

Business Item 2021-37

# **Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan**

## Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

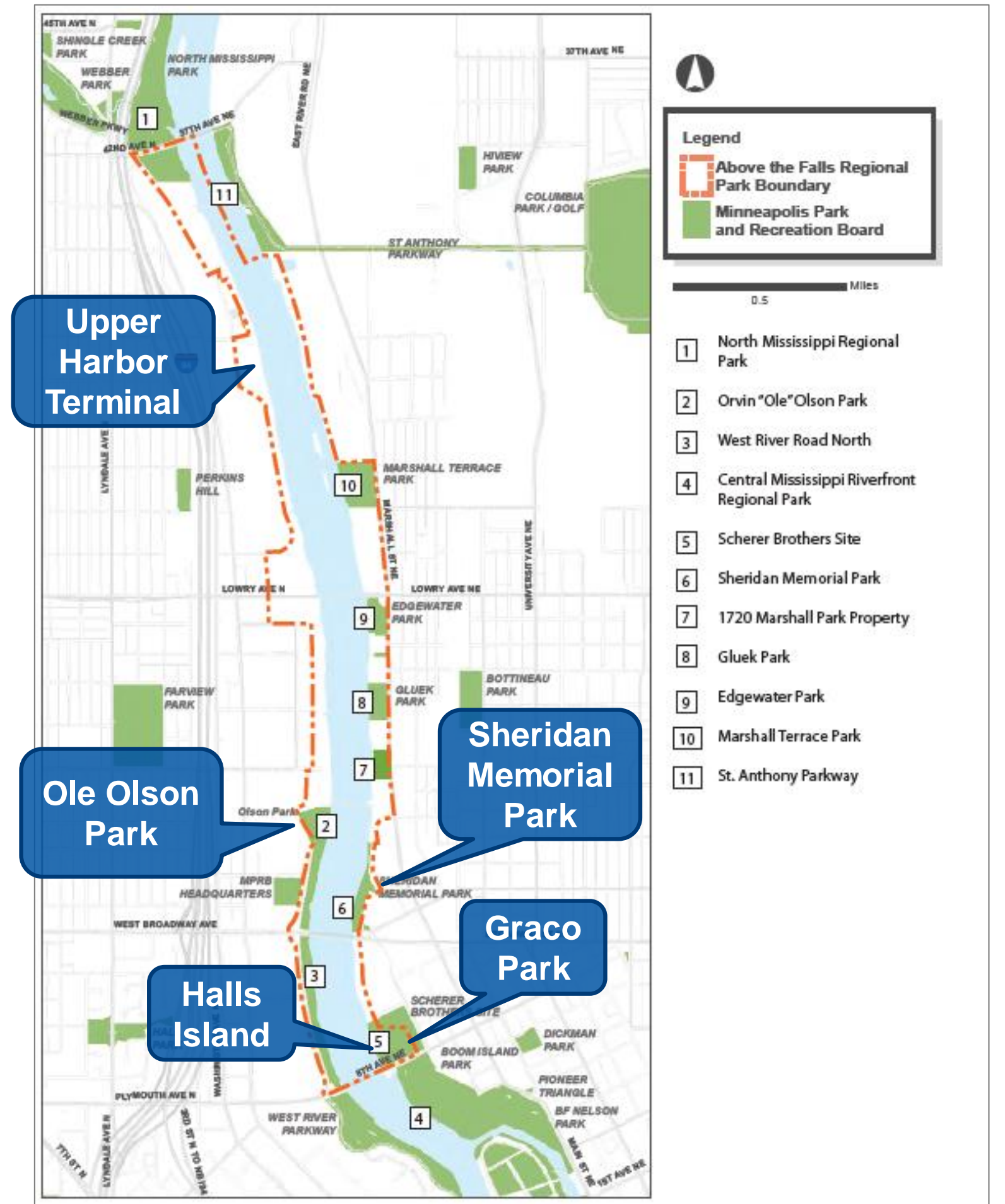
