

Changing Relationships to the Power of the Falls

An Interpretive Vision for the West Bank of
St. Anthony Falls

ST. ANTHONY FALLS HERITAGE BOARD

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

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Detail, Minneapolis riverfront, 1955, Fairchild Aerial Surveys,
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Introduction

The West Bank of St. Anthony Falls was once an internationally known industrial complex built on the only waterfall on one of the world's great rivers. Today the waterfall and river are attracting millions of visitors each year, many of whom enjoy the historical, cultural, and natural resources of the area.

What draws people to St. Anthony Falls has changed through time. The powerful river that flows over the falls had once sustained native people; today the falls remain a spiritual place for the Dakota. When early tourists traveled far and wide to admire wonders of nature, the falls became a sought-after destination. When rivers powered the nation's industry, the falls produced enough energy to run the greatest milling center the world had ever known. When only railroads linked western farms to manufacturing centers and international ports, the falls stood at a critical hub of the nation's rail network. The falls have long sustained an enduring confluence of human and natural systems.

As a center for industry, the West Bank reached its zenith between the 1880s and 1920s, when Minneapolis was known as the "flour milling capital of the world." In the decades that followed much of the area's waterpower, milling, and railroad complex was buried, removed, or lost to fire. What remains is an extraordinary archaeological resource that holds memorable stories and large-scale artifacts, that if revealed would astonish today's visitors. The area also holds stories of the falls that transcend history—in relationships with people and animals that are as present today as they have been for millennia.

Project Objective

Create a new vision and plan for engaging the public in the scenic and historical resources of the West Bank of St. Anthony Falls.

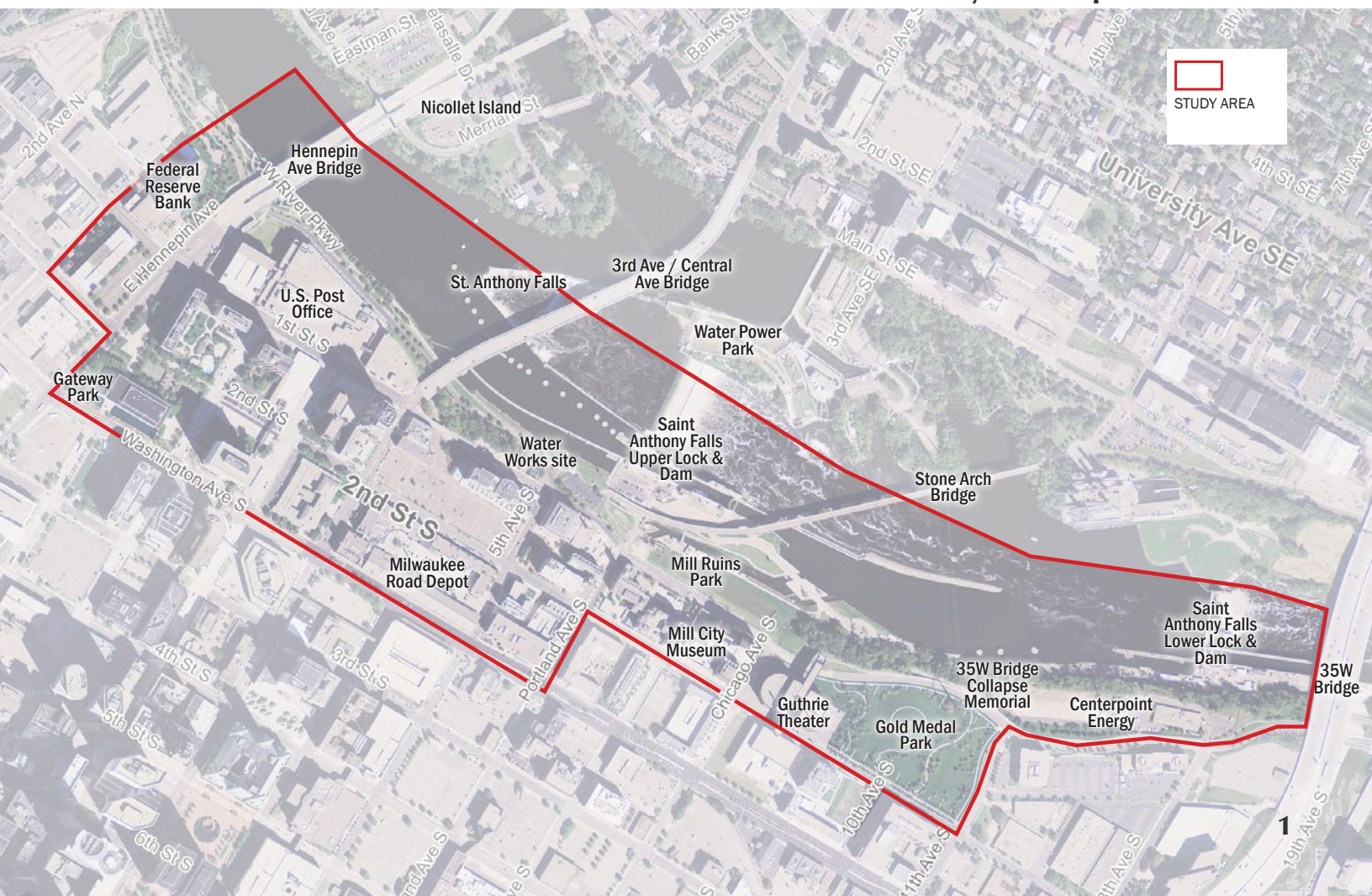
“

“St. Anthony Falls is a sacred place that was created by Mother Earth as a teaching place.”

”

Dave Larsen,
Former Tribal Chair,
Lower Sioux Indian Community

Study Area Map





The West Bank has cycled through periods of great change, including both decline and renewal. Over the past 20 years the area has experienced a gathering momentum. Increased visitation, continuing commercial development, and a growing population of residents have brought new life to the riverfront. This new era of revitalization was guided by concerted planning efforts, including the original **St. Anthony Falls Interpretive Plan**, 1990, that led to the Stone Arch Bridge reopening (1994), the Heritage Trail (1996), Mill City Museum (2003), Mill Ruins Park (2000-2005), and First Bridge Park (2001). These successes have in turn brought new focus on planning for the next generation of interpretive and recreational resources. This plan builds on years of research and many proposed visions for the St. Anthony Falls area. In particular, **The Power of the Falls: Renewing the Vision for St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone** (2009) sets forth a set of interpretive themes that acknowledge the value of reflection and personal experience in learning about this important place in our history.



Bird's eye view of Minneapolis, about 1891. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

The concepts described in this plan depict visitor experiences that will:

- Provide access to the area's historic resources with trails and landscape structures;
- Connect people and events through compelling narratives; and
- Extend exploration through online resources and location-based media.

St. Anthony Falls has once again become a confluence of trails that leads to an important place for learning—from the river, the ruins, and the stories this place holds. Looking forward, visitors to the West Bank—even those seeing it for the first time—will feel the same energy that drew people to the power of the falls in centuries past.

POWER OF THE FALLS

Over the past 30 years, changing relationships with the power of the falls have opened up new perspectives on the river, the historic riverfront, and the many untold stories of St. Anthony Falls. Looking ahead, visitors will see and hear the presence of indigenous people throughout the area. And indigenous people will see themselves in exhibits, stories, and art installations inspired by the power of the falls. Tourists and long-time residents alike will wander through industrial ruins, imagine the constant movement of railroads, and feel the energy of the falls. While on site and visiting through various media, people will experience the simultaneous unfolding of multiple episodes in the area's history. Seeing into the past through the present landscape, visitors will discover new perspectives on the West Bank, finding interpretive tools, settings, and programs that spark curiosity and engage the imagination.

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

This plan and vision describes a range of visitor-experience concepts developed around eight interpretive resources. The planning process also resulted in a set of recommendations that address overarching needs and visitor-experience concerns in the West Bank. The following summary provides a brief overview of recommendations, each of which are described in greater detail starting on page 56.

1. Make indigenous cultures more visible

Develop long-term relationships with Dakota elders and teachers who can provide input more broadly and advise on specific interpretive projects and programs as they arise, recognizing this as a place of ceremony and teaching.

2. Create a more vibrant riverfront through expanded interpretive programming

Support agencies already providing high-quality programming in the area and encourage them to increase funding for expanded programs to meet the growing audience.

3. Preserve the area's industrial ruins while providing appropriate accessibility to the public

Develop a conservation and preservation plan for all uncovered (current and future) ruins and water-control structures in the West Bank. In particular, evaluate alternatives for re-establishing the presence of the gatehouse.

4. Meet the needs of a growing number of visitors

Create a multi-agency task force to evaluate visitor data for the area's varied audiences (e.g. school groups, tours, casual visitors, tourists, area residents) and recommend how best to meet their needs, including specific sites for a visitor center and other amenities. In particular, focus on the federal processes to repurpose the Upper Lock and Dam as an ideally located venue for visitor amenities.

5. Strengthen the visual and experiential cohesiveness of the area

Establish a more formal design-review process of all proposed interpretive elements with input from various agencies working in the Heritage Zone. Building on current design guidelines, the review process should focus on developing consistent and legible signage (wayfinding and interpretive) throughout the area.

Interpretive Sites and Subjects

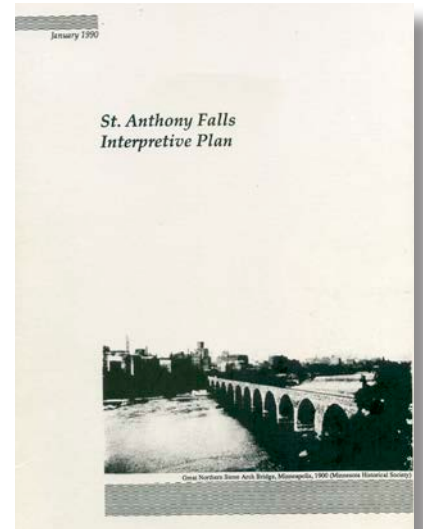
- St. Anthony Falls and Spirit Island
- Canal and Gatehouse
- Railroads and Rail Corridors
- Upper Lock and Lower Lock and Dam
- Mill Ruins and Tunnels
- Bridges
- Standing Mills and Related Structures
- Gateway District



West Bank Planning Legacy

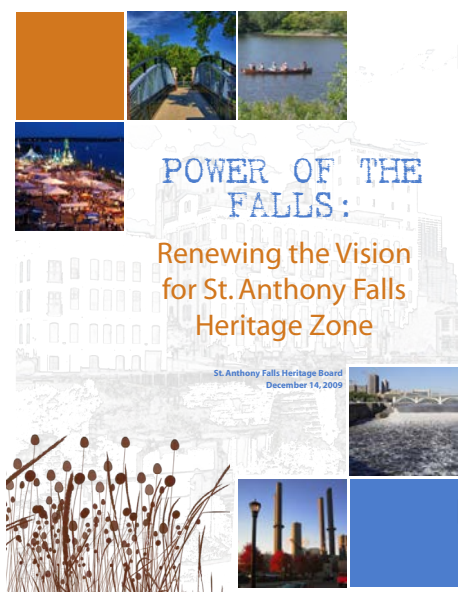
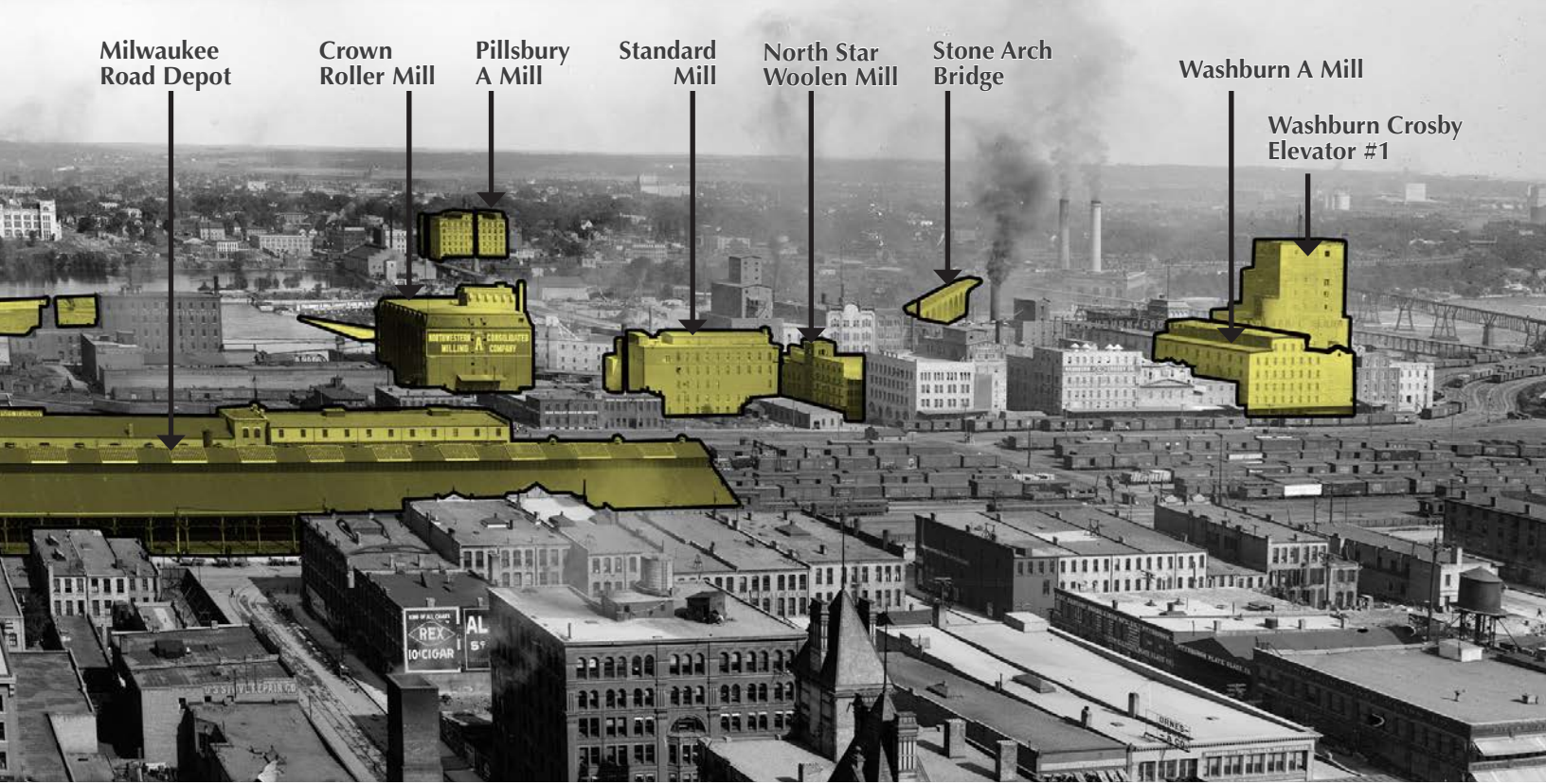
Since the 1960s, the Minneapolis riverfront has been the focus of many planning studies, all of which have recognized the value and appeal of the area’s historical resources. This succession of planning concepts clearly points to a larger vision for St. Anthony Falls—as a major destination for recreation, sightseeing, history learning, and the arts.

The St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board was established by the Minnesota State Legislature in 1988 to develop and implement a comprehensive interpretive plan for the Heritage Zone. The original interpretive plan was completed in 1990 and included “significant historic and natural features such as the river, bridges, buildings, machinery that is part of the milling story, underground canals, stone paving, waterfall, railway components, and a heritage trail system that interlocks historic features of the zone.” Over the years, the Heritage Board has relied on this plan to guide development of some of the area’s most important resources and to produce a wealth of research and interpretive materials. Plans that followed have set the course for individual projects and initiatives throughout the Heritage Zone. Most recently, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board’s Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park Master Plan of 2014, in conjunction with interpretive planning by the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board, establishes a comprehensive plan and vision that will guide development for the next 25 years.

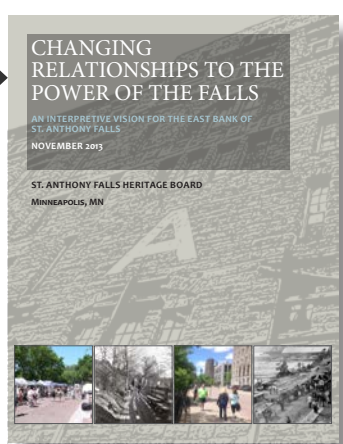


1990

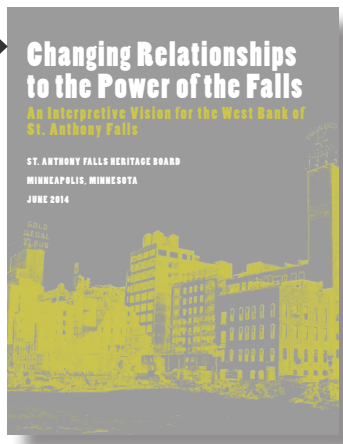
Vision plan for the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone



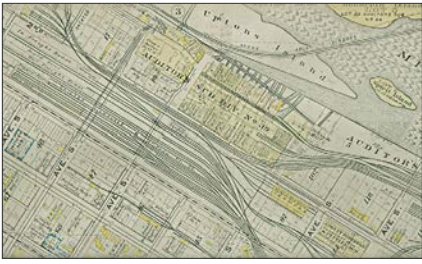
2009
Vision plan for the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone



2013
Interpretive plan for the East Bank of the St. Anthony Falls



2014
Interpretive plan for the West Bank of the St. Anthony Falls



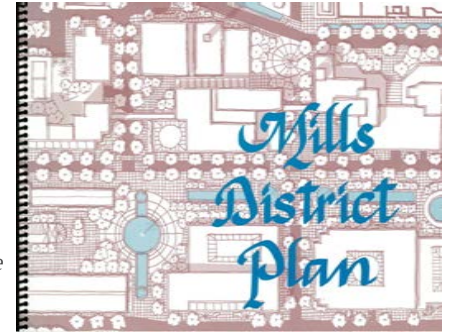
1914

Plat map



1983

Central Riverfront Regional Park Development Master Plan (Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board) and the Mills District Plan (City of Minneapolis). These seminal plans strongly influenced the many project plans that came after.



1900

ST. ANTHONY FALLS PLANNING TIMELINE

1970

1980

1990



1972

Mississippi/Minneapolis - A Plan and Program for Riverfront Development

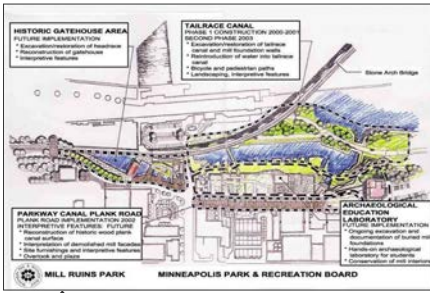
1990

St. Anthony Falls Interpretive Plan

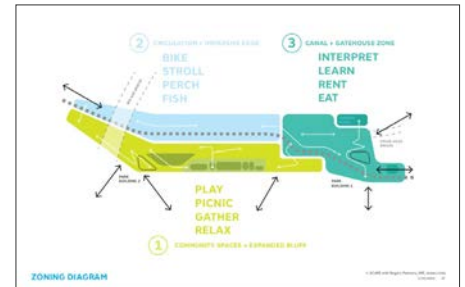


1991

Mill Ruins Park Vision, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board



2000
 Mill Ruins
 Park plan,
 Minneapolis
 Park and
 Recreation
 Board



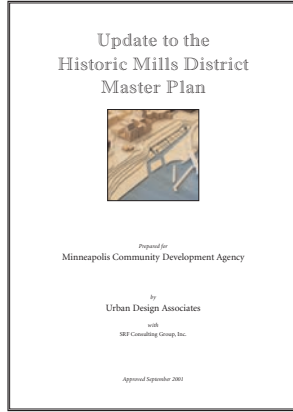
2014

2014

Downtown East
 Development showing
 future residential,
 office, Vikings stadium,
 Ryan Companies, 2014

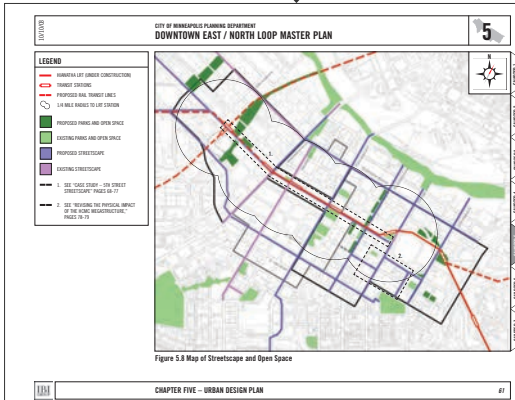
Water Works Project Master Planning,
 Minneapolis Parks Foundation/Minneapolis
 Park and Recreation Board

2001
 Update to the
 Historic Mills
 District Master
 Plan, Urban Design
 Associates and SRF
 Consulting Group,
 Inc.



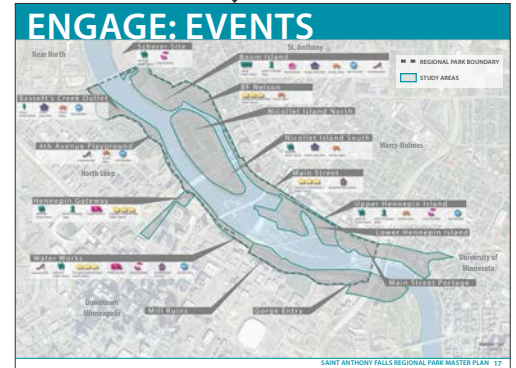
2000

2010



2003

Downtown East North
 Loop Master Plan, City
 of Minneapolis, IBI
 Group



2014

Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park
 Master Planning, in-process diagram, MPRB and
 SRF



2011

Gateway Park concept planning, Damon Farber
 Associates



2012

Water Works Site Design Proposal, MS&R

A 25 YEAR VISION CONCEPT FOR THE WEST BANK

A lively mix of interpretive experiences will help new visitors see the big picture of the West Bank and provide frequent visitors with enough settings and stories to sustain lifelong relationships with the power of the Falls.

