the project, including City Planning, MCDA, and Hennepin County. Four teams were invited to appear for interviews, which were held on October 27 and 28, 1997. After appropriate review, the team led by BRW, Inc. and Wallace Roberts & Todd was selected. Details of the consultant contract, requirements, and project schedule were being finalized at the time of this update.

**August 1, 1998:** During this reporting period, contract arrangements with the consultant team of BRW, Inc., Wallace Roberts and Todd, and various subconsultants were finalized. A thorough data inventory was completed, including the following attributes:

- area history
- previous planning efforts in the area
- neighborhood and regional connections
- land use
- environmental factors
- contaminated sites
- demographic data
- property values and condition
- tax base
- topography
- site features
- employment data
- transportation conditions
- utility locations

Based upon this analysis and upon the *Gateways to River Conceptual Plan*, which is the direct precursor to this planning effort, several broad alternative concepts for the area were defined. These concepts were presented to public leaders for their preview and discussion on June 23, 1998. Invitees to this meeting were:

- The Mayor of Minneapolis
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
- Minneapolis City Council
- Hennepin County Commissioners
- Minneapolis Planning Commission
- Minneapolis state legislative delegation
- Mississippi National River and Recreation Area
- St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board
- Metropolitan Council

At the time of this update, revised versions of these concepts were being prepared for presentation to the public within the next reporting period via neighborhood open houses, focus groups, a newsletter, and a website. An extensive mailing list was compiled to which newsletters and meeting notices will be sent. In the upcoming reporting period, further refinements to these concepts will be made on the basis of input received throughout this process and evaluation criteria will be defined by which a preferred concept option will be selected.

**April 8, 1999:** (this update reflects work done between August 1, 1998 and January 11, 1999) Immediately prior to the beginning of the current reporting period, initial versions of three alternative concepts for the project area were prepared and presented to public leaders for discussion. Based upon comments received at that meeting and informed by additional analysis, revisions were made to these concepts to more fully represent the range of possible future scenarios for the project area. These alternatives addressed both land use and transportation corridor possibilities as well as broad-brush concepts for park and greenspace siting and programming. Elements common to all plans were also defined, including riverbank restoration, creation of stormwater filtration areas, and establishment of lateral links to adjacent neighborhoods.

Simultaneously, in-depth analyses were prepared of the status and future of the Upper Harbor Terminal; of the housing, commercial, and industrial development potentials of the area; of employment and tax consequences of various redevelopment scenarios; of the public and private costs associated with each alternative; and of the potential impact of reconfiguring transportation modes. A matrix of costs and benefits, both quantifiable and nonquantifiable, was prepared to assist in assessing the merits of the alternative concepts.

Public comment on these alternatives was elicited through a variety of means. Well-attended public open houses were held at Logan Park Community Center on October 20, 1998 and at the North Regional Library on October 21, with a follow-up meeting held at Webber Community Center on December 2. Throughout October and November, a series of several dozen "kitchen table meetings" was held with groups of intimate size representing an entire range of potential stakeholders. Sets of alternative concept plans were placed at six northside and northeast community centers for easy review by the public. Newsletters were sent to a 1000-plus mailing list in August, October, and November, and additional comment opportunities were afforded through the comment hotline and website.

In early November, a special panel of "National Advisors" was convened to provide high-level input by economic experts of national caliber. A series of meetings with the consultant team and Technical Advisory Committee yielded interesting insights which were then shared with public officials at open houses held on November 3, 1998. These open houses were critical in establishing a sense of the direction and political will necessary for the implementation of the plan to be developed.

This phase of the project culminated in the preparation of an initial draft of a single, preferred concept for land use and park development in the project area. This concept incorporates elements of all three alternatives and attempts to balance the various interests and opinions heard throughout the input-gathering phase.

