

DRAFT

**MASTER PLAN FOR
HIDDEN FALLS - CROSBY FARM
REGIONAL PARK**

SUBMITTED BY THE CITY OF SAINT PAUL
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION
MARCH 2019



Report Draft - March 25, 2019

St. Paul Parks and Recreation Mission:

To build a city that works for all of us, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will facilitate the creation of active lifestyles, vibrant places and a vital environment.

St. Paul Parks and Recreation Vision:

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will make Saint Paul a city that works for all of us by:

Responding creatively to change.

Innovating with every decision.

Connecting the entire city.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Mississippi Park Connection
Friends of the Mississippi River

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1. PLANNING FRAMEWORK



Flooding in Crosby Farm Park



Ice in Crosby Farm Park



Flooding in Hidden Falls Park

Park Overview

Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Regional Park is considered one regional park despite having two names and being identified locally as two separate parks. Hidden Falls Park is 131.36 acres and Crosby Farm Park is 480.96 acres (83.63 acres are water). Users enjoy the parks for quiet gatherings, hiking, running, walking, biking, bird watching, and boat access to the Mississippi River.

These parks:

- are a part of the 17 miles of linear river shoreline planned in the Great River Passage Master Plan (2012) and comprise 5 miles of contiguous regional park land
- sit within the Bdote, a culturally and historically significant site of the Dakota Oyate (Nation)
- are within a significant ecological area along the Mississippi River for bird migration
- provides access to a floodplain forest at the edge of the Mississippi where people can come to recreate and experience nature within the urban context.

Purpose of the Plan

The previous Hidden Falls and Crosby Farm Regional Park Master Plan was written in 1970 and was not adopted by the Metropolitan Council, as the council had only recently been created. The Regional Parks system was started four years later, in 1974 (see the Metropolitan Council website - <https://metro council.org/About-Us/What-We-Do/Metropolitan-Council-History.aspx>). This 2019 plan will ensure that Hidden Falls and Crosby Farm parks are meeting the mission and vision of the City and the needs of the region, and provide a framework for future improvements and funding requests.

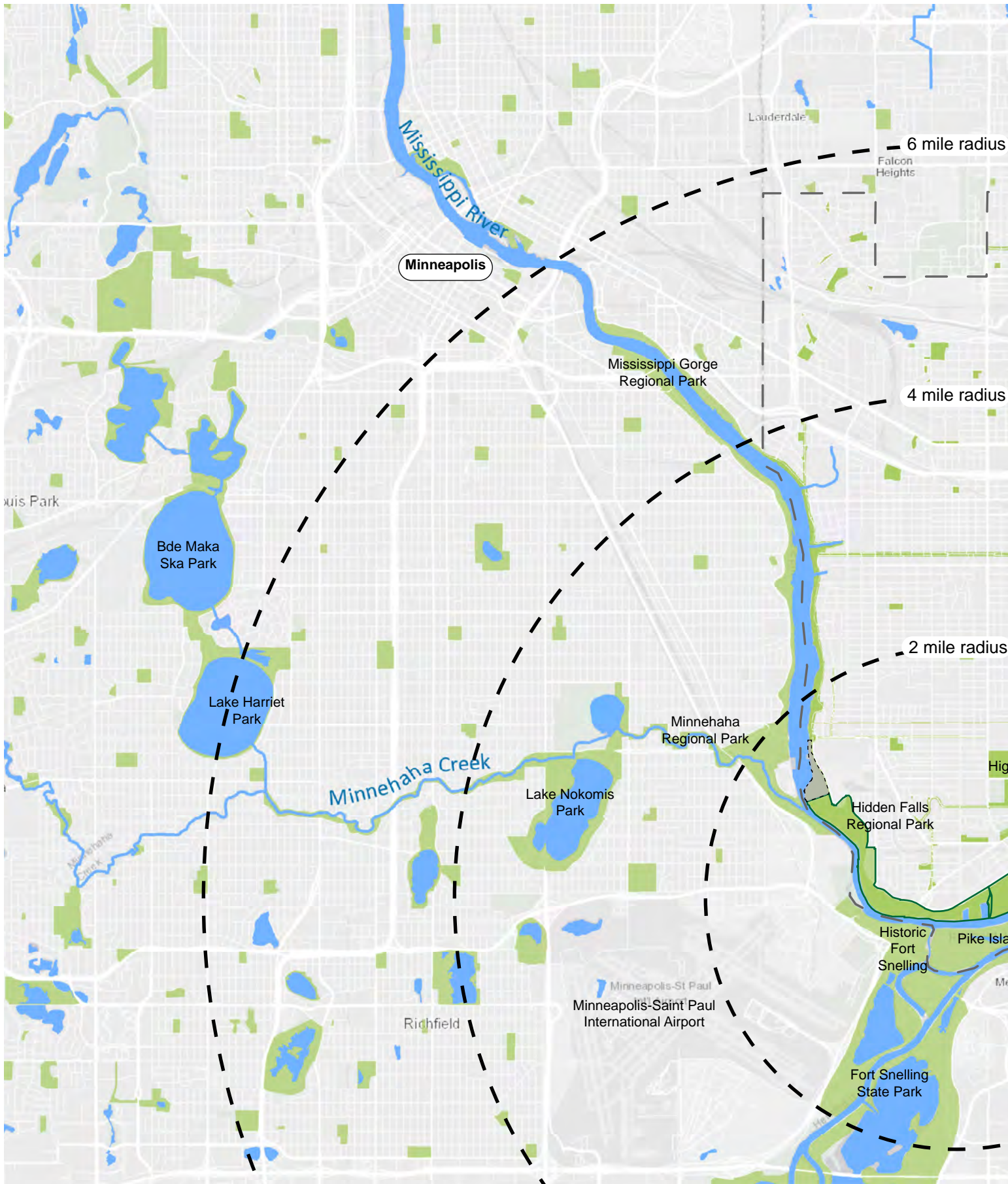
Introduction

Located on a deep bend on the St. Paul side of the Mississippi River, Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Regional Park is significant in many ways, but it is appropriate to begin this report by acknowledging the undeniable presence of water and the Mississippi River. This land was carved out by glaciers long before our time. Centuries of floods have deposited sediments and shaped the land, just as many animal species and human communities have lived or traveled through here. There has been a human presence in this area long before we have written record of it.

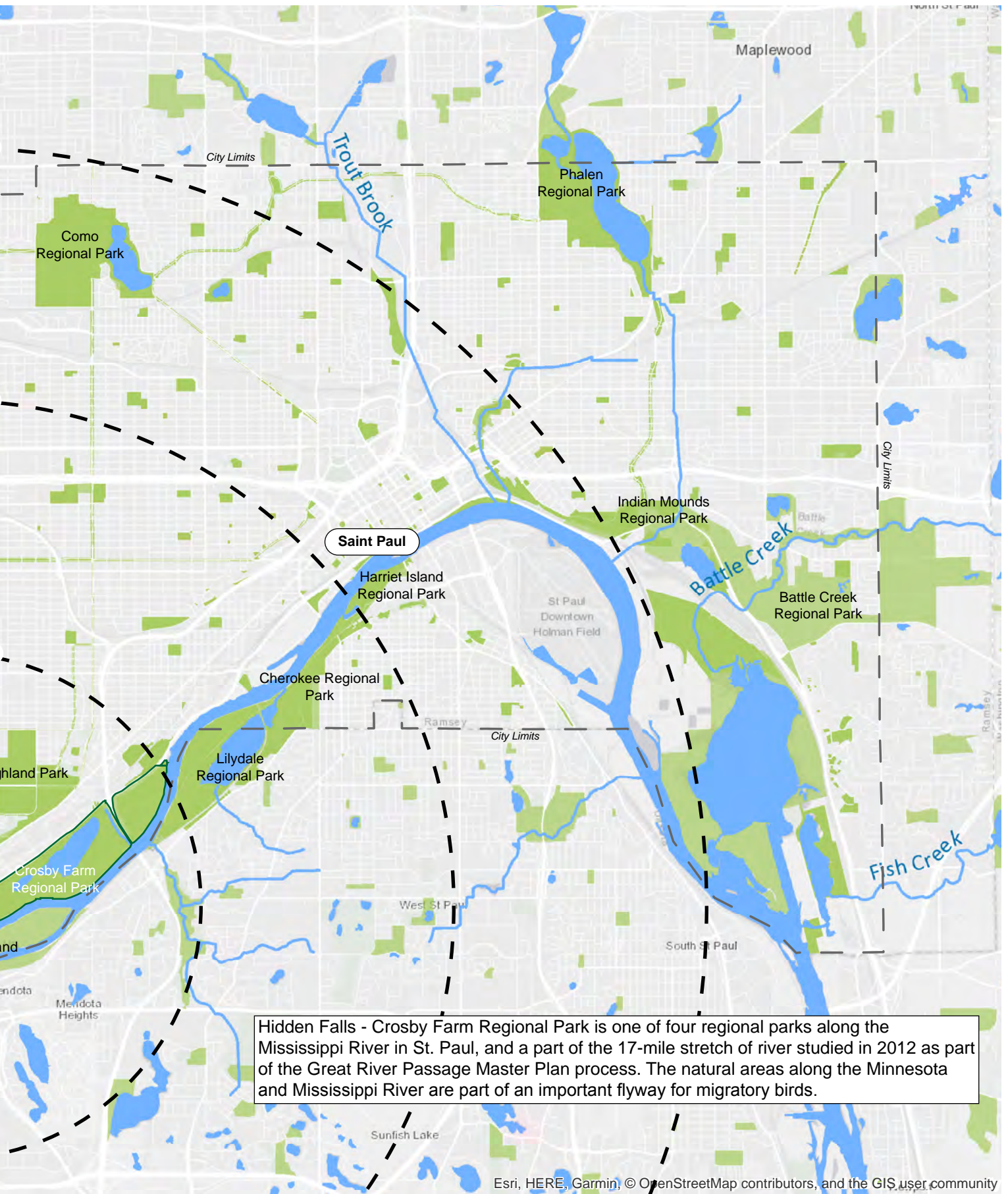
Water has shaped this land and its presence and impacts must be honored and respected. Seasonal flooding continues to impact the park and restricts development thereby preserving the untamed character of the land. High river bluffs surround the floodplain floor, allowing the park land to feel miles from the city despite being five miles from downtown St. Paul.

“The Hidden Falls-Crosby Farm site is the product of the degradation action of the Mississippi River. The character of the river has constantly changed over thousands of years. The resulting landform in Hidden Falls-Crosby Farm vicinity is a steep sided canyon flaring to an open valley south of the Minnesota River.” – 1970 Master Plan, p 9

This report provides an overview and snapshot of Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Regional Park in 2019. This park land is dynamic, and in process. Flooding or rockslides can occur and change the landscape; just as adjacent land development can change how many people visit the park or how much rain water is directed over the bluffs and into the river gorge. This land, just as this city, is in flux; as such, this report serves as a framework and guide for future park improvements, but strives for flexibility.



CONTEXT PLAN





Mississippi River near the boat launch, Hidden Falls. Photograph by Sarah B. Davis.

VISION STATEMENT

At the place where the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers join together, Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Regional Park brings people and nature together. The master plan honors the cultural significance of this area to the Dakota people, increases access to the parks in a way that strengthens wellness of people, plants, animals, and water. The plan seeks to maintain this place of healing and restoration for people and ecology, including those of the City of St. Paul and the broader Metropolitan region.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Respect the sacredness of this region. Acknowledge and celebrate the indigenous history of this location on the Mississippi River near the site of the confluence (Bdote) with the Minnesota River.
2. Preserve and sustain the ecological functions of these parks by managing and enhancing the critical habitat area, and support the ecological resilience of these parks as they adapt to a changing climate.
3. Upgrade park facilities for public use (bathrooms, signage, trails, lighting), improve safety features, and add new recreational opportunities to encourage healthy active lifestyles for all ages in balance with the “natural” character of the park.
4. Recommend and enhance pedestrian and multi-modal connections to draw regional and local users to the park space.
5. Support partnerships with organizations who assist in bringing new user groups to the park and river, and continue to manage the park for the use of all metropolitan area residents.

Cultural and Historic Resources

Evidence of humans living in the Twin Cities area goes back approximately 12,000 years. During the 1600s and 1700s as French traders and missionaries, and later British and American explorers and surveyors arrived, the land was purchased and subsequently altered to accommodate an influx of European immigrants, settlers, and entrepreneurs.

The high river bluffs offer commanding views, and tower above the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers. This meeting of the waters forms a natural resting point, and the confluence, or Bdoté, has long been significant to the Dakota peoples as a place of meeting and spiritual origin. Since the period of European arrival, the history of the land has been complex and contested. Many other documents explain the conflicts and challenges of this land as it was “settled.” This conflict is most evident in the establishment of Fort Snelling just across the river from the confluence, in the contested treaties made at the fort and nearby Pilot Knob, and in the internment of Dakota peoples at Coldwater Spring. For more information on this history, please see the resources listed below.

- Bdoté Memory Map - <http://bdotememorymap.org/>
- Fort Snelling State Park - <http://www.mnhs.org/fortsnelling/learn>
- Pilot Knob/Oheyawahe - <http://pilotknobpreservation.org/wp/>
- Mississippi National River and Recreation Area - <https://www.nps.gov/miss/learn/historyculture/confluence.htm>
- Coldwater Spring - <https://www.nps.gov/miss/planyourvisit/coldwater.htm>

Much of the Twin Cities' park land was planned in the late 1800s by visionary Landscape Architect H.W.S. Cleveland, at the request of early city leaders from both Minneapolis and St. Paul. Due to the scenic qualities of its waterfall, Hidden Falls, originally called “Hiawatha Park,” was envisioned as part of the Grand Rounds, circa 1882-1887. Mississippi River Boulevard, the parkway that defines the parks' uphill bluff edge, was set aside between 1900 and 1905 (for more on the history of the St. Paul Grand Round, see the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation website - https://www.stpaul.gov/sites/default/files/Media_Root/Parks_&_Recreation/ST_PAUL_GR_ROUND_Historic.pdf). While Hidden Falls and the Parkway were protected early on, Crosby Farm remained in private hands much longer, until about 1962. The following summarizes developments in both parks up to the current era.

Despite being earmarked as a public park early in the city's history, Hidden Falls remained mostly unimproved for a long time. From about 1916 to 1930, the river bottom was used as a tree nursery for St. Paul Parks. In 1931, the first stairs were built down the bluff by Ford Motor Company, and then



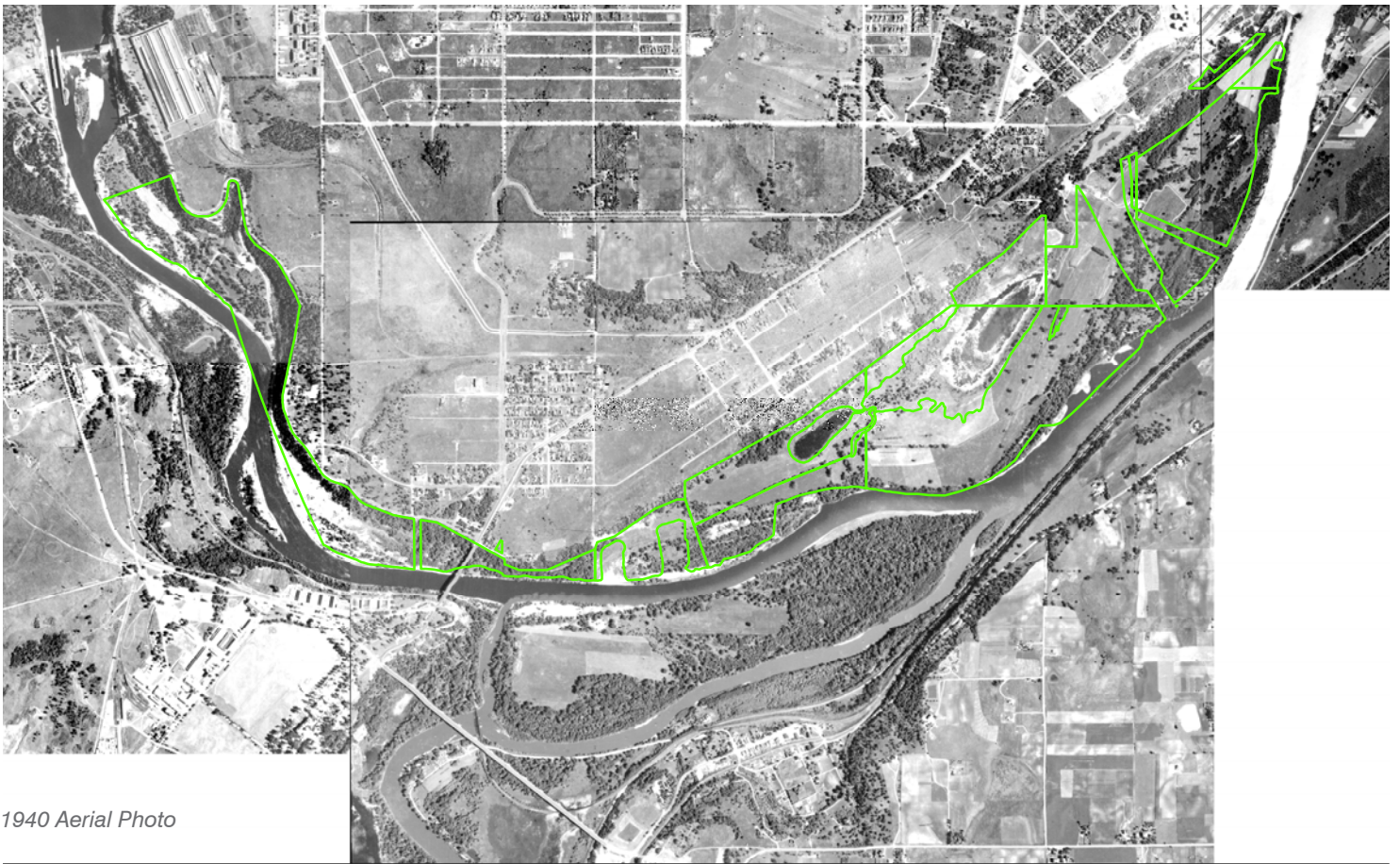
Stone stairs at Hidden Falls, shortly after construction, ca. 1938 (MNHS Archives, <http://collections.mnhs.org/cms/display.php?irn=10707690>)

in 1936-1937 the Works Progress Administration (WPA) built the stonework still standing today at Hidden Falls: the water channel, fire rings, bridges, stairs, and trails. The WPA also operated a gravel pit on the south end of the park (which no longer stands), and much of the material taken from here was used to construct state, city, and county public works. (according to Parks and Recreation records).

Crosby Farm was staked out in 1858 by Thomas Crosby, an English immigrant. He marked 160 acres in the valley southwest of the present-day junction of Shepard Road and Interstate 35E. Before Crosby's death in 1886, the farm became one of the largest and longest running in the West End and Highland Park areas of the city. A succession of families farmed it between 1902 and 1962. The Saint Paul Port Authority purchased the land in the early 1960s and leased it to the city for park use (City of Saint Paul Parks, Crosby Farm Regional Park facility website, <https://www.stpaul.gov/facilities/crosby-farm-regional-park>).

Brief timeline of known developments in the parks:

- 1963 picnic shelter building built at Hidden Falls Park
- Until ca. 1970 boat builder shop by Highway 5 in Hidden Falls Park (described in 1970 master plan)
- 1974 Crosby Farm Park picnic shelter built
- 1981 Public Boat launch constructed (had previously been an unofficial launch point)
- 1980s trails developed (1989 trail connecting two parks constructed)
- The northeast portion of Crosby Farm Park, east of Interstate 35E, is the most recent addition and was transferred to park land in 1993



1940 Aerial Photo



The names Hidden Falls and Crosby Farm each have their beginning in the modern era of land ownership, Hidden Falls being reserved by H.W.S Cleveland in 1887 (purchased in 1906) as the city grew, and Crosby Farm actively farmed and remaining in private ownership until 1962.

Related Projects and Agencies

Ford Redevelopment – the bluff-top Ford Motor Company factory land is planned to be developed into a new neighborhood which will connect to the existing Highland neighborhood surrounding the site. The Ford Site Master plan includes a central “green-blue” spine, which will be a park-like, linear, open space running through the middle of the site that collects and filters stormwater and outlets the water to Hidden Falls. Visit <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-economic-development/planning/ford-site-21st-century-community> for more information.

River Learning Center – The Saint Paul River Learning Center, with proposed National Park Service Mississippi National River and Recreation Area Regional Headquarters, will serve as the gateway to the Mississippi River, welcoming residents and visitors to this national feature with four-season programming that honors, promotes stewardship of, and teaches the culture, history, and ecology of the river. The River Learning Center project was recommended as a part of the Great River Passage Master Plan, approved by the City Council in 2013. The City and its partners have completed technical and feasibility studies and are moving forward with a local, state and federal partnership that advances the project simultaneously across jurisdictions.

Once partnerships and funding are secured, staff will launch the design process including robust community engagement. Visit the Great River Passage website, <https://greatriverpassage.org/projects/> for more information and project updates.

Lexington Parkway Re-Alignment – the City and Ramsey County are working to change the intersection of Lexington Parkway, West 7th, and Montreal Avenues (a complex 5-way intersection in need of improvements). This re-alignment will affect traffic movement at Elway Street near the Crosby Farm’s easternmost entrance. See <https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/roads-transit/future-road-construction-projects/lexington-parkway-west-7th-street-reconfiguration> for more information.

Pedestrian Plan – the City of St. Paul is developing its first city-wide pedestrian plan. The plan recommends guidelines and suggests improvements to improve walkability. Significantly for this master plan, the streets between West 7th and Shepard Road are called out as a priority area for walking improvements. That plan will be finalized in spring 2019. See <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/public-works/transportation/walking-saint-paul> for more information.