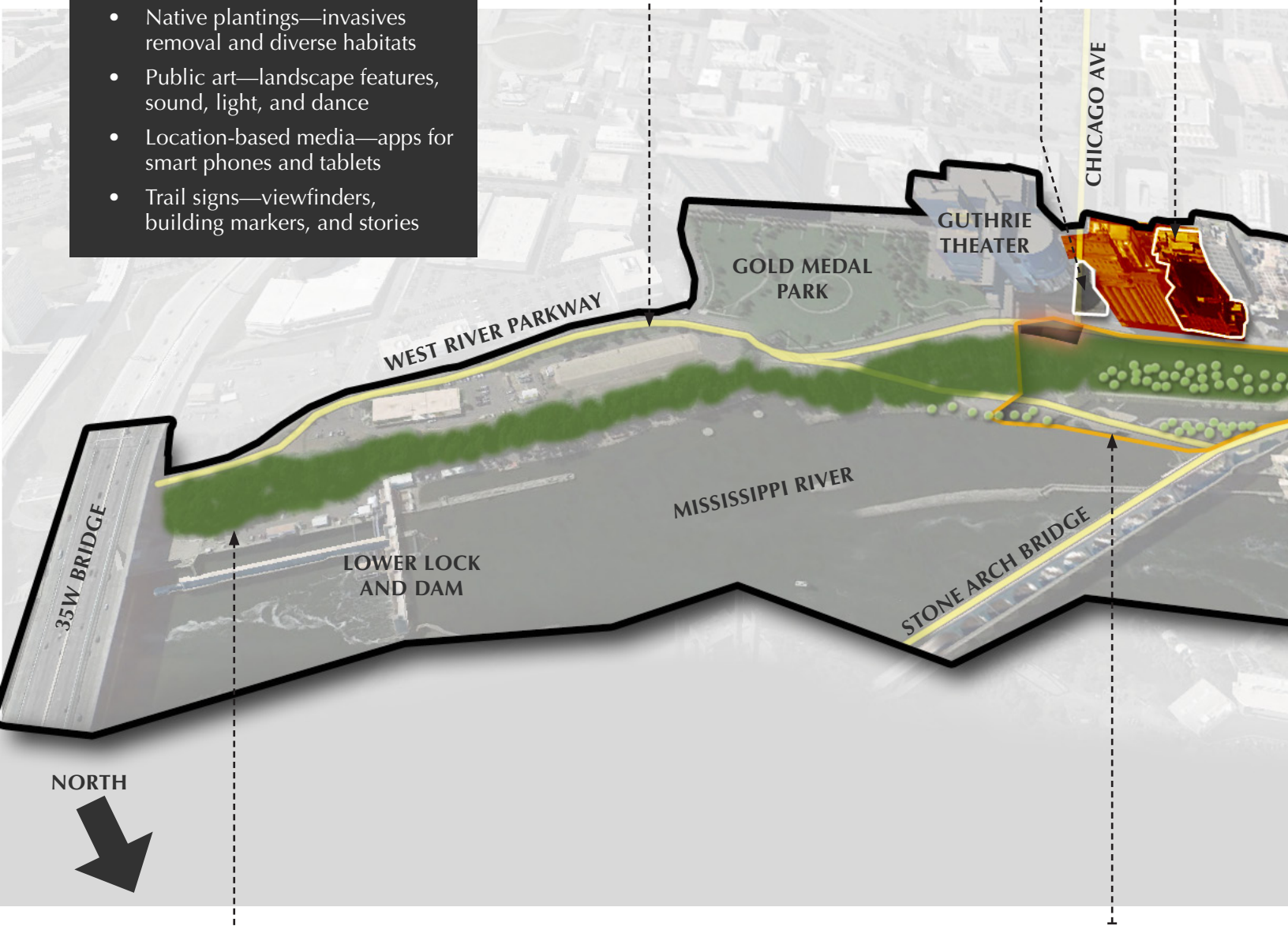
An enhanced system of trails connects historic milling structures, industrial ruins, and rail corridors with interpretive gateways and locations throughout the area, supporting visitor experiences with:

- Changing programs—tours, art events, and festivals
- Native plantings—invasives removal and diverse habitats
- Public art—landscape features, sound, light, and dance
- Location-based media—apps for smart phones and tablets
- Trail signs—viewfinders, building markers, and stories

Trails
 Continue to expand and improve pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout the West Bank

Mill City Museum
 historical interpretation hub, indoor and outdoor event space

Chicago Mall
 event space and pedestrian corridor



Riverbank
 Enhance the ecological function of the riverbank with targeted conservation and restoration programs

Mill Ruins Park
 Develop a preservation and interpretation plan for the mill ruins area

Connections

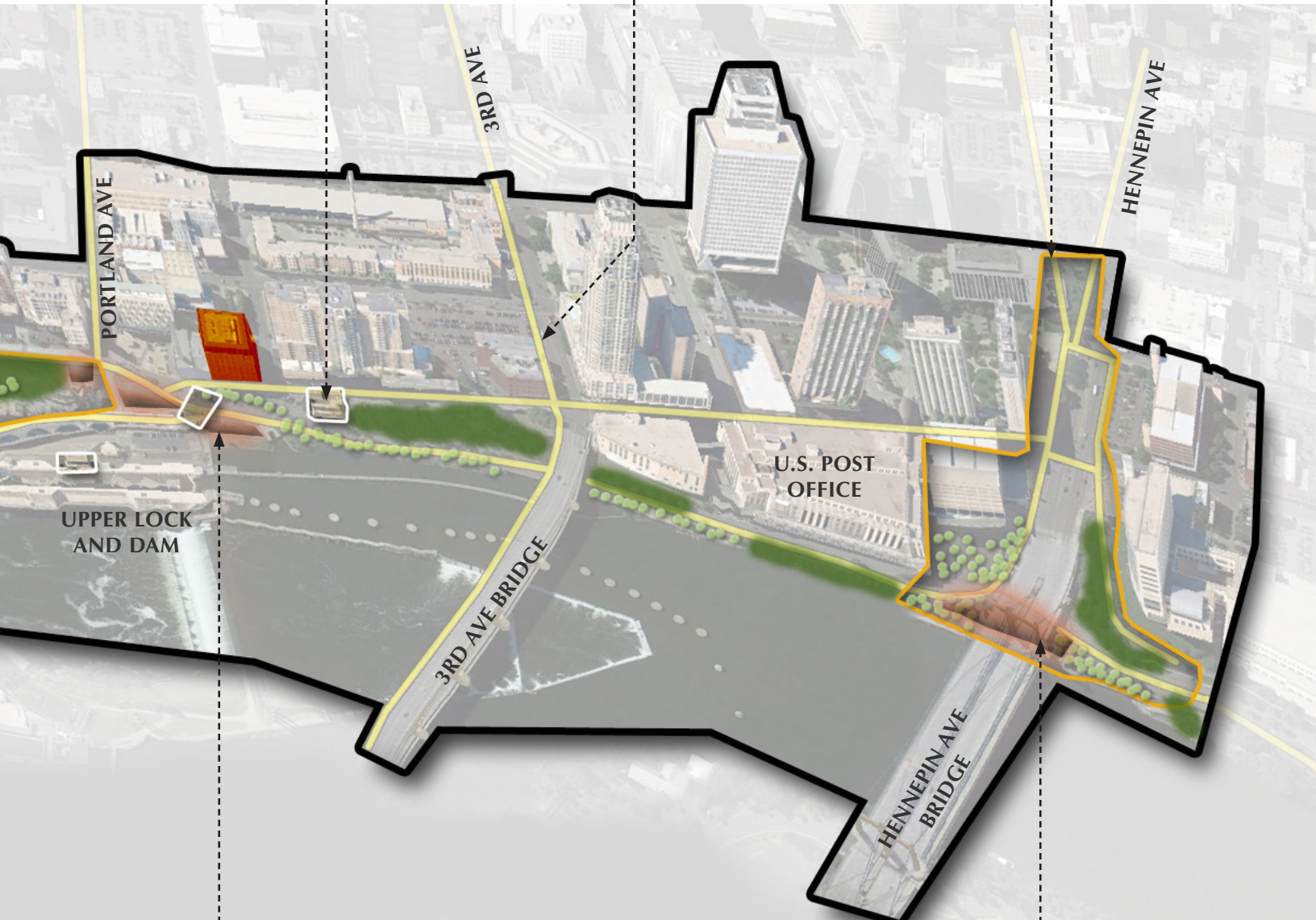
Enhance sidewalk and bike trail connections to downtown commercial and entertainment districts

Water Works site

Incorporate redevelopment of the Water Works site into the wayfinding, orientation, and interpretation of the West Bank

Gateway District

Connect the Gateway area as one cohesive site from Gateway Park to the Mississippi River



Central Gateway

Enhance the open space areas at the end of the Stone Arch Bridge and Portland Avenue - develop a strong gateway and visitor orientation space

First Bridge Park

Enhance First Bridge Park with lighting, artistic sculptures, and play structures

Visitor Orientation and Engagement

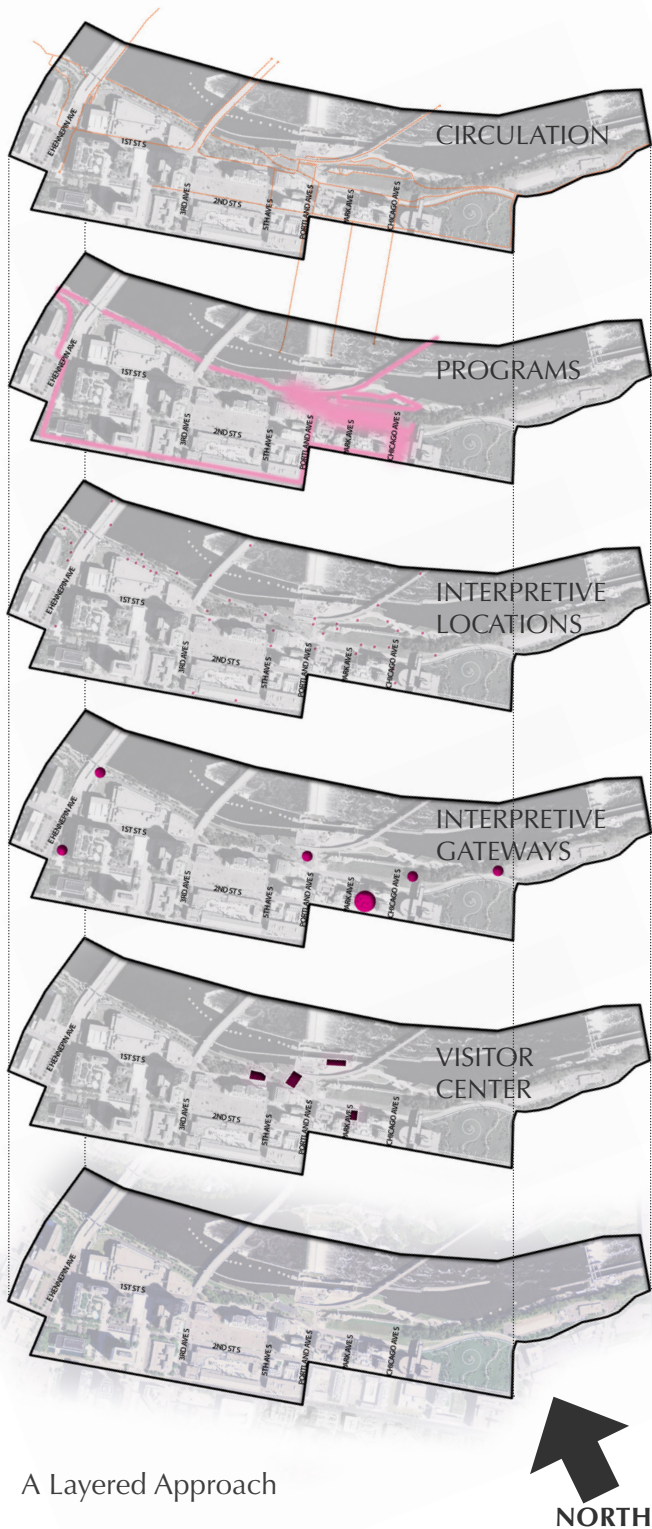
The West Bank of the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone is a nationally significant collection of historical resources—at the heart of which was once one of the greatest concentrations of industry the world had ever known. Comprised of standing structures, mill and factory ruins, and buried water-control structures, the mill district provides visitors with outstanding opportunities for deep exploration into the area’s history and culture. It also calls for a level of orientation and wayfinding not currently offered. Connecting the mill district to the surrounding landscape of the river and the city, railroads, and distant agricultural lands are many historic streets, bridges, and long-forgotten rail corridors, all of which hold rich possibilities for engaging visitors in the changing relationships to the power of the falls.

A Layered Approach to Visitor Engagement

A layered approach to site-based interpretation was described in the 2013 plan, *Changing Relationships to the Power of the Falls: An interpretive vision for the East Bank of St. Anthony Falls*. The four distinct layers of interpretive experiences—from area-wide visitor orientation to specific locations for prolonged engagement and changing programs—have also guided the development of an interpretive vision for the West Bank. Running through all of these layers is the idea that visitors learn through reflection as well as from new information. This layered approach is designed to satisfy a range of visitor expectations—from tourists who may visit only once, to locals who use the area’s parks and trails frequently. The four layers are: 1) a center for visitor orientation, 2) interpretive gateways, 3) interpretive locations, and 4) programs.

3D Virtual Mill District, 1890s

Visitors to the West Bank strive to imagine what this area might have looked like during the peak years of Minneapolis flour milling. Standing among repurposed mill buildings, industrial ruins, and contemporary structures, they struggle to visualize the landscape of a hundred years ago. While some structures remain, many more have been removed. And while railroads once dominated this landscape, there is little physical evidence of their presence.



A Layered Approach

By creating a 3D virtual world that depicts the mill district of the late 19th Century, the SAFHB could provide visitors with an engaging tool to better understand this place and the historical changes that have shaped it. This virtual milling district would be built from historical photographs, maps, and dimensions taken from existing structures. A 3D virtual milling district—depending on the level of animation and detail—could serve a range of functions, becoming a valuable core asset for interpretation and a versatile resource for many agencies in the central riverfront.

Then and now images. The selection of photographs taken in the late 19th Century is abundant yet limited. Views captured by photographers more than a hundred years ago seldom match the perspectives and locations seen by visitors today. Seldom can visitors stand in the same place where a photograph was taken 120 years ago. From a virtual world, color images of almost any location and from any perspective can be extracted and reproduced for interpretation. Trail signs could incorporate exact depictions of scenes in which visitors are standing, providing optimal comparisons between then and now.

Virtual tours. A 3D virtual mill district could be adapted for web-based virtual tours. Visitors—on or off site—could select from a menu of tours that take them to places that no longer exist or to places that are inaccessible, such as deep in the tunnels.

Location-based media. At various interpretive locations, visitors with hand-held devices can download programs and applications that visually recreate historical events in the mill district of the 19th Century, such as the first logs of spring arriving at the sawmills or a typical day of rail traffic into and through the district.

VISITOR ORIENTATION CENTER

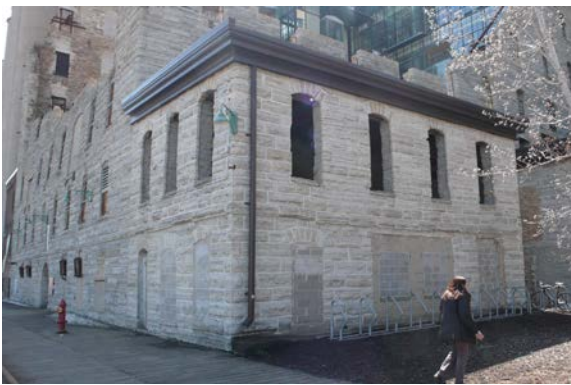
In the 2009 St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board Visitor Survey of 400 visitors to the area, half of the respondents expressed high interest in a “visitor and orientation center.” A total of 29% said they were very interested in guided tours and 21% said they were very interested in audio tours. In addition, in an open-ended question about “any additions, changes, improvements or amenities” they would like to see, 25% asked for more restroom facilities and others cited a range of visitor amenities such as visitor/orientation center, information kiosks, maps and better signage, picnic areas and more/better parking. This research clearly identifies the desire for more information and for better visitor facilities.

School groups also represent an important audience for West Bank attractions. While the school-group audience is generally underserved in the East Bank, Mill City Museum in the West Bank engaged more than 39,000 student and youth visitors (including teachers and chaperones) during the 2013-2014 school year. Given the area’s potential for meeting a range of education standards—from history to STEM—this audience is likely to grow in the years to come. A visitor center, with facilities for managing group tours and school programs, will be needed to serve this diverse and growing audience.

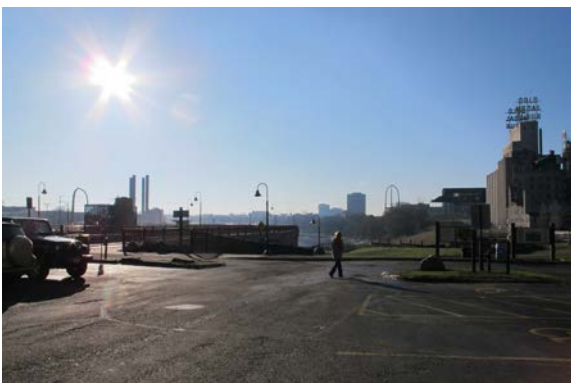
Minnesota’s changing seasons present many challenges for outdoor attractions, such as those at St. Anthony Falls. Winter also offers stunning scenes that include the changing Falls and diverse wildlife. For wintertime visitors, knowing that there’s a place to come in out of



*Images above taken from Washburn
A Mill 3D visualization, Minnesota
Historical Society*



The Mill Office is a potential location for a future Visitor Center.



Site of the former Gatehouse



Observation room of the Upper Lock

the cold adds immensely to the area's appeal. A visitor center is also a place from which visitors can gauge the length of their walks, on chilly evenings as well as bright warm days. And by providing even a minimal program of events throughout the winter months, a visitor center will help maintain public interest and keep the area's visibility high year around.

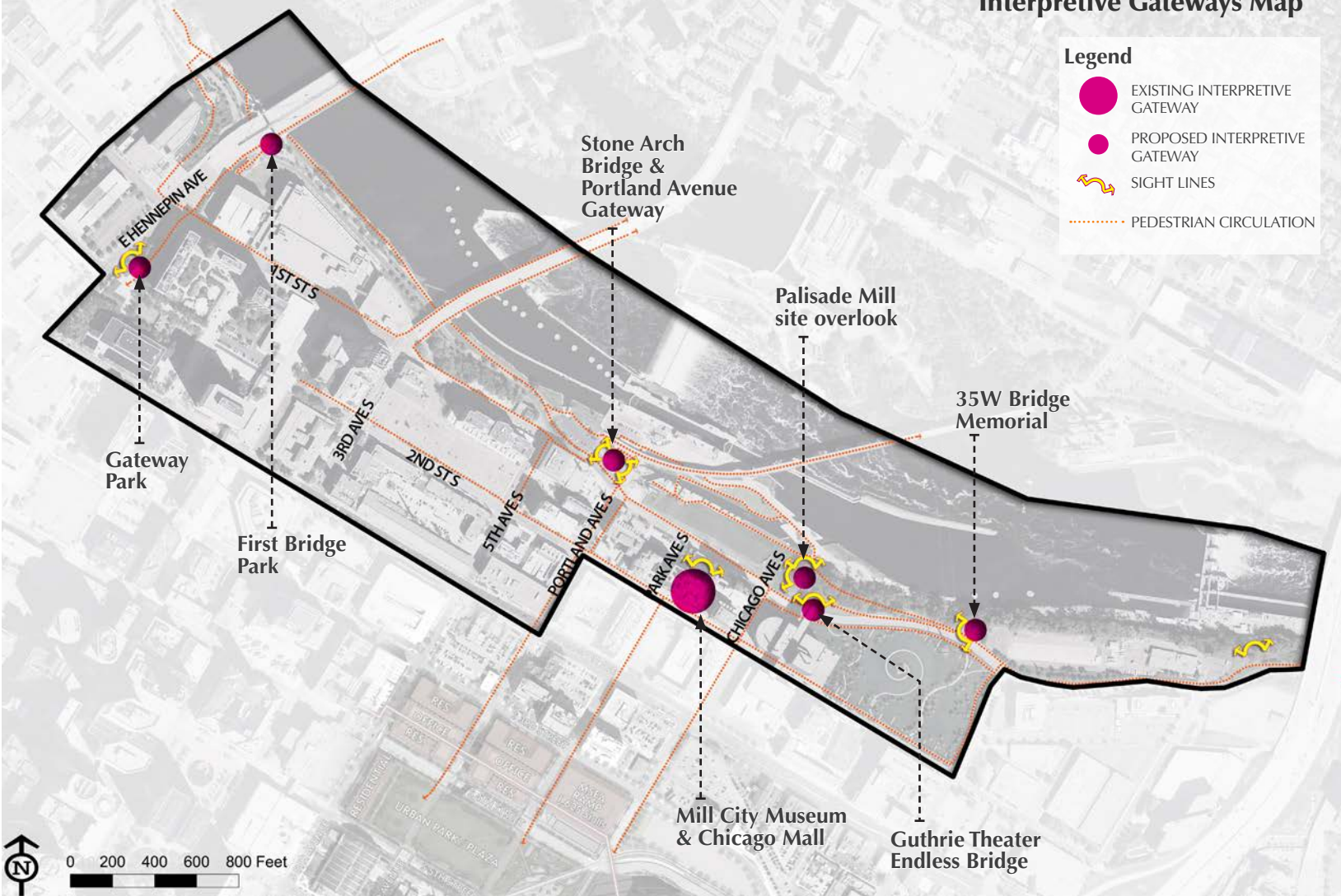
Providing amenities, orientation, and historical interpretation to West Bank visitors may be accomplished through more than one facility. When considering the Heritage Zone as a whole, the idea of a visitor center may encompass several facilities providing somewhat different but integrated services. Since its opening in 2003, Mill City Museum has filled the role of interpretive gateway to West Bank's historical attractions—especially through its many walking tours, site-based programs, and 9th-floor observation deck. Although not designed to serve as an orientation facility, the museum will continue to play an important part in any future plans for visitor orientation at St. Anthony Falls.