**August 23, 1999:** This reporting period was occupied with public discussion and



refinement of the preferred land use/park concept alternative and potential implementation mechanisms. Newsletters sent to the entire mailing list in January and April provided information regarding the preferred alternative and its details. Public meetings held on January 21, March 10, April 14, and June 15, 1999 elicited public input on the broad aspects of the preferred alternative; detailed transportation, park programming, and environmental restoration options; and possible implementation approaches.

A number of smaller-group meetings of various types were also held during this period. At two "kitchen table" meetings in May and June, 1999, input was sought from smaller groups representing a wide variety of viewpoints and stakeholder groups. In February, real estate and housing development aspects of the plan were discussed with a group of developers with experience in urban projects. The "national advisors" panel, with several additions, was reconvened in March to review and critique the draft preferred plan and to provide a national perspective on potential approaches to plan implementation. As in November, meetings with this panel culminated with a session with elected officials. Consultants and TAC members also met with representatives of the Department of Natural Resources, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, and the Metropolitan Council to clarify the relationship between the Upper River Master Plan and the city's Critical Area Plan. Staff also met with and made presentations to the Aggregate Resources Task Force and the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources. Modifications to and detailed development of the preferred plan were guided by comments gathered at all these meetings.

Analysis and refinement of the selected plan and preparation of a draft master plan were the focus of the latter part of this reporting period. This analysis demonstrates the potential of the implemented plan to fundamentally revitalize the natural, economic, and social fundamentals of the area. Projected benefits include:

- 2000 net additional jobs
- New neighborhood incorporating 2500 new housing units; this can be expected to alleviate approximately 8,000 acres of potential suburban sprawl
- 160,000 square feet of retail and service space
- 350,000 square feet of office space
- 1,000,000 square feet of light industrial/business park space
- Over \$10 million net additional annual property tax revenue
- 15 miles of bicycle and pedestrian trails and 5 miles of riverfront parkway or boulevard
- 90 net additional acres of continuous riverfront parkland/open space
- 4.6 miles of riverbank restoration and erosion control
- 40 acres of wildlife habitat
- 16 acres of stormwater retention/garden areas, treating on-site all runoff within the project development area
- Burlington Northern railroad bridge converted to cross-river bicycle/pedestrian trail link
- Boat launches
- Improved water quality
- Mitigation of contaminated sites

During this reporting period, unfinished portions of Phase II tasks were completed and substantial progress was made on Phase III items. Consultants and Technical Advisory Committee staff worked closely to refine details of all aspects of the plan.

**December 31, 1999:** In this final reporting period, activities have focused on preparation and publication of the final master plan document, entitled *Above the Falls*, and in further presentation and discussion of the plan with elected officials and the public.

The final public open house of the master planning process was held in the form of a hearing before the Minneapolis Planning Commission on September 30, 1999. Other plan presentations and discussions included:

- A group of Minneapolis City Council members (September)
- A public forum sponsored by the Minnesota Environmental Initiative (September)
- Metropolitan Council staff (September)
- Minneapolis River Forum on the Mississippi River (October)
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Commissioners (November)
- Critical Area Plan Citizens' Advisory Committee (November)

Formatting, editing, and publication of the final *Above the Falls* document has now been completed. 500 full-color copies of the 125-page plan have been printed and will be disseminated to elected officials, appropriate stakeholder groups, and to locations such as libraries where they can be easily accessed for examination. The document has also been placed on a website at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/citywork/planning/index.html](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/citywork/planning/index.html) for easy access. A technical appendix containing further details on economic and environmental aspects of the plan is also available for examination at the offices of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and City Planning Department. An "all-river graphic," which graphically summarizes existing and future public development along the entire Minneapolis reach of the Mississippi, has also been produced. This poster-format graphic will be disseminated to the public and will be useful in communicating the integrated nature of riverfront planning efforts in the city.