USACE Dam study – The US Army Corps of Engineers is

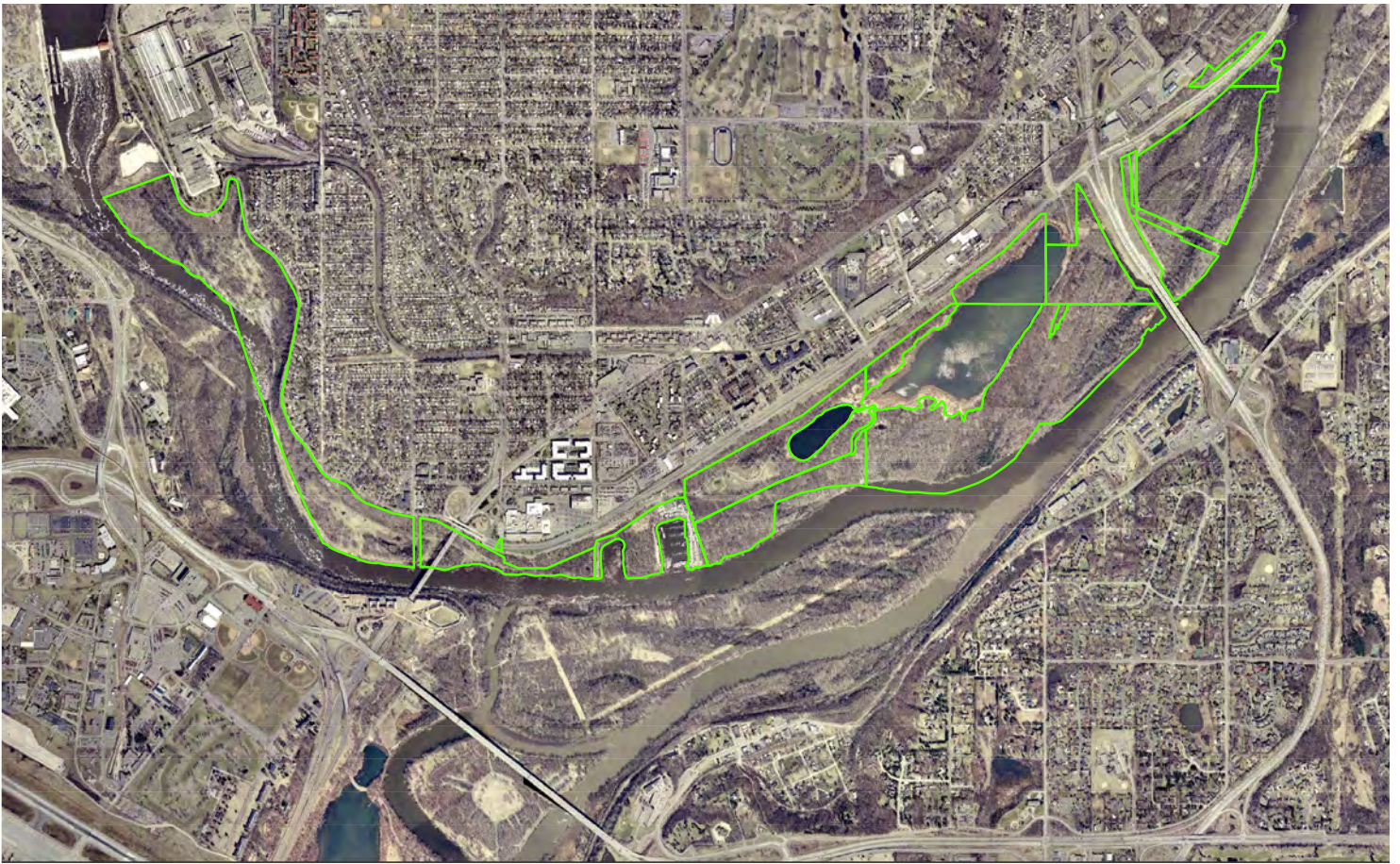


Bartusch Farm, later Crosby Farm, ca. 1906 (MNHS, <http://collections.mnhs.org/cms/display?irn=10778143>)



Crosby Farm buildings, ca. 1950 (MNHS, <http://collections.mnhs.org/cms/display?irn=10787732>)

studying the potential for dam removal along the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities. This would change the flow and depth of the Mississippi River and could significantly change the park’s land and especially the river edge condition. Removal of the Ford Dam would likely have a large impact on both Hidden Falls and Crosby Farm. Results of the study are not complete, however the City of St. Paul is aware of the study and awaiting its completion. See <https://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/MplsLocksDisposition/> for more information.



2006 Aerial Photo



DEMAND FORECAST

Hidden Falls-Crosby Farm Regional Park is well loved and well used. Data indicate that over half a million people (530,000) visit the park annually, with the heaviest use in spring, summer, and fall (Met Council Annual Park Use Estimate – data table pg. 5). This suggests that currently the park sees 1,452 visits per day on average. Citywide population is projected to increase by 20% by 2040 (an increase of 60,000 residents), and we believe the park will see a proportional increase due to nearby development and continued growth of the region.

- Current annual use is 530,000 per Met Council park use estimates (2017)
- Projected annual use in 2040 is 636,000 (a 20% increase)
- This implies approximately 290 additional park visitors per day on average (106,000 increase / 365 = 290)
- Projected future demand of 1,742 visits per day

Adjacent development projects expected to bring additional park users include:

- Ford Redevelopment – 122 acres. The Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan calls for a range of 2500-4000 unit types of housing on 40 new city blocks, with a mix of housing types. (City of Saint Paul, Planning and Economic Development - <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-economic-development/planning/ford-site-21st-century-community>)
- Shepard/Davern development - Residential redevelopment is proposed in the area between Shepard Road and West 7th. (Highland District Council website - <https://www.highlanddistrictcouncil.org/homepage/development-projects/shepard-davern-neighborhood-and-west-7th-street-development/us-bank-demolition-2/>)
- Lexington Avenue re-alignment will change traffic flow at Elway Street. Developer will build new senior apartments on West 7th Street.

In terms of demand for specific recreational uses within the parks, a 2016 region-wide survey by Metropolitan Council of regional parks users indicates hiking, walking, and biking are the most popular activities (Metropolitan Council website - <https://metro council.org/Parks/Planning/Parks-Visitor-Study.aspx>). Our survey results indicated this as well. While there are no indications that this use pattern will change, we are forecasting that demographic shifts in the city as a whole will affect how the parks are used.

That same 2016 study indicated that St. Paul Parks users as compared to the metropolitan region, specifically:

- Had a “shorter visit length and lower reliance on outside information sources”
- Were “more likely to be Asian or ‘other’ race/ethnicity”

Equity and Accessibility

Visitor use surveys and estimates indicate racial and income inequity amongst park users, that lower income residents less frequently visit our regional parks (link to 2014 Met Council study). The vision plan for St. Paul Parks and Recreation noted that a higher proportion of nearby residents do not have cars and categorized the area as “low mobility.”

Discussions with residents from several low income housing communities in the immediate vicinity indicated the parks are not accessible. Residents also indicated barriers to accessing the park due to the steep entrance roads and lack of Metro Transit service to the river bottom. For example, a resident of Cleveland Hi Rise noted that he walked down to Crosby Farm and was very concerned that he could not make the walk back up. Similarly, lack of handrails on the Hidden Falls stone stairway prevented access. Another resident of Montreal Hi Rise asked if Ford Redevelopment plans might be harnessed to bring transit service closer to Hidden Falls. While it is impossible to change the topography of the park

drastically, we can work with partners and continue to find ways to make these parks easier to access.

One approach to addressing these access needs is the new City of Saint Paul Parks Ambassador program. New equity initiatives within City of St. Paul and the Metropolitan Council require adding programs or resources to the park that draw in new users from under-served communities.

The City of St. Paul Parks and Recreation responded by starting a new program in 2016 that partners with groups such as Public Housing St. Paul and the YMCA to run activities, and utilizes city vans or hired buses to get people to the parks. Various partners are involved, including the MN DNR, NPS, Wilderness Inquiry, as well as city departments such as Natural Resources/Forestry and Recreation Services. These partnership programs are projected to continue and, hopefully, expand.

Permitting

Most permits are requested for larger, regular annual events, which include the following permitted event types:

- Celebration (office or family picnic, birthday, graduation, wedding)
- Athletic event (road race, biking, fundraising walks like the 3-day)
- Non-profit or government agency (education or camp, fitness in the parks, natural resources management - , National Public Lands Day, etc.)
- Other large community events such as Pulling Together, or Barebones Halloween Puppet Show.

Crosby Farm Park usually is requested for smaller gatherings whereas Hidden Falls Park is frequently reserved for larger gatherings. In 2016-2017, 69% of all permits were for Hidden Falls (344 of 500 events). In 2018, excluding the largest and repeating events (Barebones and Deer Hunting), 60% of permits issued were for Hidden Falls

Revenue generation - permits only generate revenue to cover staff to assist in event maintenance (for example, cleaning bathrooms or trash removal). Permits do not generate revenue beyond this and therefore do not fund overall park maintenance.



Parks ambassador event at Hidden Falls Park (summer 2018)



Day camp run by the YMCA at Hidden Falls, with National Park Service, St. Paul Natural Resources, and Minnesota DNR (summer 2018)

2. EXISTING CONDITIONS



Hidden Falls (summer and fall 2018)



View of Crosby Lake (fall 2018)

OVERVIEW

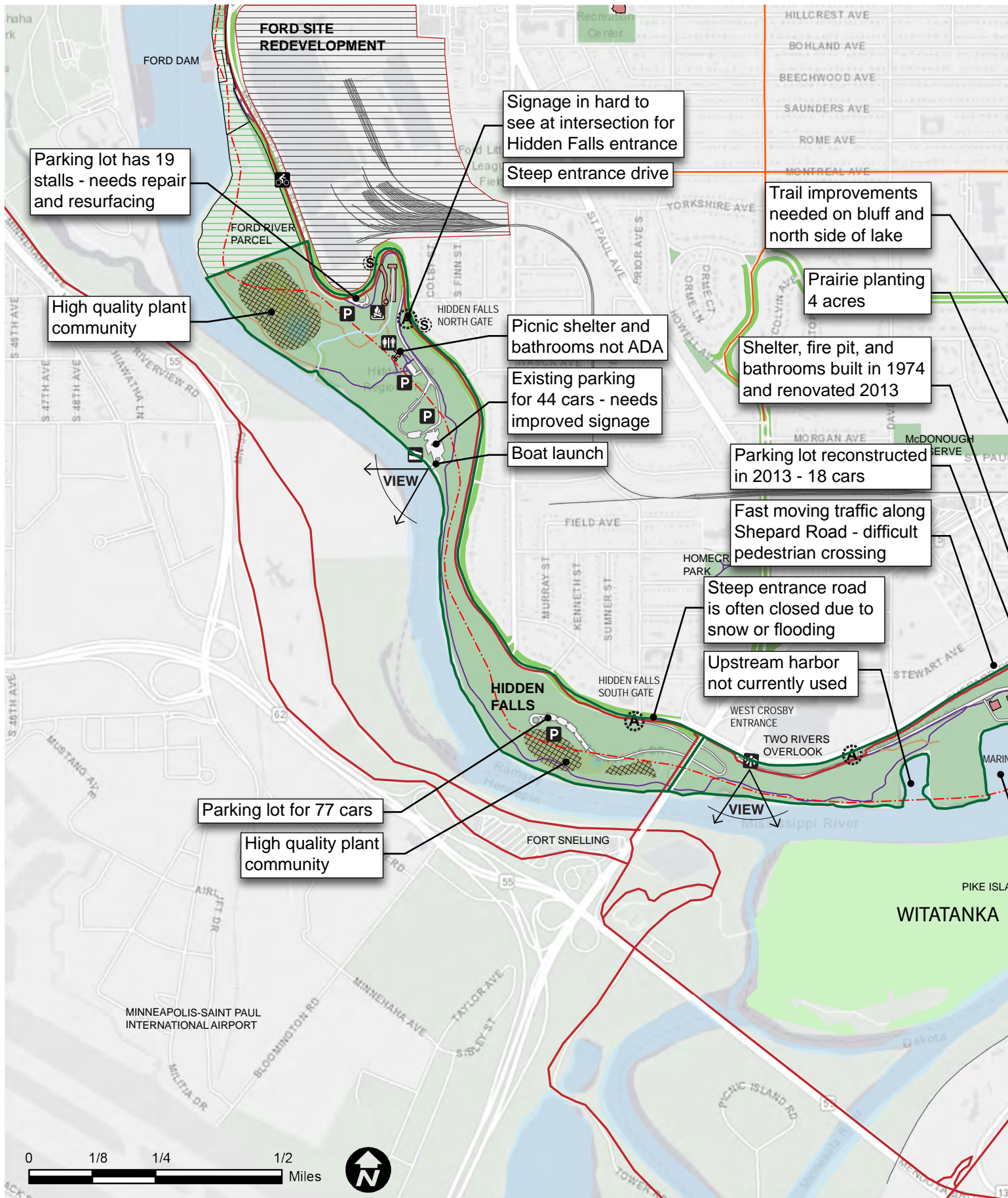
Together Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Regional Park comprises 612 acres of park land along the Mississippi River (including the two lakes in Crosby Farm Park). The park is bordered by the Ford Dam and Ford Redevelopment to the northeast, Mississippi River Boulevard to the north, and Shepard Road and the Mississippi River to the east. From end to end, the linear distance along the river shore is approximately five miles.

This is a large and significant natural area within the heavily urbanized Twin Cities metropolitan area. Many park visitors appreciate the park because it feels like a natural refuge within the city. Furthermore, the park land is culturally and geographically significant due to its adjacency to the intersection of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, commemorated at the nearby Two Rivers Overlook. Both parks provide easy

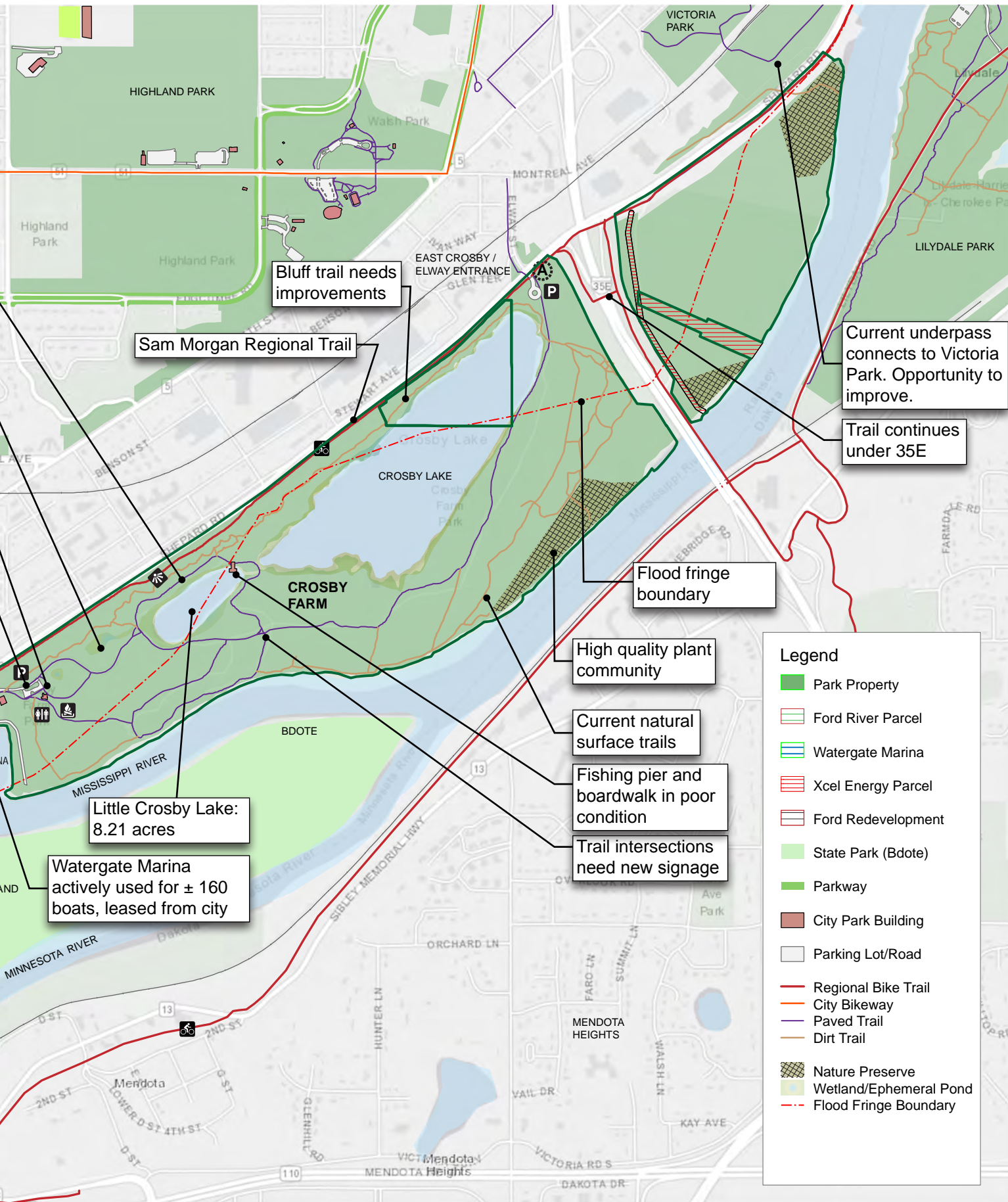
access to the water's edge, as well as trails that allow you to experience the dynamic natural environment.

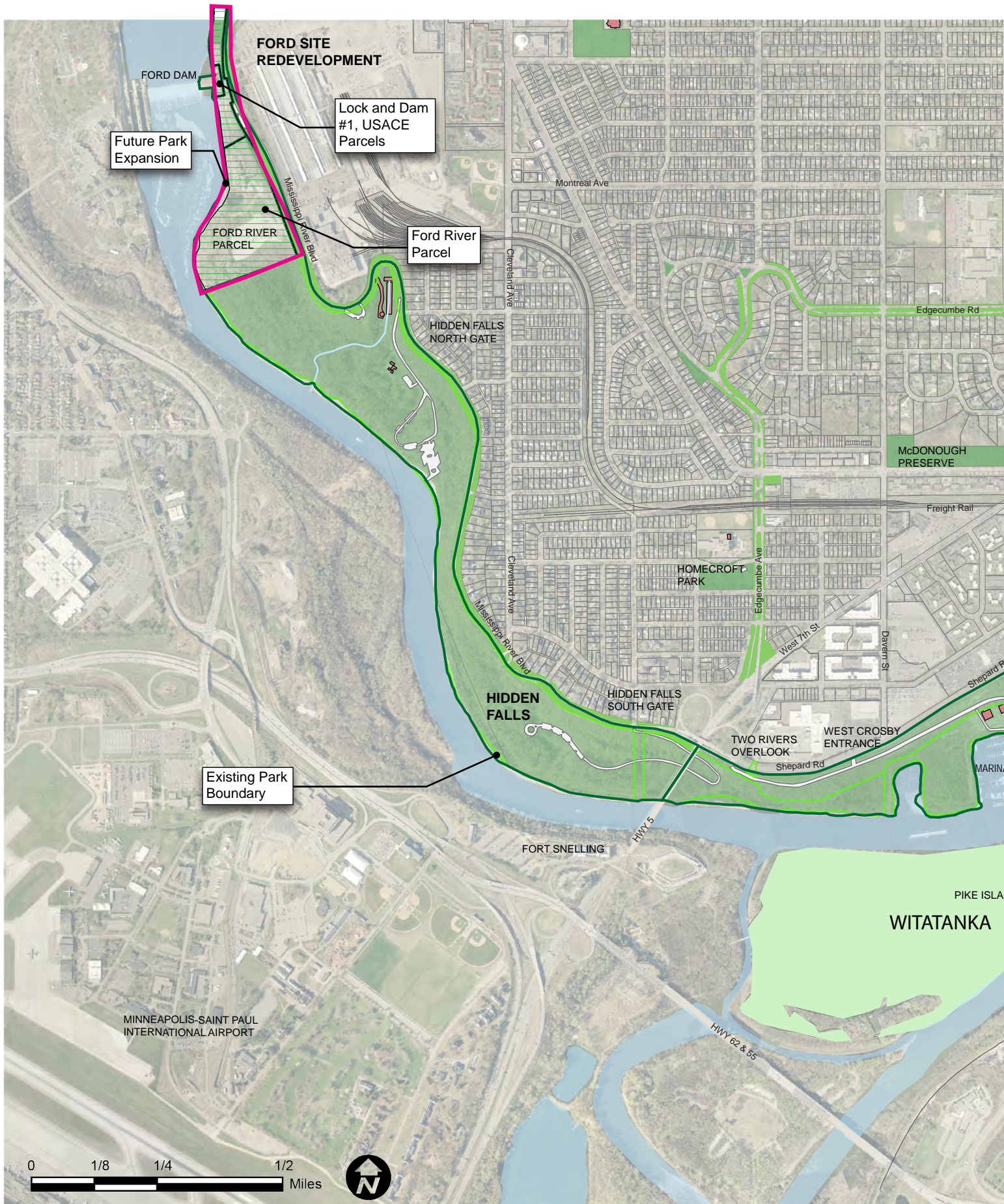
The park showcases the local geology of the river with its steep river-edge gradient ranging from the top of the bluffs to the shore. Hidden Falls Park in particular highlights this, as it features Hidden Falls Creek, which exits near the bluff top and cascades down to meet the river bank below.

The Mississippi River channel broadens and flattens down-river after the confluence, giving way to the more open flood plain in evidence at Crosby Farm. The two lakes within Crosby Park are remnants of a former course of the river, and are periodically inundated by river floods. As previously mentioned, a majority of the park's land is subject to periodic river flooding, indicated on the Existing Conditions map (See following pages) by the red dashed line for the floodway boundary.