The following criteria were developed during the East Bank interpretive planning process. They are pertinent to the West Bank as well.

- A place to organize and disperse school groups
- Ample views of area highlights and interpreted locations
- Direct experience with one of the area's historical structures
- Staff who can answer questions and help visitors explore their interests
- Public bathrooms, drinking water, and occasional food service
- A place to hold indoor events and accommodate occasional facility rentals

Potential West Bank Locations for Visitor Orientation and Amenities

- Observation Room, Upper Lock
- Mill Office, Washburn A Mill
- Reconstructed Gatehouse
- New construction



INTERPRETIVE GATEWAYS

For visitors figuring out what to see and do next, interpretive gateways provide time-and-place overviews along with visual previews of what the area has to offer—down at the water’s edge, among the mill ruins, or from a bridge overlook. It’s here that visitors are reminded that all around them the present-day landscape holds stories of people and events from the past. They can also serve an important role in wayfinding.

These gateways can be expected to engage visitors in many ways, giving them a new experience with each visit, and evoking connections through time and across geography. Art installations—temporary and permanent—can draw attention to specific stories or shift visitors’ perspectives on scenes and events they see everyday. Community artists, arts organizations, and project-specific partnerships could play key roles in developing and implementing the vision for site-specific installations. They can draw on the many relationships sustained by the Falls, collaborating with poets, teachers, and historians to develop culturally specific artworks. Standard interpretive elements, such as trail signs and markers, can be integrated into the gateways to provide the historical words and imagery that draw visitors into the bigger picture of life around St. Anthony Falls.



Interpretive gateways signal entry to the historic district and provide a place for people to gather.



Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Over the years, West Bank program providers have been drawn to certain locations for public gatherings or stopping points along guided tours. Sometimes they look for a place off to the side of a busy trail, perhaps with some shade and shelter. Also, some locations have been specially designed to accommodate events and programs, such as the Chicago Mall next to Mill City Museum. Criteria for identifying and developing interpretive gateways include:

- Space for gatherings of up to 30 people
- A place with visible historical evidence
- Engaging views and clear sight lines
- A space that is loosely bounded by landscape elements
- Seating and shade
- Feeling of destination

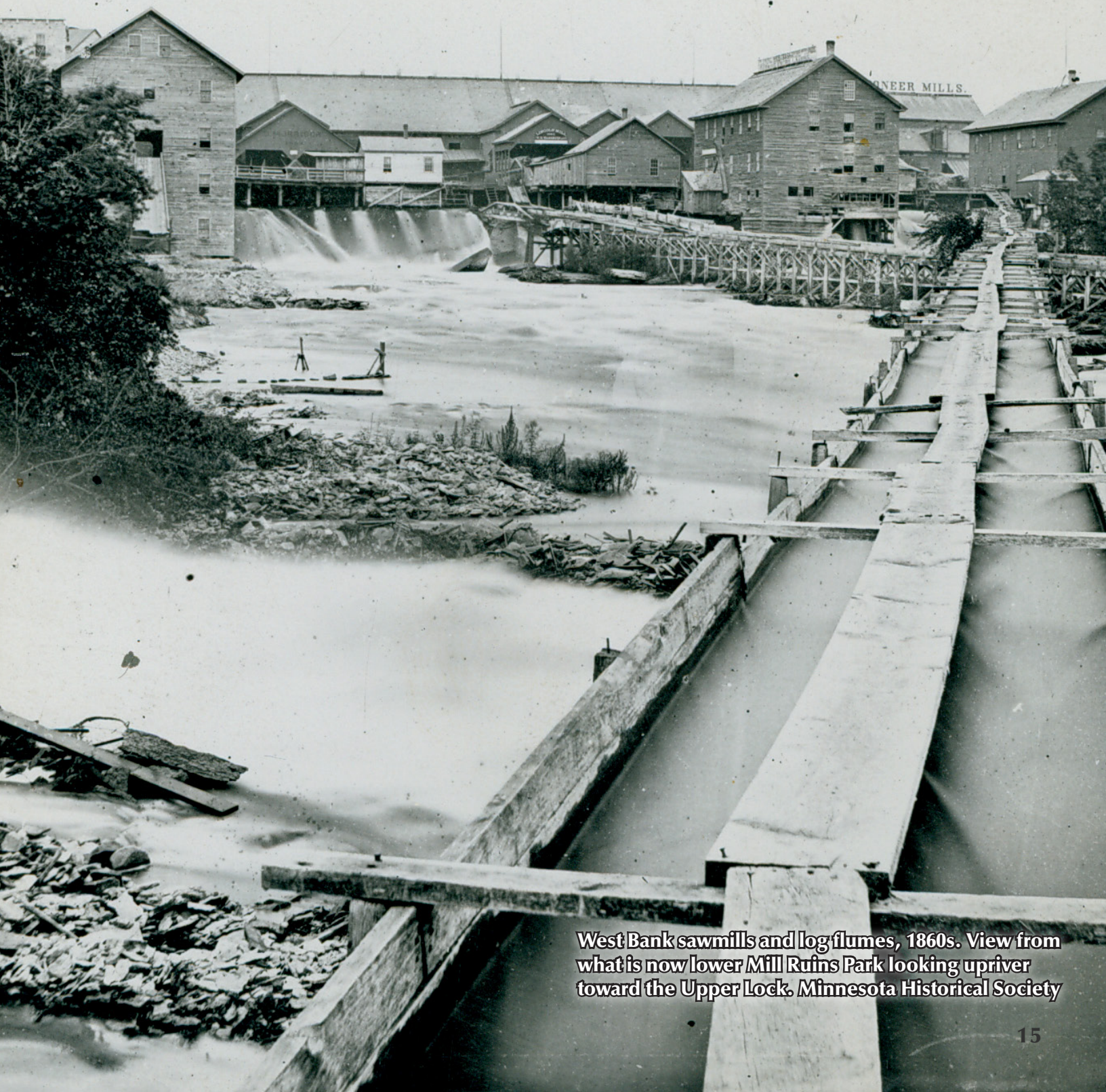
In addition to Mill City Museum and Chicago Mall, this plan identifies a series of potential interpretive gateways. They include:

- Gateway Park
- First Bridge Park
- Stone Arch Bridge landing at Portland Avenue
- Palisade Mill site
- 35W Bridge Memorial
- Guthrie Theater, Endless Bridge

*Mill City Farmers Market, Chicago Mall,
Mette Nielsen*



Sawmills dominated the falls area long before flour mills took center stage. These mills, powered by water flowing underneath their machinery, were built on top of the first dam at St. Anthony Falls. Portions of that dam can still be seen near the upriver end of the Upper Lock. Minnesota Historical Society



West Bank sawmills and log flumes, 1860s. View from what is now lower Mill Ruins Park looking upriver toward the Upper Lock. Minnesota Historical Society

Interpretive Sites and Subjects

Of the eight interpretive resources featured in this study, only a few represent specific locations. The integrated interpretive approach recommended for the West Bank area draws on the many intersecting timelines and themes that come to light when these sites and subjects are considered together as a whole. With each visit, people will discover new stories and find deeper connections between this place and the world beyond.

The proposed interpretive formats for the site's locations and trails include: trail signs and building markers, robust interactive exhibits, community art installations, landscape structures and plantings, viewing frames, and location-based media. In particular, location-based media holds great promise for interpreting the historical resources of the West Bank and for building sustained relationships with audiences. Visitors with smart phones and tablets can download materials while on site, prompted by trail signs and markers, or they can obtain programs ahead of their visit through related websites.



TYPES OF INTERPRETATION



Interpretive Tours and Programs

Guided museum tours with historical characters, commercial tours, archaeological exploration

School Programs and Tours

Facilitated group experiences, guided walking tours, on-the-water programs



Public Events and Programs

Community gatherings, markets, celebrations, theater, music, and performance



Exhibits

Artifacts (indoors and outdoors), reproductions, interactive components, media installations



Interpretive Trail Signs

Historical photographs, visualizations, maps, and narratives



Views and Overlooks

Stopping places, viewfinders, and benches



Digital Media

Hand-held media, downloadable apps, visualizations, and animations



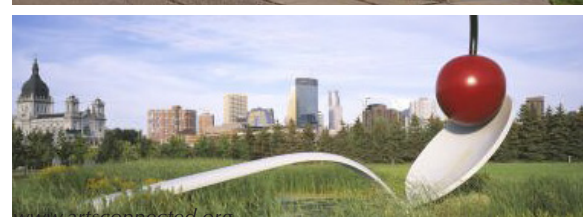
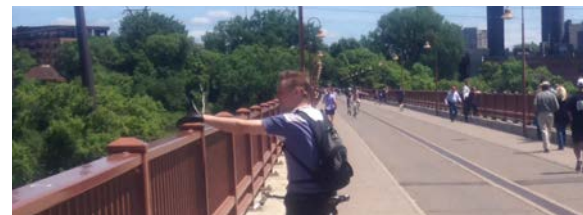
Orientation Kiosks

Wayfinding, points of reference, connection to Heritage Trail and other trail systems



Art & Landscape Installations

Temporary and permanent, multi-media (sculptures, murals, landscapes, sound, and light)



St. Anthony Falls and Spirit Island



Detail, Map of the Territory of Minnesota, 1849, Minnesota Historical Society

The water roaring over the spillway at St. Anthony Falls flows from the same headwater sources that it has for centuries. This great concentration of energy carries as much, if not more, of the region's story than the concrete and steel landscape we see today.

Until the 1850s, when human industry began hastening its erosion, the St. Anthony Falls cataract had been receding upriver at a rate of about four feet per year. In places where the powerful current met with equally powerful and well-anchored bedrock, the Falls left behind small, rocky islands. Spirit Island was one of these stalwart landmarks bracing against the river's current. In 1899 the island was quarried for its limestone and finally removed altogether to

clear a navigational channel between the Upper and Lower Locks.

Today, Spirit Island is remembered by Dakota people for the eagles that once nested there in tall oaks and cottonwoods, feeding on fish at the base of the falls. Eagles have been returning to St. Anthony Falls, a meaningful reminder of the island and the relationship between eagles and the Falls.

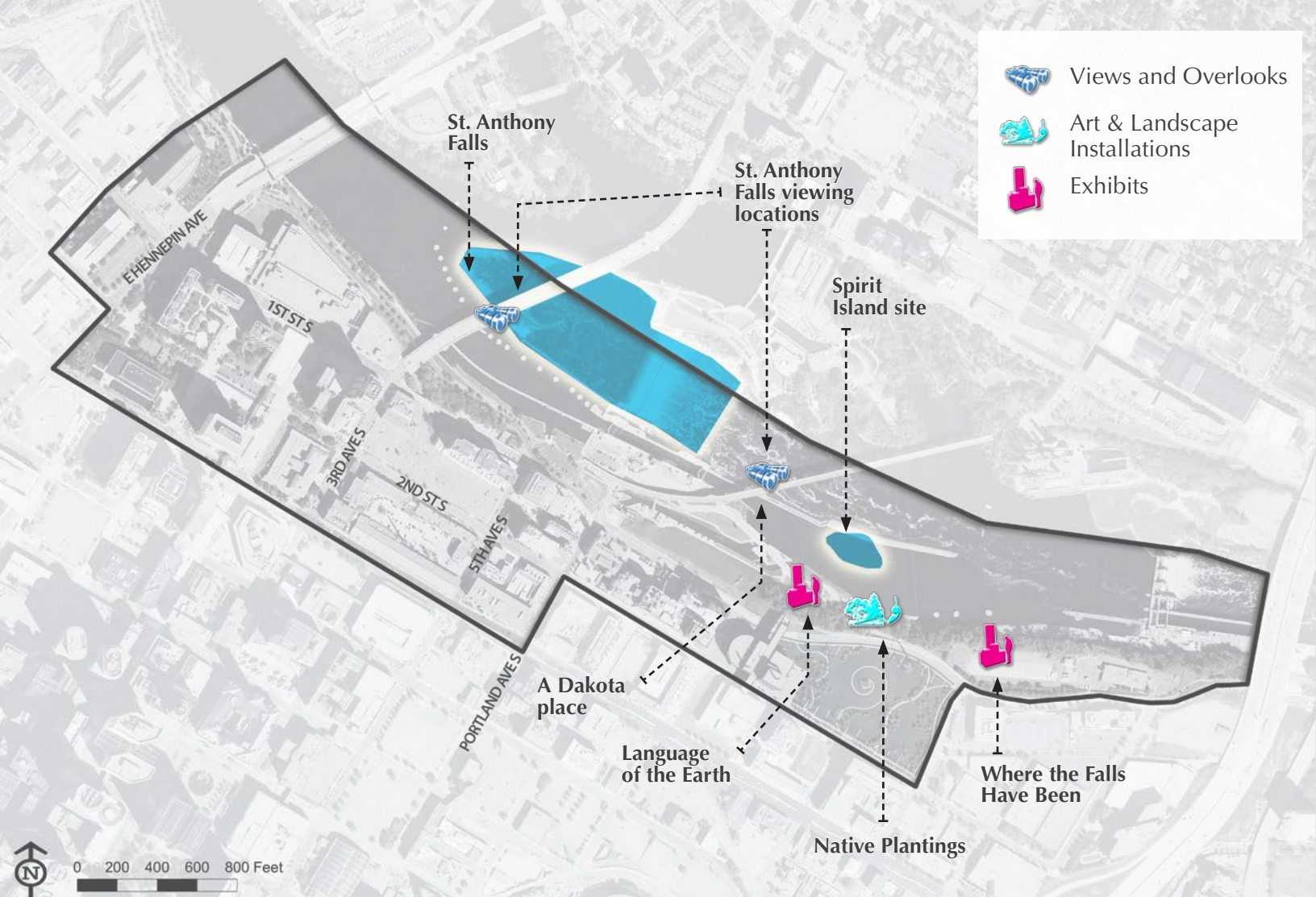
INTERPRETIVE LOCATIONS




Where the falls have been. An 1888 map, drawn by geologist Newton Horace Winchell, shows the approximate locations of the receding falls from 1680 to 1887. Winchell drew on early accounts of European and American explorers and on later observations of residents who witnessed the quickening erosion of the falls from one year to the next. The geological event recorded by Winchell's map began more than 11,700 years before, many miles down river. The powerful river carved a gorge from what is now St. Paul up through the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers—called Bdote by Dakota people—to where the falls are today.



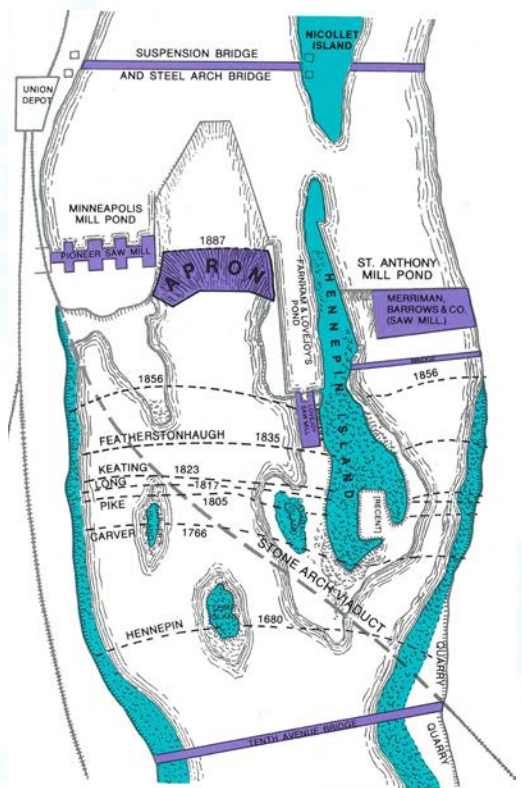
Spirit Island, 1899, Minnesota Historical Society



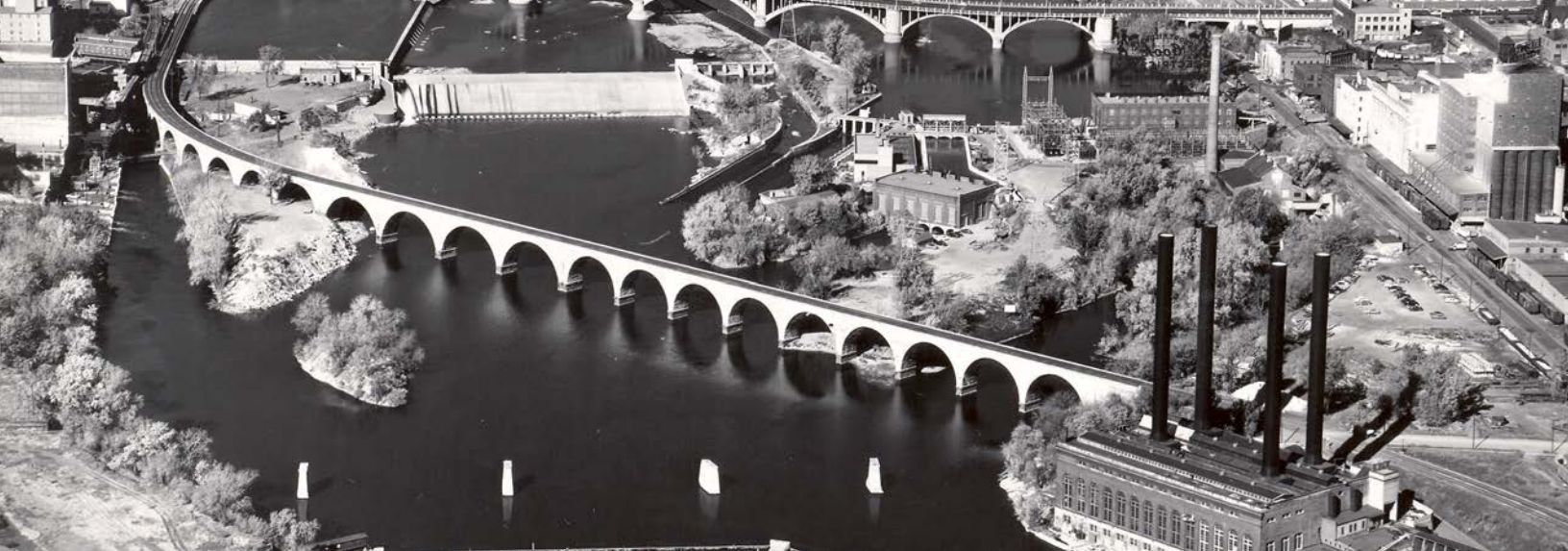
With moderate speculation, the past several hundred years of recession could be marked in various ways along the West Bank below the falls. In Mill Ruins Park and along future trails leading to the lower lock and dam, a series of markers and embedded edges with dates will show the relative pace at which the falls eroded. With special attention to the uppermost reach just below the falls, visitors will see the accelerated pace of erosion measured not in centuries or decades but in years.

 **A Dakota place.** Below the falls, particularly along the eastern side of the main tailrace, visitors can stand along the shore just a few feet above the current. The pool above the lower lock and dam is relatively calm today, compared to the swirling currents that once flowed past broken bedrock into the gorge below. Here, and in other locations near the falls, visitors will find interpretive elements designed and produced in collaboration with Dakota artists and writers. Since this was first a Dakota place, visitors will first see and hear Dakota words before reading translations into English and other languages.

