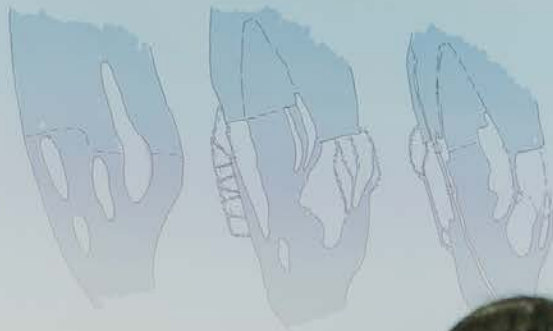




From Islands to Edges



1900s

From with islands and oak
shadows

1800s

Full canopy, lakes to
wetlands, oaks, scattered
open spaces, oaks

The Falls Initiative

The First Season

- Part 1 | Native Partnership Council
- Part 2 | Community Engagement
- Part 3 | Early Design Ideas
- Part 4 | Programming & Partnership

**This is an abridged
version of *The Falls Initiative*
First Season Report: Part 3.**

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Section 1 - Guiding Themes, Values, and Teachings

Chief Arvol Looking Horse, Lakota (second from left), was born and lives on the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota. At the age of 12, he was given the responsibility of becoming the 19th Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe. He is widely recognized as a chief and the spiritual leader of all three branches of the Sioux tribe.

Elder Brian "Nish Nung" Matrious is of the Ahzhamook [cross roads] Band of Ojibwe (first from left). He was taught in the ways of his father and grandfather and practiced his tradition in the old ways using the old Ojibwe language. Brian is a recognized elder and healer of the Ojibwe. He is a member of the Midewiwin Medicine Society of the Ojibwe.

The Falls Initiative

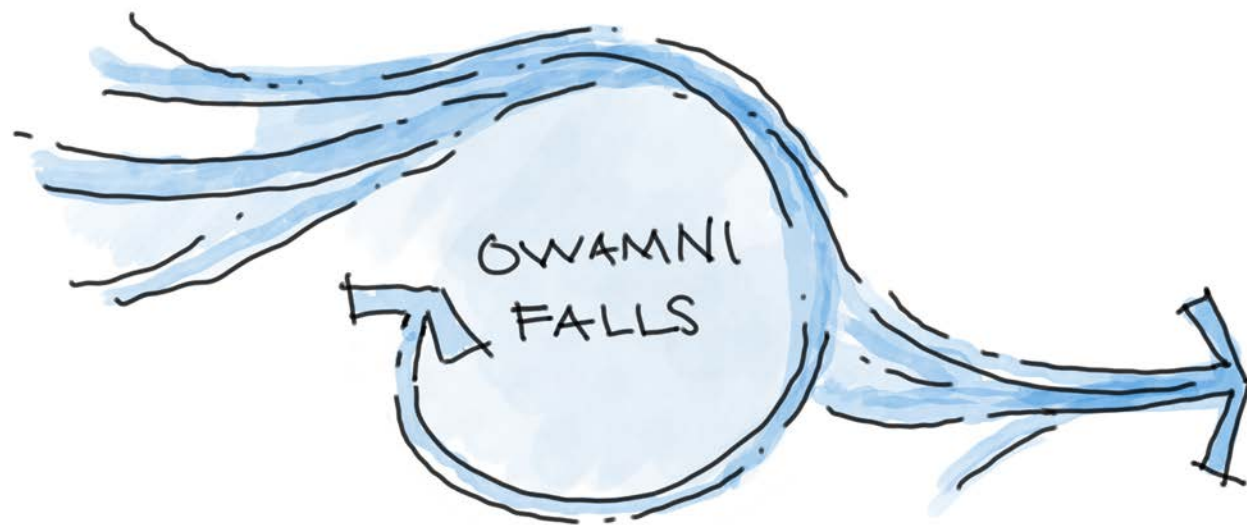
Early Design Ideas

Friends of the Falls and the Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI) are partnering with the City of Minneapolis and Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board to consider the future of the Upper Lock at Owámníyomni, St. Anthony Falls, through centering Indigenous perspectives tied to this place.