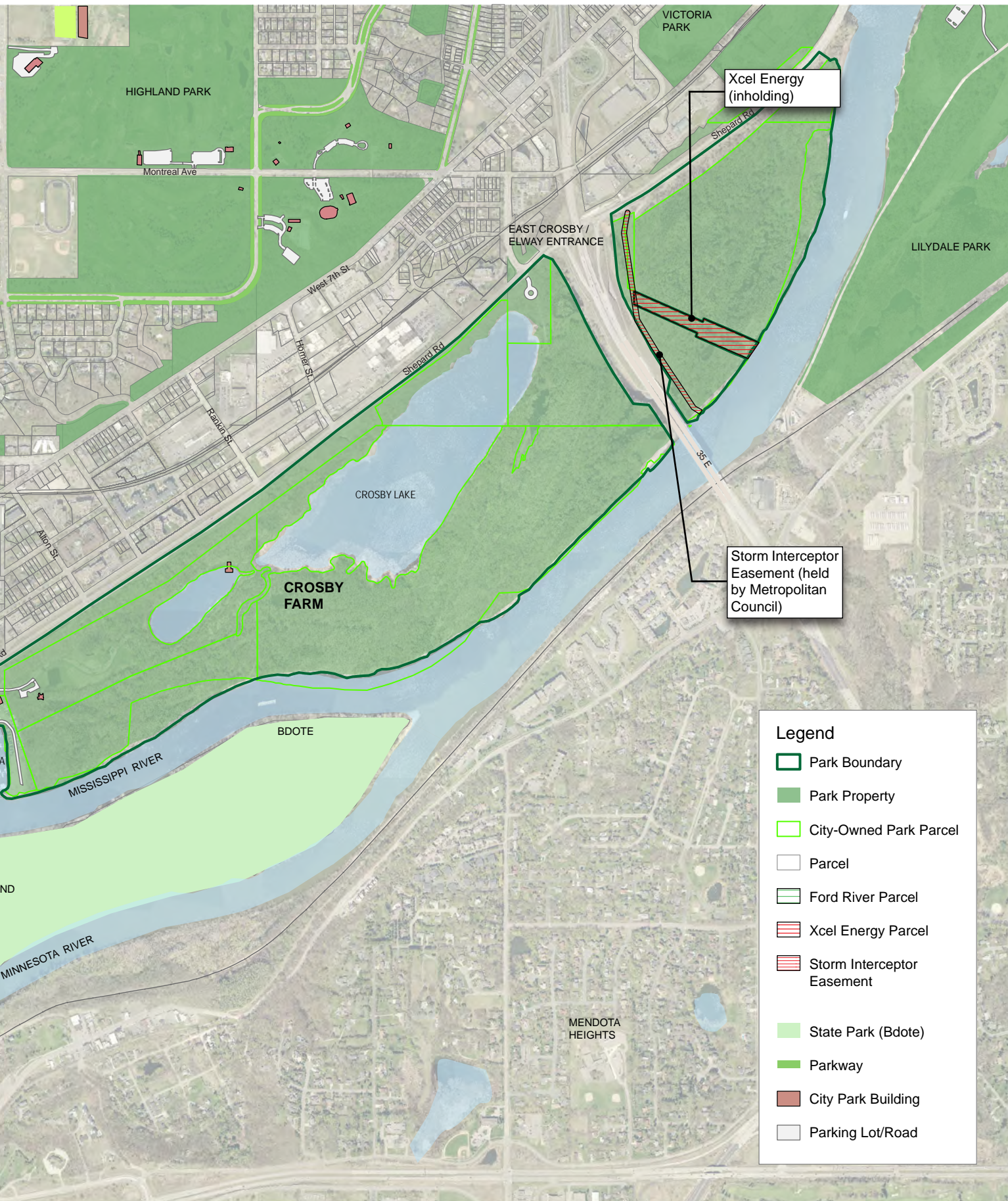


MAP 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS





MAP 2: BOUNDARIES AND ACQUISITIONS





Spring flooding in Hidden Falls Park. Photo by Sarah B. Davis

BOUNDARIES & ACQUISITION COSTS

Hidden Falls and Crosby Farm Regional Park is located along the bend of the Mississippi River (HaHa Tanka) at the confluence (Bdote) with the Minnesota River (Mnisota Wakpa) and Minnehaha Creek (Bdote Memory Map, <http://bdotememorymap.org/memory-map/>). This area is central to Dakota spirituality and history.

Though these are often referenced as two different local parks, they are registered as one regional park with the Metropolitan Council.

Hidden Falls Park sits just down stream from Lock and Dam #1 and is bordered by a parcel currently owned by the Ford Motor Company to the north, by the Mississippi River Boulevard and Shepard Road to the east, by the Mississippi River to the West, and abuts Crosby Farm. A portion of Hidden Falls Park is beneath the Highway 5 Bridge over the Mississippi.

Crosby Farm Park is bordered by Hidden Falls Park to the west, by Shepard Road and the Sam Morgan Regional Trail to the north, and by the Mississippi River to the south and east. A portion of Crosby Farm Park is beneath and to east of the 35E bridge over the Mississippi River that leads toward Mendota Heights. Within Crosby Farm Park is the Watergate Marina site with 160 privately leased slips. A private entity handles all marina operations through a contract with the City of Saint Paul.

Within the park boundary, a linear corridor splits the east side of Crosby with a parcel owned by Xcel Energy company. A Metropolitan Council easement for a storm sewer interceptor is just east of 35E. Additionally, the property map (at left) indicates a parcel owned by the City of Saint Paul Public Works department. Crosby Farm Park consists of multiple parcels (approximately eight), therefore, a title search and parcel combination is recommended for this park to clear up property discrepancies.

Future park expansion proposes acquisition of additional land north of Hidden Falls Park and west of Mississippi River Boulevard toward the Ford Bridge as parcels become available. This would ensure a contiguous green corridor that would provide ecological and recreational connectivity.

The Ford River Parcel includes approximately 21.55 Acres

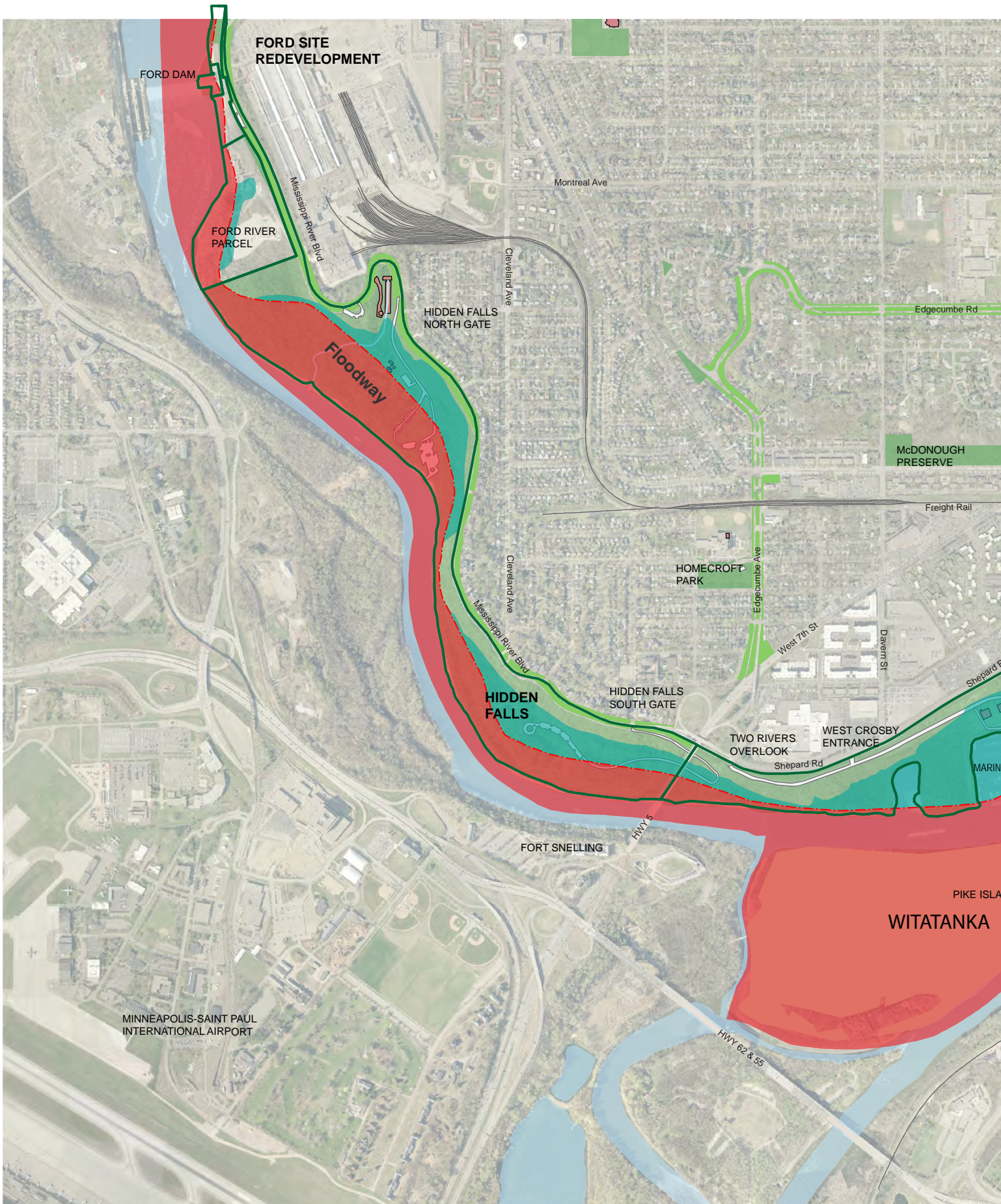
owned currently by the Ford Motor Company. The site was a former waste disposal area. Consultants under contract with Ford have been conducting environmental remediation activities on this site since 2015. Additional monitoring, stabilization, and mitigation may be necessary if the site is to be developed for park land or other uses (City of Saint Paul, Planning and Economic Development, <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-economic-development/planning/ford-site-21st-century-community>). Acquisition of this parcel is estimated to be \$3 Million and does not include clean-up costs of the site.

Additionally, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is studying potential removal of Lock and Dam #1 south of the Ford Bridge. The construction of the dam was completed in 1917, then reconstructed in 1929, 1932, and 1983, in order to provide deep channels for river transportation needs. If the dam is removed in the future, it will significantly change the river as we know it. However, it will also be an opportunity to restore the river channel and potentially acquire park land along the river banks for a complete green corridor.

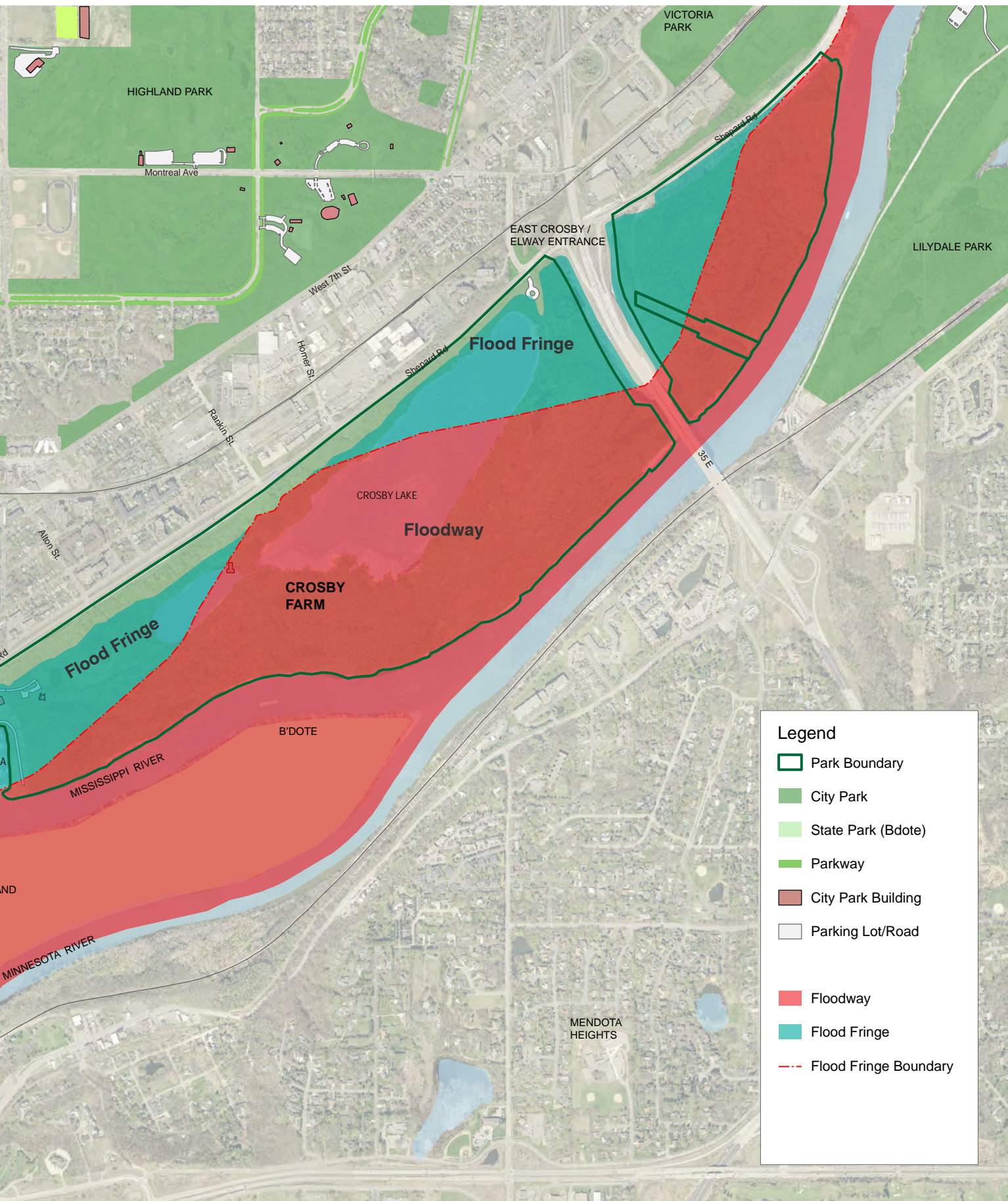
Positive aspects of dam removal include:

- Restoration of historic rapids (8 miles from St. Anthony Falls to the Minnesota River confluence). For Saint Paul, this would mean rapids through Mississippi Gorge Regional Park, Hidden Falls Regional Park, and perhaps part of Crosby Farm.
- Increased opportunities for river recreation, including fishing, whitewater kayaking, and tubing.
- High ecological significance.
- Native fish restoration. Would provide habitat for fish that rely on high-flow environments (e.g. paddlefish, sturgeon).
- Habitat for endangered species (ie.Snuffbox mussel) that relies on a specific fish host that needs rapids.
- Reintroduction of paddlefish and sturgeon could help compete with invasive carp.

Two USACE-owned parcels related to the dam encompass an additional 5.2 acres. They are currently owned by the Federal Government and operated and leased by the USACE. Acquisition of these parcels is approximately \$1.5 Million (valued at \$606,000 and \$426,000 individually) and does not



MAP 3: FLOODWAY AND FLOOD FRINGE





Crosby Farm - edge of the Mississippi River (summer 2018)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Prior to 2018, Hidden Falls Park did not have a Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP); however Crosby Farm Park had a complete inventory from 2005.

For the purposes of this master plan, the City of St. Paul Parks and Recreation engaged Great River Greening to create a Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP) of Hidden Falls, Park the contents of which are summarized below. The full text is included in the Appendix. St. Paul Natural Resources staff compiled an updated NRMP for that park, also summarized below.

2018 Hidden Falls Park NRMP Executive Summary Great River Greening

Hidden Falls Park consists of floodplain forest and bluff land, and is within the Minnesota Mississippi River Critical Area Corridor and the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA). Hidden Falls Park is a refuge for many native wildlife species, and attracts thousands of visitors per year.

The natural resources management plan (NRMP), developed in 2018 identifies opportunities for managing the native plant communities within the park, and provides City of Saint Paul staff recommendations for enhancement and restoration projects.

The goals and recommendations outlined in the NRMP were developed based on a review of aerial photography, soil data, topography, surficial geology data, and Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS) data. In addition, plant community species composition, invasive species distribution and abundance, and potential restoration opportunities were evaluated through site visits. The NRMP describes current site conditions, key ecological features, management goals, and a framework to manage the natural resources within Hidden Falls Park.

The highest quality plant community within Hidden Falls Park is floodplain forest, although it is considered of only moderate ecological quality. Much of the remaining parkland is considered altered with minimal intact examples of native habitat. This NRMP found that a ranking of “altered” is a more dire view than the reality for most of the plant community assemblages within the park. For example, there are native species present in each of the MLCCS units with a ranking of “altered.” The ground and shrub layer is typically more degraded in these units, with canopy layer needing augmentation.

Management objectives are to enhance the diversity and resilience of plant communities at Hidden Falls Park and to increase their value as wildlife habitat. The NRMP rec-

ommends this be accomplished through invasive species management (through mechanical, chemical, and, if applicable and feasible, biological control), and re-vegetation efforts including seeding and planting of native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous species.

Management and enhancement of Hidden Falls Park will be guided by existing vegetation, soils, topography and constraints imposed due to the park’s particular location along the bluffs and floodplain of the Mississippi River in a dense urban area. The disturbance factors inherent with the location of Hidden Falls Park are at play and have caused varying levels of degradation and invasion by nonnative species over time. Plant communities typical of the area at the time of European settlement have been altered due to development, suppression of natural disturbance regimes (fire and grazing), alteration of the hydrologic regime, and the introduction of invasive species. Therefore, it may not be desirable to use pre-settlement conditions as the target for restoration, as these factors will likely continue to impact the site. Alternatively, the target outcome of restoration efforts could be the establishment of diverse and sustainable plant communities, regardless of whether the plant communities are exactly the same as pre-settlement.

Before committing to a restoration or enhancement project, the City should assess its capacity to not only implement a project, but also to manage the plant community over time. The actions taken in each management unit should be considered the beginning of a long-term commitment to manage the resource. Some of the disturbances impacting a given site may be ongoing and intractable, and persistent time-ly effort will be required to transition a habitat from a plant community dominated by invasive species to a more diverse and ecologically functional plant community. Initial efforts to remove invasive species from a site will have been in vain if resources for ongoing management are not committed for the long term.






2019 Crosby Farm Park NRMP (Amendment Summary)

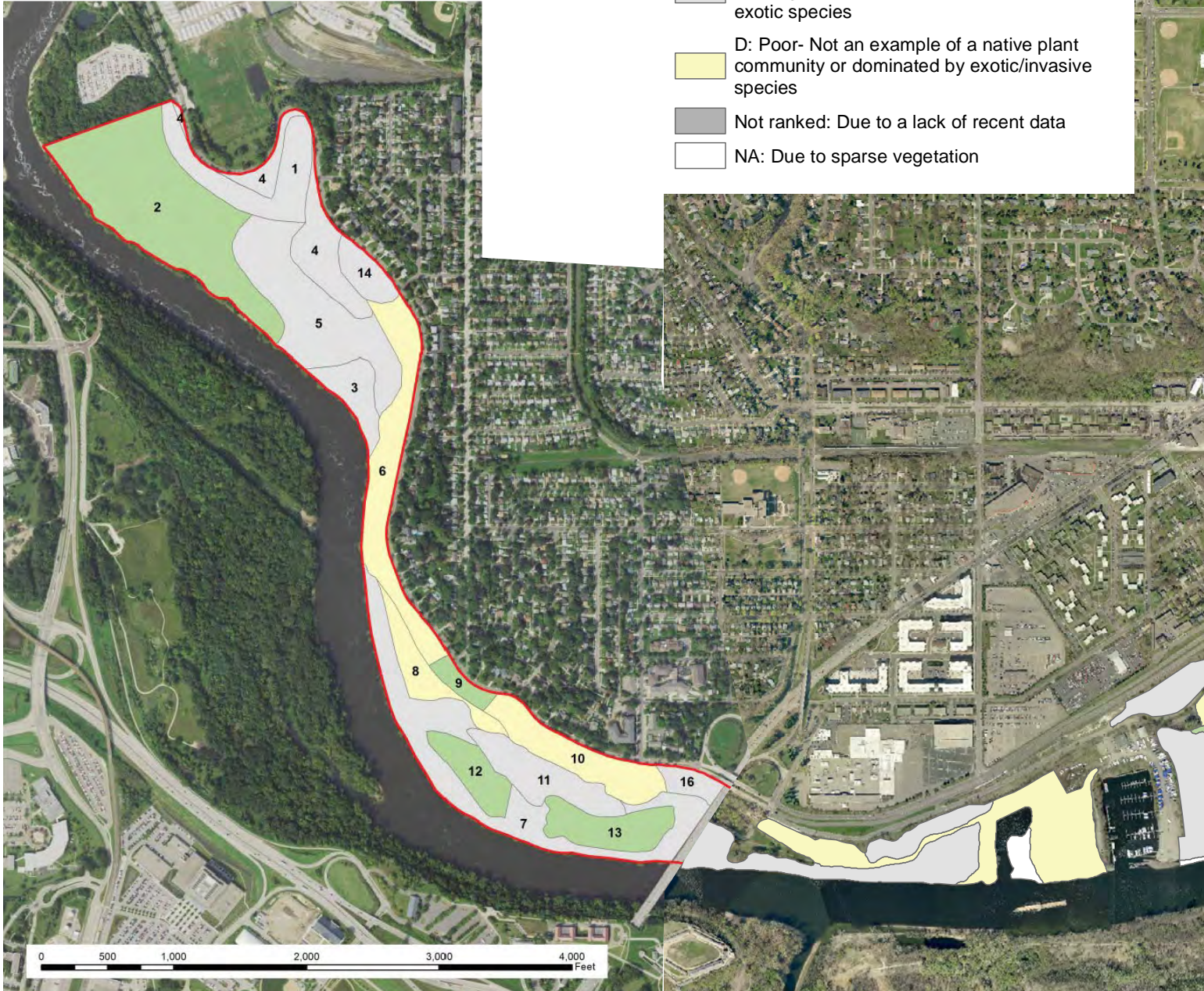
Crosby Farm Park is the largest natural park within the City of Saint Paul, encompassing floodplain forests, bluff land, oak woodlands, lakes, and marshes. Crosby Farm Park is also a significant natural area within the state of Minnesota, Mississippi River Critical Area Corridor, and the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA). The park is a refuge for a broad diversity of native wildlife species, and attracts thousands of visitors per year.