The next step toward implementation of the Master Plan will be adoption by the Minneapolis Planning Commission and City Council, a process which involves extensive review and public hearings. If the plan is adopted, the Park Board will then make application for Regional Park status for the proposed park areas within the Upper River corridor. Other near-term steps include rezoning studies within the plan area to bring the zoning code in accord with the Upper River Land Use Plan; establishment of an Upper River Development Corporation as a non-profit entity with the sole purpose of implementing the plan; closure of the Upper Harbor Terminal; the formation of partnerships with private property owners, foundations, and others interested in improving the Upper River; and acquisition of funds for the public improvement portion of the plan.

#### **IV. Outline of Project Results**

A comprehensive master plan was developed to guide land use, acquisition of land for trails and greenspace, riverbank restoration, and stimulation of sustainable economic development within a corridor along both the east and west banks of the Mississippi River from Plymouth Avenue North to the Minneapolis city limits. The Master Plan addressed:

- Parks and parkways development
- Access to the river
- River ecology
- Neighborhood renewal
- Upgrade of Marshall Street

- Commercial navigation
- The role of heavy industry
- Redevelopment of Grain Belt complex
- Housing development
- Traffic and transportation
- Employment creation

The project, which occupied a two-and-a-half-year period, involved two major expenditures:

- The hiring of two staff persons by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to facilitate the efforts of park staff, city, metro and state and national agency staff, and the consultant team. The cost of the wages, salary, and benefits for that portion of these staffers' time to be devoted to this project were \$90,000.
- The retention of a multi-disciplinary consultant team (planners, civil engineers, traffic engineers, environmental specialist, economists, park planners, etc.) to produce the master plan. The cost for consultant services for the entire project was \$510,000.

Master planning fell into three main phases, which were further broken down into subtasks. Deliverables in the form of reports and graphics were provided at the end of each phase. Public input and communication opportunities occurred throughout the process in the form of public open houses, smaller "kitchen table" meetings, round-table discussions with public officials, newsletters sent to an extensive mailing list, a comment call-in line, a website, and the placement of public comment workbooks at locations within the study area. Over 2500 individuals participated in these opportunities.

The first phase involved an extensive data inventory and an examination of previous planning studies of the area. Information collected and analysis items included:

- Existing land use and land use relationships
- Zoning
- Transportation and circulation systems
- Property ownership, property values, and taxes
- Riverbank conditions and wildlife habitat
- Contaminated sites
- Regulatory requirements
- Historical and cultural resources
- Building conditions
- Visual structure/viewsheds
- Figure-ground patterns
- Background real estate market conditions
- Previous planning efforts
- Upper Harbor Terminal operations
- River geomorphology
- Study area issues, opportunities, and constraints

On the basis of this inventory and analysis, criteria were developed to evaluate alternative master plan concepts. Principles and objectives were established to guide the master planning process; these included:

- Create a publicly-owned riverside park corridor with continuous riverside recreational



trails on both banks

- Create an integrated riverway street system both parallel to and leading to the river
- Enhance the ecological function of the river corridor through riverbank stabilization and revegetation, creation of habitat areas, creation of stormwater retention and filtration areas, and identification of contaminated sites
- Link the Upper River to the Grand Round parkway system and other adjacent open space systems
- Create opportunities for new housing and stabilize existing neighborhoods
- Realize the area's potential for economic development, including increased employment and new tax base
- Establish urban design principles which respect the urban fabric and grid
- Balance land uses and minimize conflicts
- Establish park features which recognize the area's unique opportunities and culture

In the second phase, alternative land use and park development plans were developed to facilitate investigation of a full range of future options for the area. These plans examined:

- General concepts for parklands, greenways, and trails
- Alternative real estate development types
- Vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle circulation and transportation linkages
- Appropriate linkages between the river and adjacent neighborhoods and to park areas to the north and south of the study area

Generalized public and private sector costs for implementing development plans were prepared for each development area. Information included estimated acquisition cost, development type and density, estimated assessed value, and cost estimates for public infrastructure. Citizen participation and input during this phase was extensive and was crucial in shaping the selected preferred alternative.

