



The Next Generation of Parks

Minneapolis Riverfront

PROJECT RFQ

minneapolisriverfrontdesigncompetition.com

A competition sponsored by The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and The Minneapolis Parks Foundation, with creative partners The University of Minnesota College of Design and Walker Art Center

Introduction

Minneapolis' civic leaders 125 years ago had the opportunity and foresight to create the park system we have today. As those who came before us, we, too, must take advantage of an historic moment and plan for future generations. Climate change, limited natural resources, economic instability and changing demographics all demand a comprehensive, integrated approach to parks planning and design, at a time of limited government resources. At this unique time we have the responsibility to work collaboratively, to build on our existing resources, to "green" investment in the city, and to shape the future growth of the Minneapolis Park System.

The Minneapolis Park System, and its defining feature—the Mississippi River—is an inspiration nationally and internationally. The system, and most specifically the River, is an asset that defines the identity of Minneapolis, is an invaluable resource that improves the quality of life for residents and visitors through access to open space, nature and recreation, and contributes to the social, economic and environmental success of the region.

It is within this context that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) and The Minneapolis Parks Foundation, along with creative partners The University of Minnesota College of Design and Walker Art Center, launches a design competition addressing Minneapolis' Upper Riverfront, the area extending from the Stone Arch Bridge to Minneapolis' northern city limits, along both sides of the Mississippi River. This project builds on the MPRB award-winning 2000 master plan and is the first demonstration project of The Minneapolis Parks Foundation's "Next Generation of Parks"—a design-driven vision for a 21st century park system.

Site Description/Background

The Mississippi River has historically been the engine of growth and development for the City of Minneapolis. It has a rich industrial past, beginning with lumber mills dotting the river's edge and followed by flour mills—both supported by the river and rail for power and transportation. The focus of development has always been around the falls, from the first settlers at St. Anthony Falls to the development of industry and rail at and above the falls. The downtown area and south, due to the history of development of the river, as well as the more picturesque adjacent landscape, has received more design attention and economic benefit than the northern, flatter savannah landscape that also was historically populated by a poorer immigrant population.

Along the downtown Minneapolis riverfront vestiges that remain of the vibrant industrial history were integral to the development of the area around St. Anthony Falls, starting in the 1960s with the expansion of the lock and dam system, as well as the acquisition of land, development of parks, and creation of West River Road. Over the past 20 years, approximately two billion dollars of development has occurred in the area, transforming land uses and public perception of major segments of downtown. The core city now has an increased residential population of 33,000. While the park system helped attract that development, the new communities of residents and businesses placed extraordinary demands on park facilities while calling for more and more services.

Whereas the lower riverfront can boast tremendous success, the upper riverfront is a forgotten landscape waiting to be re-discovered—and designed. Challenges facing the upper riverfront include a diminishing industrial base, large-scale infrastructure that divides the river from surrounding communities and ad hoc land uses. The juxtaposition of the upper and lower riverfronts and their unique assets and opportunities make this an exciting and challenging design opportunity.

Project Scope

The competition will build on existing assets, not only existing physical features in and around the Mississippi upper riverfront, but also previous plans and proposals for the area as well as past exercises in community engagement. At the same time the competition will investigate new opportunities for connectivity, sustainability, infrastructure and public space along the upper riverfront and extending into the surrounding neighborhoods. See map for geographic boundaries.

Goals

The competition encourages a comprehensive, integrated approach to evaluating the larger river/park system, creating a vision that:

- Establishes parks as the engine for economic development along the river;
- Knits both sides of the riverfront together with their surrounding communities, thereby transforming the river from a barrier to a connector;
- Re-focuses the city toward one of the three great rivers of the world—the Fourth Coast of the U.S.—an extraordinary environmental amenity that defines Minneapolis' civic identity, past, present and future.

Outcomes

Design teams will be expected to create a vision for the area that includes but is not limited to five components:

- A framework for development, looking at the entire length of the riverfront, illustrating new or enhanced opportunities for ecological or environmental sustainability;
- Design development of critical connections from neighborhoods to and across the river;
- Identification of strategic sites reflecting convergences of physical features and latent opportunities for design and development;
- Concept development of the highest priority strategic site;
- Estimates of the short-term and long-term costs of design features.

Team Composition

Design teams are expected to reflect the scope and complexity of this project in their make-up. Teams should be interdisciplinary in composition, embody a high quality, creative design philosophy, and convey the pragmatism necessary for implementation.

Judging and Award

Submissions will be judged by a panel of eight jury members representing industry specialists and community leaders.

Four design teams will be shortlisted. Each team will be awarded \$30,000, which also covers travel expenses, to develop the outcomes described above. Final submissions will be judged and a grand prize in the form of a commission will be awarded to the winning team. The final commission may not necessarily be the winning team's awarded site and proposal. Selection criteria will be based on quality of design, to the extent that it represents the outlined key themes, goals and outcomes, and is a cost effective solution.

Along with the prize, shortlisted teams will be announced to coincide with the National Recreation and Parks Association Conference in Minneapolis in October 2010, and final submissions will be presented at the Walker Art Center.

Key Dates

RFQ announcement – 16 September 2010

RFQ submission deadline – 13 October 2010

Shortlist Announced – 26 October 2010

Competition brief made available to teams – 1 November 2010

Team visit – 15-17 November 2010

Submission deadline – 21 January 2011

Winner announcement, prize and exhibition launch – 10 February 2011

Entry Requirements

- Letter of interest expressing why you would like to participate in the project, what are the distinguishing characteristics of your team and what is your philosophical approach to the project;
- A one-paragraph bio and two-page resume for each team member;
- Up to three examples of projects by each team member that exemplify experience and expertise in relevant areas or proven creative problem solving skills in similarly complex projects.

All information should be submitted on a CD/DVD in PDF format.

Eligibility

The Minneapolis Riverfront Design Competition is open to all design professionals and professionals with supporting expertise.

Contact

All communication should be via email:

Mary deLaittre

E: mary@minneapolisriverfrontdesigncompetition.com

All relevant questions will be posted with answers in the FAQ portion of the competition website.

Send Entries to:

Mary deLaittre

Minneapolis Riverfront Design Competition

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

2117 West River Road

Minneapolis, MN 55411

USA

Appendix Minneapolis Riverfront Design Competition conceptual geographic boundaries