In 2004, a detailed vegetation inventory, analysis of management, and assessment of bluff trails was conducted at Crosby Farm Park. The results of those evaluations informed the *Crosby Farm Regional Park Ecological Inventory and Restoration Management Plan*, published in 2005 by Great

Habitat quality ranking - compilation from Great River Greening (left) and St. Paul Natural Resources (right), using National Park Service data

Habitat Ranking

-  B: Good- Areas of native plant communities with moderate disturbance but nearly intact species diversity
-  C: Fair- Areas of native plant communities with high past disturbance or invasion of exotic species
-  D: Poor- Not an example of a native plant community or dominated by exotic/invasive species
-  Not ranked: Due to a lack of recent data
-  NA: Due to sparse vegetation



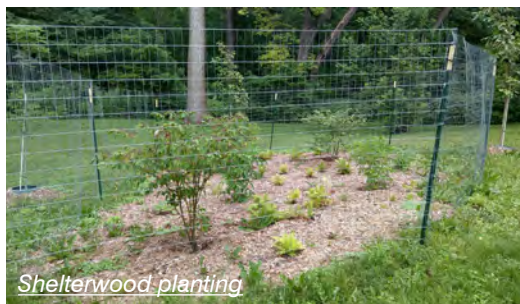
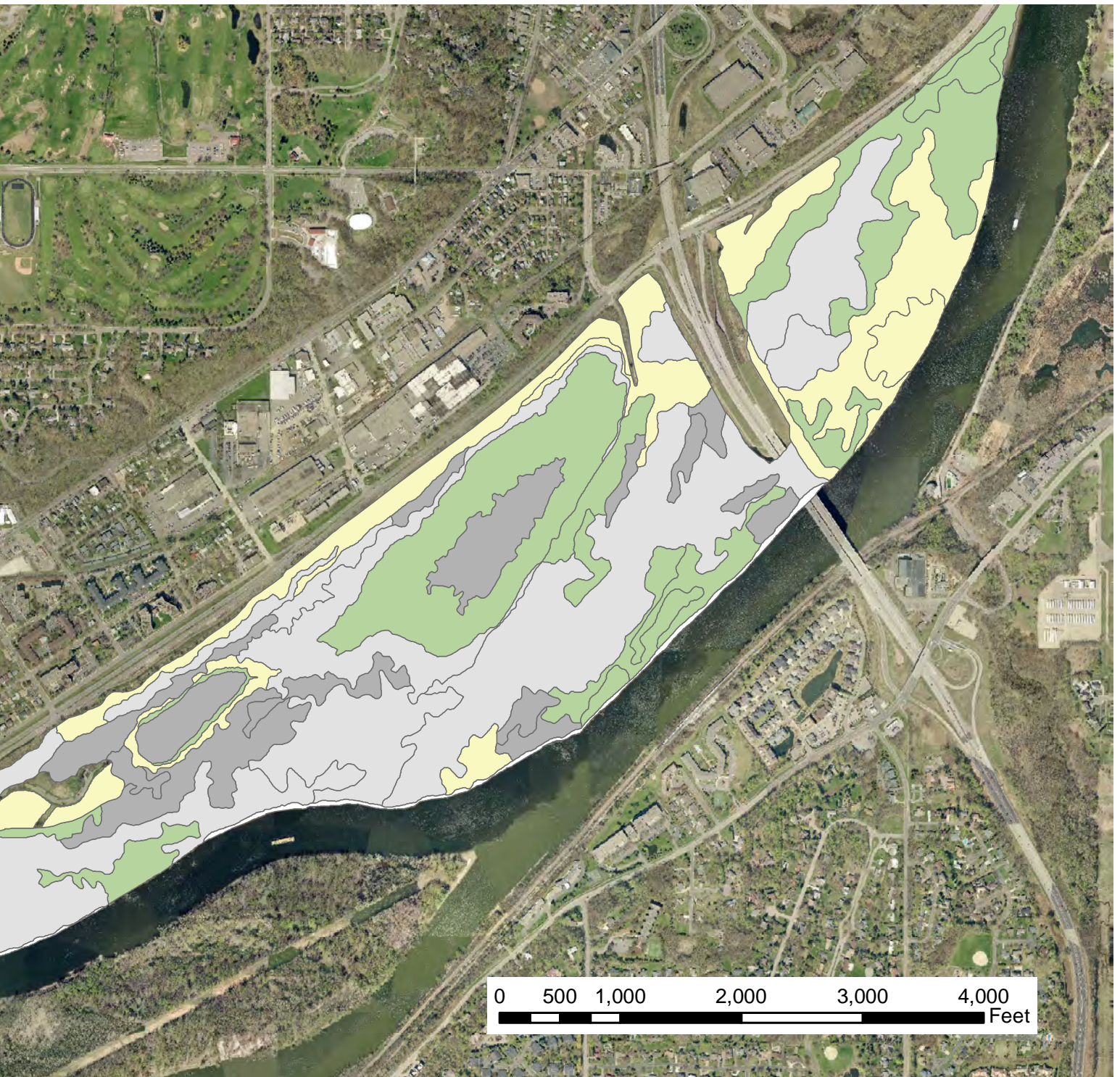
Tree watering ring trial



Marked Ash tree in Crosby



Regenerate cottonwoods



River Greening. The objectives of the plan are to document and assess bluff erosion problems, conduct inventory and mapping of terrestrial and wetland native plant communities, identify problem areas needing management and restoration work, and identify strategies for management and restoration.

The 2019 amendment to the management plan reviews the original recommendations, describes progress made to address these from 2005 to November 2018, and provides future (post-2019) recommendations based on current site conditions. In the decade since the 2005 plan was published, management activities that have been implemented were based on the 2005 recommendations as well as new research and practices in natural resources restoration. The amendment addresses overarching natural resources man-

agement objectives and strategies that span multiple plant communities and those unique to specific plant communities. In some cases, updated recommendations are included in place of outdated management strategies. Specific information is included on invasive species management, mitigation of slope and trail erosion, shelterwood harvesting, planting, seeding, and management of several different grants to complete those activities.

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will continue to refer to the 2005 plan and utilize updated management strategies to continue the management work that has begun and will continue at Crosby Farm Park. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Environmental Services Staff will continually explore new methods for control and remain aware of new invasive species threats to the park.



Crosby Farm - winding, wooded trails for biking and walking (fall 2013)

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Pop-Up meeting at National Public Lands Day, October 2018



Participants in the first Community Advisory Meeting, October 2018



ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

St. Paul Parks and Recreation took a multi-faceted approach in planning engagement for this master plan. The project team attended local events to raise awareness of the project, offered an online survey, held meetings with connected groups and partners, ran public meetings, and shared information on the project website. The project team was available for input at events and via phone or email. The following is a summary of the engagement efforts to date. More detail can be found in the appendix.

The engagement and outreach for Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Regional Park builds on the engagement conducted for Great River Passage in 2011 and 2012, which included 28 public meetings and 5 focus groups. The City's Great River Passage initiative, managed within the Parks and Recreation Department, advocates for projects identified in the Great River Passage Master Plan (including the River Learning Center), and is covered in more detail in the Plan Recommendations chapter (Appendix G).

Many of the programs in the park are run by partners a large portion of whom were engaged early-on to advise on the development of this master plan. Programs run the gamut from day camps, day paddles, and fitness in the parks, to volunteer maintenance and citizen science projects. Most partners manage programs that St. Paul Parks and Recreation staff do not have resources to operate, making them invaluable to the park system. Several group and one-on-one meetings were held to ask for partner recommendations and input. City staff asked questions such as "who do you bring to the park," and "what would make the park better for your programs."

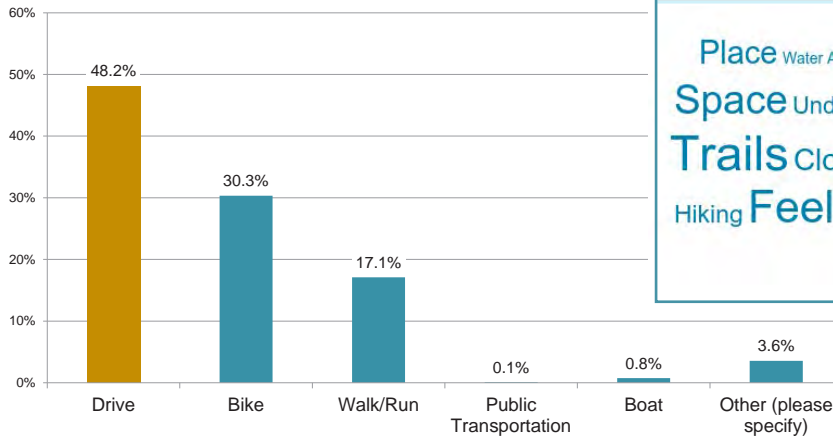
A community advisory committee of volunteers from the community was formed to advise the master plan process. This group consisted of nearby residents, passionate park users, representatives from the District Councils, and engaged citizens of the Metropolitan region. Two community advisory committee meetings were held to review goals and give input for the project, give feedback on priority projects, and discuss proposed ranking and timeline for implementation. One open house open to the public was held to summarize the master plan process and the project priorities.

Survey Results

• 940 responses

Car dependent,
lack of transit access

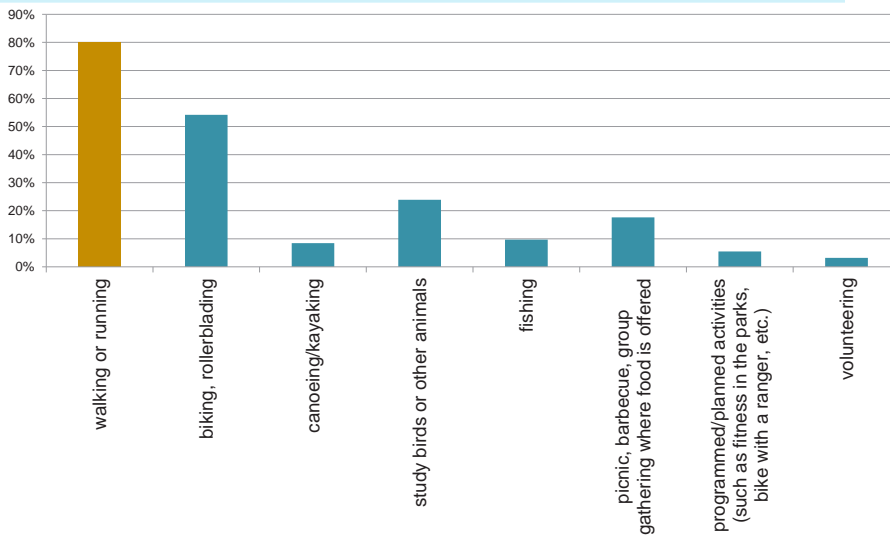
Q2 How do you typically get to Hidden Falls / Crosby Farm Regional Park?



Q3 What do you like best about Hidden Falls / Crosby Farm Regional Park?

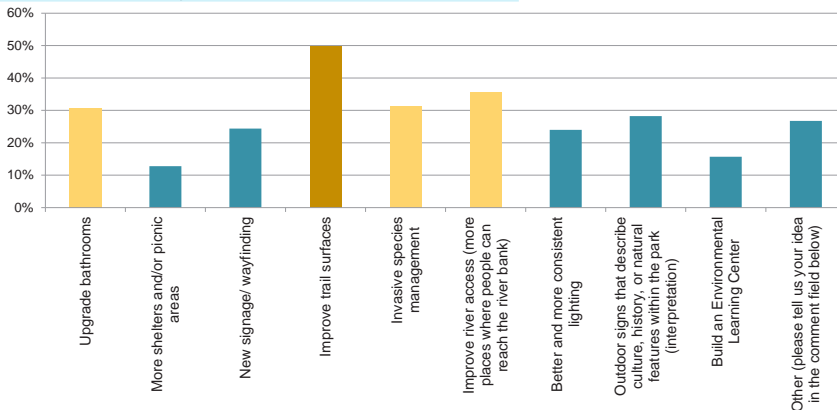
Place Space Trails Hiking Proximity
 Water Access Undeveloped Close to Home Hidden Falls
 Ice Climbing Paths River Trees
 Boat Launch Wilderness Quiet Nature
 Wildlife Big Lake Scenic
 Peaceful

Q4 What activities do you typically do at this regional park?



Top 3: improve trails, improve river access, upgrade bathrooms and with invasive species management; add natural play area

Q6 Please rank these potential improvements - ranked by percent selected in top 3



Engagement Summary

- September 2017- National Public Lands Day (2017) event at Hidden Falls Park - Project staff asked questions using P.A.R.K. (Preserve Add Remove, Keep in mind) activity to respond to each letter. A list of responses is in the appendix. A frequent response indicated a need for improving signage and wayfinding.
- June 2018-January 2019 - six internal city meetings which included recreation center staff from the nearby area, leaders from St. Paul Parks operations and maintenance, St. Paul Natural Resources/Environmental Services (SPNR), and the Great River Passage division.
- September 2018 - National Public Lands Day, Pop-up Meeting. A total of 133 responses were received in a two hour window (city staff handed out 200 popsicles). A paper survey given at the event asked similar questions to the online survey but received slightly different results. More comments mentioned fishing and picnic as a typical activity in the parks. Within the responses, the most common word was “nature” and many preferred to keep the park natural and undeveloped. Signage, upkeep, and security were also common themes. Responders generally wanted more events with free activities and more winter programs with larger groups so they feel safe.
- September 2018 - WCCO and Fraser School Pulling Together event brought thousands of people to Hidden Falls. Many participants were first time visitors to the park and were unfamiliar with the location.
- August-November 2018 - Two community advisory committee meetings were held at the Wellington Senior Living Facility with approximately 30 attendees each. Each meeting included a formal presentation and breakout discussion sessions.
- August-December 2018 - Participation in four City of Saint Paul Park Ambassador event gatherings held at the park and nearby locations. Residents from nearby neighborhoods who have limited access were invited to the park space to learn about the recreation opportunities and experience the park with park staff as guides. Additional two brief presentations at nearby Public Housing Authority resident council meetings.
- September-October 2018 - Online survey received 940 responses. See the previous page for information on responses to the survey. A full list of responses is included in the Appendix.
- October 2018 to March 2019 - Staff from the National Park Service - Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (NPS RTCA) led three focus groups. Participants were interested citizens and invited representatives from specific groups, with a focus on water, trails, and government/non-profit agency offices. A summary of these meetings is in the following section, and minutes are included in the appendix. The groups met again in March 2019.
- October 2018 and January 2019 - Project staff participated in the water ceremony with Nibi Walk groups led by Sharon Day. After the ceremony in January, park staff met with participants to discuss the significance of the park and suggestions for improvements.
- Open House, February 2019 – over 60 individuals attended the project open house held at the Jewish Community Center in Saint Paul.
- June 2017-January 2019: Partner organizations were consulted during the engagement process including the following: For the Rivers, Friends of Parks and Trails of Ramsey County, Inland Sea Kayakers, Minnesota Boat Club, Minnesota Canoe Association, Minnesota DNR, Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists (MORC), Mississippi Park Connection, Nibi Walk/Water Walk, North Star Ski Touring Club, Saint Paul Conservancy, Twin Cities Hiking Meet-up, Urban Boat Builders.

Represented Organizations	Existing Partner Organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Park Service Friends of the Mississippi River Ice Climbers Disability Hub Minnesota Friends of Ramsey County Parks and Trails Highland District Council Fort Road Federation Sleepy Hollow Montessori Allied Management Co. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitol Region Watershed District Conservation Corps of Minnesota Friends of the Mississippi River Great River Greening Great River Passage Initiative Mississippi Park Connection National Park Service Wilderness Inquiry Urban Boat Builders YMCA of Minnesota



Pop-Up Meeting at National Public Lands Day in Hidden Falls, September 2018



Open House, February 2019. Sharon Day from Nibi/Water Walks shared a song to begin the formal presentation

During the meetings and focus groups, the master plan team asked participants to revise and share input on the Great River Passage Master Plan priorities, including what participants thought should be added to the list. New information about existing conditions and natural resources management was also presented. During the four focus groups and two advisory committee meetings, participants read and commented on the priorities list. At the second advisory committee meeting, small groups ranked (in terms of timeline, funding, and urgency) the various priorities. These ranked priorities were then shared online.

Water Access Focus Group

October 17, 2019, 6 attendees

The water access focus group was comprised of various facets of the Twin Cities boating community, both members of organizations and individual citizens. With the park having only one boat launch at Hidden Falls Park north entrance, much of the discussion centered on the location and configuration of the launch area. The users in this group were most concerned with minimizing conflicts between all park users in the boat launch area through signage, policing, planning and good design.

In reviewing the Great River Passage Master Plan priorities, this focus group added the following recommendations:

- Add programming on paddling and water safety.
- Add an Environmental Education Center at Watergate Marina location.
- Add canoe/kayak launch at Crosby Farm Park so as to set up one-way paddle from Hidden Falls.
- Add signage- "Trailer Parking Only"- to boat ramp area.
- Add interpretive signage for boat safety, natural history & cultural history of Dakota.
- Add new wayfinding signage- especially to the falls.

Park and Trail User Focus Group

November 1, 2018, 9 attendees

The park and trail user focus group was comprised of staff or members from the conservation and outdoor adventure communities, as well as unaffiliated local residents who are regular users of the parks. Attendees in this focus group view the park as an extension of their personal space and are protective of that space. A recurring theme was that the park is a sanctuary and a refuge, a treasure, and a hidden gem. Feelings about trail use were a big component of the discussion. Trail construction, trail maintenance, trail signage, and ultimately, trail locations occupied much of the talking time in this meeting.

In reviewing the Great River Passage Master Plan priorities, this focus group added only one recommendation:

- Control the off-leash dog problem.

Government & Non-Profit Focus Group

November 8, 2018, 6 attendees

The government and non-profit organization focus group was comprised of representatives of government and nonprofit organizations who are regular users of the parks. Educational and habitat restoration events are the primary purpose for the government and nonprofit entities using the parks. At least fourteen different types of programming were identified among all the participant's agencies, with event sizes ranging from 6 or 7 people to 1000 or more. The programs and events these groups run are often based on improving the park environment, so as long as the park is viewed a nature resource, these programs can be supported here. Consequently, the issues raised and the content resulting from this conversation was around protection and resilience of the park's habitat.

In reviewing the Great River Passage Master Plan priorities, this focus group added the following recommendations:

- Reduce lawn area north of picnic area at Hidden Falls Park- be sure to preserve open space for the area commonly used by the Bare Bones Puppet Show.
- Reduce pavement- remove some of the looped roadway at Hidden Falls Park at both entrances.
- Add more land to the park at top of bluff from Ford Site.
- Move Hidden Falls Park north parking lot at top of bluff to other side of road and realign parkway to create more bluff-top park space near the "ear lobe" shape part of Mississippi River Boulevard.

Community Advisory Committee

Two larger community advisory committee meetings were held in October and November 2018. Approximately 35 attendees came to each meeting. In the first meeting (October 16, 2018), an overview of the reasons for creating a master plan, expectations of the committee, brief review of the parks' existing conditions, description of engagement to date, and preliminary results from the survey were presented. Similarly to the focus groups, the advisory committee meeting attendees reviewed and commented on the Great River Passage Master Plan for the park.

The second meeting (November 27, 2019) built on the topics of the first meeting. Results of the online survey, preliminary natural resources inventory findings, an updated map for the

parks, and discussion of regulatory guidelines and constraints relating to flooding was discussed. Using the priorities list as revised at meeting one and by the focus groups, the advisory committee at meeting 2 was asked to discuss and give a ranking to the priorities.

Lastly, a public Open House on February 6, 2019 (rescheduled from January 30, 2019 due to extremely cold temperatures) provided an opportunity for broader public to weigh in on committee and focus group recommendations. Boards showing maps of existing conditions, trails, priority statements, example images of proposed improvements, and a map showing the location of recommended park improvements were displayed. An hour long presentation detailed the process to date, gave a summary of recommendations, and reviewed a timeline for the remainder of the project. Lastly, open house attendees were invited to vote on one of five options for the first project to be implemented after the master plan is complete. Options included:

- Add cultural signage and develop wayfinding signage plan
- Trail system: improve rustic trails at bluff and shoreline

- Trail system: redesign bike and pedestrian connections at entry roads
- Add gathering space for indigenous culture events and recognition
- Reduce lawn area and redesign parking area at Hidden Falls north lot

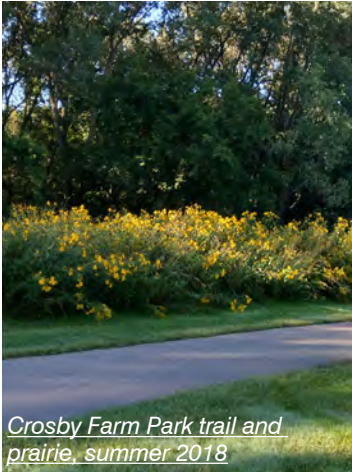
The items with the highest votes were both related to the trail system. Several open house attendees asked questions about security and pedestrian or vehicular safety, and especially expressed concerns about pedestrian-bike-car conflicts at entry points. St. Paul Parks and Recreation staff will assess the feasibility of studying circulation at the park entries and work towards developing plans and seek funding for moving this and other priority projects towards implementation. The following chapter, Implementation, will discuss how public feedback and the priorities list will be acted upon.

The final report will have a public comment period for the draft report and comments and feedback will be included in the appendix.



Voting exercise from Open House, February 6, 2019

4. IMPLEMENTATION



Crosby Farm Park trail and prairie, summer 2018



Mississippi River at Hidden Falls Park. Photo by Sarah B. Davis



Hidden Falls Park path and pavilion, summer 2018

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The goal of the master plan is to enhance access and safety to and through the urban floodplain “wilderness” along this stretch of the Mississippi River while respecting the cultural heritage of this place and providing recreational opportunities as a regional park.

Plan Approach

Led by landscape architects from the Department of Parks and Recreation Design and Construction Division, the master plan report was developed with input from the public, partner organizations, and city staff from parks and recreation, public works and planning and economic development. Community engagement and analysis from previous reports and studies shaped the list of priorities and projects. Information from separate Natural Resource Inventories of Hidden Falls Park and Crosby Farm Park provided information for management of the park landscape. Additional consideration was given to the current City of Saint Paul Parks and recreation system plan and recognition of the significance of the park at the regional scale.

To begin, the Great River Passage (GRP) served as the basis of this plan. The GRP Master Plan proposed specific improvements at Hidden Falls Park - Crosby Farm Regional Park and developed a priority list. The proposed improvements and priorities were re-visited and then reviewed, sorted, and reorganized based on priorities received from the focus groups and the community engagement committee. Structured similar to the GRP Master Plan, the priorities are divided into five categories:

- Management (renamed to Policy and Programming)
- Construction: Recreation improvements/use areas
- Construction: Road and Trails
- Construction: Structures and related improvements

- Construction: Landscape Improvements

Project Priority Ranking

Focus group and community advisory committee members assisted in ‘ranking’ the list of priorities to consider a timeline for improvements. The ranking levels are representative of the order for project implementation that was preferred in our discussions, however factors such as funding, sequencing and logical combination with other City projects may shift the timeline. Therefore, the projects are not listed in the exact order that they will be initiated. The ranking includes:

- High- near term, very important
- Medium-High, within 7 years (+/-)
- Medium, within 10 years (+/-)
- Low-Med, within 12-15 years (+/-)
- Low, funding needed and/or must be sequenced with other improvements.

Projects and Cost Estimates

From the list of priorities, projects with more specific improvements are listed with an approximate cost for construction at the time of this plan. The estimated cost is a general estimate and does not include inflation costs, nor is the project limited to the project description. Each project will be reexamined as funding sources are identified to define project scope

A list of improvements to the park with approximate costs are shown on the following pages. Corresponding maps follow showing overall park priorities, trail, pedestrian and multi-modal connection improvements, and project improvements to the high-traffic areas of the park.