In the third phase, the preferred concept plan was subjected to intense review and discussion through several public open houses, smaller "kitchen table" meetings, presentations to other agencies and citizens' groups, and discussions with elected officials and staff. The preferred plan was also analyzed in terms of potential employment, housing, tax base increase, and other economic factors, as well as in the environmental context of improving the ecological health of the river and its watershed. Though this analysis and public input, the preferred plan was refined and detailed to include the following aspects:

- Land use and zoning, integrating recommendations for riverfront treatment, parklands, greenways, trails, streets and vehicular circulation, land use, neighborhood focus areas, and implementation considerations.
- Transportation and circulation, including parkway alignment and design, the redevelopment of Marshall Street as riverway boulevard, the enhancement of other lateral riverway streets, the integration of pedestrian trails and bikeways, changes in rail service, and major access points to the riverfront. The plan recommends the creation of 5 miles of river-adjacent parkway or boulevard and 15 miles of new bicycle and pedestrian trails.
- Park, greenway, and recreational facility improvements, including identification of 90 acres of new parkland, the location of significant program elements and facilities, and the identification of greenway and trail linkages and recreational water use areas and access points. The Burlington Northern railroad bridge would be converted to a cross-river bicycle/pedestrian trail link

- An environmental/riverbank ecology, habitat restoration, and contamination mitigation plan, including the proposed methodology for the restoration of 4.6 miles of riverbank, the creation of 40 acres of new wildlife habitat, and the establishment of 16 acres of stormwater retention/gardens which would treat all on-site runoff within the proposed west bank development area. Potentially contaminated sites within the corridor are identified and approaches to mitigation and appropriate development are outlined.
- Special district focus plans and design guidelines for areas where development opportunities exist which support and enhance the riverfront park system. The relationship of these developments to the street or parkway, trail, and other development in the area is illustrated.
- Public and private sector cost estimates, including estimated acquisition cost for each private development parcel, recommended development density, and anticipated tax increment, together with cost estimates for public park, parkway, and other improvements
- Financing, phasing, and implementation plan, including project phasing, creation of an development corporation to spearhead implementation, and potential funding sources.

The preferred plan is detailed in a 125-page master planning document entitled *Above the Falls*, hard copies of which were provided to the Department of Natural Resources and Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources staff with the December, 1999 work program update. An electronic copy is included with this report. Five hundred full-color copies of this plan have been printed and will be disseminated to elected officials, the public, neighborhood organizations, and to locations such as libraries where they can be easily accessed for examination. The document has also been placed on a website at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/citywork/planning/index.html](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/citywork/planning/index.html) for easy access. A technical appendix (also provided to DNR staff with the December update) containing further details on economic and environmental aspects of the plan is also available for examination at the offices of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and City Planning Department. An "all-river graphic," which graphically summarizes existing and future public development along the entire Minneapolis reach of the Mississippi, has also been produced. This poster-format graphic will be disseminated to the public and will be useful in communicating the integrated nature of riverfront planning efforts in the city. An electronic copy of this graphic is included with this report.

The next step toward implementation of the Master Plan will be adoption by the Minneapolis Planning Commission and City Council, a process which involves extensive review and public hearings. If the plan is adopted, the Park Board will then make application for Regional Park status for the proposed park areas within the Upper River corridor. Other near-term steps include rezoning studies within the plan area to bring the zoning code in accord with the Upper River Land Use Plan; establishment of an Upper River Development Corporation as a non-profit entity with the sole purpose of implementing the plan, closure of the Upper Harbor Terminal; the formation of partnerships with private property owners, foundations, and others interested in improving the Upper River, and acquisition of funds for the public improvement portion of the plan.