The Lock closed to commercial navigation in 2015 and now presents an opportunity to not only restore public access to the river, but to create a place of healing, truth-telling, and celebration that acknowledges the past and advances a more equitable and inclusive future.

An engagement plan was designed to inform the public about engagement outcomes and to guide an authentic, accountable, and meaningful engagement process with all involved stakeholders.

As this site is on Dakota homeland, key engagement contributors include Tribal Nations and Native-led organizations; stakeholders such as environmental organizations; community residents; neighborhood groups; parks; planning; preservation groups; members of the business and tourism industry; and the general public are also included.



restoring a story disrupted

powerful place

building connections

water is life

Team:

GGN | Landscape Architect

GGN is a landscape architecture firm founded in Seattle, Washington in 1999. GGN offers broad experience designing site-specific landscapes in complex, urban contexts. Derived from research of each site's history, ecology, and culture, GGN's designs express the hidden stories and native ecology of each piece of land. Projects include the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Lurie Garden at Millennium Park, and the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture.

VJAA | Architect

VJAA is a collaborative design studio, founded in Minneapolis in 1995, with a commitment to design excellence and producing architecture that engages social, cultural, and environmental issues in a knowing and creative way. Sustainability and material craft are woven through the culture of the office and are central to its core values of creating architecture that provides long-term value to its clients and to those who use its buildings. VJAA is the recipient of the 2012 American Institute of Architects Firm Award. Since its founding, VJAA has received twenty-three national design awards.

EOR | Ecology & Engineering

EOR is a collaborative group of environmental and design professionals passionate about protecting our waters, restoring healthy ecosystems, and enhancing our community's unique sense of place. Formed in 1997 on the recognition of the crucial need for alternative and sustainable approaches to resource management that would provide long-term, holistic solutions to the world's pressing environmental challenges. At EOR, scientific study and design are inherently intertwined in the pursuit of sustainability. EOR has earned awards for many notable works including and FDIC International Engineering Award of Merit.

CDA Enterprises | Facilitation

CDA Enterprises provides skilled guidance and management support to tribal and non tribal initiatives. Facilitating across cultures, CDA seeks to cultivate a deeper understanding of the challenges and similarities we all share, building relationships that support decision-making and momentum. CDA facilitates meetings of the Native Partnership Council and is an enrolled citizen of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe/Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

Studio Civic | Duval | Project Management, Conveyance Coordination

Studio Civic | Duval is a full service planning and development practice with expertise in public-private partnerships and restorative planning. The firm provides planning, implementation, and development management services supporting the creation of public interest places where design matters. For *The Falls Initiative*, Studio Civic | Duval provides overarching project management services, including the coordination of the federal conveyance team and disposition process for Friends of the Falls and its local government partners, as well as managing the consultant team.

Cassyex Consulting | Graphic Recorder

Cassyex Consulting is led by Michelle Buchholz, a Wet'suwet'en artist who has been engaged to bear witness to meetings of the Native Partnership Council and create graphic recordings that capture the Council's stories and directions.

Full Circle Indigenous Planning | Native Perspective on Design and Programming

100% Native American-owned and -operated, Full Circle Indigenous Planning is a multidisciplinary research-based planning and visioning design practice. Full Circle was engaged to provide a Native perspective and expertise on design elements of the project, and to cultivate programming relationships to bring the project to life in the broader regional context of indigenous projects on the River.

Interboro | Programming

Interboro is an award-winning planning, urban design, and architectural design firm based in Brooklyn and Detroit. They are leading experts in public space design and community engagement at all scales, from the building and neighborhood to the city and region. Along with local partners MIGIZI and the Division of Indian Work, they are exploring partnerships and programming opportunities based on themes that emerged during initial engagement meetings.

Studio Thalo | Graphic Recorder

Friends of the Falls and NACDI engaged the artist collective Studio Thalo to document Community Conversations from a BIPOC perspective with graphic recordings. Studio Thalo is an artist collective and studio space composed of Olivia Levins-Holden, Nell Pierce, and Bayou Bay (fka Donald Thomas Design).