Barebones



River Learning Center conceptual aerial view, Great River Passage



Wilderness Inquiry



Ramsey County - Tamarack Nature Center



Mississippi River, photo from Wilderness Inquiry

PROJECT PRIORITIES

Priority Key

High - near term, very important
 Med-High - within 7 years (+/-), significant

Medium - within 10 years (+/-), desired but not top
 Low-Med - within 12 to 15 years (+/-), preferred
 Low - must be sequenced with other improvements

Policy and Programming HF = Hidden Falls, CF = Crosby Farm

Priority Level	Project Title	Description of Priority
High	Invasive Species Management	Increase budget for invasive species management and coordination. [both]
High	Cultural Events	Continue to program cultural events such as "Barebones Halloween Puppet Show." [both]
High	Enforce Pet Policy	Address the off-leash dog problem by signs and education. [both]
Medium-High	Bluff-top Land Acquisition	Explore addition of bluff-top land to the park, from Ford Site by curve at Mississippi River Blvd. [HF]
Medium-High	Park Security	Install video surveillance to reduce theft from parked vehicles and increase safety. Additional surveillance via police and parks security patrol [both]
Medium-High	River Learning Center	Support development of a River Learning Center at Watergate location, with partners including the National Park Service, Mississippi Park Connection, Friends of the Mississippi River, Capitol Region Watershed District, and Wilderness Inquiry. [CF]
Medium-High	Ford River Parcel Acquisition & Trail Extension	Acquire adjacent riverfront land and inholdings as they become available. [both]
Medium	Water Safety	Add programming on paddling and water safety. [both]
Low	Improve Public Transit Access	Improve transit access by working with adjacent neighborhoods and Metro Transit. [both]

Construction: Recreation Improvements/Use Areas HF = Hidden Falls, CF = Crosby Farm

Priority Level	Project Title	Description of Priority
High	Indigenous Community Gathering Area	Add gathering area with fire pit designed to accommodate and recognize Native American heritage and culture. [HF] (Similar to Pilot Knob)
High	Provide a Natural Surface Trail System	Develop linear mountain bike trails using International Mountain Bicycling Association best practices. [both]
Medium-High	Cross Country Ski Trails	Add Cross Country (XC) skiing trails for classic style skiing (use grooming equipment from park system). If feasible, design to be multi-use natural surface trails. [both]
Medium-High	Boat Ramp & Boat Trailer Parking; New Restroom Near Boat Launch	Improve boat ramp and trailer parking. Separate casual shoreline users and cars without trailers from boat ramp area. [HF]
Medium-High	Picnic Lawn & Open Space	Improve meadow near Hidden Falls Pavilion to allow passive recreation and picnic areas for large and small group events. [HF]
Medium	Nature-Based Play	Construct a new nature-based or woody play area (non-traditional). [HF]
Medium	Add a Canoe/Kayak Launch	Add (2) canoe/kayak landing areas (separate from boat ramp, at Hidden Falls South Gate and Crosby). [both] * Could be combined when River Learning Center is built
Low-Medium	Managed Group Camping	Develop managed, rustic group tent camping area for permitted events, with a potable water source. [CF] * Only feasible when River Learning Center is built
Not Ranked	Explore Ice Climbing	Study feasibility of allowing and Improving access for ice climbing

Construction: Landscape Improvements HF = Hidden Falls, CF = Crosby Farm

Priority Level	Project Title	Description
High	Forest Canopy Expansion; Habitat Improvements	Reduce lawn area, encourage continuous tree canopy growth, and remove some parking along road at Hidden Falls South. Use this as an area for Cottonwood regeneration. [HF]
Medium-High	Fallen Trees on Trails	Remove fallen trees from trails as soon as possible, and emphasize tree canopy management via programs with partners. [both]
Medium-High	Bluff-Zone Erosion	Address bluff erosion at bluff-top, following Natural Resources Inventory guidelines (stable materials for trails that will diffuse water flow, resist compaction and disintegration, and redirect water away from trails). Re-vegetate slopes where feasible. [both]
Medium	Water Quality Management	Restore native floodplain and wetland areas, and address erosion near stormwater outfalls to improve water quality. [both]
Medium	Invasive Species Management	Selectively manage understory of invasive vegetation species in passive activity areas. [both]
Low	Restore Hidden Falls Creek	Restore Hidden Falls Creek to incorporate water quality treatment and habitat enhancement in coordination with Ford site redevelopment. [HF]

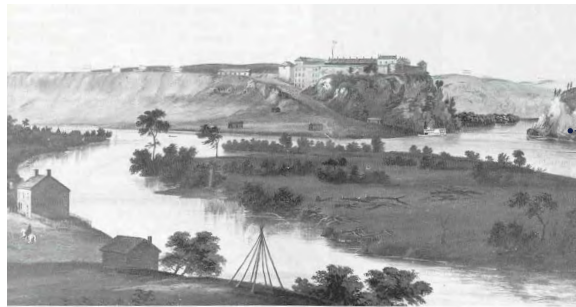


Figure 14-6. Fort Snelling in 1844, as depicted in watercolor and gouache by John Casper Wild. (Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.)



Construction: Roads and Trails **HF = Hidden Falls, CF = Crosby Farm**

Priority Level	Project Title	Description of Priority
High	Provide a Natural Surface Trail System	Add looped rustic nature trails, including the mid-bluff trail, that provide a varied experience and connect to create 5 mile loops. [both]
High	Provide a Natural Surface Trail System	Add rustic trails with access to shoreline (shorter/spur trails). [both]
High	Trail Accessibility Assessment/ Wayfinding	Assess the trail network, improve accessibility throughout, and provide clear access and signage to trail heads. [both]
High	Accessing Undeveloped Eastern Portion of Park; Trail Connections from Marina Area	Add new park trails from Watergate to Lower Crosby Farm (east side), connect to new parking areas and to Victoria Park. [CF]
High	Trail to Hidden Falls	Improve and extend park trails at Hidden Falls, improve trail from pavilion to falls area. [HF]
High	Redesign Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Along Entry Roads	Redesign bike and pedestrian trails along entry roads. [both]
High	Shepard Road Entrance Safety	Improve Shepard Rd. crossings. [CF]
High	Pedestrian Access Improvements; Pedestrian Experience From Park Entrances; Trail Extension on Ford River Parcel; Miss. Blvd. Entrance Safety; Accessing Undeveloped Eastern Portion of Park	Improve all pedestrian access points, giving consideration to neighborhood access, and connections from Victoria Park and redeveloped Ford Site / WPA era (Works Progress Administration) staircase
Medium	Miss. Blvd. Entrance Safety: Improve Safety at Park Entrance	Improve safety and sight lines at Mississippi River Boulevard entrances. [both]
Medium	Boardwalk and Fishing Pier	Improve boardwalk and fishing pier. [CF]
Low	Improve Parking	Improve parking areas at Hidden Falls (especially near pavilion, which is not emergency vehicle accessible). [HF]
Low	Improve Parking; Reduce Pavement	Reduce pavement, by removing some of the looped roadway at Hidden Falls at both entrances. [HF]

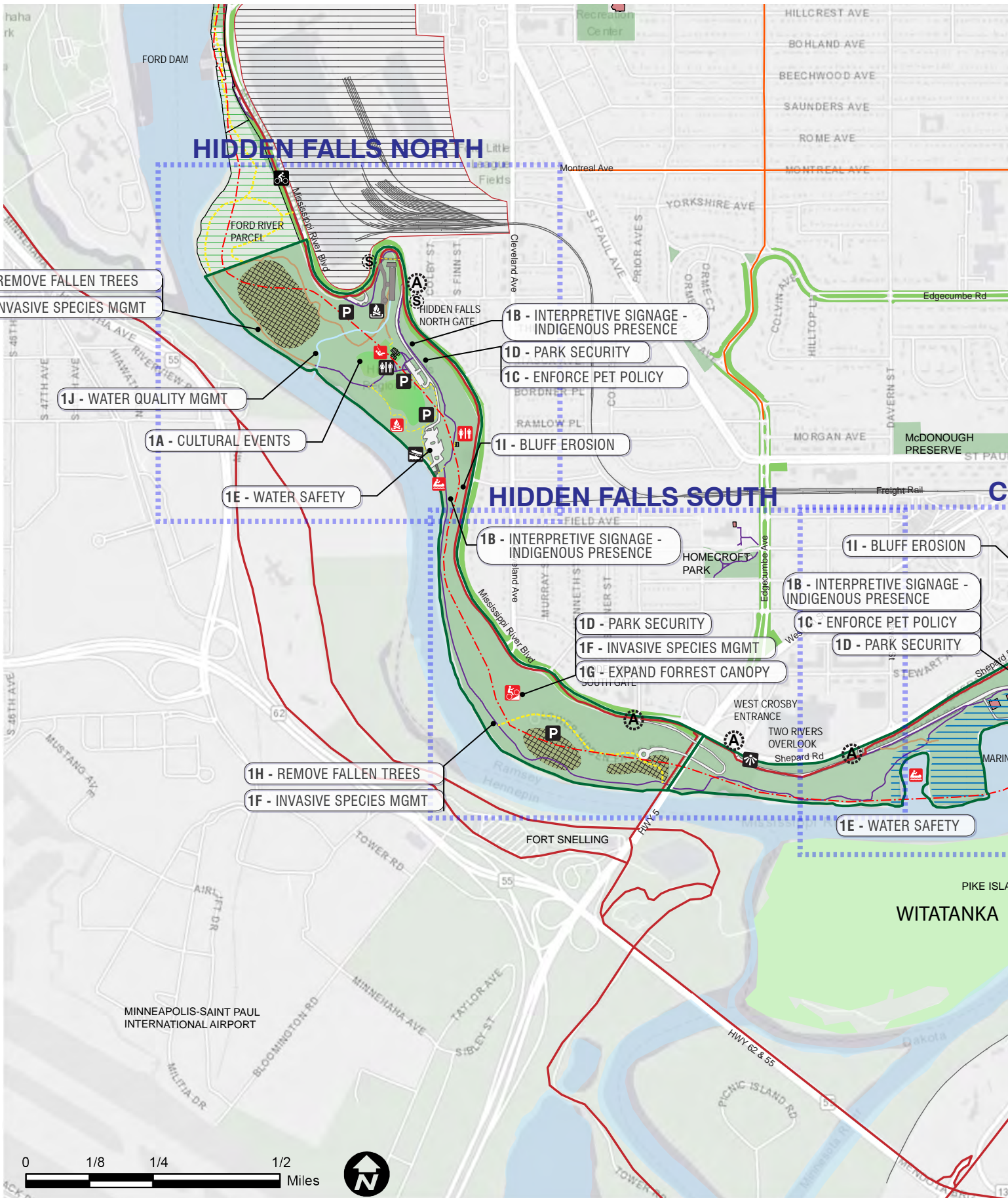
Construction: Structures and Related Improvements **HF = Hidden Falls, CF = Crosby Farm**

Priority Level	Project Title	Description
High	Interpretive Signage - Indigenous Presence	Add interpretive signage for natural history, and cultural history of Native American presence. [both]
High	Boat Ramp & Boat Trailer Parking	Improve signage at boat ramp parking lot, provide directions to nearby launches, designate area for boat trailer parking only. Add signage for boat and water safety. [HF]
High	Wayfinding	Implement signage and wayfinding systems in Crosby Farm and Hidden Falls (develop short walking tour with clear and easy to follow signs). [both]
High	New Restroom Near Boat Launch; Year-Round Restrooms	Year-round, minimal maintenance bathroom (composting if floodplain rules allow). [both]
High	Wayfinding; Pedestrian Experience from Park Entrances; Kiosk/ Wayfinding Signage	Add signage/kiosks to mark entry point to parks (West Crosby Entrance, and along Mississippi River Blvd., Hidden Falls North and South Entrances). [both]
Medium	Hidden Falls Pavilion and Restrooms	Improve Hidden Falls pavilion and make restrooms accessible. [HF]
Low-Medium	Boat Storage Area	Construct two small boat storage areas at Hidden Falls Park. [HF]
Low	Construct a Weather Shelter	Build a weather shelter for summer groups. [HF] * Could be eliminated from priorities if River Learning Center built

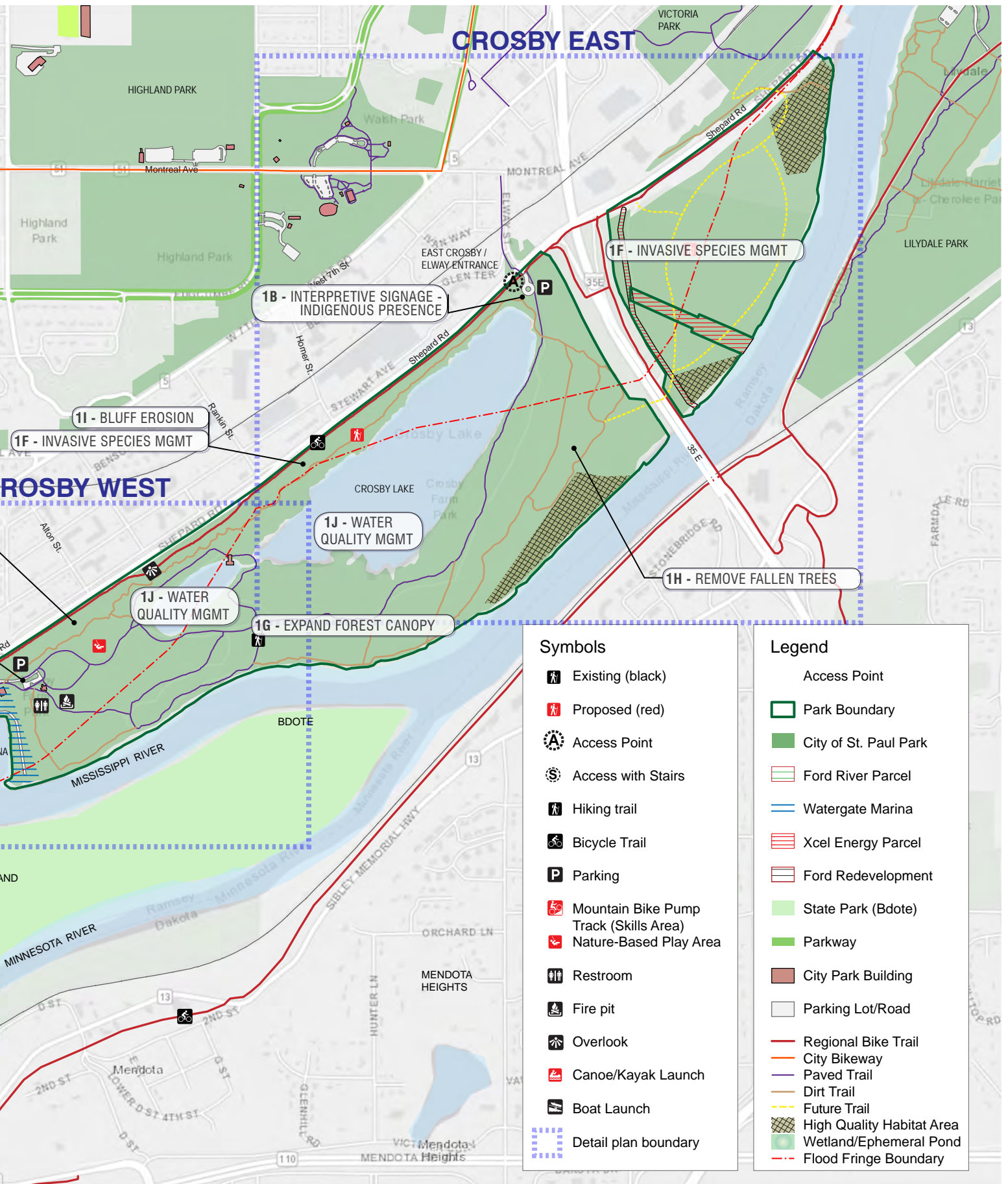
Priority Key

↑ High - near term, very important
 Med-High - within 7 years (+/-), significant

↓ Medium - within 10 years (+/-), desired but not top
 Low-Med - within 12 to 15 years (+/-), preferred
 Low - must be sequenced with other improvements



1 - PARK-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS



Please refer to page 40 for text describing recommendations on the map above.

1 - PARK-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

Park-wide Priorities - Policy & Programming

1A: Cultural Events (high)

Citizens love cultural events that happen in the park and are vocal about the importance of these events continuing in an updated park. Upgrade utilities to support cultural programs and events, such as “Barebones Halloween Puppet Show.”

Estimated Cost (construction): \$75,000

1B: Interpretive signage recognizing Indigenous presence (high)

Work with local representatives of the Dakota nation to provide interpretive signage and native language place names. This may require a cultural resources study. This was recommended in the Great River Passage Report and this master plan also endorses the recommendation.

Estimated Cost (construction): \$25,000- 50,000

1C: Enforce Pet Policy (high)

Park users often bring pets to the park for recreation and let them off leash. However, unleashed pets chase wildlife, may damage sensitive ecological areas, and cause anxiety for some park users. Educate pet owners on the rationale for the park ordinance. Use universal signage, education, policing and other methods (if needed) to ensure every pet is leashed. Explore options for a designated off-leash area.

Estimated Cost (signage): \$10,000

1D: Park Security (medium-high)

Vandalism and theft occur in parking lots, which has caused some park users to be afraid of being in the park. Increase actual and perceived surveillance of the park using a combination of location-appropriate techniques, including video technologies, emergency phones, police patrols, and presence of park and partner staff.

Estimated Cost (camera): \$26,000 / (staff): \$64,000 per year

1E: Water Safety (medium)

The Mississippi River is a powerful body of water that can present hazards to paddlers of any skill level. Add programming on paddling and water safety that will provide guidance for a safe and enjoyable experience on the water. Have staff or volunteers from the City or partner organizations to assist paddlers. Provide universal signage for when staff is absent. May require additional study of water dynamics at boat landing and engineered solutions (ie. wing dam) to create safe launch conditions.

Estimated Cost (signage): \$10,000 / (program): \$24,000 per yr.

Park-wide Priorities - Landscape Improvements

1F: Invasive Species Management (high)

Habitats in the park are in fair to poor condition. Maintenance is required so the park’s habitats can hold up to the pressures of increased park visitors, invasive species, and a changing climate. Year-over-year budget increases must be planned for invasive species management within the forest understory and in other passive activity areas. Management methods of invasive species differ for each species; refer to the Natural Resources Management Plan and ‘Invasive Plants of the Upper Midwest,’ for guidance.

Estimated Cost - \$500,000/project, or \$50,000 per year

1G: Expand Forest Canopy (high)

The forest habitat is fragmented by roads, trails, park facilities, and lawn. To maintain or increase the quality of the park’s forest habitat, the tree canopy should be expanded by removing under-used lawn and pavement, and by planting and pruning trees.

Estimated Cost :\$190,000/per year (includes labor for tree removal, pruning, and planting)

1H: Remove Fallen Trees (medium-high)

Remove fallen trees near and across trails. Keep in place dead wood for the habitat value it provides. Cut down standing dead wood near park facilities that may be a safety hazard.

Estimated Cost : \$50,000/year

1I: Bluff Erosion Mitigation (medium-high)

The bluffs are being damaged by various kinds of erosion. Prevent erosion within the bluff zone by diverting stormwater and people away from bluffs. Stabilize eroding slopes with vegetation where reasonable. Use engineered products where vegetation alone is not enough to stabilize an eroding bluff. For trails in the bluff zone, use sustainable techniques to design new or reroute existing trails to direct water away from trails. Consider decommissioning informal trails that contribute to erosion.

Estimated Cost: \$1,500,000

1J: Water Quality Management (medium)

Research realistic water quality improvements determine feasibility, and choose a strategy for implementation. Restore wetlands and floodplains to a better state of ecological functioning using a variety of best management practices. Refer to the resource, ‘Minnesota Wetland Restoration Guide,’ by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.

Estimated Cost: \$1,400,000

2 - TRAILS & CONNECTIVITY IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

2A: Trail Accessibility Assessment (high)

The trail system in Hidden Falls-Crosby Farm has not been thoroughly assessed for compliance with federal accessibility guidelines. It is likely that most of the trail system does not meet the standards. It is most important to provide accessible routes to primary facilities, such as from the parking lots to the pavilion, restrooms, boat launch, and picnic areas. The hard surface trail through the park needs rehabilitation in order to meet the requirement that the surface be free of obstructions and large cracks. Complete an accessibility assessment of the trail network in Hidden Falls Park and Crosby Farm Park, and develop a phased plan to upgrade trail facilities accordingly. An accessible trail system will increase the safety, comfort and usability for all visitors.

Estimated Cost: \$20,000

2B: Wayfinding (high)

The parking areas at the four vehicular entrances serve as trail heads for trail users. However, there are few or no wayfinding signs or maps of the trail system at any of the trail heads and few trail intersections are marked with maps or directional signs. Improve the safety and comfort for trail users by creating a wayfinding system for the Park that clearly directs people to and from park destinations. The wayfinding system should include: trail system maps or kiosks at the trail heads, indications of allowed uses on every trail, a system of numbering or naming intersections or trails, "you are here" maps, distance markers, and an indication of accessibility features. Wayfinding signs, kiosks, or artistic landmarks appropriate to the Park should also be added at all park entrances to improve the ability of park users traveling by motor vehicle to find the entrances. As part of the wayfinding system, develop a short walking tour that leads park users to park highlights and scenic views. The tour could be noted on wayfinding signs or maps, and could be offered and promoted with a partner, such as the American Volkssport Assn., the St. Paul Hiking Club or other hiking/walking clubs.

Estimated Cost: \$275,000

2C: Pedestrian Access Improvements (high)

Pedestrian access exists at the four vehicular entrances to the Park, and also via the staircase adjacent to Hidden Falls Creek. No crosswalks across Mississippi River Blvd. exist at any of the Hidden Falls access points. The Shepard Road crossings at the two Crosby Farm Park entrances have push button crossing signals, but outdated crosswalk pavement markings. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) era staircase at Hidden Falls is steep and not easily

found from Mississippi River Boulevard. Neighbors indicated a strong desire for safety improvements at park access points; Shepard Road and Mississippi River Boulevard are deterrents to park use. Improve all pedestrian access points and road crossings to encourage non-motorized park access for neighborhood residents, future Ford Site residents, and to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. Options for road crossings include: high visibility crossing markings, advance warning crossing signs, stop bars for vehicles, adding signals where there are none; improving curb cuts to accessibility standards, and adding lights. The WPA stone stairs are historic and aesthetically pleasing, so should be rehabilitated as needed without altering its character. Accessibility may be improved with handrails.

Estimated Cost: \$50,000 - 500,000

2D: Redesign bike and pedestrian trails at entry roads (high)

The asphalt trail into Hidden Falls Park at Hidden Falls Drive (North Entrance) is steep and not ADA accessible. There is no separate trail into Hidden Falls Park at South Prior Avenue (South Entrance). A trail exists along Crosby Farm Road for part of the way into Crosby Farm Park (West Entrance), but is narrow and in marginal condition. There is only trail access into Crosby Farm Park beyond the small parking lot at Elway St. (East Entrance). In order to encourage bicycle and pedestrian transportation to the Park and to improve trail connectivity, this Plan calls for improving the existing hard surface trails along entry roads to accessibility and bicycle facility standards and for upgrading the existing separate hard surface trail along Crosby Farm Road to convert it into a marked two way trail.