*U.S. Army
Corps of
Engineers*



MISSISSIPPI RIVER AT ST. ANTHONY FALLS
SHOWING THE RECESSION FROM 1680 TO 1887



Detail, Minneapolis riverfront, 1955, Fairchild Aerial Surveys, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board



Language of the Earth



Language of the Earth (Concept provided by Mona Smith)

Expressing the idea that languages are a gift from the earth, Dakota words and phrases are heard from audio speakers placed in the ground, triggered by motion sensors as visitors walk past. That which is spoken in the recordings will be chosen by elders, Dakota speakers, and language students, perhaps with the aid of ceremony, with the site and potential listeners kept in mind. If the site is a traditional Dakota site, the voices could make reference to traditional events, rituals, people who lived there. Perhaps if the site is alongside the Mississippi River, the Dakota words will talk about the role of the river in Dakota history, in all human life, in the future of the continent. Perhaps the words will change seasonally, reflecting the cyclical nature of life.

Language of the Earth could be installed seasonally or for special events lasting only a day or two. While visitors will not hear translations as part of the program, translated versions of the recordings could be made available in various formats, including conversations with Dakota speakers on site.



Native plantings. Below the falls and throughout the West Bank area, native plantings that include cottonwoods, red-osier dogwood, and oaks will provide wildlife habitat, and help recall the centuries-long relationships between the falls, trees, animals, and first people of this area.



Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

STORIES OF THE WEST BANK

Returning Eagles

During the late winter months of 2014, a pair of bald eagles began nesting on the east side of the Mississippi River near the Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam. This event marked the return of eagles to St. Anthony Falls, an area in which they had once been abundant. Up through the 1850s, visitors to the area observed eagles nesting in the mature oaks and cottonwoods that grew along the banks of the river. Over time, human industry overtook the landscape, the large trees were removed, and eagles began to shy away from the falls. Later, the widespread use of DDT and illegal hunting reduced their numbers even further. By the early 1960s, there were no more than 400 nesting pairs of bald eagles in the lower 48 states.

“At a little distance below the Falls stands a small island, of about an acre and [a] half, on which grow a great number of oak trees, every branch of which, able to support the weight, was full of eagles. . . . they find a constant supply of food for themselves and their young, from the animals and fish which are dashed to pieces by the Falls, and driven on the adjacent shore.”

Jonathan Carver, 1766

Conservation efforts, including the 1972 ban on DDT, greatly improved the bald eagle’s chances for survival. By the 2010s, about 90 bald eagle nests were recorded in the Twin Cities metro area. Sightings—especially near the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers—have become a regular occurrence. At St. Anthony Falls, maturing cottonwoods and improving water quality are again providing an attractive habitat for eagles. At the same time that eagles have learned to adapt to this densely populated urban center, people have also learned to make way for the eagles’ return.



wamdi (Dakota)

migizi (Ojibwe)

www.huffingtonpost.com



Canal and Gatehouse



Minneapolis Mill Company Gatehouse, 1895, Minnesota Historical Society



Canal reconstruction, about 1890, Minnesota Historical Society

Hidden under the streets and buildings of the West Bank are the remains of a monumental system of headraces and tailraces that once distributed waterpower to mills across the district. It began with the construction of the first canal in 1857 and culminated in 2.9 miles of tunnels and open channels.

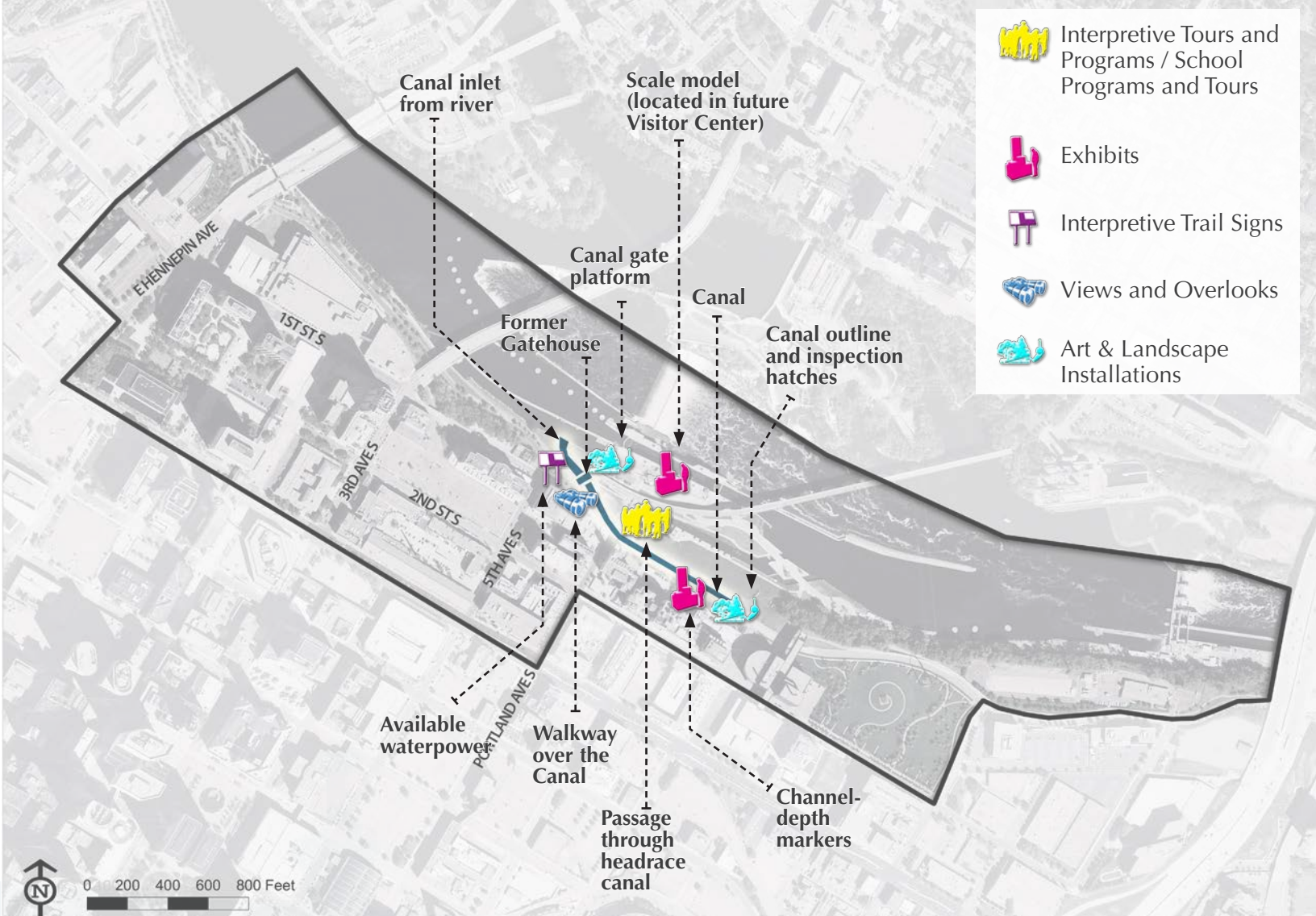
If early leaders of industry had been satisfied to operate a few mills immediately adjacent to the river, then a canal would have been unnecessary. But already by the 1850s, ambitious entrepreneurs had envisioned a major manufacturing center powered by water. Such a center would require a complex system of channels that would bring water to mills and factories far from the river's banks. The project began with a canal 14 feet deep, 50 feet wide, and 215 feet long. Eventually the "great canal" was deepened to 20 feet and extended to 900 feet. By the 1930s this once-critical waterpower complex was outmoded and in the early 1960s the gatehouse was removed and the canal buried during construction of the Upper Lock.

Referring to the zenith years of Minneapolis milling, Minnesota State Archaeologist Scott Anfinson called this "the greatest direct-drive waterpower center the world had ever seen." At the heart of this industrial center was the Minneapolis Mill Company's canal and gatehouse, major components of which remain intact and are well preserved. Given the historical stature of these facilities and their past prominence in the district, it is important that the canal and gatehouse be elevated from present-day obscurity—to play a more central role in visitors' experiences at St. Anthony Falls. As interpretive assets, these singular structures hold tremendous potential for engaging—if not thrilling—West Bank audiences.


Planning for potential excavation or restoration of the canal and/or gatehouse—whether limited or comprehensive—should be guided by the following interpretive objectives:


- Impress upon visitors the physical scale of the structures and their functions
- Evoke a feeling of awe in the power and volume of the water that once flowed through this system
- Reveal to a range of audiences the complex system of engineered structures that brought water through the West Bank milling district
- Physically set the stage for a range of facilitated programs and installations that draw attention to the story of waterpower at St. Anthony Falls
- Integrate the West Bank waterpower story and visitor experiences with the structures and systems of the East Bank mills and hydroelectric plants


Several of the visitor-experience concepts described in this plan assume at least partial excavation of the canal and control-gate structures in several locations.

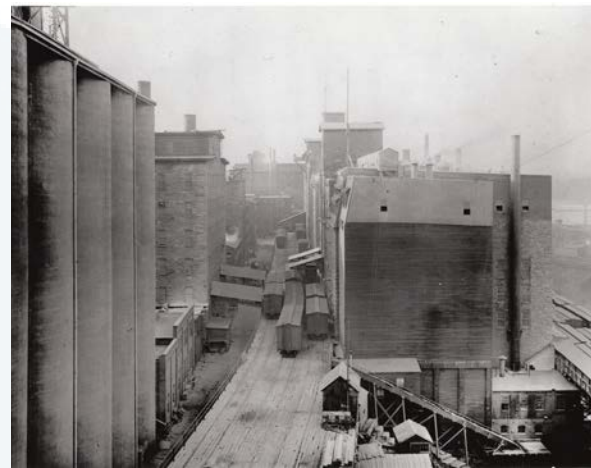


INTERPRETIVE LOCATIONS

 **Walkway over the canal.** Near the control-gate structure, visitors can traverse a pedestrian bridge over a partially excavated section of the canal. Walking over and across the width of the structure will impress visitors with the scale and depth of the canal. While on the bridge, location-based media can provide visitors with a brief animation showing the canal filling as the gates were raised for the first time after completion of the gatehouse in 1885.

 **Passage through the headrace canal.** From the Ruin Courtyard in Mill City Museum, visitors could descend down to tunnel-depth and follow the route of a waterpower tunnel through the canal and out toward the river into Mill Ruins Park. Beneath the traffic on West River Parkway, a wide portion of the canal is excavated to reveal the actual walls, floor, and tunnel connections for visitors to experience up close.

 **Canal gate platform.** With partial excavation of the control-gate structure, a long platform above the gates could be accessible to visitors for temporary art installations and live programs. Even without a reconstructed gatehouse, the platform could be a staging area for installations that recall the former building, including projected images, full-scale, open-frame structures, and sculptural representations of gate machinery.



Rail trestle over canal, 1900, Minnesota Historical Society. This is close to the same view that visitors see from Guthrie Theater's Endless Bridge.



Tailrace construction, about 1900, Minnesota Historical Society



Gatehouse aerial, 1945, Minnesota Historical Society



Channel-depth markers



Scale model. Seeing the entire West Bank waterpower system in one three-dimensional model will help visitors grasp the scope and complexity of the system. This large-scale, walk-around model reveals the canal, gatehouse, headrace tunnels, dropshafts, and tailraces in clear relation to one another, showing visitors how this astonishing feat of engineering worked. Further animating the model with flowing water or moving lights could demonstrate not just the scale of the system but its changing modes of operation.

This model and a similar exhibit representing the East Bank system will complement and reinforce what visitors experience at Mill City Museum's Water Lab.



Channel-depth markers. While visitors may not experience the canal from its floor looking up, they might still be prompted to imagine the depth of the canal from the ground above. At several prominent locations, visitors encounter small trail signs with then-and-now images taken from the 3D virtual milling district. The images place them in specific locations looking up and/or down stream as if they were standing in the canal. Attached to each of the signs is a simple depth gauge, looking like a surveyor's story pole stuck into the ground. The top of the pole is marked "25 feet," roughly at an adult's waist height. Each foot is labeled in descending order down to ground level, indicating the number of feet a person is standing above the canal floor below.



Canal outline and inspection hatches. By revealing the top of the canal walls, or marking their location through landscape treatments, visitors are given strong visual clues about the size and location of the structure and its physical connection to the river and the mills. Two or three recreated canal-inspection hatches could also draw visitors' attention to the locations and depth of the canal. Positioned over excavated segments of the canal, hatch covers (fixed to appear open) will function as viewfinders, prompting visitors to look down into a sealed and lighted shaft revealing the canal floor 20 feet below.



Available waterpower. As the river of a hundred years ago approached St. Anthony Falls, its current was parceled out for distribution through the Minneapolis Mill canal and into the many headrace tunnels that powered the mills. A large stylized graphic near the gatehouse site—aligned with the lower canal—illustrates the complex mapping of water rights that once ruled the falls.

STORIES OF THE WEST BANK

Sage of the River

William de la Barre (1849 – 1936), an engineer from Austria, arrived in Minneapolis in 1878, shortly after an explosion and fire leveled much of the West Bank milling district. He came as a representative for the Brehmer Brothers Company, which sold a system for removing the air-borne flour dust created by the milling process.

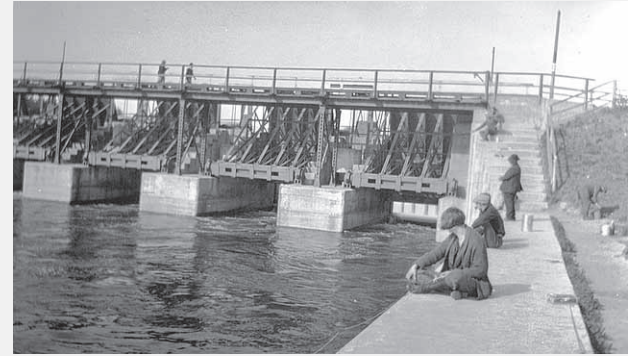
“Accustomed to casual administration, the millers usually took the amounts of water they needed whenever it was available, ignoring both their obligations to Minneapolis Mill and the relative rights of others. To these practices De la Barre called a halt.”

Lucile Kane, *The Falls of St. Anthony*, 1966

Reducing dust in the mills promised to reduce the likelihood of future dust-fueled explosions.

The gifted de la Barre quickly earned the respect of the Minneapolis millers and by the early 1880s had become director of Minneapolis Mill Company. One of his key responsibilities was the regulation and management of the waterpower that supplied West Bank mills, which by this time had been over-allocated to an ever-increasing number of new mills. While river levels ran high, millers simply took what waterpower they needed and the director’s authority remained unchallenged. In 1885, however, a severe drought required that de la Barre enforce reduced

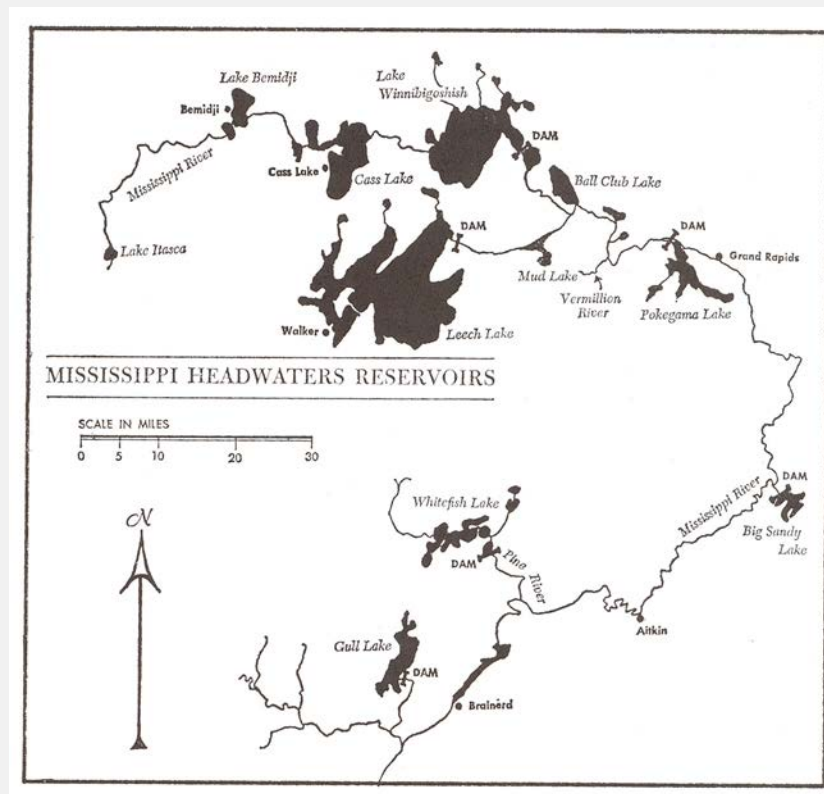
Reservoir Dam, Minnesota Historical Society



allocations, angering the millers. Reporting to company owners that “the millers are getting ugly,” he pressed for an engineering solution. Before long, construction workers began the task of lengthening and deepening the canal to increase its capacity and better serve West Bank millers.

De la Barre studied the river intensely, seeing in its flow changing measures of horsepower over time. In the 1890s he turned his attention to hydroelectricity and the construction of two generating plants on the east side. He remained in charge of harnessing power from the river until 1923, when the business of waterpower at the falls finally passed from the flour millers to the Northern States Power Company.

Maintaining the river’s flow throughout the seasons required a far-reaching system of dams installed far upriver of the falls in the 1880s, many of which caused the flooding of wild rice beds and other Ojibwe lands in northern Minnesota. Minnesota Historical Society





Railroads and Rail Corridors



Rail corridor over what is now West River Parkway, 1897. The river is to the right. Minnesota Historical Society



Minneapolis Eastern Trestle, 1890s, over what is now the lower end of Mill Ruins Park, Hennepin History Museum

Milling and railroads grew up together in Minneapolis. The place-and-time confluence of waterpower and milling technology that built the milling capital of the world also included a web of railroad tracks that carried wheat from the Northwest, flour to international ports, and people to and from cities across the country. Tracks and trestles were constructed with remarkable speed then quickly moved or dismantled as needs shifted. The West Bank was never still for the constant movement of trains in and through the milling district.

Today, much of the West Bank's railroad landscape is gone. A few buildings, structures, and rail beds remain in places where visitors might stand and imagine the great flow of people and goods through the city. In today's West Bank landscape, visitors can still see several rail corridors that led into and out of the Milling District. These include:

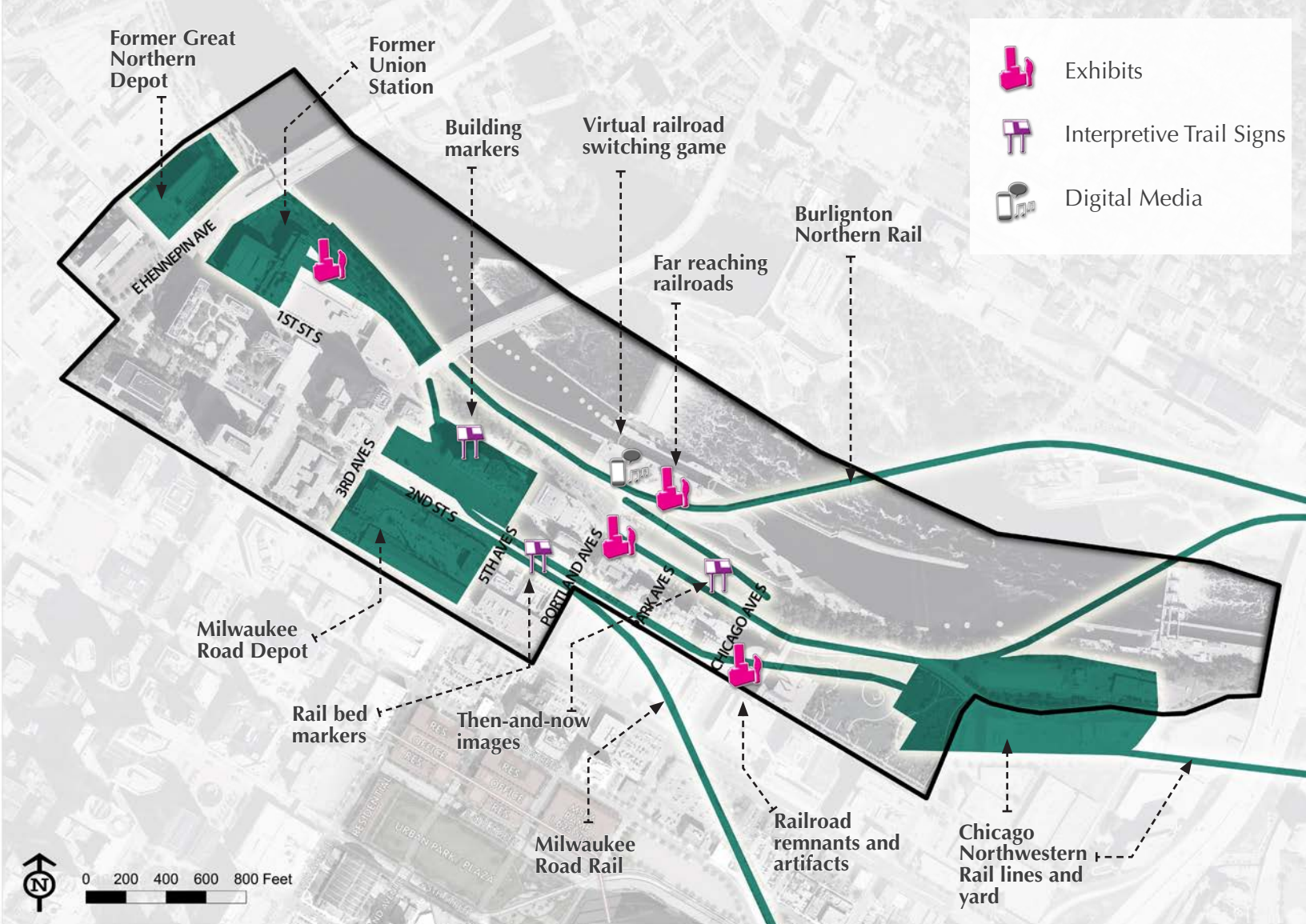
- The Great Northern (Burlington Northern) route that crossed the Stone Arch Bridge, especially the rail beds on either end of the bridge connecting to St. Paul on the east side and to the Great Northern Station on the west side
- The Northern Pacific (Chicago Northwestern) route between Second Street and the former Bridge Number 9, near today's 35W Bridge
- The Minneapolis and St. Louis spur that curves from Second Street past Mill Place (Hall and Dann Barrel Factory) and under First Street to the former Great Northern Station
- The Milwaukee Road line that crossed Washington Avenue diagonally and headed south. A remnant of the viaduct abutment remains on the southeast corner of Washington and Chicago Avenues.