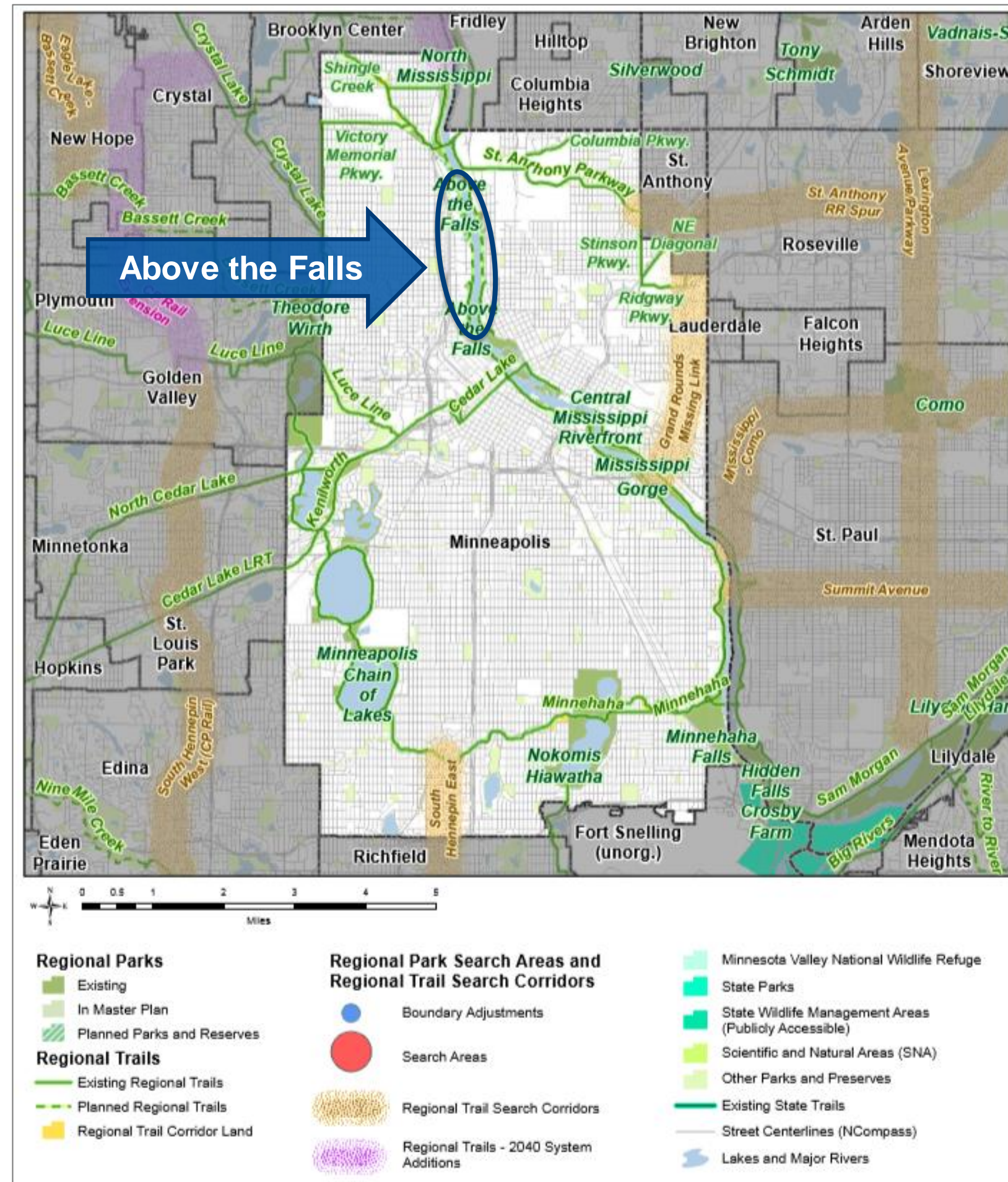
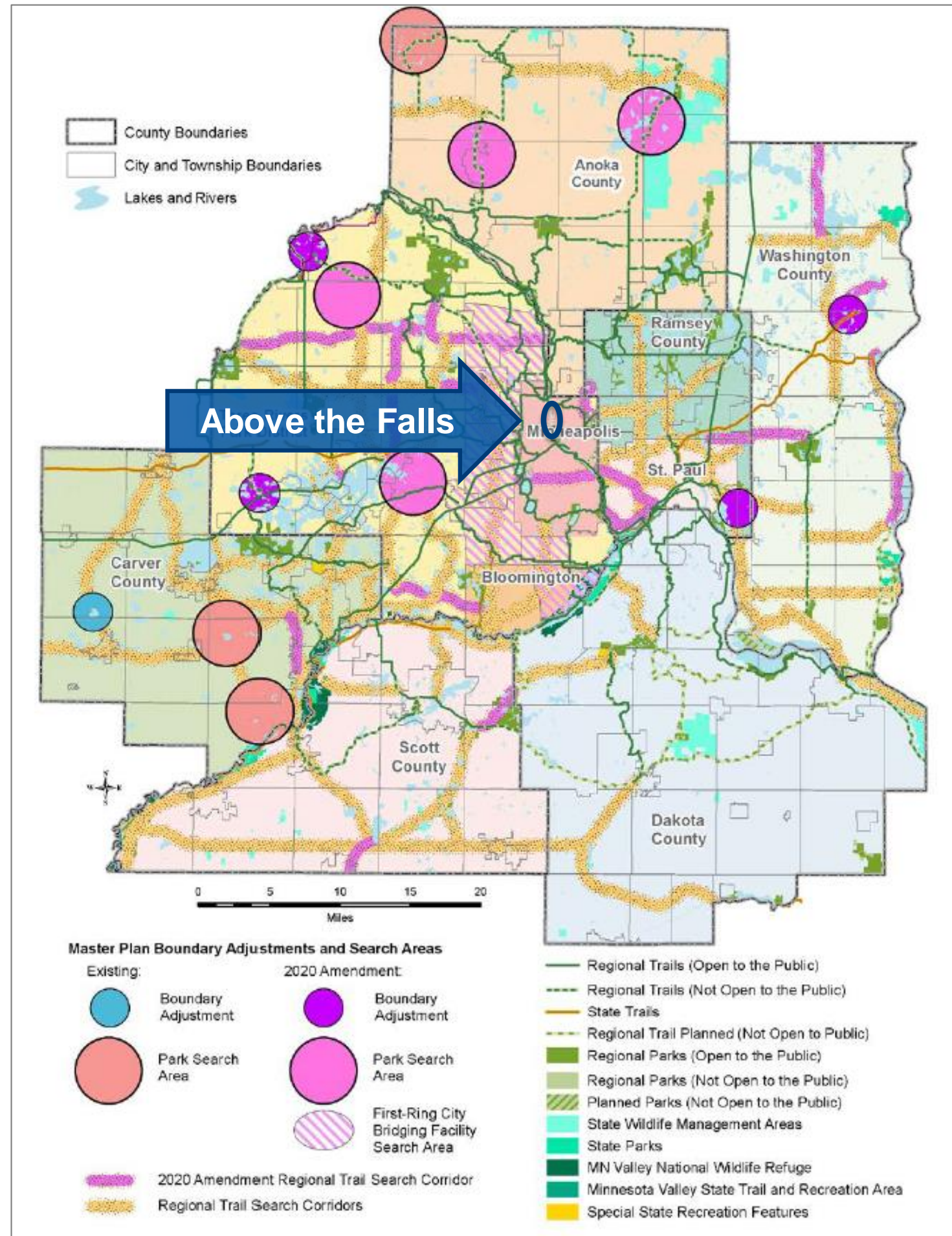
February 16, 2021