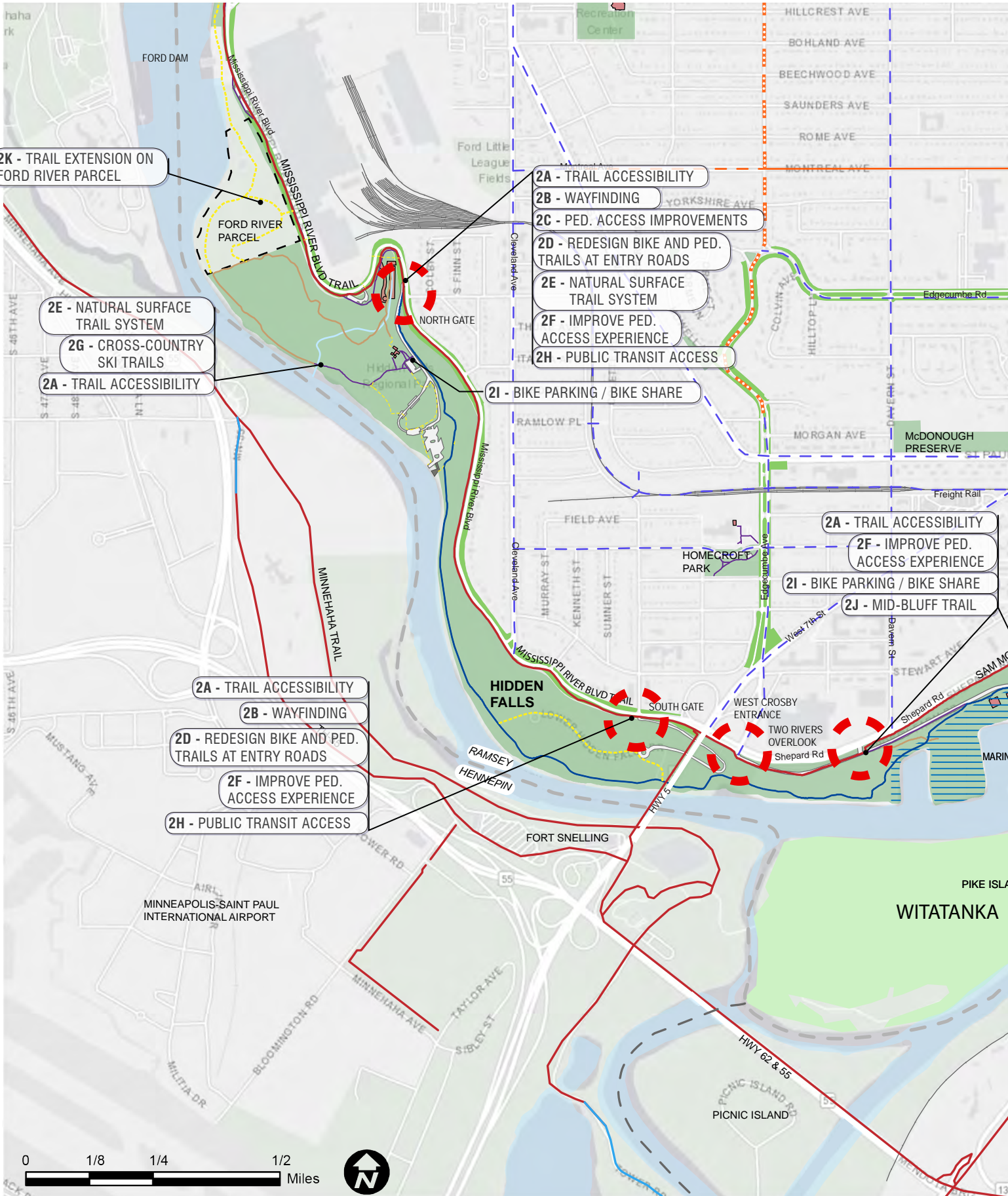
Estimated Cost: \$800,000

2E: Natural Surface Trail System (high)

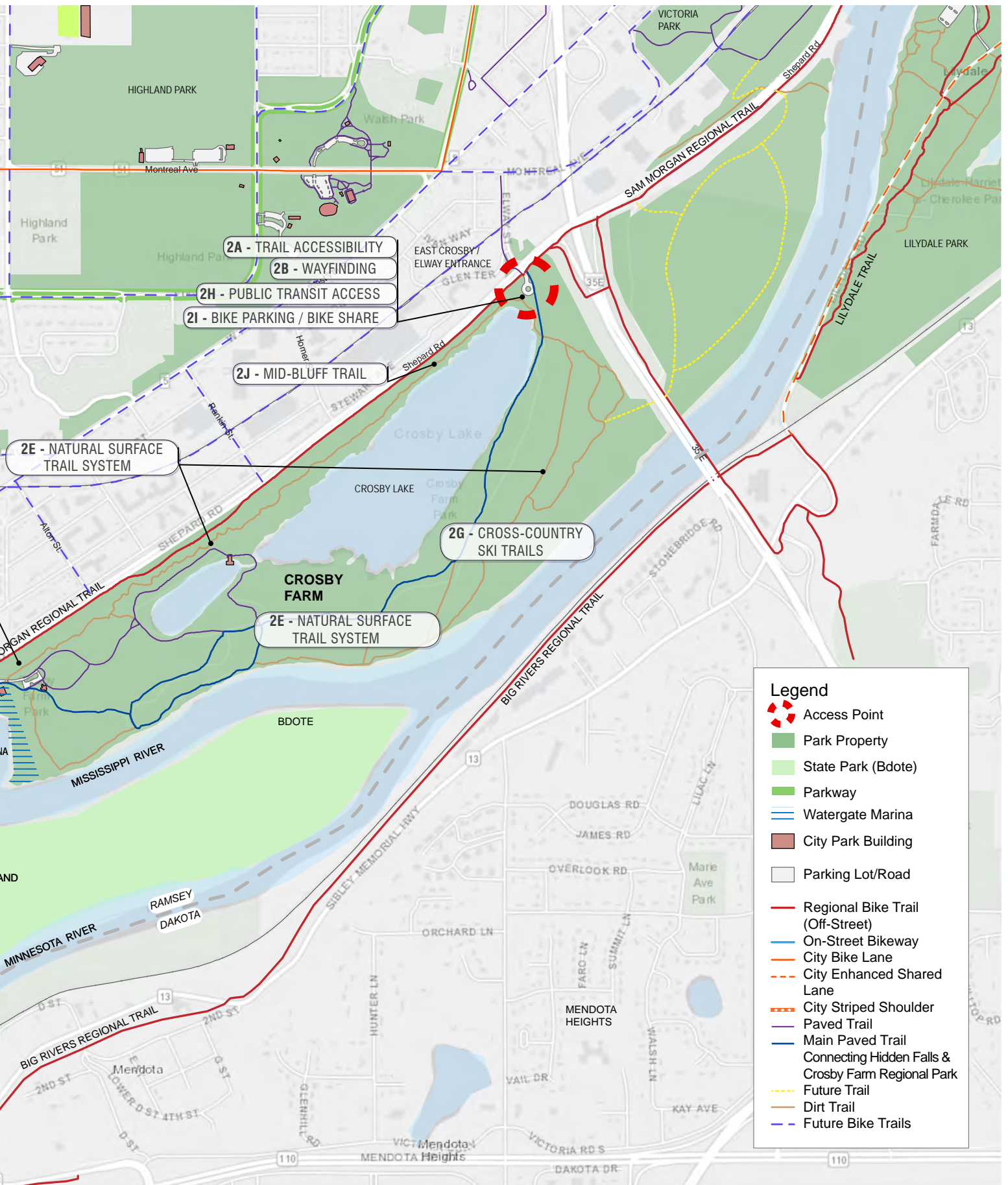
Design and build a trail system that offers varied experiences and accommodates hiking, mountain biking, and trail running, and also classic style cross country skiing, and winter hiking during the snow season. First assess the existing trails for suitability for these uses, preferably with separate trails for mountain biking and hiking. The system will include: designating existing trails as is; renovating trails as needed to accommodate new uses; and adding natural surface, sustainable trail loops in appropriate locations. As part of this system, a new, linear, mountain biking trail could be added to traverse through Crosby Farm and Hidden Falls at mid-bluff or on ledges above the floodplain, using best practices of the International Mountain Biking Association. Ideally, the natural surface trail system will offer trails of adequate distances for all types of users, totaling at least five miles of trails.

Estimated Cost: \$400,000

2F: Improve Pedestrian Access Experience (high)



2 - TRAILS & CONNECTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS



Legend

- Access Point
- Park Property
- State Park (Bdote)
- Parkway
- Watergate Marina
- City Park Building
- Parking Lot/Road
- Regional Bike Trail (Off-Street)
- On-Street Bikeway
- City Bike Lane
- City Enhanced Shared Lane
- City Striped Shoulder
- Paved Trail
- Main Paved Trail Connecting Hidden Falls & Crosby Farm Regional Park
- Future Trail
- Dirt Trail
- Future Bike Trails

Please refer to pages 41-44 for text describing recommendations on the map above.

Improve all pedestrian access points by using wayfinding signage. Redevelop existing sidewalk at Hidden Falls Drive accessible where feasible. Develop ADA compliant sidewalk at South Prior Avenue entrance. Implement improved wayfinding signage at neighborhood access points such as the pedestrian connections from Victoria Park and the redeveloped Ford Site to the WPA staircase.

Estimated Cost: \$400,000

2G: Cross Country Ski Trails (medium-high)

To attract additional recreational opportunities, the park may improve options for winter recreation to encourage healthy, active living, and better serve the regional public that want year round access to parks. Manage a portion of the natural surface trails in Hidden Falls – Crosby Farm Regional Park for classic style cross country skiing. This will require an assessment of the trails to identify appropriate trails for this use. Required regular grooming can be accomplished with City equipment and staff. Ski trails should be adequate in length (preferably 10 kilometers or more), and avoid boardwalks,, sharp turns and dips shorter than ski length, and avoid obstacles that could be covered in snow, etc. There may be a need to designate trails for only skiing to maintain groomed tracks. Provide adequate alternative hiking/snowshoeing trails and clearly sign the allowed uses. Trail segments may need to be constructed to provide desired loops, but can be used for hiking or biking during other seasons.

Estimated Cost: \$45,000

2H: Public Transit Access Improvements (low-medium)

Currently no public transportation directly accesses the park. Public buses are the only public transportation type in the vicinity of the park. There is a bus stop across Shepherd Road from the West Crosby Farm Park entrance at Gannon St. Bus stops near the other park entrances are between 3 and 5 blocks away. Metro Transit's interactive map does show the park entrances. Transit access can be improved by working with Metro Transit, the National Park Service's Alternative Transportation program, and adjacent neighborhoods to consider adding closer stops to park entrances, and to promote the availability and encourage the use of public transportation to the Park.

Estimated Costs: n/a

2I: Bicycle Parking and Bike Share Programs (not ranked)

Bicycle racks and a bicycle sharing station exists in the pavillion parking lot at the Hidden Falls Park South Entrance area. The bicycle racks are an outdated type that is not recommended for modern bicycles and locks. Bike sharing companies are on contract for three year segments with the City of Saint Paul (Lime is the contract holder through 2020 for dock-less bike share). No bicycle racks or bike sharing stations exist in other parts of the park. To reduce the demand for vehicle parking spaces and encourage active lifestyles, replace the outdated bicycle racks with modern ones.

Add bicycle parking at all parking lots. Work with the current bike share management entity to encourage the promotion of using bikes to ride to the park.

Estimated Costs: n/a

2J: Mid-Bluff Trail (not ranked)

A natural surface trail runs mid-way up the bluff side from about Crosby Lake to just east of Little Crosby Lake. There are few access points which are not well signed. Areas of the trail are failing from erosion and need repair. Railings and boardwalks need continued maintenance. The 2004 Great River Greening study of the bluff trail included proposed design solutions for long term maintenance. Some solutions have been implemented, but the study should be reconsidered. Apply safety improvements and sustainable trail design methods to address erosion and water issues, add a bluff stair access point parallel with Rankin Street, widen narrow areas of the trail, and repair railings and retaining walls while preserving the rugged nature of the trail.

Estimated Cost: \$800,000

2K: Trail Extension on Ford River Parcel (not ranked)

Trail users desire to be in the lowlands along the river for as long as possible before the trails must climb to the top of the bluff as Mississippi River Blvd. approaches the Ford dam. If all or part of the Ford river parcel is acquired for the park, expand natural surface trail system by assessing the existing informal, natural surface trails on the parcel, and either retain them, rehabilitate and reroute them, close some of the informal trails, and/or create new natural surface trails. A through route should be provided for pedestrians, and preferably a separate through route for bikers. These trails should connect to the hard surface Mississippi River Trail along Mississippi River Blvd. by gradually climbing to the bluff-top using sustainable trail building best practices.

Estimated Cost: \$185,000

3 - HIDDEN FALLS NORTH AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

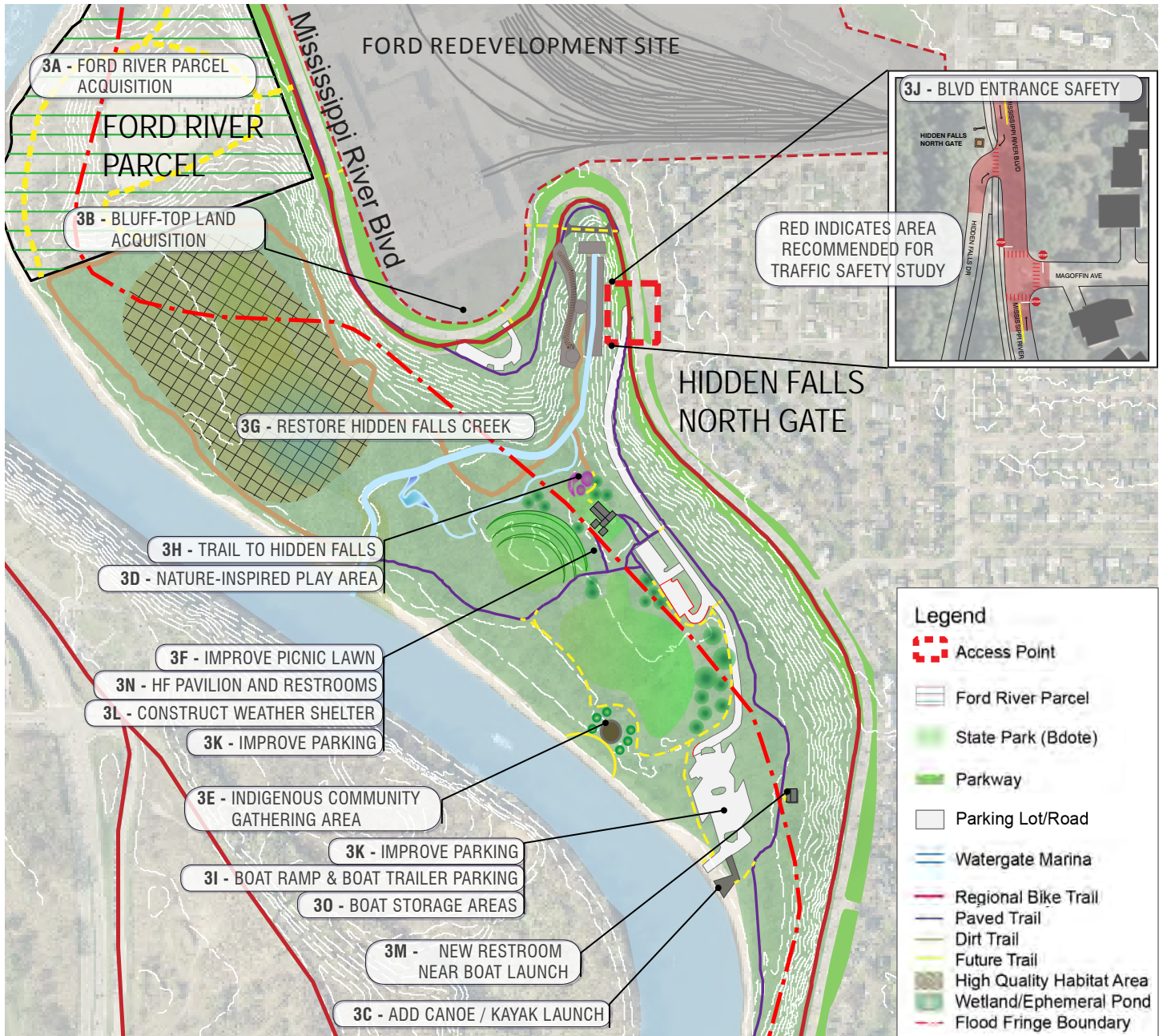
Policy & Programming

3A: Ford River Parcel Acquisition (medium-high)

North of Hidden Falls and between the Mississippi River and Mississippi River Boulevard is a 21.55 acre river parcel that is owned by the Ford Motor Company. As planning for the development of the adjacent 122 acre Ford Site on the east side of Mississippi River Boulevard, there may be an opportunity for the City to acquire some or all of the river parcel as part of the park. Informal trails extend along the

river from the formal natural surface trails inside the park to and beyond the river parcel. The informal trails appear to receive frequent use, indicating a community desire for a trail connection from that parcel. The City will pursue acquisition of some or all of the river parcel if that opportunity arises. The site however, was a known dump site for the Ford Plant. The history of contamination and the safety and suitability for recreational use shall be considered prior to acquisition.

Estimated Cost: \$3,500,000



3 - HIDDEN FALLS NORTH AREA RECOMMENDATIONS



Please refer to pages 45-49 for text describing recommendations on the map above.

3B: Bluff-top Land Acquisition (medium-high)

A tight S curve exists on Mississippi River Blvd. where the road crosses Hidden Falls Creek, and the road bends around the bluff top and ravine for Hidden Falls Creek. The Ford Site is north of the road, and Hidden Falls Park to the south. A small parking lot and overlook exists on the western part of the curve. Entrances to the park and overlook have poor sight lines, causing safety concerns. An option to straighten out the S curve has been considered. This would add more bluff-top land to the park, providing an opportunity to increase the safety of the park and overlook entrances, and better protect the bluff from erosion. The current S curve slows traffic, and any redesign should provide equivalent traffic calming and provide safe road and trail crossings. Redesigning the parking lot at the top of the bluff should be considered in conjunction with reducing the parking lot sizes in the floodplain to reduce potential damage during floods.

Estimated Cost: unknown at this time

Construction: Recreation Improvements/Use Areas

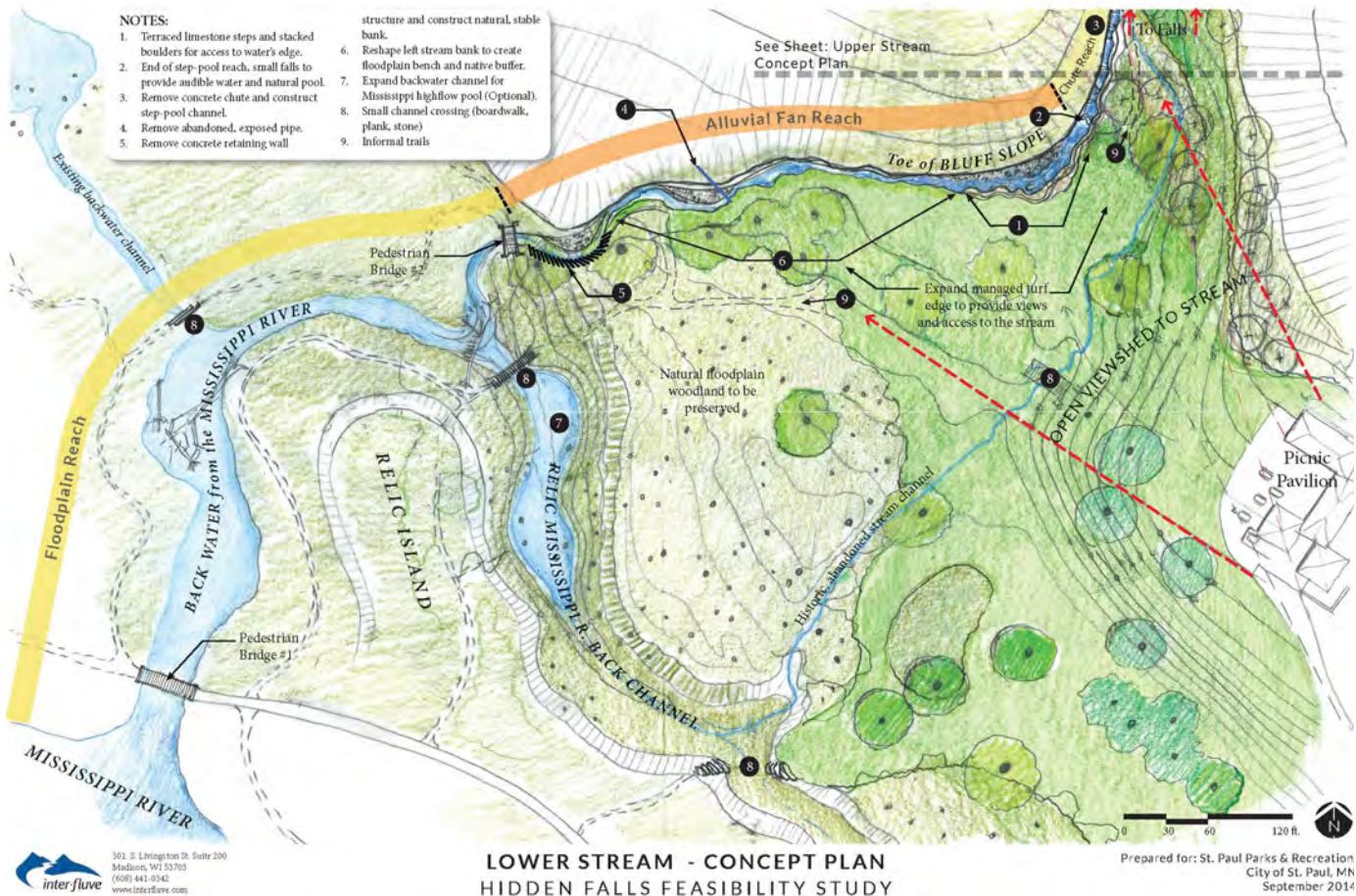
3C: Add Canoe/Kayak Launch (medium)

Non-motorized boats are put in at the existing concrete boat ramp (which can cause conflicts) or at the sandy area adjacent to the ramp. Non-motorized boaters prefer to launch on a natural surface to reduce damage to boat hulls. Formalize a canoe/kayak launch northwest of the existing boat launch to increase safety and reduce congestion at the existing ramp. Ensure the canoe/kayak launch is ADA accessible.

Estimated Cost: \$15,000

3D: Nature-Inspired play area (medium)

Because Hidden Falls-Crosby Farm Regional Park does not have a playground. There is community interest in some type of play area for children to attract families to the park. Nature-inspired play areas use natural materials, such as logs and branches, which are often movable to increase



Recommendations for lower reaches of Hidden Falls Creek, from Feasibility Study by Inter-Fluve (August 2014)

children's interest in nature, and to encourage creative play. Add a nature-inspired play area near the picnic areas at Hidden Falls (see also Crosby Farm maps.)

Estimated Cost: \$500,000

Construction: Landscape Improvements

3E: Indigenous Community Gathering Area (high)

This site, across from the Bdote and Witatanka (Pike Island), is sacred land to the Dakota and other indigenous people. However, that cultural significance is not visibly recognized in the park. Accommodate and recognize indigenous heritage and culture by adding a gathering area including a fire pit south of the boat launch area.