Native Partnership Council Guiding Themes



Themes We Heard:

Restoring a Story Disrupted

During the Ki Ceremony, Wakinyan LaPointe used the phrase “restoring a story disrupted.” In order to address the traumas of colonization and begin to heal collectively, the Falls must engage the truth of what happened in this place and support a process of building relationships among all that was disrupted by colonization. The continuity of the Dakota and Indigenous people at the Falls is stronger than the disruption of industrialization, and the story of the Dakota should be prioritized.

A Powerful Place

The spiritual power of the Falls is central to the life of the Dakota people and the many relations who have connected through the Falls. While colonization sought to control and extract the River’s power for industry, the Spirit of the place is still here. This effort should look to the deeper spiritual power of the Falls and truth of this place to guide the future and all who connect here.

Mitakuye Owas’in

That all lives are related is a fundamental lesson of the River and Dakota values. Colonization disrupted many of the relationships at the Falls and this project can work to restore those relationships as well as supporting new connections. This approach takes the focus away from human activity as the center of the story and looks to the land, water, and other relatives to shape what is best for the place.

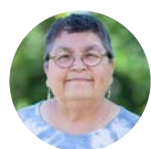
Mní Wičóni

Water is life. The river is a Spirit that connects and supports all life. This place and this project are centered on the water. The water is a Spirit and alive, and this place can nurture the water. As *The Falls Initiative* focuses on the future of Owámniyomni (the Falls), it should begin with the River and the life of the water, shifting the focus from a solely human experience or benefit to the broader power of the place. Protect and restore the water.



“As Indigenous peoples our spirituality is our reality. To see this beautiful story come back to the fore, all you’re doing is restoring a story that was disrupted. When we come back here today we are restoring that story. We are telling historical truths and it’s good to see our lives here as Indigenous peoples. It’s time to stop trying to outsmart the truth and let it have its day.”

- Thorne LaPointe (NPC)



“We talk a lot about what we want, but what does the River want? ...No matter what we try to do, the River will do what She wants to do... What does that beautiful main artery wish?”

- Sharon Day (Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe)

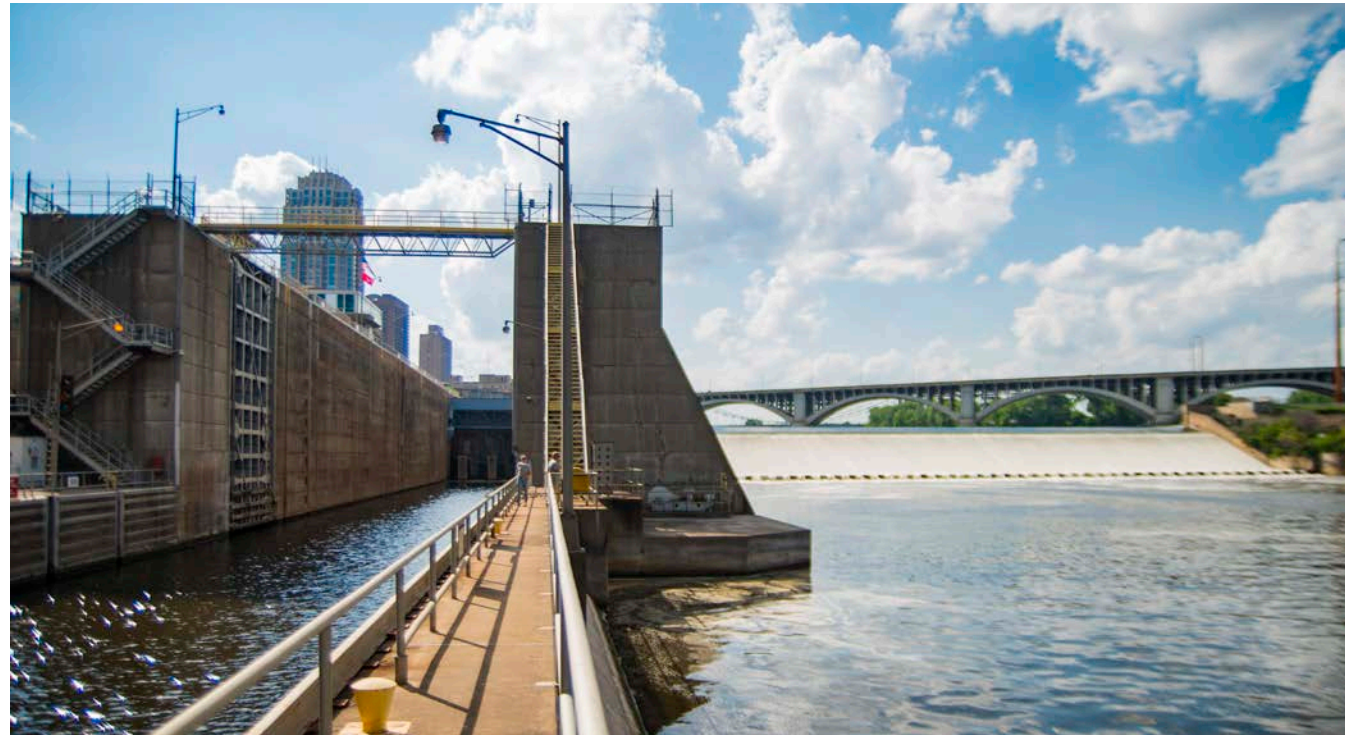
Through a series of discussions with the Native Partnership Council in the first season of *The Falls Initiative*, several themes emerged that helped orient the team and ground our understanding of this place and the broader values that should guide the project. These themes highlighted that *The Falls Initiative* is as much a transformational process led by Dakota voices and values as it is a proposal for the future of a specific place.