**Community Development Committee**





# Above the Falls Regional Park





# Community and Partner Engagement

## Examples of who was engaged

- The General Public
- Neighborhood organizations from North, Northeast Minneapolis
- City of Minneapolis
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
- Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership
- Hennepin County
- Juxtaposition Arts
- Mississippi Watershed Management Organization
- University of Minnesota
- Friends of the Mississippi River
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Minnesota Historical Society
- National Park Service
- US Army Corps of Engineers





# Community and Partner Engagement *continued*

## What did participants say?

- People want to **experience** and **access** the river
  - Continuous and looping trails with connections to neighborhoods
  - Boat access and gathering places, picnic shelters, etc.
  - Recreation activities for all ages (walk, bike, ski, fish, swim)
- People want to **restore** and **improve** the river
  - Natural and open spaces with restored habitat for ecological health
  - Native plantings and gardens
  - Clean water, stormwater management and shoreline restoration
- People want **equitable** development
  - Equitable distribution of park access points and park development
  - Design for a diverse population to access the public health benefits of parks
  - Benefits to North and Northeast Minneapolis



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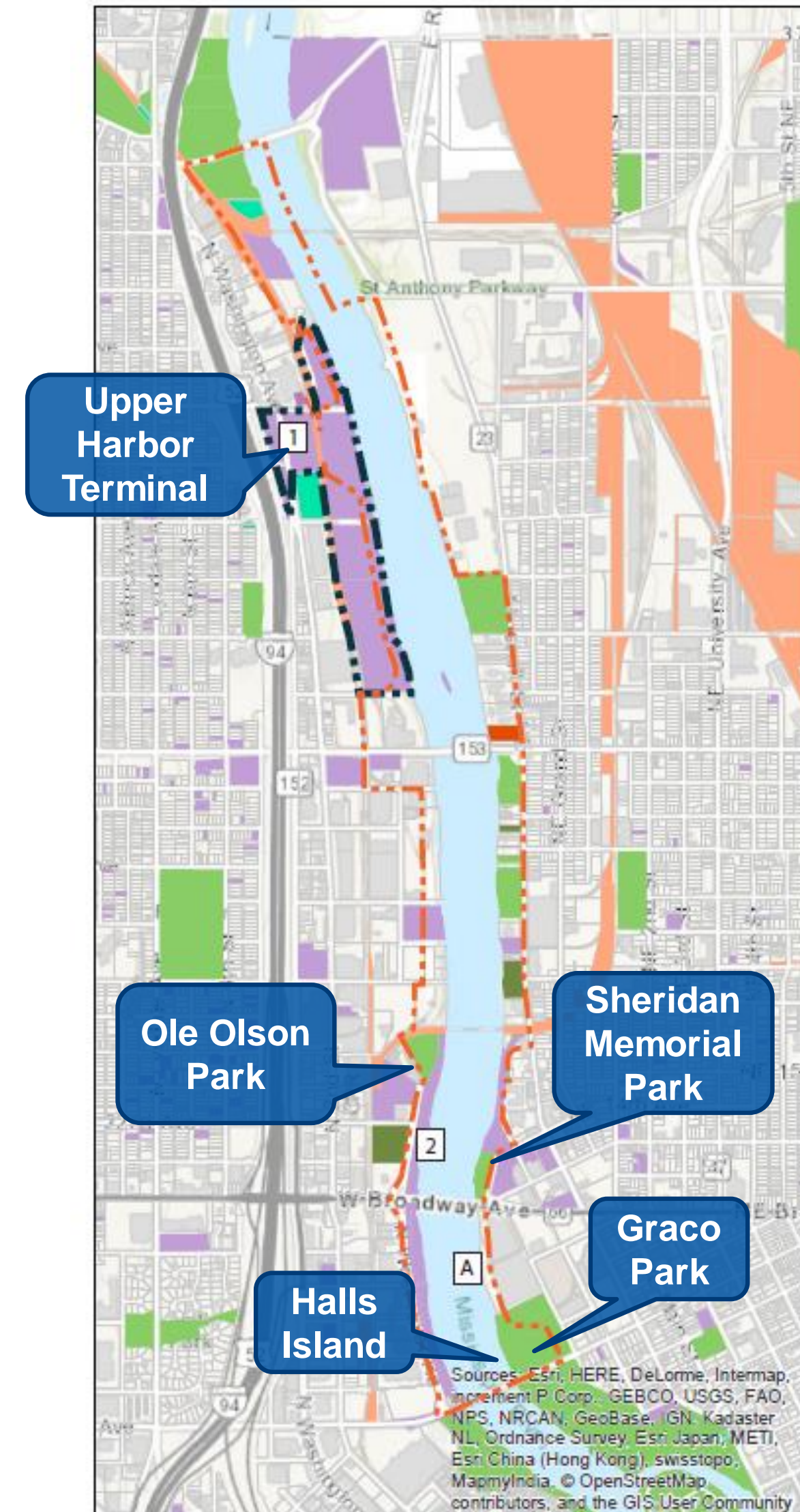
# Equity Analysis

- The Plan is rooted in equity with a fundamental goal to provide parks and access to the Mississippi River in an area of the city that currently lacks these opportunities.
- Areas around the park in North and Northeast Minneapolis are characterized by high poverty rates, a higher-than-average rate of negative health issues, and a high percentage of BIPOC and youth populations.
- Adjacent neighborhoods struggle with disinvestment and lack of positive economic activity.
- Transforming the land from industrialized shoreland to ecologically rich, publicly owned park will improve the quality of life in an underserved urban area and will have profound benefits for residents and visitors.