INTERPRETIVE LOCATIONS





Rail bed markers. Where walking trails and sidewalks are on or near former rail beds, visitors will find trail signs combined with structures that evoke railroad signaling equipment. On the trail signs they will see exact views captured from the 3D virtual milling district and graphics that depict the number and frequency of trains and/or boxcars that would have passed by a particular place over the course of a day, or even an hour.

On the site of the former 2nd Street rail yard visitors will find trail signs describing the massive environmental cleanup that occurred here in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The cleanup was necessitated by the decades-long practice of dumping dirty oil between the tracks. When fresh oil was needed in the journal boxes that lubricated train wheels, maintenance workers routinely let the used oil drain onto the ground. Over many decades into the 1960s, thousands of gallons of oil was left to soak into the ground, a costly legacy of the city's railroad complex.



 **Virtual railroad switching game.** A large interactive touchscreen, housed indoors, will start with a view of all the rail yards and corridors in the West Bank. Visitors will be asked to zoom into specific locations where they try their hand at moving trains on and off the various spurs and connecting them with the lines coming and going from distant places. This digital interactive will be supported by model train pieces representing the engines and rolling stock commonly seen in the milling district.

 **Then-and-now images.** With images taken from the 3D virtual milling district of the 1890s, visitors will see views into the past from exact locations throughout the district. These images can represent surprising views not likely documented by 1890s photographers, such as looking up from under the Eastern Trestle while standing near the main tailrace in Mill Ruins Park.

 **Railroad remnants and artifacts.** The boxcar on display at Mill City Museum provides an engaging encounter with a real artifact from the past. Additional artifacts, from rolling stock to switching equipment, can help recall the prominence of railroads throughout the West Bank. Where remnants still exist—such as the bridge abutment at Chicago Avenue and Washington Avenue—special care should be given to their preservation and interpretation.



Union Depot train shed, upper left, 1887, Minnesota Historical Society



Building markers. Railroad-related structures and buildings still exist in the West Bank—among them the Minneapolis Eastern Engine House. The large-photograph building markers recommended for the area’s milling structures will also identify and help draw visitors into the stories of the area’s railroad buildings. Like windows into the working spaces of these facilities, these images can help answer common questions about what went on inside these intriguing buildings. Building markers can also provide prompts for location-based media programs.



Far Reaching Railroads. This set of maps shows the distant and critical connections made by the area’s railroads. Installed in the Observation Room at the Upper Lock, or another indoor location, these maps will show the great expanse of the wheat-growing regions and the timber lands that fed the mills at St. Anthony Falls.



Detail, Official railroad Map of Minnesota, Board of Railroad Commissioners, 1886, Minnesota Historical Society



Building markers

STORIES OF THE WEST BANK

Water powered Railroad

In the fall of 1878, the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad built an elevated wooden trestle over South First Street between Sixth and Eighth Avenues (now West River Parkway between Portland Avenue and Chicago Mall). Its purpose was to provide flour mills with fast and easy access to boxcars carrying incoming wheat and outbound barrels of flour.

"The mill men have no fears that horses will be scared, since it is proposed to operate the cars by a continuous chain and not be an ordinary engine."

**Minneapolis Tribune,
October 28, 1878**

Providing rail service to the mills along First Street presented many challenges. The rail bed had to be suspended over the Minneapolis Mill Company's canal on a shallow trestle that was unable support the weight of locomotives. The solution was a chain-drive system that pulled boxcars along the length of the trestle between various mill docks and the locomotives that came and went from the south end of the trestle. The entire system was driven by a turbine powered by water flowing from the canal below. The same water that powered the mills also powered the railroad.

Shortly after the Minneapolis Western Railroad took over the trestle in 1884, the wooden trestle was replaced with an iron structure. The iron trestle was removed in 1936 and the wheel house that powered the system remained until 1960.



Boxcars were hitched to chains that ran under the tracks, pulling them into position next to the mills then back to engines waiting at the end of the trestle. Photo taken from what is now the corner of Portland Avenue and West River Parkway, river to the left, about 1890. Hennepin History Museum

Upper and Lower St. Anthony Falls Locks



Upper lock under construction, about 1960, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers




Upper lock mechanism, Minnesota Historical Society

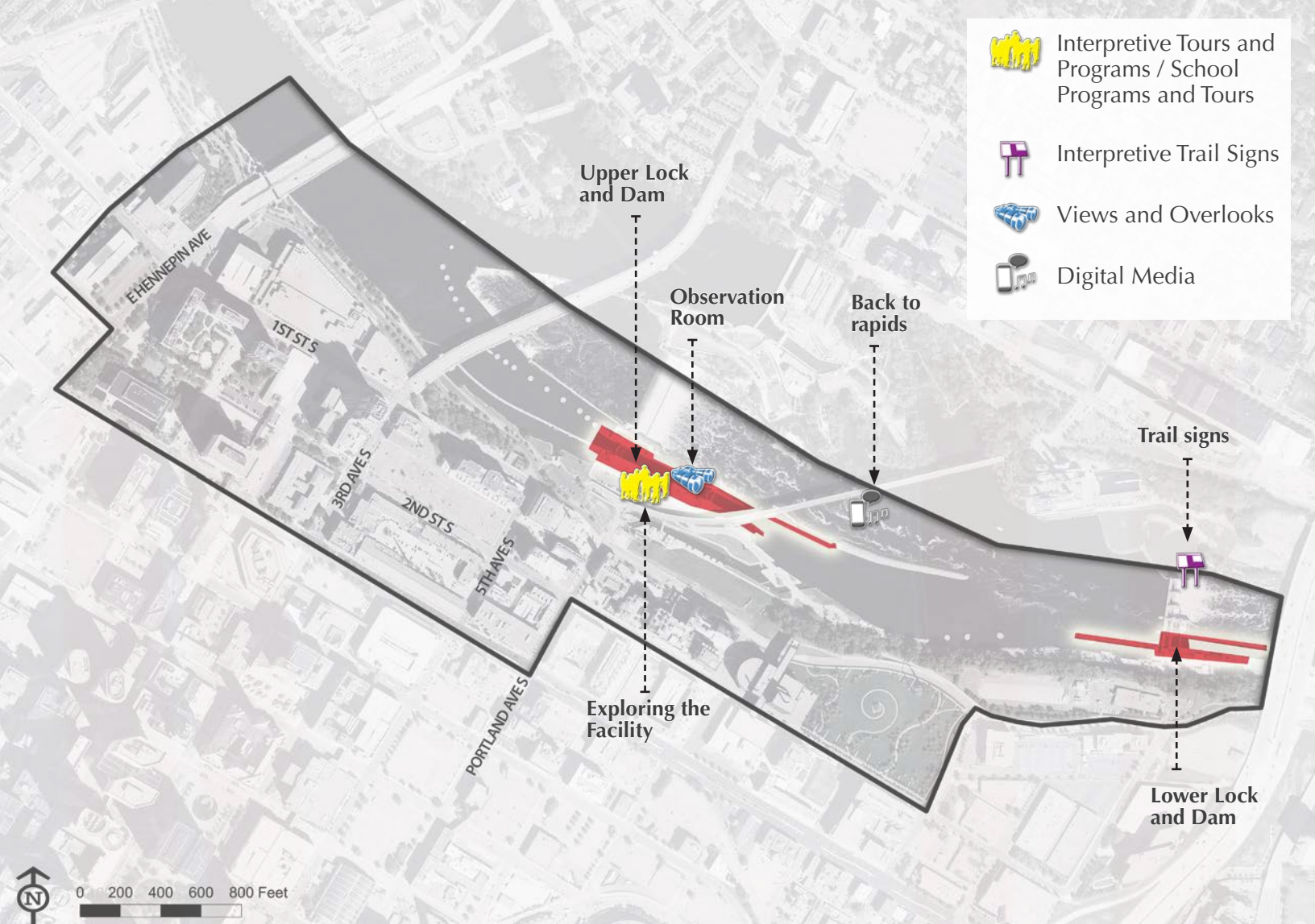
The Upper and Lower Locks at St. Anthony Falls were authorized by the U.S. Congress in the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1937. Wanting to support new industries in the face of a declining milling economy, the City of Minneapolis lobbied strongly for the locks. Construction began on the Lower Lock and Dam in the late 1940s. Within a decade, the industrial landscape and hydrology of the central riverfront had been changed permanently and significantly. Fifty years after the celebrated opening of the Upper Lock in 1963, the U.S. Congress passed the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014, which includes a provision for its closure. This change, while bringing about no physical changes to the lock, presents new opportunities for enhancing visitor experiences in the West Bank. Potential cooperative agreements between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and agencies that implement interpretive programs at St. Anthony Falls could lead to new interpretive facilities and improved visitor access to the Falls.

UPPER LOCK

Today, visitors to St. Anthony Falls can see the great physical changes brought about by the construction of the Upper Lock. By comparing images from the 1950s to the current landscape, significant differences abound: Upton Island is radically reshaped, a pier and two arches from the Stone Arch Bridge are replaced by a steel truss, and Spirit Island is gone from sight. The facility that opened in 1963, however, provides extraordinary access to the river, the falls, and the dramatic concrete and steel control structures that now dominate the west side of the river. When the facility ceases operations as a navigable lock, the site will provide highly engaging opportunities for interpretation and exploration.

Interpretive Locations

 **Observation Room.** This elevated space gives visitors unparalleled views of the falls and the Mississippi River, upriver and downriver. Given visitors' inclination to linger here, this is an optimal location to introduce broader, more far-reaching stories related to St. Anthony Falls. While looking upriver, for example, visitors can imagine the headwater sources of the river and its power. Maps and stories can help describe the relationship between the rivers, lakes, and people north of here, to the falls and the river to the south.

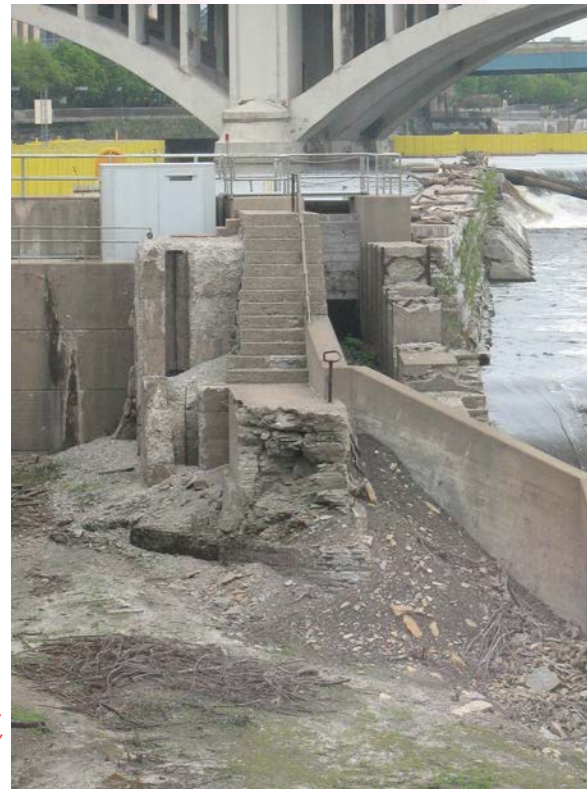


Exploring the Facility. Behind-the-scenes tours and hard-hat tours would bring visitors into contact with locations that were previously off limits. Public access to the main platform would provide a range of vantage points from which visitors could see the river, the falls, and the west-side milling district.

LOWER LOCK AND DAM

Until 1895, when construction began on the original Dam located immediately upriver of the current dam, this stretch of the Mississippi River was a shallow rapids. Inspired by the potential of harnessing even more of the river's power, engineer William de la Barre proposed a dam that would deepen and divert the current to a hydroelectric plant on the eastern shore. The dam was completed in 1897 and with occasional rebuilding remained in place until 1959 when it was largely removed following completion of the new lock and dam in 1956.

*Remnants of the first west side dam,
Minnesota Historical Society*



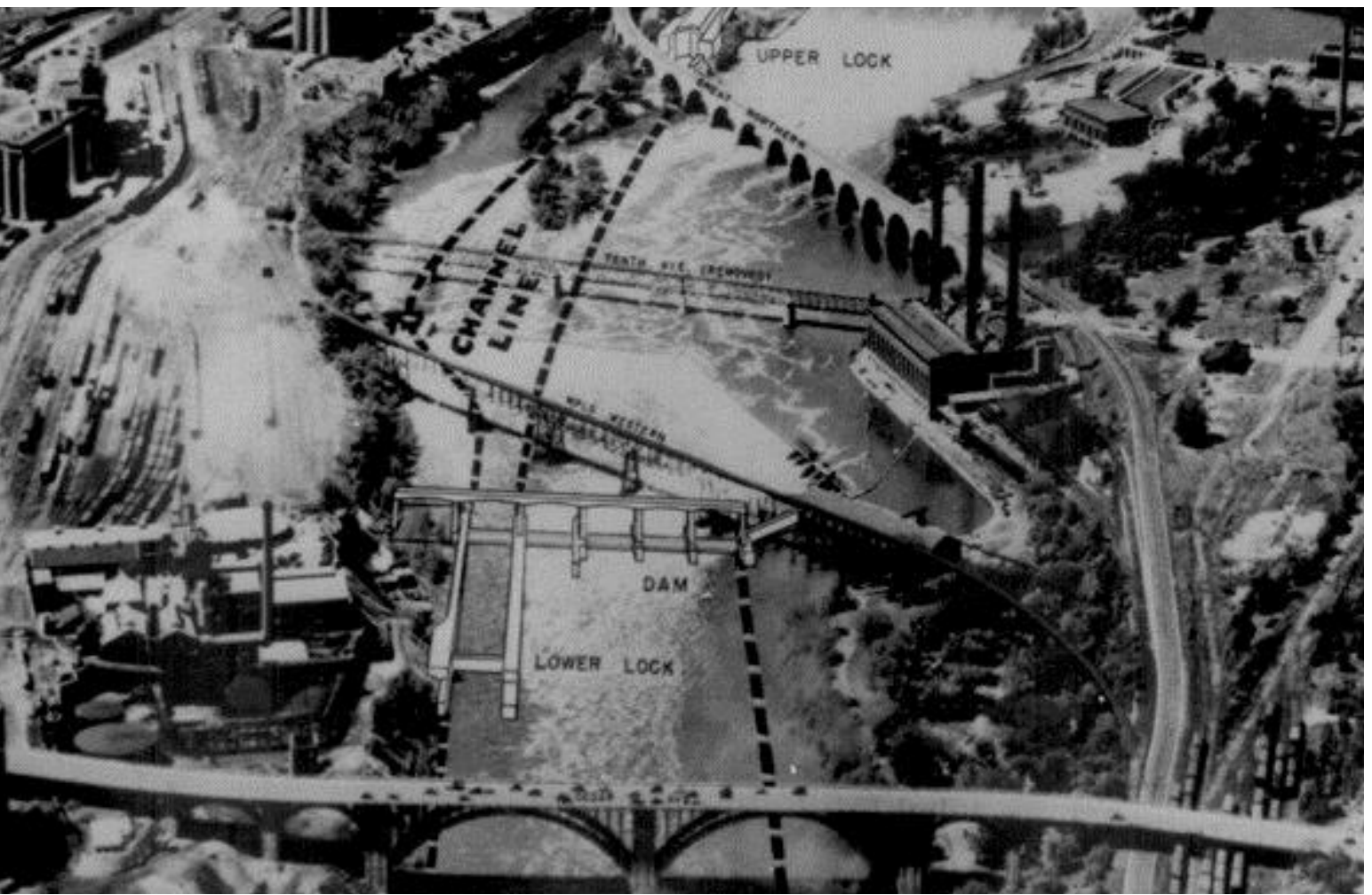
Interpretive Locations



Trail signs. Visual access to this facility is very limited, leaving it almost forgotten in people's experience of the West Bank. From a proposed West Bank trail that connects Mill Ruins Park to the University of Minnesota trail just below the 35W Bridge, visitors could see more of the lock and dam than is currently possible. Trail signs along this route could provide photos, illustrations, and written accounts of this storied structure. More visionary trail concepts include a suspension bridge under the 35W Bridge and a walkway over the Lock and Dam, built into the existing gate structure. Either of these concepts would provide exceptional views of the facility.



Back to rapids. Looking up river from various proposed river crossings, visitors would have excellent views of the pool above the Lower Lock and Dam. With location-based media, they could compare video illustrations of the river to the river they see before them. One view could be of the river without the lock and dam restraining the flow. Another view could be an historical recreation of the river from a time before the Lower Dam, including Spirit Island.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

STORIES OF THE WEST BANK

Closing the Door on Carp

On June 10, 2014, President Barack Obama signed into law the Water Resources Reform and Development Act. One line, buried deep in this 200-page document, will bring about historic change on the Minneapolis riverfront, “Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary [of the Army] shall close the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam.” Sponsored by U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken, the amendment’s key purpose is to slow the spread of invasive, non-native carp into the lakes and rivers of northern Minnesota.

“As Minnesotans have already seen with zebra mussels and Eurasian watermilfoil, invasive species can completely alter the lakes and rivers we love, and take an economic toll. We can’t let carp be added to the list of foreign species invading our waters.”

**U.S. Representative Keith Ellison,
StarTribune, July 29, 2013**

fish for food and habitat. They eat more, grow faster (some species exceeding 100 pounds), and lay more eggs than native fish. Considering the great damage invasive carp could do to Minnesota’s ecosystems, citizens and agencies have raised alarm about their northerly expansion. Scenes of carp leaping into the air by the hundreds present a frightening prospect for the state’s fishing and boating industries.

The carp that have been moving up the Mississippi River into Minnesota were first imported from China in the 1970s to control weeds and parasites (plankton) in fish-farm ponds in the Mississippi Delta. Decades ago, a few of these fish escaped into the Mississippi River where they established breeding populations, eventually dominating great stretches of the river and its tributaries. Among the four species of invasive carp originally introduced to the U.S., silver carp are the most infamous—known for their ability to leap from the water 6 – 8 feet when agitated by boat motors or electrical currents.

These carp have been extremely successful in the Mississippi River basin, outcompeting native

Until now, invasive carp have easily passed through the lock-and-dam system on the Mississippi. Even where swift-moving water makes spillways largely impassable, the carp ride upstream in the locks along with river barges. The Falls of St. Anthony, however, present a significant barrier to migrating carp. With the lock closed, even the athletic silver carp will be stopped at the base of the falls.



Carp jumping, Star Tribune



Mill Ruins and Tunnels



*Exposed ruins, Fort Ridgley, Minnesota
Historical Society*

The decline of West Bank industry that began in the 1930s left behind standing structures and many ruined mill foundations. By 1965, when General Mills moved its operations to Golden Valley, the milling district had taken on an appearance that it would keep for the next 20 years. A line of mill and factory foundations and waterpower structures is still intact along First Street/West River Road Parkway between Third Avenue and Chicago Avenue. The greatest density of ruins and tunnels lies in what is now Mill Ruins Park, much of it still buried in sand and gravel.

The mill ruins and waterpower tunnels visible today spark curiosity and help visitors imagine the milling district as it appeared a century ago—dense and full of orderly, round-the-clock activity. Today's Mill Ruins Park features the first phases of an ambitious vision to uncover and interpret almost all of the existing ruins. Archaeological surveys describe a fragile resource, one that if exposed to weather and the likely wear and tear of visitors, could deteriorate rapidly. There are, however, elements of the St. Anthony Falls milling and waterpower story that are diminished without the authentic, full-scale representation of the side-by-side mills and the waterpower system that made them work. More research is needed before viable recommendations can be made regarding the further excavation of the ruins.