<b>Expenditures by phase</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>LCMR</b>	<b>LCMR match</b>
Phase I consultant fees	\$102,930	\$ 77,197	\$ 25,733
Phase I MPRB staff costs	26,600	19,950	6,650
Phase II consultant fees	95,665	71,749	23,916
Phase II MPRB staff costs	16,617	12,463	4,154
Phase III consultant fees	311,405	95,245	216,160
Phase III MPRB staff costs	46,783	23,396	23,387
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$600,000</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>

## **V. Dissemination**

Public and agency involvement in the preparation of this plan was extensive and in itself had a significant educational component. The final Master Plan report, entitled *Above the Falls*, has been published and will be disseminated to readily-accessible locations, such as libraries and community centers, for public inspection. Copies will also be made available to elected officials and appropriate stakeholder groups for examination. The report also appears on the City of Minneapolis Website at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/citywork/planning/index.html](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/citywork/planning/index.html) for easy access. A technical appendix containing further details on economic and environmental aspects of the plan is also available for examination at the offices of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and City Planning Department. An "all-river graphic," which graphically summarizes existing and future public development along the entire Minneapolis reach of the Mississippi, has also been produced. This poster-format graphic will be disseminated to the public and will be useful in communicating the integrated nature of riverfront planning efforts in the city.

## **VI. Context:**

**A. Significance:** The revitalization of the Minneapolis riverfront as a focal point and unique amenity has been a topic of discussion since the 1960s, and significant strides have been made since that time in reclaiming the central and lower areas of the corridor for river-oriented uses. Those portions of the Mississippi Riverfront have been designated as a Regional Trail, with narrow open space areas connecting a limited number of larger park nodes. This study recommends the continuation of this park corridor from the Central Riverfront Regional Park to the northern city limits at a scale similar to that developed by Anoka and Hennepin Counties. The upper section of the corridor, stretching from the end of the West River Parkway to the Camden Bridge, has to date received little attention. Land uses in this area consist primarily of heavy industry and harborage on the west bank and light industry with scattered residences on the east bank.

The majority of these uses have little dependence on or interaction with the river itself; thus, the outstanding scenic and recreational potential of this nationally significant riverfront is minimally recognized. Few waterfront areas are accessible to the public, and the visual qualities of the existing uses are generally incompatible with appropriate riverfront development. There are also significant environmental questions regarding possible soil contamination by previous and current land uses

and the restoration of the ecological integrity and stability of the riverbanks.

The proposed study addressed these issues and explored the potential of neighborhood economic revitalization and sustainable development through a gradual shift in land use toward residential neighborhoods and office/light industrial development in conjunction with greenways and riverfront trail systems. The implementation of this plan will provide the final link in the Minneapolis riverfront greenspace system and will celebrate the central position of the Mississippi in the consciousness of its surrounding community.

**B. Time:** June 1997-December 1999

**C. Budget Context**

	July 1995- June 1999	July 1997- Dec. 2000	January 2000 - June 2001
	Prior expenditures on this project	Proposed expenditures on this project	Anticipated future expenditures on this project
1. LCMR	\$ *	\$300,000	Undetermined
2. Other state	\$ *	\$0	Undetermined
3. Non-state cash	\$	\$300,000	Undetermined
<b>Total</b>	\$ *	\$600,000	Undetermined

**\*Note:** Monies from a variety of resources, including federal, state, local, and foundation funding, have been used to acquire properties in the study area. This includes approximately \$350,000 in LCMR funds for acquisition of the River Palace site and over \$2 million in Metropolitan Regional Open Space funding for acquisition and development at North Mississippi Park.

**BUDGET:**

**Personnel:** \$ 90,000  
**Equipment:** 0  
**Acquisition:** 0  
**Development:** 0  
**Consultants:** 510,000

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**Total:** \$600,000

**VII. Cooperation:** Minneapolis Community Development Agency, City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County

**VIII. Location:** See maps attached to previous work programs

**IX. Reports were submitted as follows:**

January 1, 1998 Preparation of revised work program and cost estimate based on

	negotiated consultant contract
August 1, 1998	Submission of Phase I deliverables
January 1, 1999	Submission of Phase II deliverables
June 30, 1999	Submission of workplan update
December 31, 1999	Submission of workplan update and Phase III deliverables
March 3, 2000	Submission of Final Work Program Update Report