# Boundaries and Acquisition

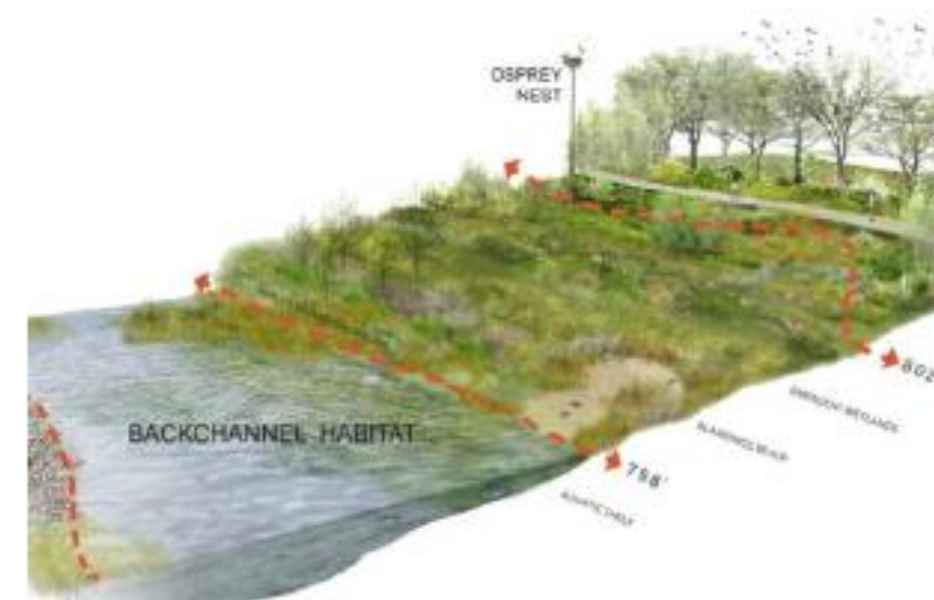
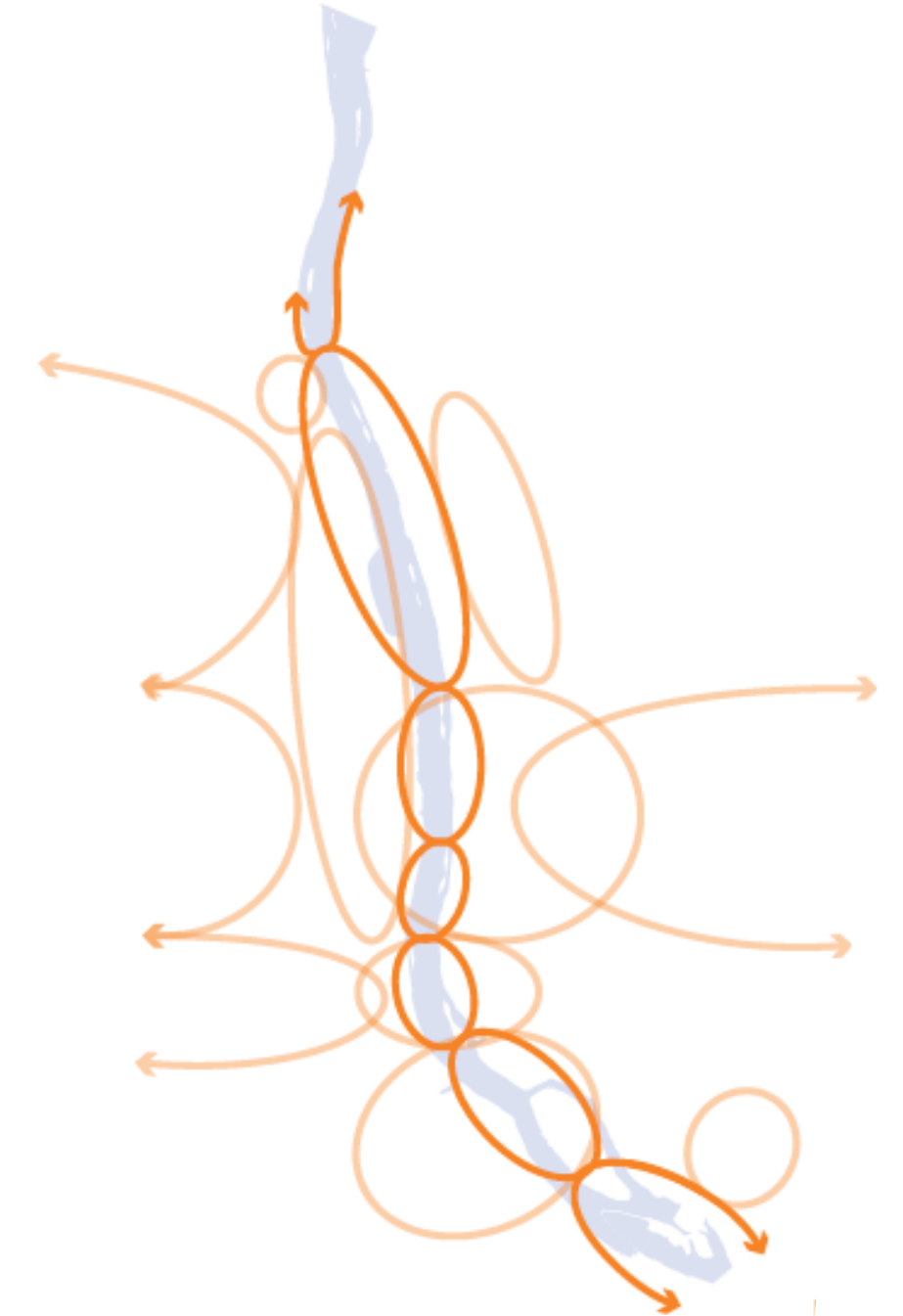
- Above the Falls comprises approximately 375 acres of Mississippi River and its banks along a 2.75 stretch through North and Northeast Minneapolis.
- Approximately 64 acres (or 45%) of the 140 upland acres are currently under MPRB ownership.
- MPRB is working toward an agreement with the City of Minneapolis to assume ownership of roughly 20 acres of the Upper Harbor Terminal property as parkland.
- Because the Regional Park is an urban-infill park, acquisition of park land will occur incrementally over time, depending on funding and as opportunities arise with willing sellers.