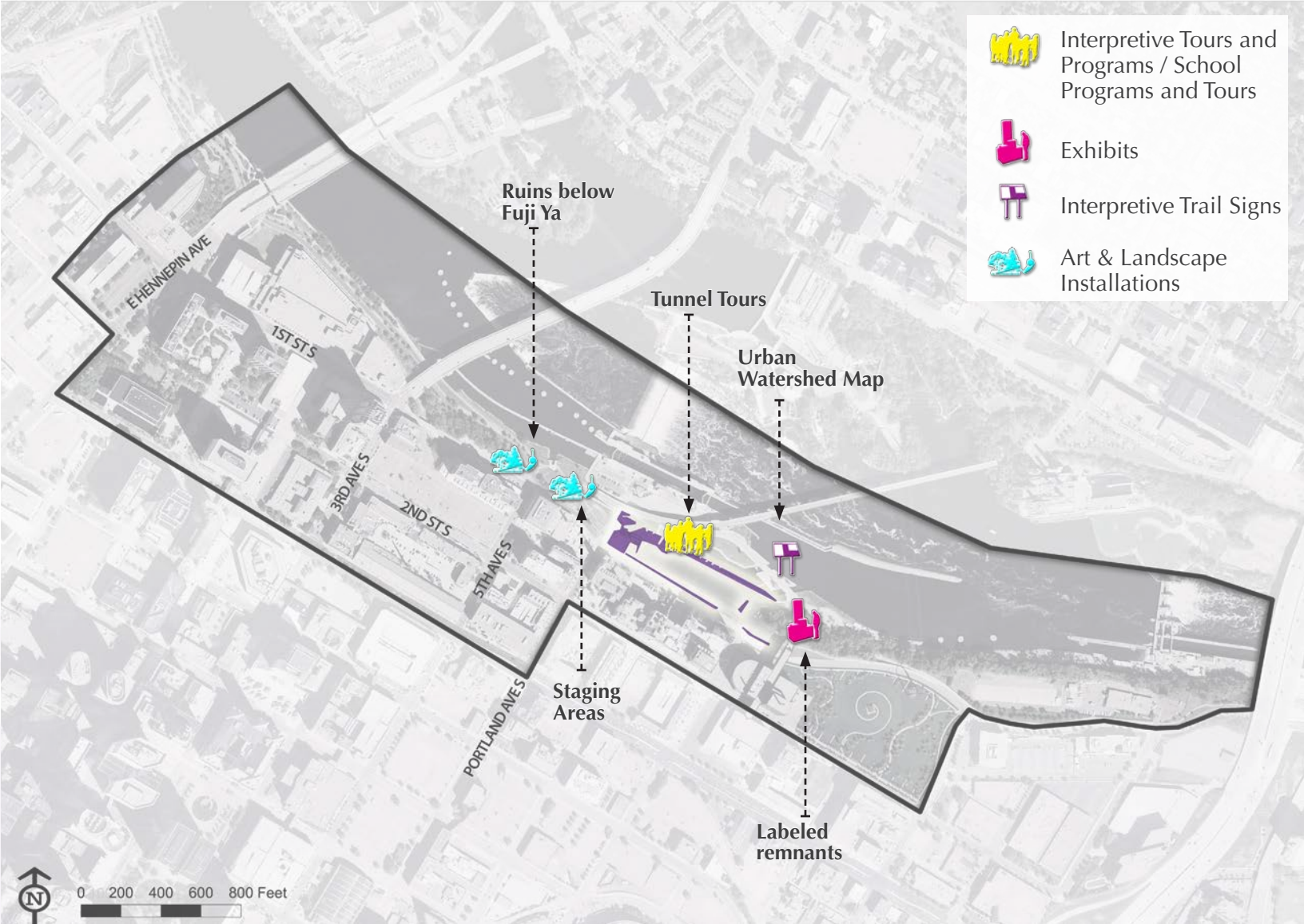
Mill Ruins Park is an engaging environment for public events and school programs, especially those focused on archaeology. Beyond milling and water power, the area features intriguing historical evidence of railroads, navigation, and a changing watershed. Additional interpretive support around these stories would greatly enhance a visitor's self-guided exploration of this important resource.

INTERPRETIVE LOCATIONS



Staging Areas. Places to pause with a tour group or gather a class of school children are essential for interpretive programs. Over the years, program planners and guides have identified several locations that serve these functions well. The addition of interpretive elements such as trail signs and view finders can greatly enhance the effectiveness of these learning environments. Shade and minimal space-defining structures can also improve the function and appeal of these staging areas. Promising locations include:

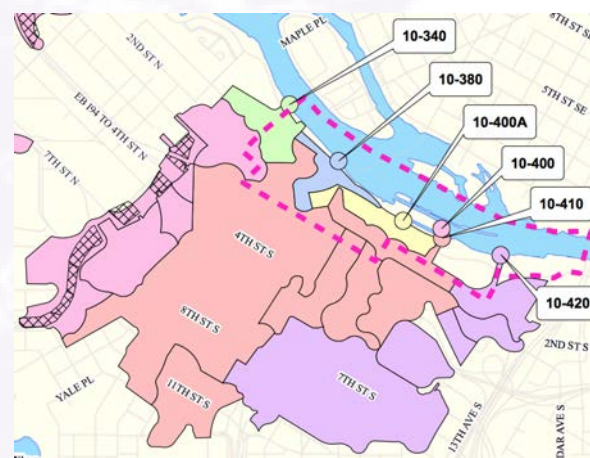
- Two overlooks on the downriver side of Portland Avenue at the Stone Arch Bridge
- The west end of the Stone Arch Bridge near the intake for the Mill Ruins Park outflow
- Above the ruins of the Palisade Mill



Tunnel Tours. While tours deep into the tunnels that open into Mill Ruins Park may not be feasible, visitors could gain an appreciation for the expansive system by simply stepping through a gate and into one or two of the tunnels led by a knowledgeable guide. Within 20 or 30 feet, visitors would feel the scale of the system. A few interpretive enhancements would heighten the experience, such as lights that extend sightlines deep into the tunnels and water-level markers that showed the depth and volume of water flowing through the tunnel during typical operations.

Urban Watershed Map. A trail sign below the falls provides a map-like view of the highly engineered watershed that flows into the Mississippi River along the West Bank.

Ruins beneath the Fuji Ya. The Fuji Ya building is slated for demolition down to the mill ruins on which it was built. By leaving some remnant of the restaurant structure intact along with the mill ruins, visitors will be provided with interesting clues to a more complex story of decline and renewal in the West Bank.



Urban Watershed Map, City of Minneapolis Public Works



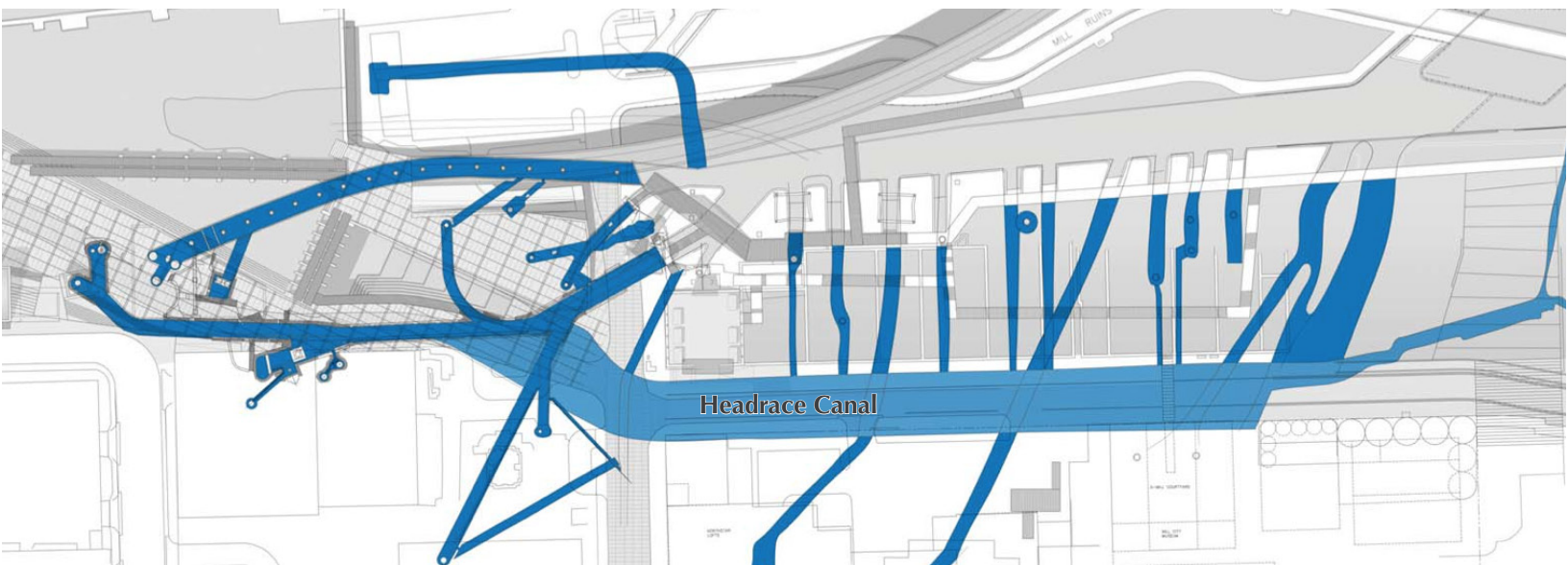
Bridge pier from the Minneapolis Eastern Railroad Trestle.



Labeled Remnants. At least two remnants of the original horseshoe dam and platform sawmill site still exist near the Upper Lock. Simple labels will draw attention to these pieces and recall a sequence of events that shaped the West Bank and influenced the region.



Mill Ruins Park concept, MSR Design



West Bank tunnel diagram, MSR Design

STORIES OF THE WEST BANK

Mill District Visionary

In 1967, when Reiko Weston chose to build a restaurant on the foundations of the Columbia Flour Mill, few people saw the riverfront as a place of interest and beauty. Her site was surrounded by dark and abandoned mill buildings, railroad tracks, a gravel yard, and makeshift roads. But it had astonishing views of the river.

“I was intrigued by the Mississippi River. . . . I talked to officials of the Burlington Northern Railroad. They told me I was ridiculous to ask for property. Then one day, while driving on E. 1st Street, along the river bank, I saw a for-sale sign on a burned-down flour mill. I contacted the real-estate company and made an immediate offer. I hate to quote the price, it was such a steal.”

Reiko Weston, owner, Fuji Ya, 1979

Years after the Fuji Ya closed, Weston’s daughter, Carol Weston Hanson, described the unusual structures just beneath the restaurant. “Mom chose it because it was on the river—that was a good luck sign—and you could see a bridge from there, which was another good luck sign. . . . It was built on the foundation of a flour mill. You could go all the way downstairs to where the big old turbines were, and there were tunnels that went to the old Crown Mill. The things we did were unbelievable. It’s plain stupid now that I think about it, the way we would go through all those underground ruins, with river rats.”

Over the years, the restaurant was expanded and eventually occupied multiple stories. In 1987, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board condemned a portion of the Fuji Ya parking lot to make way for the extension of West River Parkway along First Street. The restaurant was closed in 1990 and the building was later acquired by the Park Board. After years of disuse, it fell into disrepair and by the early 2010s was deemed unsalvageable. Current plans include the removal of the 1960s and ’70 additions and the preservation of the original mill ruins. Although the restaurant was built after the mill district’s period of significance (1858 – 1941), it marked the beginning of the central riverfront’s revitalization.

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Image source: Greg Smith





Mills and Grain Elevators

From the early 1880s to the 1920s, Minneapolis produced more flour annually than any other city in the world. With close to 30 flour mills, it was also one of the densest concentrations of industry in the world—and most of that was on the west side of the river. While much of this industrial landscape has been lost to fires, torn down, or removed, a distinctive collection of structures remains.

INTERPRETIVE LOCATIONS



Building markers. Walking around the Milling District, visitors will see large photographic images with basic identification labels affixed to historic buildings. Like windows into the working spaces of these facilities, the images help answer common questions about what went on inside these intriguing buildings. Building markers can also provide prompts to location-based media programs.



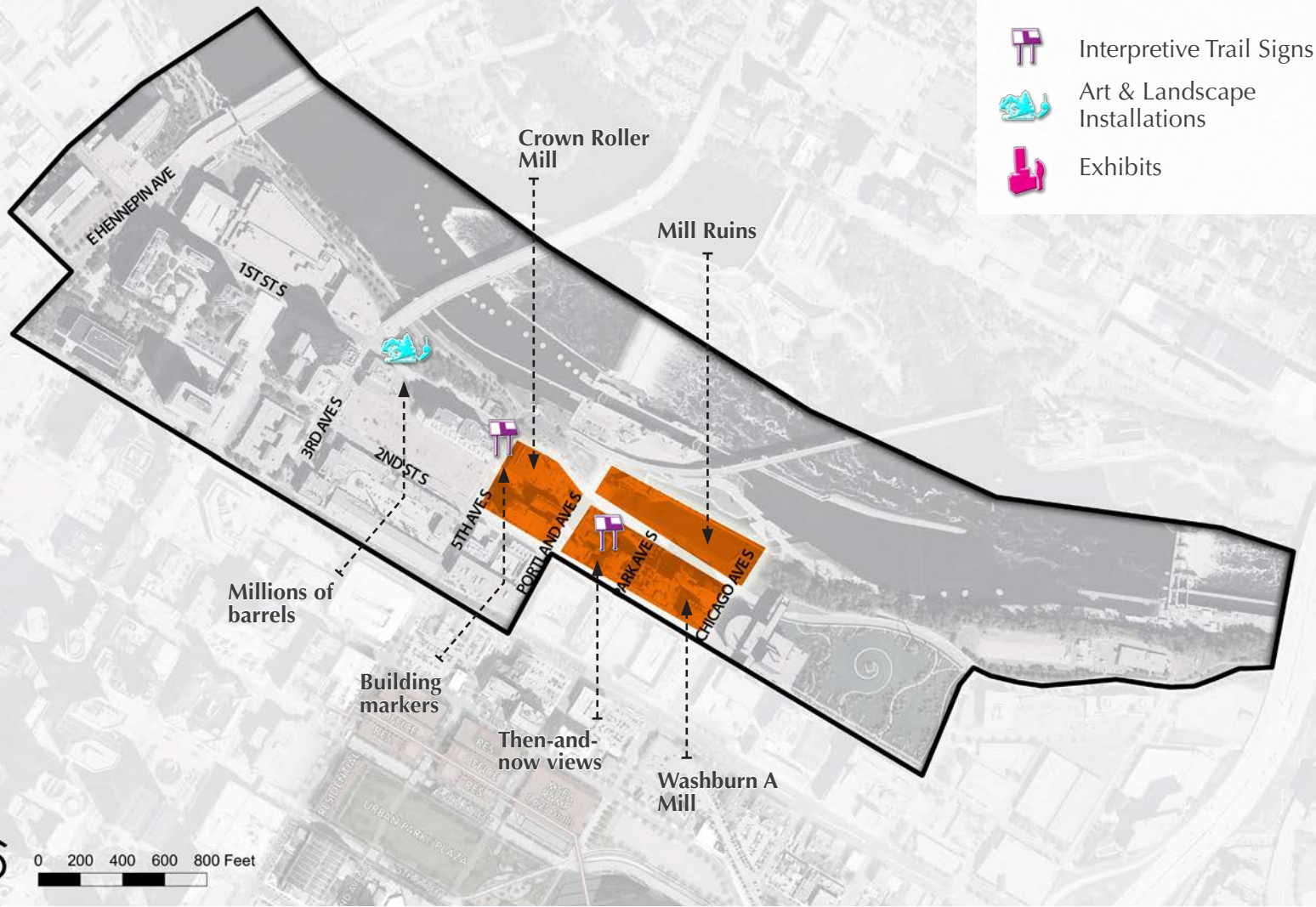
Then-and-now views. Trail signs with images taken from the 3D virtual milling district of the 1890s are placed in locations that best reveal the one-time towering density of mill structures in relation to the landscape of today.



Millions of barrels. By the late 1880s, the output of flour from the Minneapolis mills was exceeding 6 million barrels per year. While not all flour was shipped in barrels, the number of barrels manufactured in the West Bank was still astonishing. Along trails near the Hall and Dann Barrel Factory (Mill Place) and other West Bank rail corridors, visitors will find barrel-themed trail structures with graphics that illustrate the astonishing volume of barrels produced during the years of peak production in Minneapolis.

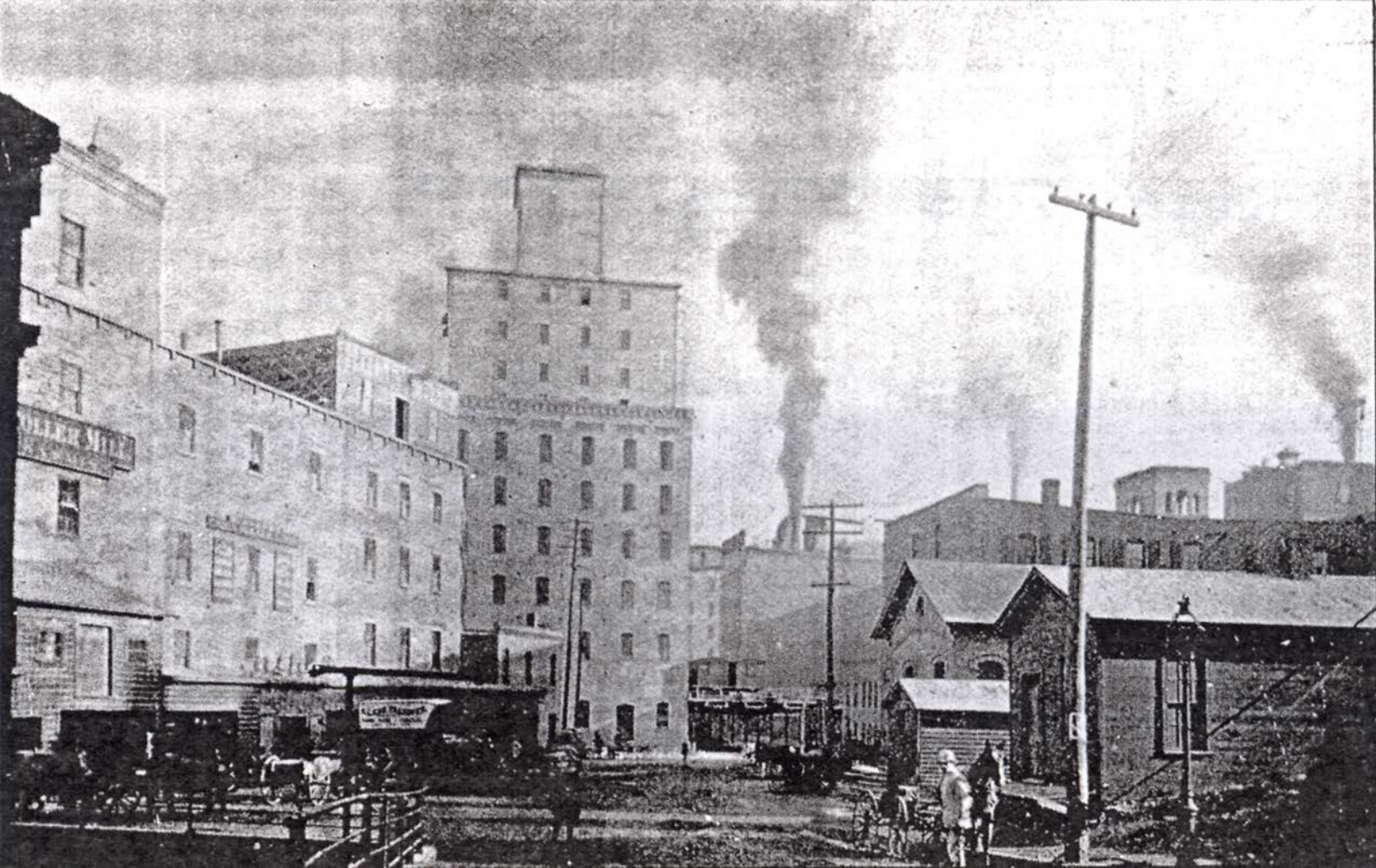
Hall and Dann Barrel Company (currently Mill Place), about 1900, Minnesota Historical Society. The rail bed under the bridge (First Street) holds great potential for an interpretive trail.





Washburn Crosby Band playing in Millstone Plaza, 1920, Minnesota Historical Society. The building in the background is the Mill Office.





*West Side Milling District from
Gatehouse, 1892, Minnesota Historical
Society*

STORIES OF THE WEST BANK

Women Workers in the North Star Woolen Mills

"Girls, why don't you open the windows, it's so hot in here?"

"We get used to the heat, so we don't mind it much, and we can stand that better than the dust and dirt from the street above."

"How much do you get paid?"

"Ninety cents a day."

"Do you think it's worth while to ruin your health by working in this place for such wages?"

"I don't know as it is, . . . but when a girl's got her living to earn she can't choose where she'll work."

Eva McDonald Valesh, St. Paul Globe, May 20, 1888

Eva McDonald Valesh (1866 – 1956), journalist and labor activist, began her storied career writing about the working women of the Minneapolis milling district. In 1888, the editor of the *St. Paul Daily Globe* hired Valesh to investigate the abusive conditions faced by workers in the city's mills and factories. Under the pen name Eva Gay, she wrote her first exposé, a series of articles describing low wages, demanding workloads, and dangerous machinery. Often going undercover as a girl looking for work, Valesh gained the confidence of her co-workers and came away with human stories that stung factory owners and managers. "I carefully fished out of the rag-bag a dilapidated dress, . . . and procured shoes and gloves with many holes in them. . . . Hoping that my wretched appearance would provoke pity, I presented myself at the office of the mill and asked for work."