Estimated Cost: \$125,000

3F: Improve Picnic Lawn & Open Space (medium-high)

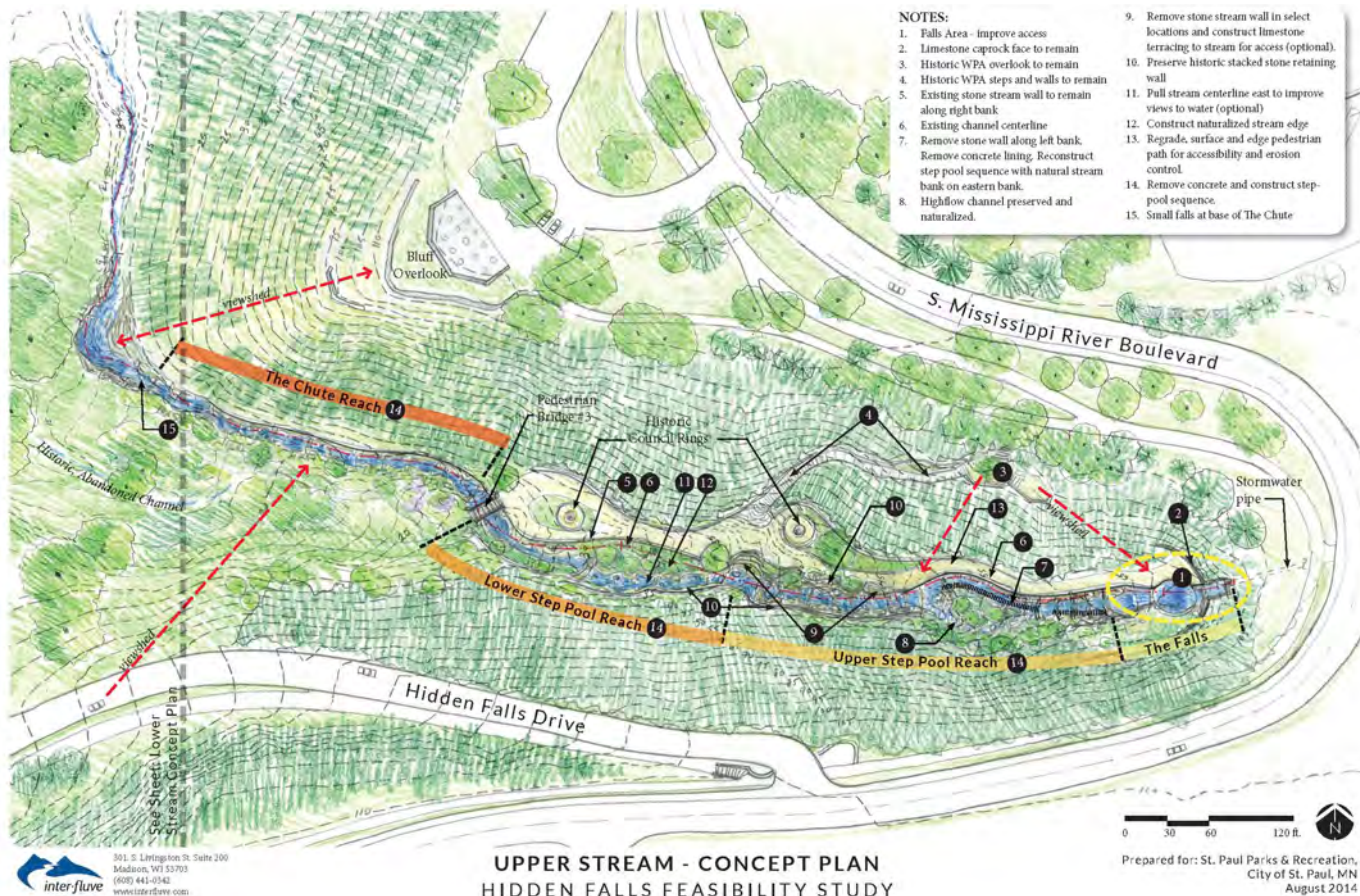
A large, mown lawn area scattered with trees and picnic tables exists south of the existing picnic pavilion. It serves multiple uses, including casual sports, for large events through

the permit system, and for small, spontaneous gatherings. In recent years, tree saplings have been planted in the area southwest of the pavilion to add shade once they mature. To improve this area, reduce the lawn, add more woodland/meadow plants in infrequent use areas, and replace some picnic tables with accessible ones.

Estimated Cost: \$48,000

3G: Restore Hidden Falls Creek (low)

To maximize usable land for the Ford Site, Hidden Falls Creek was moved underground in pipes and directed from those pipes over Hidden Falls. Through the park, the creek is released through a partially man-made channel to the Mississippi River. "Daylighting" the creek through the Ford Site and adding stormwater treatment wetlands are included in the plans for that development. Over time within the park, engineering measures have been made to stabilize the creek's banks using materials like concrete, geotextile which have largely been damaged and undermined. The result is mar-



Recommendations for upper reaches of Hidden Falls Creek, from Feasibility Study by Inter-Fluve (August 2014)

ginally effective structures and exposed materials. In 2014, They City and Capital Watershed district prepared a feasibility study (pg 46-47) for creek and falls restoration. Hidden Falls Creek will be restored using more modern and natural water quality treatment methods and habitat enhancement. The creek restoration within the park will be timed to coincide with the Ford site redevelopment and water quality improvements.

Estimated Cost: \$1,400,000

Construction: Roads and Trails

3H: Trail to Hidden Falls (high)

The falls are a major feature of the park and its namesake, yet many visitors cannot find them. There is no clear path from the parking area or picnic pavilion to the falls. The dirt trail is rutted from stormwater erosion. The stone retaining wall and stairs, built by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930's, are in need of repair, as is the trail bridge over the creek. Rehabilitate this trail to repair damage, repair pedestrian bridges, divert stormwater off the trail, and meet accessibility standards to the extent feasible, while retaining a natural looking surface.

Estimated Cost: \$250,000

3I: Boat Ramp & Boat Trailer Parking (medium-high)

The boat ramp was updated in 2001/02, is in good condition, and is maintained by City Parks and Recreation. Addition of an accessible path is needed. The condition of the ramp will continue to be monitored, and repaired or replaced as needed. The largest parking lot near the boat ramp is striped for 32 boats with trailers, but vehicles without trailers often park here, leaving some cars with trailers with nowhere to park on busy days. As a first step, sign trailer spaces for vehicles with trailers only, and install a kiosk near the boat launch with information about nearby public launch sites, as well as information on boating and launching safety. Wayfinding signage will also be installed along the entrance driveway so people in motor vehicles can find the correct parking lot. More substantial improvements to the boat ramp parking area will be considered for the optimal mix of trailer and non-trailer parking spaces. Options include: Additional signage, re-striping, and/or reconfiguring the parking lot design, resurfacing as needed. Additionally a hydrodynamics study may be required for creating a safer boat launch area.

Estimated Cost: \$200,000

3J: Mississippi Blvd. Entrance Safety (medium)

The North Entrance to Hidden Falls, at Mississippi River Blvd. near Magoffin Ave., is the busiest entry in the Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Regional Park. It is, however, difficult for park users to navigate, requiring a hairpin turn if approaching from the south. Sight lines are limited due to a retaining wall and gate between the driveway and the road, and the curving road. Work with the City's Public Works Department to improve the intersection's safety. Options include: reconfiguration of the intersection, retaining wall and/or gate, striping, or signage. Estimated Cost: \$200,000

3K: Improve Parking (low)

The existing parking lots in the north section of Hidden Falls include a 19 stall lot near the pavilion. The surface is in fair condition many patches and is in need of reconstruction. It has a narrow, one-way center lane that is not accessible by emergency vehicles. Four smaller parking areas for vehicles without trailers are scattered along a loop driveway and are not striped. The parking configuration is confusing, and the loop driveway covers more of the park with impervious surface than may be necessary. Options to improve these parking areas include: reconfigure the pavilion parking lot to allow for emergency vehicle access and consider adding an exit drive; reconfigure the parking loop to reduce impervious surface; stripe all parking spaces; resurface lots as needed.

Estimated Cost: \$250,000

3L: Construct a Weather Shelter (low)

Partner organizations and City Recreation Centers that lead summer camps and group activities at Hidden Falls are concerned about the lack of a place to get groups out of the weather during quickly developing storms, such as summer thunderstorms. The roofs of the pavilion provide inadequate shelter when winds drive the rain sideways. A 3 or 4 sided shelter in the vicinity of the pavilion will be constructed to increase safety for groups. If the River Learning Center is constructed at Crosby Farm, this project could be eliminated; group activities will likely move there.

Estimated Cost: \$450,000

Construction: Structures and Related Improvements

3M: New Restroom Near Boat Launch (high)

Partner organizations who are frequent park users indicate the difficulty of having the only restroom at the park located so far away from the boat launch. This can cause major delays for entire groups if one child needs to use the facilities when the group is ready to launch. An accessible restroom will be added close to the boat launch to improve convenience for boaters and trail users in the central part of the park. Composting toilets or other environmentally friendly technologies that do not need water lines but can be installed in a floodplain should be considered. A system that can be used year round will be constructed, if feasible.

Estimated Cost range: \$50,000 - \$300,000

3N: Hidden Falls Pavilion and Restrooms (medium)

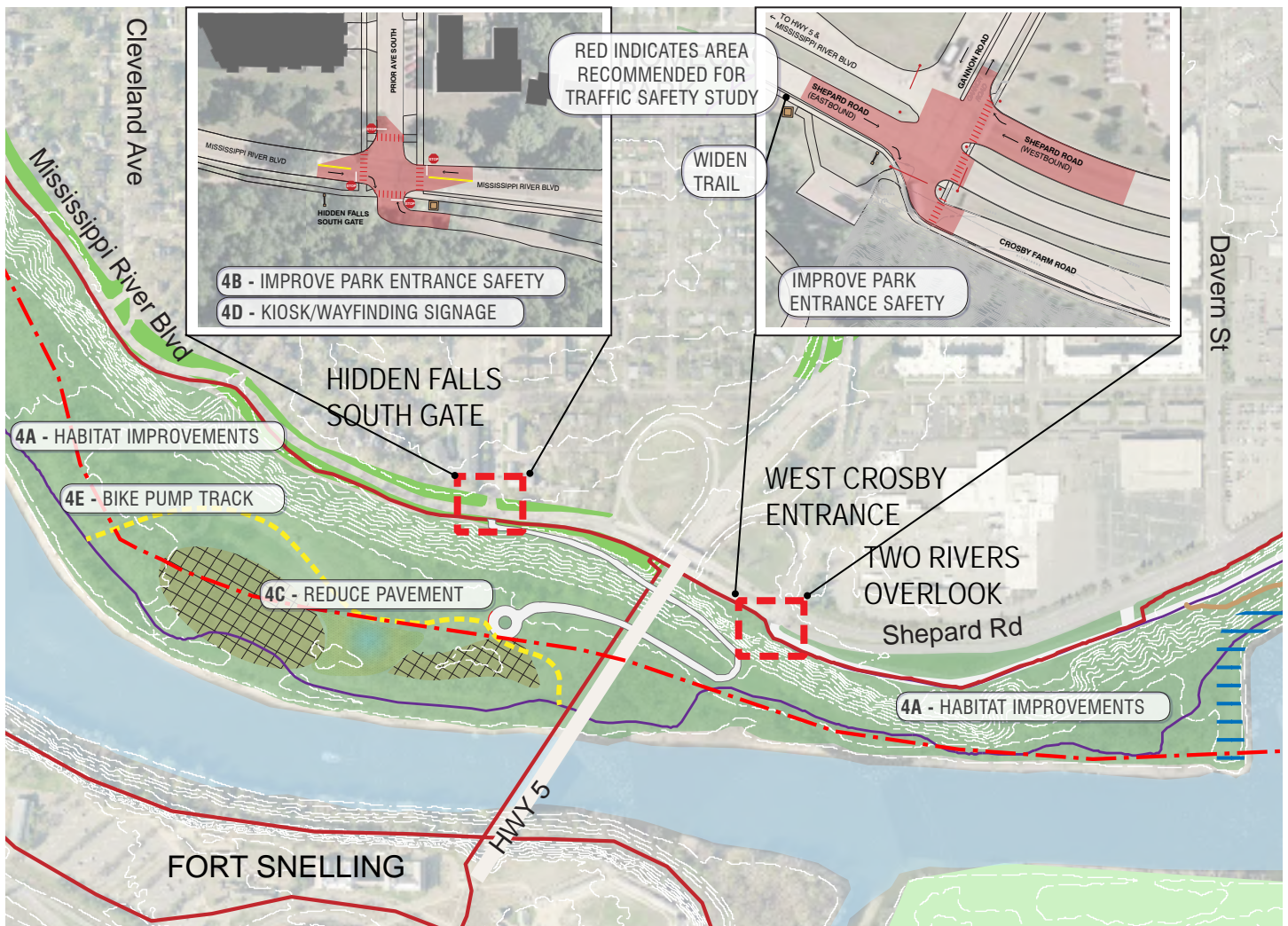
The stone picnic pavilion and restroom building is a landmark of the park, but is in need of upgrading. The pavilion is one of the most popular features of the park, and receives virtually daily use during the summer for large, permitted groups as well as informal groups. As the only permanent restroom in Hidden Falls, there is continual use, but are small, in fair condition, and are not accessible. They are closed from fall to spring. Improvements needed include: upgrade restroom to accessibility standards for entryway, sinks, and stalls; upgrade pavilion floor and surrounding patio to accessibility standards; add storage space in the building to support programming and day camp options at the park, and add accessible picnic tables.

Estimated Cost: \$600,000

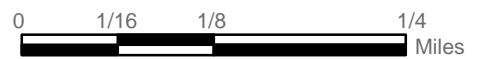
3O: Boat Storage Areas (low-medium)

City Parks staff and partners use boats and boating equipment at the park for adult and children's programming, but there is nowhere in the park to store small boats and equipment, requiring transport for each program. In addition, frequent boaters who launch from the park have expressed interest in a secure place to store private canoes or kayaks, such as lockers that could be rented seasonally. The City will consider adding up to two small boat storage areas, such as sheds or locker facilities, for City and partner use, and/or for private rental.

Estimated Cost: \$50,000



4 - HIDDEN FALLS SOUTH AREA RECOMMENDATIONS



Please refer to page 51 for text describing recommendations on the map above.

Legend	
	Access Point
	Ford River Parcel
	State Park (Bdote)
	Parkway
	Parking Lot/Road
	Watergate Marina
	Regional Bike Trail
	Paved Trail
	Dirt Trail
	Future Trail
	High Quality Habitat Area
	Wetland/Ephemeral Pond
	Flood Fringe Boundary

4 - HIDDEN FALLS SOUTH AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

Construction: Landscape Improvements

4A: Habitat Improvements (high)

The South Entrance area of the park includes a long two-way driveway with five parking nodes along it, with 77 spaces and a circular turnaround at the end of the driveway. The area also includes a large mowed lawn, which receives relatively little use, and scattered picnic tables. Because this part of Hidden Falls is more natural and has fewer facilities, it receives much less use than the North Entrance area. This entrance is often closed in the winter or during floods. With access to the east and west, this entrance could be studied for future closure. Two areas of good quality plant communities exist between the driveway and the trail along the river, one south of the mowed area and one just west of the Hwy. 5 bridge. In order to increase natural habitat in this portion of the park, the City will: reduce the mowed lawn area, encourage development of a continuous tree canopy, remove some of the asphalt parking area, and improve Cottonwood regeneration. Consider reducing the number and width of trails while maintaining adequate park access.

Estimated Cost: \$45,000

Construction: Roads and Trails

4B: Improve park entrance safety (medium)

The South Entrance to Hidden Falls Park is at the intersection of Mississippi River Blvd (MRB) and S. Prior Ave. just west of the Hwy. 5 bridge. A sharp turn to descend a steep hill is required to enter the park. The sight lines along MRB and entrance road are poor due to the steep entrance hill, dense vegetation, and road curves. The Mississippi River Trail between MRB and the entrance road adds to the safety concerns. The City will improve the safety and sightlines at this intersection for motor vehicle users, bicyclists and pedestrians. Options include: selective removal of vegetation at corners to increase sight lines, widening of the park driveway at the curve, highly visible crosswalk and trail crossing striping, advance crosswalk signs; move visible park entrance signs, road centerline striping, turn lanes, and/or crosswalk signals.

Estimated cost: \$400,000

4C: Reduce pavement by removing some of the looped roadway at Hidden Falls Park at both entrances (low)

The surface is in fair condition and is in need of reconstruction. The parking configuration is confusing and abundant for the number of park users at this location, resulting in more impervious surface than may be necessary. Options to improve these parking areas include: reconfigure the parking loop to reduce impervious surface; stripe all parking spaces; resurface lots as needed.

Estimated cost: \$250,000

4D: Kiosk/Wayfinding Signage (not ranked)

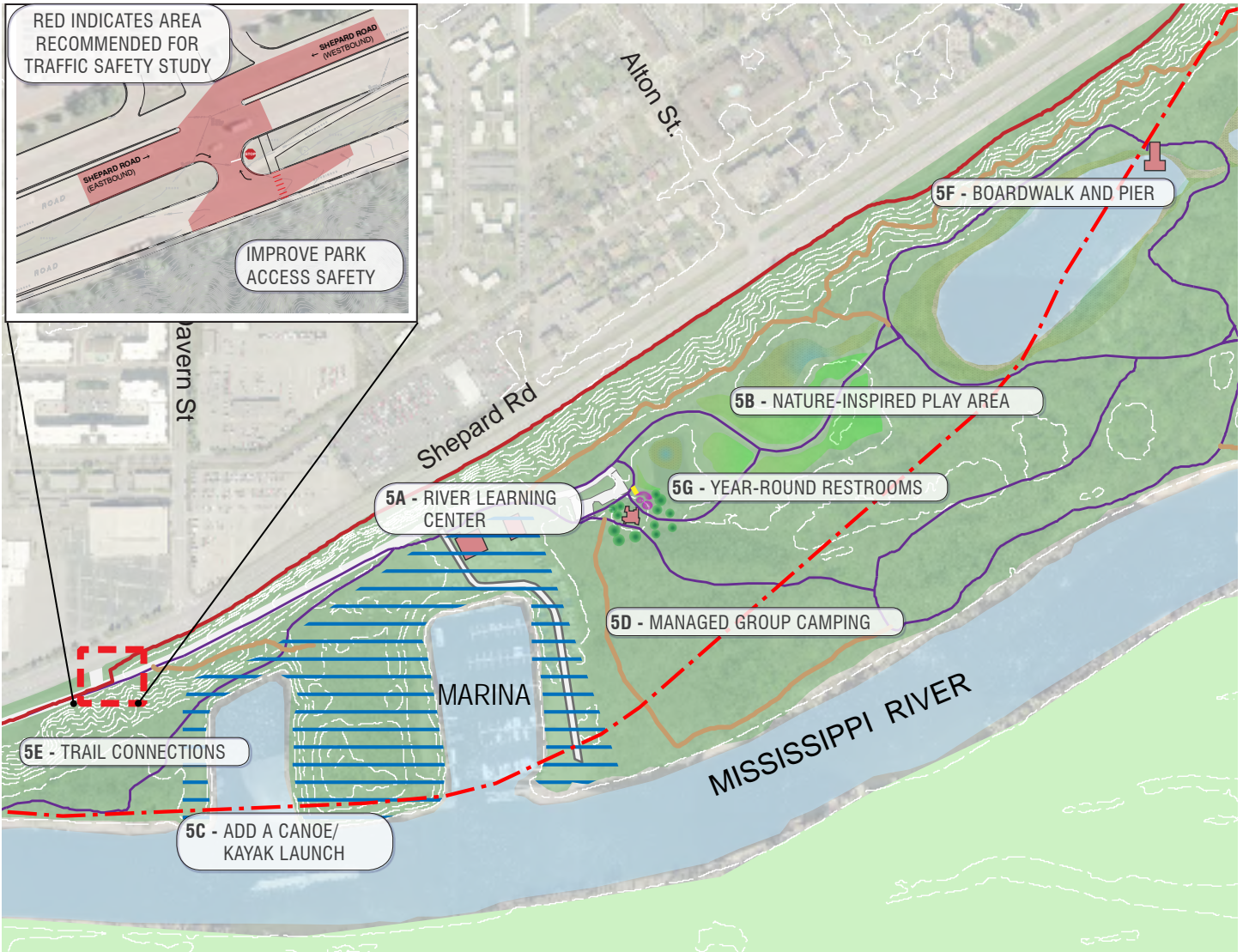
The standard wooden park sign with stone posts is set on the west side of the entrance road, and is difficult to see, especially if approaching from the east. There is no indication of what facilities are accessed from this entrance point. Add a kiosk near the park entrance along the Mississippi River Trail for bicycles and pedestrians that includes information about the facilities in the South Entrance area of Hidden Falls Park. Add better wayfinding signage for motor vehicle drivers to find the park entrance.

Estimated cost: \$150,000

4E: Pump Track and Bicycle Challenge Course (not ranked)

Introducing new activities to the South Entrance at Hidden Falls will activate the area. Pump tracks are a relatively new type of bicycle facility with a circuit of small hills and banked turns designed to use momentum with body movements instead of pedaling. Children develop bike riding skills and experience challenging terrain in a relatively small area. Because mountain bicyclists have expressed interest in more places to ride in the park, a pump track will be considered as an alternative that would concentrate use to a small area. Recommendations include building the track out of material that will withstand flooding such as a bituminous surface trail.

Estimated Cost: \$65,000



5 - WEST CROSBY FARM AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

Please refer to page 53 for text describing recommendations on the map above.



Legend	
	Access Point
	Ford River Parcel
	State Park (Bdote)
	Parkway
	Parking Lot/Road
	Watergate Marina
	Regional Bike Trail
	Paved Trail
	Dirt Trail
	Future Trail
	High Quality Habitat Area
	Wetland/Ephemeral Pond
	Flood Fringe Boundary

5 - WEST CROSBY FARM AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

Construction: Recreation Improvements/Use Areas

5A: River Learning Center (medium-high)

The idea for the River Learning Center (RLC) at the Watergate Marina site emerged during the Great River Passage planning process in 2011 and 2012, in an extensive outreach process which included 28 public meetings and 5 focus groups. The City's Great River Passage initiative, managed within the Parks and Recreation Department advocates for projects identified in the Great River Passage Master Plan, including the River Learning Center. The RLC/NPS Headquarters is a forward-thinking, mixed-use hub of shared space and activity that will be an accessible center of river oriented experiences, stimulating economic development, educating the next generation of river stewards, and improving the health of the river. The partners have completed a technical study to evaluate site and partner space needs, and a feasibility study to determine the possible programming at the site as well as organizational structure and finance strategy. Implementation of the River Learning Center is a local, state and federal partnership that advances simultaneously across jurisdictions.