# Development Concept

- Design facilities that meet or exceed **Americans with Disabilities Act**
- Provide public access to the Mississippi River
- Enhance the habitat, structure and function of the river and its environs
- Construct new parkways and trails and integrate them into the Minneapolis Grand Rounds
  - West River Parkway
  - East Bank Trail
  - Trail Loop System
- Provide new park spaces and continue to improve existing spaces
  - Graco Park, Halls Island
  - Sheridan Memorial Park
  - Upper Harbor Terminal





# Upper Harbor Terminal

- 48-acre former barge terminal facility, owned by the City of Minneapolis
- MPRB working with City to assume ownership of approximately 20 acres
- Redevelopment vision includes:
  - Extension of West River Parkway
  - Creation of linear green space and signature gathering places
  - Reshaping of shoreline and habitat enhancements
- Plans for private redevelopment are being reviewed and developed and generally include:
  - An outdoor music venue
  - A mix of development uses including residential, office, hospitality and light industrial





# Estimated Project Costs

- The Plan estimates:
  - \$168,201,200 in acquisition costs and
  - \$16,000,000 in development costs for a
  - total cost estimate of \$184,201,200.
- Because of the Regional Park's urban setting and desire to transform the upper river corridor from private land to public park, land assembly will be an ongoing effort.
- Development cost estimates focus on Upper Harbor Terminal and Graco Park at this time.
- Approval of master plan does not commit the Council to any funding at this time.