Before long Valesh was speaking as a labor activist, gaining the trust of working people because of her own working-class background. Her success as a speaker and

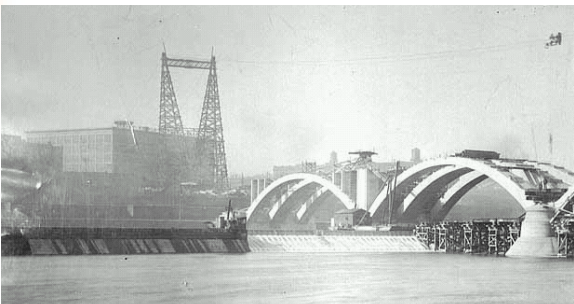
organizer put her in the middle of labor conflicts including the Minneapolis and St. Paul Street Railway strike of 1889. Valesh eventually found herself drawn to the national stage of labor politics, first in Washington DC, where she worked with Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, and later to New York. After many years in labor politics she returned to journalism, writing for the *New York Times* until she retired at the age of 87.



Bridges



Stone Arch Bridge and Tenth Avenue Bridge, 1920, Minnesota Historical Society



Third Avenue Bridge under construction, 1916, Minnesota Historical Society

The collection of bridges in the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone is remarkable for its range of designs and memorable stories. From the 1883 Stone Arch Bridge—which has become an icon of Minneapolis—to the 2008 35W St. Anthony Falls Bridge, they span a 125-year history of bridge-building innovation. Each of these bridges is distinguished by its architecture and its place in the life of the city. They are vital elements of the city’s culture.

The bridges of St. Anthony Falls have an enduring appeal. They physically connect places separated by the river and they take pedestrians, motorists, and bicyclists out over the moving water where they can experience the place between the east and west banks. These bridges are among the best places to feel the power of the falls and observe the cultural landscape of the Minneapolis riverfront.

Since every bridge is built for specific reasons—typically to connect roads and railroad tracks—every bridge has its own story. Today there is little to recall these stories, especially when river crossings are so common and uneventful. Interpretive elements on these bridges and in the places where bridges once stood, can prompt people to pause, observe, and reflect on the relationship between the bridges and the changing city they support.

Bridges are among the interbank resources of the St. Anthony Falls area, no more or less a part of the West Bank than they are of the East Bank. They are included in this plan because of their visual prominence among the West Bank interpretive resources and the historical relationships they evoke between the area’s communities, transportation, and industry.

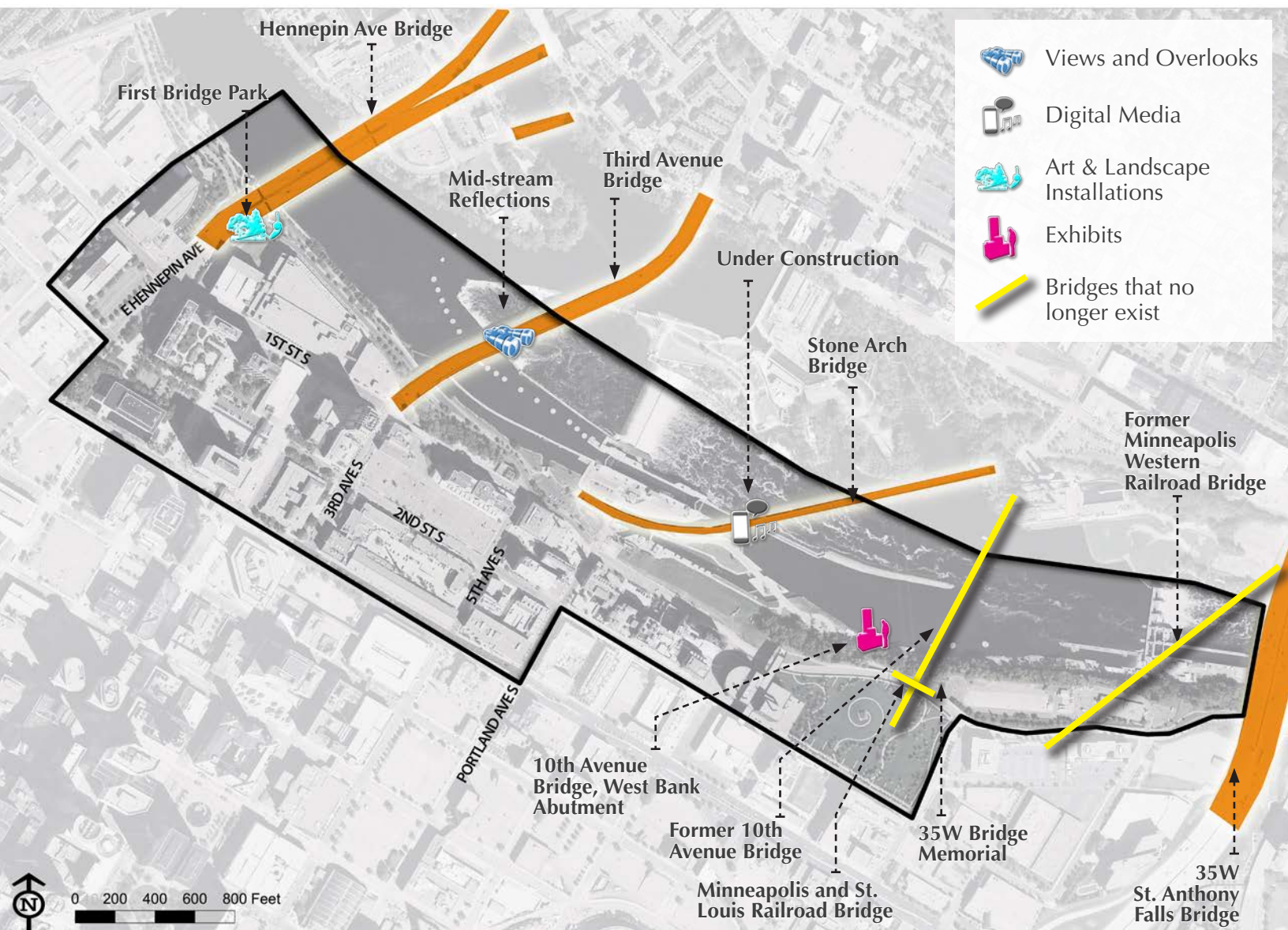
Bridges included in this plan:

Hennepin Avenue Bridge. The first bridge on this site (1854) was celebrated as the first permanent structure open to general traffic to span the Mississippi River. Two other bridges crossed the river at this point before the current structure opened in 1990.

Third Avenue Bridge. Minneapolis chose a design of reinforced concrete for this structure, an innovation at the time—achieving graceful lines and long-term durability. It opened in 1918.

Stone Arch Bridge. This bridge carried mostly passenger trains from 1883 to 1978. It was reopened for recreational use in 1994.

35W St. Anthony Falls Bridge. The original Interstate 35W bridge (1967) collapsed August 1, 2007, killing 13 people and injuring 145. The current structure opened in 2008.



Past bridges included in this study include:

10th Avenue Bridge (1874 – 1943). This lightweight, steel-truss structure was built to join the newly consolidated cities of St. Anthony and Minneapolis.

Minneapolis Western Railroad Bridge (1887 – 1952). Built to provide rail access directly to the West Bank flour mills, it was removed to make way for construction of the Lower St. Anthony Falls lock and dam.

Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad Bridge (1890s). This relatively short bridge spanned 10th Avenue at the river and facilitated movement of boxcars in and out of the Milling District.

INTERPRETIVE LOCATIONS



10th Avenue Bridge, West Bank Abutment. Just upriver from the 35W Bridge Memorial, along the bike and pedestrian trail that descends from West River Parkway, visitors can stand atop the former abutment of the 10th Avenue Bridge and look across the river to the East Bank. A series of piers once marched across the river, all that remained after the steel trusses and bridge deck were removed in 1943. As of 2014, only one pier remains.

During the early decades of the 20th Century several modes of transportation crisscrossed this location on roads and bridges stacked almost on top of one another. This interpretive installation is comprised of three elevation markers—all visible from an orientation trail sign—that indicate the levels of each structure: the 10th Avenue Bridge deck below and the two railroad bridges at or above a visitor's eye level. An additional viewfinder puts visitors in direct alignment with the 10th Avenue Bridge.



Mid-stream Reflections. Pedestrian trails and bicycle lanes on the area's bridges provide exceptional vantage points all along their spans. They help people focus on places and objects of interest, but they also bring people to places between the East and West Banks. In Dakota culture, the place between is a place for healing. These bridges offer places to pause and feel the energy and life of the river; they are evocative places for embedded poetry.

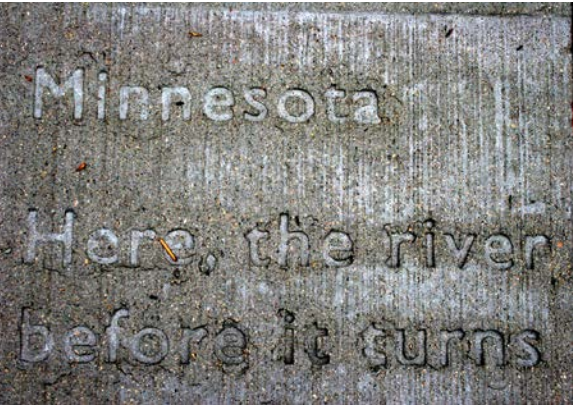


First Bridge Park. This small, undistinguished park features some extraordinary artifacts and structural remnants of earlier Hennepin Avenue bridges. Unfortunately, the dark under-bridge atmosphere of the setting does little to draw visitors into the stories of the site. Given the great height up to the underside of the bridge deck, there are opportunities to install sculptural elements and large images high above the historical remnants that suggest the shape and prominence of the towering structures that once stood there. Signage and additional lighting—especially during daylight hours—would greatly increase the appeal of this significant site.



Under Construction. Sometimes the best place to see and learn about a bridge is from another bridge. Pedestrian walkways and overlooks on the Hennepin Avenue Bridge, Third Avenue Bridge, and Stone Arch Bridge provide excellent views of neighboring bridges. For example, the steel trestle section of the Stone Arch Bridge provides space and good sightlines to the 3rd Avenue and 35W Bridges. At various locations on these bridges visitors encounter trail signs and viewfinders or are prompted to download a location-based media application that features stories and photos not about the bridge they are crossing, but the next bridge up or down river.

Few events attract the attention of photographers like a bridge under construction. This was true during the building of the bridges near St. Anthony Falls. Many historical photographs depict monumental efforts and changing bridge-building technology.



Poetry in concrete



Clink Street Tunnel, London, "Good Night: A Dazzling New Era of Metropolitan Light," Places: Design Observer, April, 2014.

STORIES OF THE WEST BANK

Bridge Meets River

On the evening of April 18, 1965, a switch crew moving empty passenger cars across the Stone Arch Bridge noticed a dip in the tracks about halfway across the river. Within hours, inspectors confirmed a fifteen-inch sag at pier number 7. The mighty bridge was giving way to an even mightier river.

“Firmer than the earth which supports it, it is constructed to stand the test of time until the golden age shall arrive when the problems of aerial navigation shall have been solved, and railroads and railroad bridges will be useless works of engineering.”

**Daily Minnesota Tribune,
November 23, 1883**

The spring floods of 1965 were breaking all records at St. Anthony Falls. The river’s flow had exceeded typical spring velocities by almost three times, moving rocks that were once thought immovable. The piers of the Stone Arch Bridge had been armored with rip rap comprised of 500-pound boulders. That spring the river simply moved them downstream, exposing the bases of the mid-river piers to scouring currents that began undermining the great bridge. As the sandstone beneath Pier 7 eroded, the massive structure began to sink.

The bridge was closed and repairs began immediately. On October 22, 1965 the Stone Arch Bridge reopened to rail traffic. The herculean efforts to save the bridge, however, could do nothing about the sag over Pier 7, which can still be seen today—an impressive reminder of the power of the river.



*View along
Stone Arch
Bridge, 1965,
Minnesota
Historical
Society*



Gateway District



Bridge Square, 1883. The first City Hall is on the right and in the distance is the second Hennepin Avenue Bridge.

Arriving on the west side of the Mississippi River—after crossing a wooden suspension bridge—pedestrians, riders on horseback, and wagon drivers in the 1850s came to a place that was emerging as the city's center and would later be called the Gateway District.

The relatively narrow channel and calm waters between Nicollet Island and the West Bank provided a likely place for crossings long before the first Hennepin Avenue Bridge was built. Azayamankawin (1788 – 1873), a Dakota woman also known as Betsy St. Clair, or Old Bets, helped people across the river in a canoe. Over the years, other ferries operated here including that of Franklin Steele, who established a service in 1847.

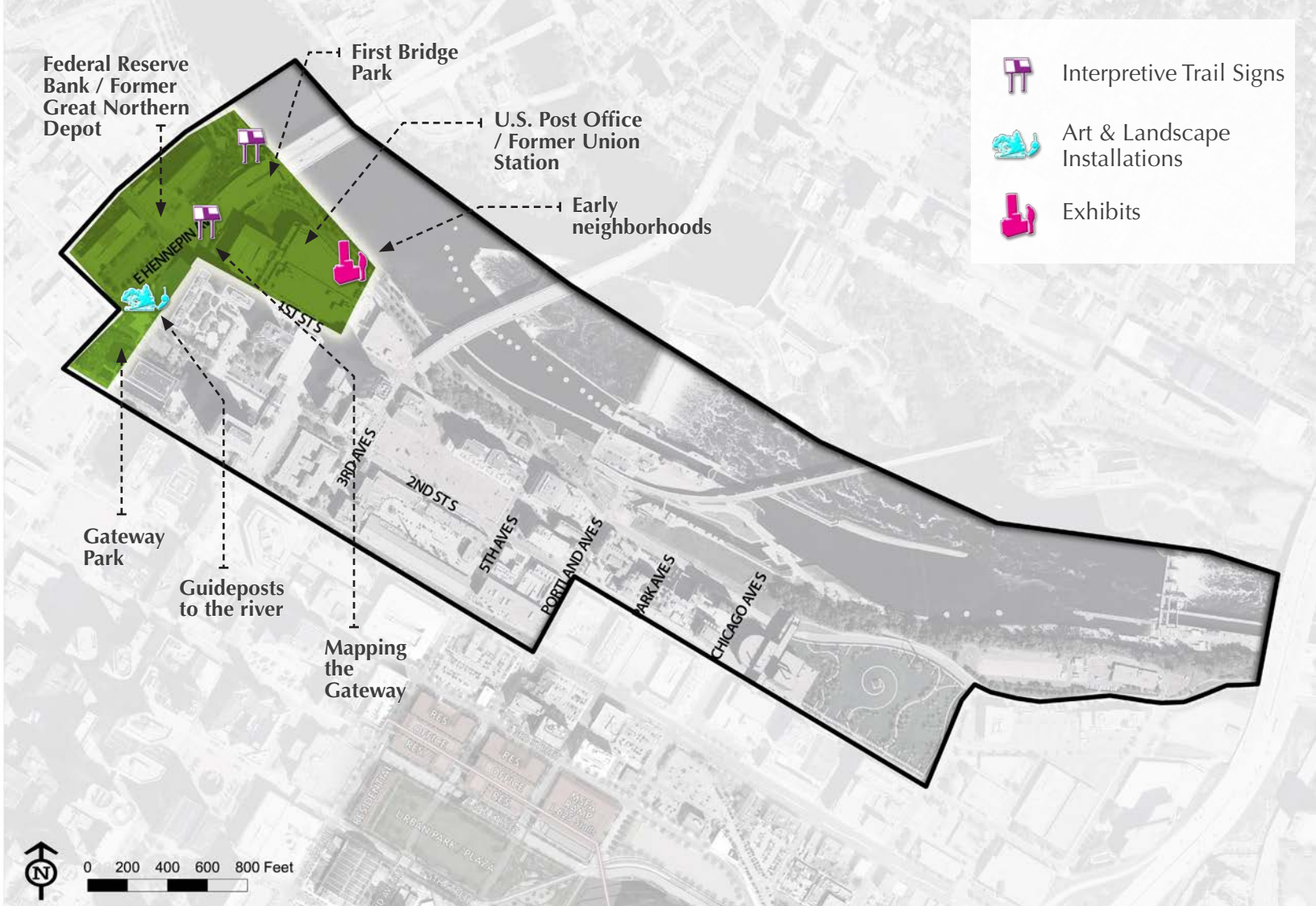
When the first Hennepin Avenue bridge was built in 1854 it was the first permanent structure open to general traffic to span the Mississippi River. It didn't take long for the area around the western terminus of the bridge to become a vital destination for people and commerce. This was the place where streets, railroads, the river, and even city government came together. Laborers looked for their next jobs in the Gateway, moving in and out of the district between seasonal jobs that included harvesting wheat in the fall, working in the lumber camps during the winter, and even driving logs to the Minneapolis sawmills in the spring. But as the city grew outward in various directions, the original city center no longer attracted people and commerce the way it once did. By the 1930s, the area became known as Minneapolis's Skid Row, a reputation that carried into the 1960s, when wrecking balls and bulldozers cleared the way for urban renewal.



Gateway Pavilion, 1929. The flag pole is now located at the corner of Hennepin Avenue and First Street. Minnesota Historical Society



Gateway District, 1939, John Vachon, photographer, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection



INTERPRETIVE LOCATIONS



Guideposts to the river. A series of lighted guideposts mark a path between an interpretive gateway located near Second Street and Hennepin and the river. From each guidepost visitors can see the next in a succession that brings them to the river. Variations in color, size, materials, and lighting can distinguish different paths and different themes relating the Gateway District to the river.



Mapping the Gateway. So much has been removed and changed in this district that it is difficult for visitors to see change over time. This series of trail signs makes a game of finding specific places and historical street views. At 8 to 10 locations visitors encounter interpretive signs that picture buildings, people, and events tied to exact locations around the Gateway. Each sign features a map of today's Gateway overlaid with a map from an earlier time period, showing where the streets have changed and stayed the same. Each map also shows the locations of all signs in the series.



Early neighborhoods. The area along the river between Hennepin Avenue and what is now the Third Avenue Bridge was the city's first residential neighborhood, anchored by the 1849 home of civic leader John H. Stevens. The Minneapolis Post Office now occupies the land where once stood a growing neighborhood of wood-frame houses. The gallery that parallels West River Parkway provides an engaging, site-specific venue for an installation of projected images and lighting effects recalling the historic first neighborhood of Minneapolis.



Guideposts to the river



View of the early residential neighborhood between what is now Third Avenue Bridge and Hennepin Avenue, 1866. The John Stevens House is the white gabled structure center left. Minnesota Historical Society.



This series of sculptures illustrates changes over time in the Gateway District. They provide an interpretive anchor for additional historical mapping activities in the area.



Bridge Square lighting mast, 1883, powered by the Minneapolis Brush Electric Company, Upton Island, the first hydroelectric central station in North America. Minnesota Historical Society

STORIES OF THE WEST BANK

A City Beautiful

“The Gateway was in desperate need of redevelopment. But the solution chosen by the city was an extreme one—total destruction. This strategy of obliteration received final approval in 1957 when Minneapolis Mayor P. K. Peterson went to Washington, D.C. and convinced federal officials to help fund the ambitious project.”

Larry Millett, Lost Twin Cities, 1992

Park Board (currently Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board) began acquiring land in 1908 to build the Gateway Park and Pavilion. The new facility opened in 1915, featuring ornate architecture, potted palms during the summer months and a Christmas tree in the winter, and a prominently displayed inscription that read, “The Gateway: More than her gates the city opens her heart to you.”

The Pavilion, with its available shelter and public restrooms, eventually became a favorite destination for the city’s homeless. Following the same trend as the Gateway District in general, the park and its once-gracious pavilion deteriorated into an undesirable city landmark.

The Pavilion was torn down in 1953 and again this historical heart of the city became the focus of a grand, rejuvenating vision for the future of Minneapolis. The Gateway Urban Renewal Project of the 1960s, responsible for the demolition of a wide swath of the city’s downtown, claimed the remaining park, leaving only the flag pole now standing at the corner of Second Street and Hennepin Avenue.

Bridge Square, at the west end of the Hennepin Avenue Bridge, had been the city’s front door since the first bridge was built across the river in 1854. It was the home of city government, the first farmers’ market, and the area’s premier railroad station. By the early 1900s, however, the area had lost its shine and become the focus of visionary ideas for urban renewal. Minneapolis, like so many other urban centers across the country, had embraced the City Beautiful Movement. Adherents to this urban-planning philosophy believed that a city of columned facades and gracious landscape designs—all influenced by classical architecture—would promote civic virtue and wholesome values among its residents.

City leaders began imaging the possibilities for Bridge Square as early as 1905. The Minneapolis



Gateway Park dedication, 1915. The water fountain that once graced the Gateway pavilion can now be seen at the Lake Harriet Rose Garden. Minnesota Historical Society

Programs



Ice skating in an urban setting



*Firepit gathering space,
www.bryantpark.org*



Tour of the Mill District

Social gatherings and events can instill powerful memories of a place in ways that fixed interpretive elements seldom can. They are personal, allow for conversations, and are centered on specific locations and topics. When visitors are given a tour, happen upon a live performance, or see a temporary art installation, they are invited to concentrate on the particulars of a subject and see it from a different perspective.