Estimated Cost: Not yet determined (refer to the Great River Passage planning efforts, <https://greatriverpassage.org/projects/>)

5B: Nature-Inspired Play Area (medium)

A nature-inspired play area does not yet exist in this area of St. Paul. A playground filled with natural materials is suitable for the park setting and comes with many benefits for children: improved cognitive function, increased creativity, better interaction with adults, reduced attention deficit hyperactive disorder symptoms and reduced rates of aggression. Construct a nature-based play area within 1/8 mile of the West Crosby parking lot using logs, branches, rocks, boulders and other natural elements.

Estimated Cost: \$500,000

5C: Add a Canoe/Kayak Launch (medium)

Add a canoe/kayak launch at the western end of Crosby Farm, to alleviate congestion at the Hidden Falls boat launch. Consider the western harbor near Watergate Marina, and/or south of the parking lot at Crosby Farm. Ensure the canoe/kayak launch is ADA accessible. Criteria to consider in locating the launch include: bank steepness, proximity to parking, river current, and frequency of flooding. The launch will include a natural surface path from the parking area to the launch and 1-2 parking stalls for canoe trailers.

Estimated Cost: \$50,000

5D: Managed Group Camping (low-medium)

Camping opportunities in the city are limited, but a desire exists to provide introductory camping especially for youth groups and summer camps. Consider the installation of a rustic, managed, group tent camping area in conjunction with the River Learning Center.

Estimated Cost: \$25,000

Construction: Roads and Trails

5E: Trail Connections from Marina Area (medium)

There are few trail connections between Watergate Marina and the rest of the park. Watergate Marina is recognized in the boating community as a high quality marina on the upper Mississippi and Saint Croix rivers. If future changes allow more public access, new trails from Watergate Marina to Lower Crosby Farm will give marina customers the option to explore the park. This will require further study and thoughtful public engagement.

Estimated Cost: \$25,000

5F: Boardwalk and Pier (medium)

The boardwalk and pier are sometimes flooded and unusable. Some boards are warped and rotting, providing an uneven walking surface. Improve the boardwalk and fishing pier to be functional in high water conditions. Consider using modular composite piers and walking platforms that are rot resistant. Increase the height of the boardwalk above flood level, and repair floating decks that rise and fall with water levels and remain usable in all conditions.

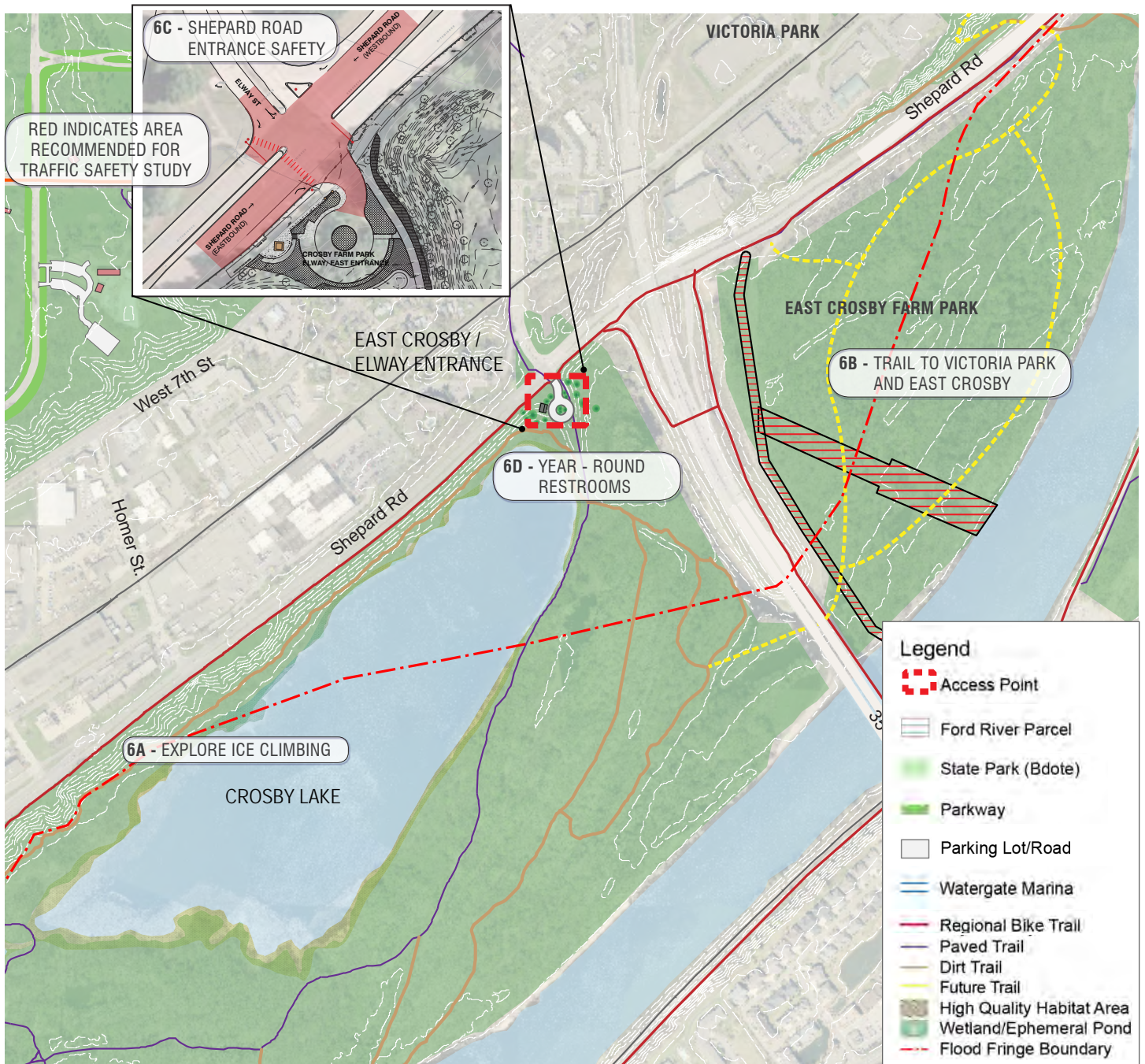
Estimated Cost: \$500,000

Construction: Structures and Related Improvements

5G: Year-Round Restrooms (low)

Restroom facilities are limited to the West Crosby Farm parking lot. The restroom buildings are open in the summer, and portable toilets are provided from mid-fall to late spring. In order to encourage exploration of the park outside of the summer months, and by people with limited mobility, add year-round, minimal maintenance accessible bathroom facilities if a feasible solution can be found to construct in the floodplain.

Estimated Cost: \$450,000



6 - EAST CROSBY FARM AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

Please refer to page 55 for text describing recommendations on the map above.



6 - EAST CROSBY FARM AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy & Programming

6A: Explore Feasibility of Ice Climbing (low)

Ice climbers climb ice formations on the bluffs, some from stormwater outfalls. Study the feasibility and liability of officially allowing ice climbing. Consider ice climbers' desire for ice formations when changing stormwater management structures. Meet with the leaders of the ice climbing community to consider facility or management needs or potential for programming.

Estimated Cost: (analysis) \$50,000

Construction: Roads and Trails

6B: Trail to Victoria Park and East Crosby (high)

Park user access to the east of the 35-E bridge is only via informal, unofficial natural surface trails. A tunnel under Shepard Road exists, but is not part of the trail system into the park. Neighbors have expressed a desire to connect from Victoria Park north of Shepard Rd. into Crosby Farm Park. Develop natural surface trails from the eastern half of Crosby Farm Park to Victoria Park. Use the existing tunnel under Shepard Road as part of the new trail to provide a safer, grade-separated crossing.

Estimated Cost: \$250,000

6C: Shepard Road Entrance Safety (high)

Pedestrian access to the park is hazardous. Shepard Road is four lanes wide with the largest traffic counts on a street next to the park. Vehicles travel along Shepard road at speeds up to 10 mph over the posted speed limit. Work with the City's Public Works Department to improve the safety of intersections at Gannon Road, Davern Street, Alton Street, Rankin Street, Homer Street and Elway Street. Options include: reconfiguration of the intersections, higher visibility crosswalk striping, longer pedestrian crossing signals, advanced warning signs, and advanced stop bars for vehicles.

Estimated Cost: \$ 100,000

Construction: Structures and Related Improvements

6D: Year-Round Restrooms (low)

Crosby Farm is the largest portion of Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Regional Park with the most trail miles but has few restrooms. Restroom facilities at the eastern entrance area of Crosby Farm are limited to a portable toilet in the small parking lot at Elway St. and Shepard Rd. In order to encourage exploration of the park outside of the summer months, and by people with limited mobility, add year-round, accessible minimal maintenance bathroom facilities if a feasible solution can be found to construct in the floodplain.

Estimated Cost: \$450,000



Bluff seepage water covering a trail at Crosby Farm (December 2018)

STEWARDSHIP PLAN

The City of Saint Paul currently owns and manages the park land within the Hidden Falls and Crosby Farm Park Regional park. The 620 acre park within the river floodplain is extensive and ecologically complex as a natural area within an urban environment. Flooding conditions are frequent for this area and result in an ever changing environment as seed, sediment, and debris are moved and deposited, roads and trails may be underwater, and activities and access limited during flood events. The challenge lies in keeping a balance of human activities and minimizing interference with the natural systems in place, yet still creating a place that will offer a unique, safe, and restorative experience. It is an unlikely expectation to restore the site to a pre-settlement condition, but there are opportunities to enhance the condition with targeted stewardship efforts to protect the resources of the park.

Vegetation

The city has established long-standing partnerships and relationships with organizations who assist in the maintenance and management of the ecological systems within the park. The MN Department of Natural Resources provides grants through the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program and others to fund work that restores, protects, and enhances wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game and wildlife. (DNR Website)

The City of Saint Paul will continue to manage and maintain the vegetation and habitat areas within the park working through available grants, volunteer opportunities, and partnerships. In the near future, Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Regional Park will be a site for an adaptive silviculture site to explore vegetation adaptations due to climate change. This effort is being led by a partnership with Colorado State University, USDA Forest Service and Northern Institute for Applied Climate Science, and Mississippi Park Connection.

Grants and partner organizations continually offer support of the park to improve plant communities and restore native vegetation. The Natural Resources Group will continue to take advantage of such opportunities and partnerships guided by the natural Resources inventories. ([Appendix E. Summary of Natural Resources Work](#)).

Wildlife Population

Hidden Falls-Crosby Farm Regional Park provides significant habitat for numerous bird and animal species. The park is a part of the Mississippi Flyway which hosts migratory habitat for many birds, water fowl and raptors. The park also provides habitat for mammals including white tail deer, otter, coyotes, red fox, raccoons, and beavers.

The deer population is monitored and surveyed annually. The Department of Parks and Recreation hosts an annual event to manage the deer population in Crosby Farm Park each fall.

Water Resources

The Capitol Region Watershed district completed a management plan for Crosby Lake in 2010 through a grant funded by the MN Clean Water Partnership Program. The plan assessed the current water quality and proposed management goals and implementation activities to protect and improve the lakes water quality and minimize polluted runoff to the Mississippi. Since the development of the plan, the Natural Resources department of the Department of Parks and Recreation have worked toward carrying out recommendations. The watershed district is a great partner to the city and potential partner for continuing the implementation for water quality improvements.

The Capital Region Watershed District partnered with the City of Saint Paul to develop a plan and proposal for the Hidden Falls Creek restoration. The work completed in this report from 2014 will inform and guide the priority project to restore the creek and the falls.

Historic and Cultural Resources

The area within which Hidden Falls and Crosby Farm Park is one of utmost importance to the Dakota Nation known as the Bdote. The Native American influence on this site must be considered as each project moves forward to not overlook the cultural significance of this area. Additionally, the history of these parks provides interesting context of the expansion of the neighborhood, city, and state over time. Stories and interpretive signage can be added to the park to educate the public of the sacred treasures of this space next to the Mississippi River to communicate those who have inhabited the land. State and Federal Requirements for protecting cultural resources, including those not yet identified, may apply to the management and stewardship plan of the park.

Recreation

The park is used extensively for recreation such as hiking, running, walking, biking, fishing, and boating. Many of these are low-impact uses of the park space, though this will need to be managed and maintained so that it does not degrade the natural environment of this park.

As trails are improved and potentially built out for mountain biking, Cross country skiing, trail running or other activities, there are partnership opportunities for to maintain these recreational opportunities with outside organizations such as Minnesota Off Road Cyclists (MORC), Volunteer groups, or the state utilizing fees from the State Ski Pass.

Hidden Falls has become a location for a number of events such as the WCCO Pulling Together event which draws in a number of organizations and companies. Other events such as St Paul Classic, Barebones Production and National Public Lands Day that draw hundreds of people to the park annually. Although these events could potentially generate some revenue, it would need to be arranged so it would not be cost prohibitive to people coming to the event itself or put the events into financial stress, as both are currently volunteer or non-profit based.

Watergate Marina is leased out to an exterior management group and is working to renew a contract for additional years of operation (until approximately 2021). The marina currently manages 160 private slips for boat owners. The contract includes providing all security for the marina site.

CONFLICTS/OPPORTUNITIES

Hidden Falls and Crosby Farm Park are natural areas in the midst of a dense, changing urban environment. The park land includes steep bluffs, an expansive river and is bordered by busy roads including Shepard Road and Mississippi River Boulevard. Therein lies potential conflict to ensure safety of park users, pedestrians and cyclists at key intersections and access points to the park as well as clear delineation of use areas in the park with wayfinding and signage.

As land use change occurs locally over time with Ford site and the proposed River Learning Center, there will likely be an influx of park visitors. Maintaining the balance of human recreational uses and activities in this natural urban park will require continual monitoring and adjustment to protect the natural resources, plant communities and habitat as well as management adaptation for climate change. This requires placing limits on some of the uses (i.e. off leash

dogs, protected planting areas, and boat launch areas). The plan proposes to improve the boat launch area and separate motorized boats and non-motorized boats to reduce conflict areas. Delineated zones for each use will allow boaters to access water in a safe way. Trails will need to have proper signage to indicate uses. If the trails are developed and more heavily used for mountain biking, Cross country skiing, or other high speed uses, they will need to be clearly delineated from the slower paced walking and hiking groups.

Future development will need to recognize the areas of cultural and historic significance and minimize disturbance to those areas. The proximity to the Dakota birthplace, The Bdote, is critical to comprehend and recognize as projects move towards realization. Engaging with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC), local tribal leaders, and indigenous community will be necessary for each project development and implementation. The Design and Construction Division of the Department of Parks and Recreation is working on a plan to engage with indigenous communities to develop a communication methodology to better understand and recognize the cultural resources within the park.

As proposed in the Great River Passage Master Plan, the Watergate marina site is the location for the River Learning Center/National Park Service Headquarters. The city is in the feasibility phase of this project under the direction of the Great River Passage Initiative separate from this project. The Great River Passage Initiative is working with local, state and federal partners advancing the project simultaneously across jurisdictions.

ORDINANCES

As city parks, Hidden Falls and Crosby Farm Regional Park are controlled by the Department of Parks and Recreation rules and regulations (<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/parks-recreation/parks/park-security/park-rules-and-regulations>) for public safety and use.

The City of Saint Paul is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Policy (NFIP). Under 44 CFR 60.3(a)(2) Saint Paul is required to ensure, prior to issuing a building or grading permit for a development in the “Special Flood Hazard Area,” that an Applicant is in compliance with local and NFIP regulations. As defined in City Ordinance Section 60.205 of the City of Saint Paul Zoning Code, developments in the floodplain include any change in the use or appearance of any structure or land including, but not limited to, structural changes to buildings or alterations to the shore or bank of a body of water. Site plan review is necessary for any development in the floodplain regardless of the change. Development within the Flood Fringe will be reviewed differently than development in the Floodway. Flood maps can be reviewed at the City of Saint Paul Department of Safety and Inspections zoning office or online at the FEMA website (<https://www.fema.gov/>).

MRCCA

The Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) is a State-designated land corridor along 72 miles of the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, including 17 miles of river and 26 miles of shoreline in Saint Paul. The MRCCA is an overlay of special regulations to guide planning and development in the river corridor in a way that preserves and enhances the quality of the river corridor. Per State rules MR 6106.0010 – 6106.0180, local governments in the corridor must complete a MRCCA plan as part of their comprehensive plans. The City of Saint Paul is in the process of completing its MRCCA chapter as part of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, which will be submitted to the Metropolitan Council in June 2019. The language of the MRCCA chapter within the Comprehensive Plan, together with the final master plan for Hidden Falls Crosby Farm Regional Park, will serve as the legal basis for all planning, design and maintenance activities within Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Parks. MRCCA provides a minimum level of protection for landscapes within the Mississippi River corridor. If MRCCA is more restrictive than other legal protections, MRCCA serves as law. When a landscape protection measure is put into law within the



Mississippi River from the bluff top. Photograph by Sarah B. Davis

MRCCA corridor that is more restrictive than MRCCA, then the more restrictive legal protection serves as law. An understanding of what legal protections are in force within the Mississippi River corridor matter in any discussion about future projects at Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Regional Park.

OPERATIONS

Operations Overview

Hidden Falls and Crosby Farm Regional Park are currently maintained and operated by the City of Saint Paul, Department of Parks and Recreation. Funding for general Operations and Maintenance (O&M) comes from the City of Saint Paul General Fund and Special Fund allocated each year by the Mayor of Saint Paul, and funding is based on the system as a whole rather than being park-specific. Operations and maintenance are provided at a level appropriate for the current use of each park distributed across the park system. The budget for Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Regional Park, currently, is limited and as use of the park increases, new sources of funding will need to be identified to keep up with the maintenance of the park.

Building trades and park maintenance are two categories with O&M costs for these parks. Currently, building and trade costs are approximately \$18,000 which includes vehicle expenses and about 1/10 of each full-time employee (FTE) for each of the trades (heating, masonry, electrical, plumbing, painters, and carpentry). The biggest annual expenditures are at seasonal transition time (bathrooms, drinking fountains, benches, gate, repairs from winter months). Because park infrastructure is nearing the end of its lifespan and considering the proposed improvements, the building and trades group requests a future annual budget of \$45,000 for labor costs, vehicles, maintenance, and upgrades to existing infrastructure.

In addition, the annual park maintenance costs are approximately \$105,000 for Hidden Falls and \$80,000 for Crosby Farm Park. The following is a list of items included in annual park maintenance:

- Plowing snow (Nov- April)
- Salt/sand for ice
- Portable toilet rental
- Mow grass (May-Oct)
- Weed whip (May-Oct)
- Minor tree maintenance
- Storm damage clean up
- Little pick up (May-Oct) vs. (Oct-April)
- Empty trash barrels (1 or 3 times per week depending on season)

- Clean restrooms and shelter
- Custodial supplies
- Amenity upkeep/repair
- Clean out culverts
- Cave inspection (weekly)
- Patching/pot hole repair
- Pressure wash shelter (2 times per year)

There are three full-time staff in the Natural Resources Department who manage all natural areas across the city. They provide a great deal of support at Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Regional Park and rely on grants and partnerships for supporting the environmental management work in this park. If they are to provide a rough cost, the guideline is approximately \$250/acre for Natural Resource Management (for more detail, see Appendix E).

Currently, there are no recycling facilities in the park. Some events will have recycling for the duration of the event. If a future budget allows for additional labor and vehicle time, it is recommended to provide the option for recycling and compost facilities to give visitors the ability to responsibly handle waste generated in the parks.

Operating Hours

As with most Saint Paul city parks, Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Regional Park is open from sun-up to 10:00 PM. The south gate at Hidden Falls Park is closed at 9:00 PM.

Public Awareness

Notices are posted to the facilities websites if park closures occur. Occasionally, park facilities or trails may be closed due to a permitted event.

- Hidden Falls Park Facility Website - <https://www.stpaul.gov/facilities/hidden-falls-regional-park>
- Crosby Farm Park Facility Website - <https://www.stpaul.gov/facilities/crosby-farm-regional-park>

The Hidden Falls Park south gate is frequently closed due to flooding, snow, or ice on the steep entrance road. Whenever operations deems the south gate, or any park entrance, as a safety hazard, the gate will be closed and notice will be posted on the facility website.

The master plan recommends a system for public communications if the park is closed due to flooding or weather related events; in the future, park users could subscribe to updates through the City of Saint Paul Park and Recreation website.

5. CONCLUSION

The master plan is to serve as a guide for future development and projects with some flexibility to adapt and shift implementation timeline according to other development influence. Acceptance of the plan does not commit the Council to any funding at this time. Future development funding will be completed through the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program, Legacy Funds, and Land Acquisition Opportunity Fund. Council action is required to approve the Capitol Improvement Plan (CIP) and to approve specific grants to the City of Saint Paul.

The remote wild character along side the edge of the Mississippi River has drawn visitors to this park for centuries. Many come to this park to seek out quiet, solitude, and the magnificence of the river. It is unique to find a place in a major metropolitan area that offers uninterrupted views of the River as does Hidden Falls and Crosby Farm park. The park offers many opportunities to touch the flowing water of the Mississippi and consider the interconnectivity and grandeur of this resource. Many come to the park for a sacred and spiritual connection and desire that the planned improvements do not disturb or inhibit this practice rooted in an indigenous culture and honoring the natural world.

This master plan for Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Regional park intends to improve the facilities and park space to support the current recreational uses of the park, expand youth and water safety programming, accommodate the gathering of groups for celebrations and gatherings that celebrate the sacred quality of the space, and maintain partnerships with organizations that draw individuals to the park from a wide variety of backgrounds.

The Hidden Falls - Crosby Farm Regional Park Master plan is consistent with the Thrive MSP 2040 and 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan adopted by the Metropolitan Council and strives for the five desired outcomes: stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability (Metropolitan Council 2040 plan, <https://metrocouncil.org/planning/projects/thrive-2040.aspx>).

The estimated cost to implement the master plan is approximately \$17 million, which includes \$3.5 million in eligible acquisition costs and \$14.3million in development costs.



Hidden Falls Park, summer 2018. Photo by Sarah B. Davis

6. APPENDICES

The appendix sections are available on the project website - <https://www.stpaul.gov/hidden-falls-crosby-farm-master>

A. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meeting Notes

Open House Notes

B. SMALL GROUP & FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

Parks Ambassador Events

NPS-Led Focus Groups

Nibi Walk Group

C. NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY SUMMARIES (2017 & 2018)

D. ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

E. NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN

Hidden Falls NRMP

Crosby Farm NRMP

St. Paul Natural Resources - Summary Of Work 2018

F. PREVIOUS REPORTS

Crosby Lake Management Plan 2010

Crosby Park: Bluff Trail Project 2004

Crosby Farm Park: Bluff Stabilization/Restoration Feasibility Study 2007

Hidden Falls Water Resource Development Feasibility Study

G. GREAT RIVER PASSAGE

Hidden Falls Regional Park Vision Plan

Crosby Farm Regional Park Vision Plan

H. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Map showing overlap of significant Indigenous sites and St. Paul Parks & Recreation projects

LIST OF REFERENCES *(SECTION IN PROGRESS)*