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# Rationale for Proposed Action

- The Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan is consistent with the requirements of the:
  - *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*
    - Planning Strategy 1
  - Other Council policies

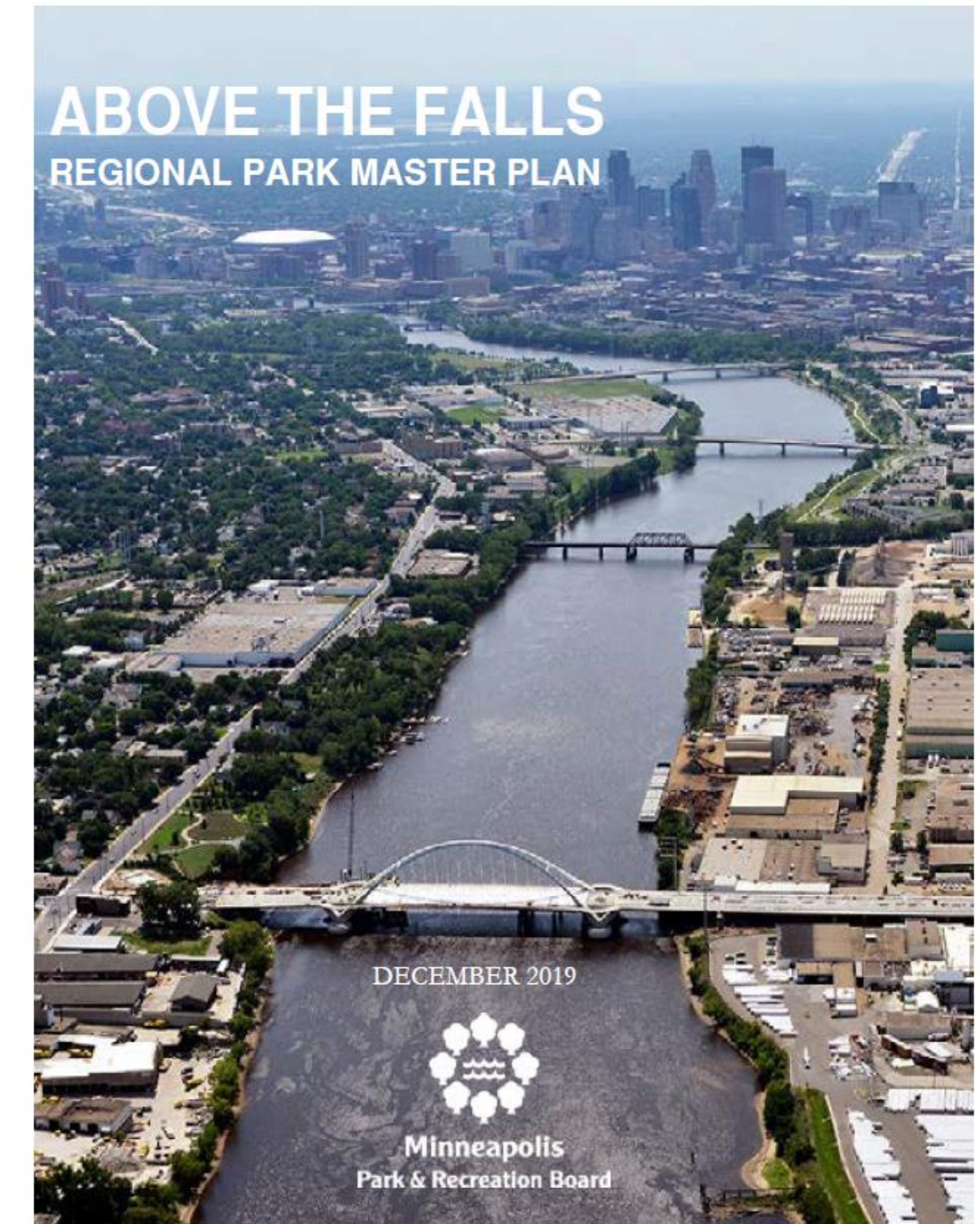




# Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan.
2. Require Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, prior to initiating any new development of the regional park, to send preliminary plans to the Environmental Services Assistant Manager at the Metropolitan Council's Environmental Services Division.
3. Advise the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to implement the comments in the Analysis for Natural Resources and Transit.





# Thank you

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# Access, Connected Actions and Transit

- Master plan commits to increasing access to the river and park land for residents in North and Northeast Minneapolis.
- Connected Actions
  - Located outside of park boundary
  - Riverway Streets
  - Farview Park Extension
- Metro Transit Routes 7, 11, 14, 22, 30, and 32 currently connect to existing or planned portions of the regional park.