At St. Anthony Falls, programs are offered by various organizations including the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Minnesota Historical Society, National Park Service, and the University of Minnesota among others. Increasingly, visitors are drawn to facilitated events where encounters with talented guides, teachers, and storytellers get people excited and strengthen their relationships with the power of St. Anthony Falls. Examples of programs in the West Bank include: Journey to the Falls, a school field-trip program (National Park Service in collaboration with multiple agencies); Gold Medal Walking Tours, some guided by history players (Mill City Museum); Magical History Tours (Segway Tours); Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures (National Park Service with Wilderness Inquiry); and Minneapolis Red, White, and Boom (Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board).

The 2013 interpretive plan for the East Bank described an array of current and future programs and events, including:

- Naturalist Classes
- Community Special Events
- Outdoor Concerts and Movies
- Youth and Volunteer Programs
- Culturally Specific Events and Programs
- Tours and Living History Programs
- Winter to Year-round Bird Watching
- School Programs
- Festivals and Social Gatherings

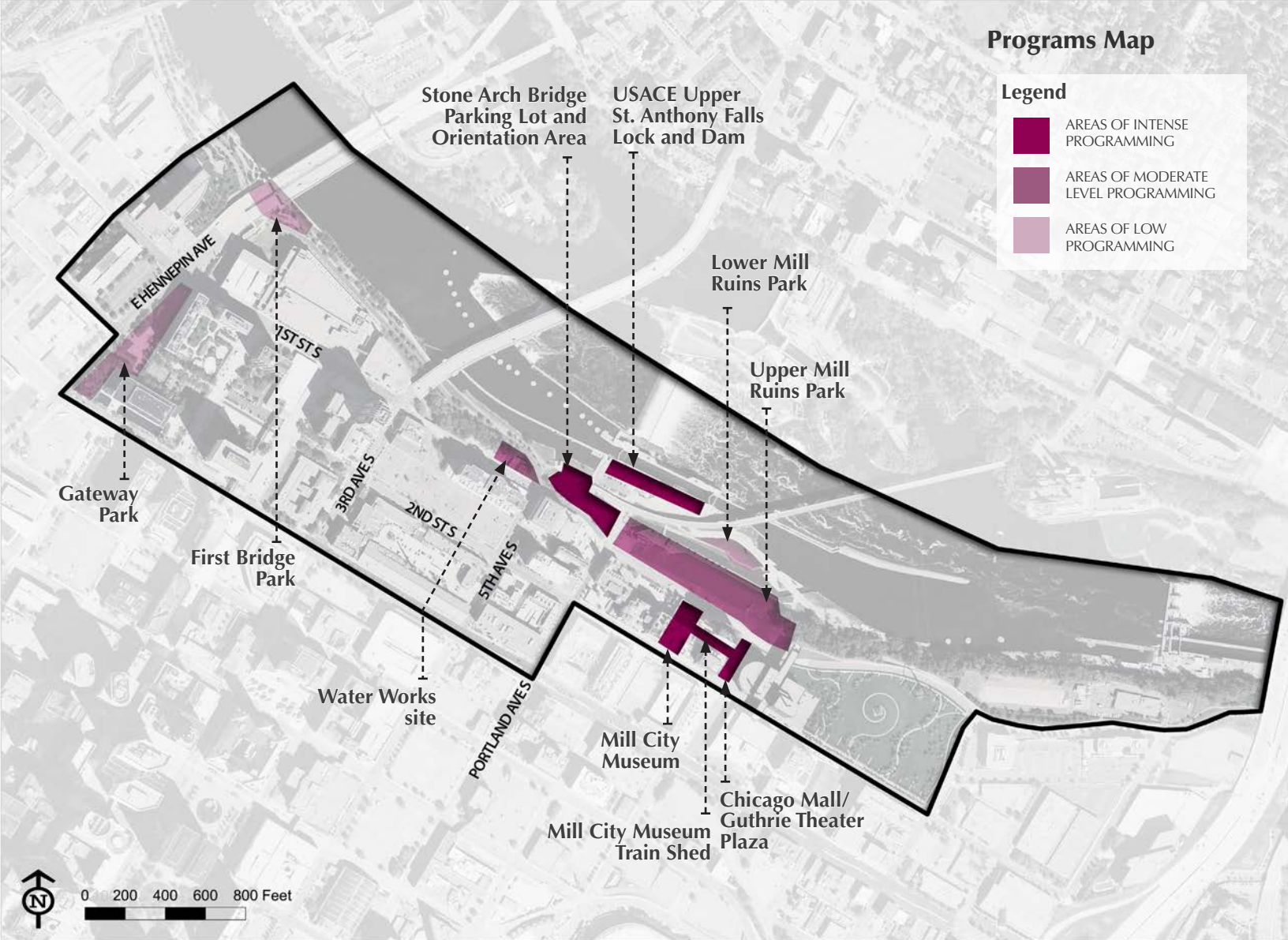
This list of structured and facilitated activities also reflects the existing and potential role of programming for the West Bank. With a greater density of historical resources and more established venues for interpretation, the West Bank provides opportunities for an even wider range of program offerings. Mill City Museum—as a welcoming venue and program presenter—can host permanent and temporary installations in a public, yet secure facility. In 2011, the museum opened *Cloudy Waters: Dakota Reflections on the River*, an audio installation in Ruin Courtyard. Staged performances and installations such as this are widening the range of interpretive viewpoints from which visitors can see and feel the power of the falls.

A growing tourism market also presents demands and opportunities for a different scale of programming throughout the area. With enhanced interpretive resources, such as those described in this plan and in the plans for the East Bank, St. Anthony Falls has the potential to become

Programs Map

Legend

- AREAS OF INTENSE PROGRAMMING
- AREAS OF MODERATE LEVEL PROGRAMMING
- AREAS OF LOW PROGRAMMING



a national and international destination for tourists. With greatly expanded program offerings, the area's holding power with visitors will carry into days, not just an afternoon. Packaged as *A Week at the Falls*, a potential set of experiences could be offered through public and private collaborations, taking visitors out onto the river and into the tunnels during the day and out to restaurants, galleries, and theaters at night.

Already, the field of program providers is diverse, including for-profit companies and public/private partnerships. It is important that the West Bank and its public-program amenities are welcoming to various presenters, neighborhood groups, businesses, and informal partnerships. The West Bank is an increasingly attractive venue for artists and arts organizations interested in staging programs and installing temporary and permanent artworks. Agencies can help foster this kind of activity by streamlining the process for acquiring permits and requisite permissions, further enlivening the area and engaging local communities.

Tour of the Mill District



Investing in the Visitor Experience



Northern Spark, 2012

The work of the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board in the Minneapolis Central Riverfront has been a stunning success by many measures, not the least of which is as a driver of economic development. The opening of the Stone Arch Bridge (1994), construction of the Mill City Museum (2003) and Mill Ruins Park (2003-2005), and other projects have yielded private investments estimated at \$4 for every \$1 of public investment. Today, the Central Riverfront is a vibrant heart of the city and a focal point for tourists, thousands of residents, and many more residents soon to move in.

Continued investment in the Central Riverfront is needed to not only build on the work that has been done but also to fill important gaps in visitor amenities and accessibility as well as historical interpretation. The Central Riverfront has the potential to rank among the world's great destinations, attracting an increasing number of tourists, residents, and commercial investment in the urban core. The Metropolitan Council estimates more than 1.8 million visits to the St. Anthony Falls Regional Park in 2013, up from 1.6 million in 2011. Visits to the area have steadily increased in recent years and are likely to do so in the future, especially with the strategic investments called for in this plan.

Investors in this endeavor can be assured that current visitors to the area would greatly value future developments. According to the 2013 St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone Visitor Survey:

- 73% want to take tours of underground tunnels
- 64% love history
- 60% would like on-the-water activities
- 56% want to learn more about the area
- 55% want to learn more about the natural resources
- 53% are interested in programs about industries and transportation
- 53% would like a visitor and orientation center
- 49% want to learn more about American Indians
- 39% want to learn more about people who lived here
- 36% are interested in guided tours
- 32% are interested in audio tours

A Desirable Destination for Tourists

Great cities provide unique and memorable experiences for visitors, and the West Bank area offers the greatest concentrations of one-of-a-kind experiences in the downtown area. Its combination of centrally located historical and natural resources offers travelers the kind of authentic, unique, and concentrated experiences they are seeking. Short walks leading visitors from one unique feature to another, opportunities to experience nature in the heart of the city, and abundant photo



opportunities will delight first-time visitors and draw them back again and again.

Northern Spark, 2012

Development of the West Bank comes at an opportune time as local tourism organizations are stepping up efforts to attract and serve the growing number of tourists. Meet Minneapolis is promoting Minneapolis as a “city within a park.” Their strategic plan calls for an increase in the annual number of visitors from 27.9 million in 2012 to 37 million by 2017. In addition, the Metropolitan Airports Commission has launched an effort to make it easier for the 17 million travelers who come through the airport each year to get out of the airport and experience the Twin Cities. Attracting these audiences to St. Anthony Falls will require more one-of-kind, signature experiences—especially on the water and underground.

A Growing Downtown Residential and Commercial Community

More than 35,000 people reside in and near downtown Minneapolis and many more residences are under construction. The Minneapolis Downtown Council 2025 Plan calls for 70,000 residents, nearly double the current population. Minneapolis will require more recreational amenities to meet the needs of this growing downtown population. The Downtown Council’s Plan also calls for creating and sustaining green infrastructure, connecting downtown to the river and showcasing the riverfront.

The West Bank is a focal point, connecting numerous residential neighborhoods and an evolving commercial area of restaurants and shops that serve tourists and residents of the area. Public investment in this area will continue to stimulate private investment, contributing to Minneapolis’s tax base and enhancing real estate values in the surrounding community.

Partnership Opportunities for the West Bank

As demonstrated by the Stone Arch Bridge, Mill City Museum, and Mill Ruins Park, partnerships are essential to development in the Central Riverfront. Similarly, partnerships will provide powerful vehicles for developing the West Bank, providing rich and unique visitor experiences, and creating the marketing and promotion required to build audiences.

Land Owners and Program Partners

As is true throughout the Central Riverfront, the West Bank is a patchwork of public and private landowners. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board owns much of the land and must be a willing participant for development to go forward. The U.S. Government is an important landowner, especially in view of the 2015 closing of the Upper Lock. Other significant land owners include the U.S. Postal Service, Minnesota Historical Society, Union Pacific Railroad, and the Guthrie Theater Foundation.

Program Partners

Numerous organizations are in a position to play a programming role on the West Bank, and in many cases, the landowner will not be the program provider. Each organization will want to participate in a way that builds on its strengths and mission. Examples include:

- The Minnesota Historical Society, which has been the leader in historical interpretation on the west side of the river, has the opportunity to extend its offerings and deliver its mission in new and exciting ways outlined in this plan.
- The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has provided leadership in recreational use and is likely to do so in partnership with many public and nonprofit partners who offer programs in parks throughout the city.
- The National Park Service (Mississippi National River and Recreation Area) has offered interpretation and programs in the area in the past and may want to lend its knowledge and expertise to interpreting the West Bank, possibly through a partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as the Upper Lock is closed.

Additional programming partners could include:

- Federal Reserve Bank
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- City of Minneapolis Public Works Department
- Preserve Minneapolis
- Minnesota Segway Tours
- Native American Community Development Institute
- Works Progress Studio
- Forecast Public Art
- Guthrie Theater
- Wilderness Inquiry
- MacPhail Center for Music
- All My Relations Arts
- Minnesota Center for Book Arts
- Open Book
- Mill City Farmers Market
- Numerous local restaurants (e.g. Spoonriver, ZenBox)

Promotion and Marketing Partnerships

A key recommendation of the 2009 *Power of the Falls* study was to “build and broaden the audience” in the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone. The study described the potential for building new audiences, particularly among local and non-local tourists, residents of nearby communities, and diverse populations who are under-represented in the area. Although the Metropolitan Council’s estimate of 1.8 million visitors in the Central Riverfront is an impressive number, it is far fewer than the nearly 5.4 million who visit the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park. To grow the audience and achieve the full benefit of the *Power of the Falls* vision, more investment in promotion and marketing is needed. Fortunately, the West Bank is in a position to benefit from many organizations who are implementing plans to drive tourism and build local audiences. Meet Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Downtown Council, and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport all have new plans to boost tourism. Many more organizations are positioned to drive audiences to the area through a variety of media, including evolving web-based marketing.

A topic of particular concern among the West Bank Interpretive Planning Group is how people of color access and enjoy the Central Riverfront. Audience surveys in the Central Riverfront in both 2009 and 2013 demonstrate under-representation by people of color in contrast to the population of Minneapolis (15% of survey participants vs. 37% of Minneapolis residents.) A recent Metropolitan Council study (Regional Park Usage Among Select Communities of Color, March, 2014) explores the topic of under representation of people of color among visitors to the regional park system and identifies barriers. The top three barriers were lack of awareness, time, and fear or safety concerns. The study also noted variations in how communities of color access and enjoy parks in contrast to white visitors. The Central Riverfront has more potential to attract and serve communities of color, particularly in view of its central location and proximity to diverse neighborhoods like Cedar Riverside and others in North and Northeast Minneapolis. The study offers guidance on how program leaders in the Central Riverfront can broaden and grow the audience through effective program development.

Financial Partners

Major projects in the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone have exemplified the power of public and private financial partnerships. Public and private sources stepped forward to reopen the Stone Arch Bridge and build Mill City Museum and Mill Ruins Park. More recently, private donors funded the lighting design and installation for the Stone Arch Bridge. Based on that history, there is every reason to believe a variety of organizations would be willing participants in an exciting future for the West Bank.

In the immediate future, there is a need to continue planning, especially for visitor amenities and interpretive installations in collaboration with the St. Anthony Falls Regional Park Master Plan project. The St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants (Legacy Funds) are likely sources for ongoing planning support.

Funding for physical development and the natural resources of the West Bank Vision will likely involve numerous financial partners. Examples include the following:

- Minneapolis Parks Foundation
- State Bonding (through MHS, MPRB, etc.)
- Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants
- Additional legacy funds such as Outdoor Heritage Funds, Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and Clean Water Fund
- Mississippi Watershed Management Organization
- Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission
- Various Corporate Foundations

Financial partners for programming will include many of the previously listed programming organizations plus a host of others, both public and private. Private vendors have enjoyed success in a variety of Minneapolis parks, providing services ranging from food and entertainment to various recreational opportunities such as Segway tours. Implementation of this plan will attract more visitors and spawn the amenities and services that visitors need and desire.

Recommendations: Context And Opportunities

In calling for this Interpretive Vision and Plan, the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board asked the consultant team to take a long-term, 25-year view. Within this long-range plan, however, are many planning objectives and visitor-experience concepts that can be acted on in a much shorter timeframe. Many plans are underway for the West Bank that share similar objectives with this interpretive plan, so it is important that the Heritage Board keep up the momentum and begin taking action on the following recommendations.



Sisoka Duta and Kate Beane reading poetry in Dakota and English, Mill City Museum, 2011

1. Make indigenous cultures more visible

St. Anthony Falls is a spiritually significant place for indigenous people. The power of the falling water, the dramatic gorge, and the abundance of wildlife has provided a desirable place to hunt, fish, and live in community for centuries. Dakota, Ojibwe, and Ho-Chunk people all have strong relationships with the area. In particular, St. Anthony Falls is a Dakota place. They were the first here and have continued their relationship with the falls up to the present. It remains a place of homecoming for Dakota from across the country.

Today there are many opportunities to work with Dakota people—in celebrating the area and helping

to engage others in its stories. Today's visitors are interested in indigenous cultures and this report contains a number of specific concepts for interpreting Dakota relationships to the area. These recommendations must be further shaped through deeper conversations with Dakota elders and teachers. Long-term relationships that lead to trusting collaborations could open the way for Dakota people telling their own stories at the falls. The St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board and its member agencies have already begun working with Dakota artists and teachers. It is important that the board deepen these relationships and support long-term conversations with Dakota elders and teachers who can advise on specific interpretive projects and programs and provide broader knowledge about the area as well.

2. Create a more vibrant riverfront through expanded interpretive programming

Programs (events, performances, tours, etc.) add immeasurable value to the overall visitor experience on the riverfront. Seeing live performances or taking guided tours are often the most memorable experiences visitors will have at venues such as this. Despite the certain value they add, programs are consistently underfunded and are the first budget items to be cut during tough times. By increasing funding and support for history programming, the West Bank could become a premier destination for visitors seeking memorable, one-of-a-kind experiences.



Twin Cities youth participating in an Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventure program with National Park Service staff on the Mississippi River, 2013, Wilderness Inquiry/StarTribune

3. Preserve the area's industrial ruins while providing appropriate accessibility to the public



The Minneapolis riverfront holds a distinguished collection of industrial ruins that play an important role in engaging visitors in the stories of waterpower, milling, and railroads. The ruins are effective interpretive tools; they evoke parts of a story while engaging visitors' imaginations to fill in the rest. Tragically, the existing ruins have deteriorated, battered by the harsh climate and the interaction with the people who visit the area. Consequently, there is an ongoing debate about whether to excavate

more of the ruins or leave them in the ground, preserved for all time.

The significance of these ruins, and the Gatehouse in particular, cannot be overstated. It was here, through the massive gates below the Gatehouse, that the river roared through to power many mills and even a section of railroad. No single structure better demonstrates the scale and historical significance of water power at St. Anthony Falls. This and the area's other ruins tell a story that is central to the development of the city and the milling industry, once the largest concentration of direct-drive waterpower systems the world has ever known.

Partial excavation—guided by a well-researched preservation and conservation plan—holds the greatest promise for keeping the ruins in the public eye. Starting with an updated inventory and assessment of all ruins and water-control structures, the preservation plan should address the condition and future maintenance needed for each structure, above and below ground. Additionally, alternatives for re-establishing the presence of the gatehouse must be evaluated, including considerations of its archaeological and architectural values.

4. Meet the needs of a growing number of visitors



Attracting visitors from around the world, St. Anthony Falls offers memorable experiences with the river, the falls, and its distinctive historic landscapes. Audiences for the area are likely to grow dramatically. By 2025, 70,000 people are projected to live downtown, nearly twice the number who live there today. The number of tourists to Minneapolis is expected to grow from 27 million now to 37 million by 2017, an increase of 10 million. Looking to the future, the area has the potential to rank among the world's top destinations.

The question of what amenities to provide for visitors to the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone has been at the forefront of planning discussions that now span the development of three interpretive plans since 2009. Numerous other studies also have called for a range of visitor services in the area and numerous potential

sites have been mentioned on both sides of the riverfront.

A focused approach to answering this question is far preferable than leaving the answers to individual agencies that may want to move forward on one option or another. We recommend the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board create a multi-agency Visitor Task Force with the following charge:

- Review all existing information related to current and future audiences and their needs. Audiences include tourists (Minnesota and beyond), casual visitors, residents of the area, school groups, and other tour groups. Analyze survey results and traffic studies in the area and commission additional research if needed.
- Evaluate the many optional sites that have been identified in the District and any others that have potential.
- Make recommendations on how best to meet the needs of various visitor groups for orientation, interpretation, tours, event spaces, and basic amenities such as food, water, and restrooms. Determine which audience needs are best met in which locations on both sides of the river. Make recommendations for how the facilities can be financed and operated.
- Determine which partners should take on the construction and ongoing operations of each facility.

5. Strengthen the visual and experiential cohesiveness of the area

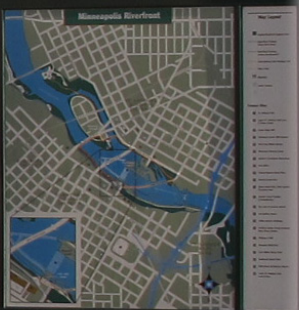
Over the years, individual projects, large and small, have been designed and installed with only limited consideration of the overall look and feel of the Central Riverfront. As a result, the area presents a fragmented, disjointed

experience to visitors. Recognizing the role of design in visitor experience, museums have developed guidelines and processes for reviewing interpretive elements that could provide a model for the Heritage Board and Park Board.

By establishing a more formal design-review process of proposed interpretive elements, the Heritage Board can help create a unified identity for the area, giving visitors clear, welcoming signals that they are in a historic district with myriad offerings. Beyond wayfinding, design can also influence how visitors interact with the themes and messages that pull together the bigger story of St. Anthony Falls. Design reviews should also include proposed exhibit and street furniture (materials, colors, and finishes) and address issues of safety and accessibility.

The St. Anthony Falls Regional Park Master Plan (2014) addresses issues of legibility and cohesion throughout the park, with particular focus on circulation connections between east and west banks and downtown. Through signage and exhibits, these connections can be strengthened with historical interpretation that draws attention to the vital relationship between St. Anthony Falls and the urban community that grew up in this great confluence of the river, people, and industry.

INFORMATION



Community Input

Additional people who gave their time and thoughts to the West Bank Interpretive Vision:

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Diane Wilson, Dream of Wild Health

West Bank Interpretive Vision Plan

ST. ANTHONY FALLS HERITAGE BOARD

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

2014