During the Ki Ceremony, Thorne LaPointe reminded us of the power of the continuity of the Indigenous story. By looking to the deeper truths of Dakota and Indigenous culture rooted in the relationship with land and water, along with the more recent truth of the disruption of colonization, this project can build new relationships at the Falls and through the Falls.

These values guided the subsequent development of goals and proposals for the Falls found in this document.*

*Citation throughout this book is authored by GGN and is a GGN interpretation of NPC statements.

Truth of Owámníyomni and the Story Disrupted



"A lot of us don't even know the story of genocide because we have been erased in history and education. Acknowledging the genocide is an important part of this process."

- Jewell Arcoren (NPC)

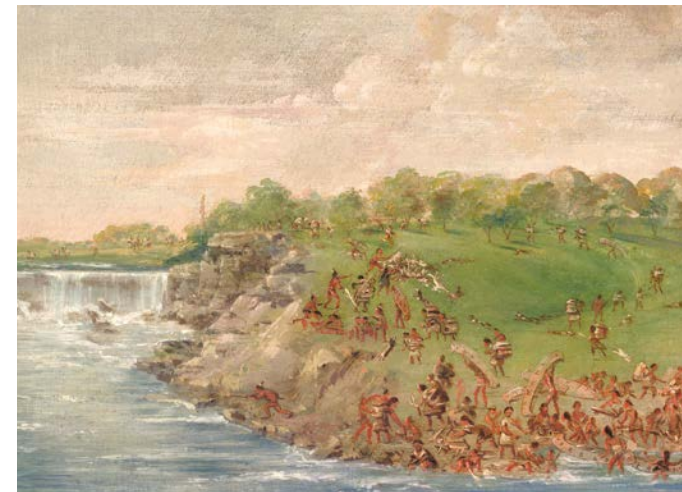


"We need to recognize the River has been here for ages. The River knows what She wants to happen....She is alive, She is a Spirit."

- Juanita Espinosa (NPC)

Most accounts of Minneapolis's history begin with the Falls. The story of the magnitude and impact of the cataracts, along with the economic growth that came from harnessing the power of the water, are at the beginning of most books and interpretation around the River.

The Falls Initiative looks to amplify the voices of Dakota and Indigenous peoples who are telling the truth of the Falls and the impact of colonization and genocide that occurred here. Our process began with the truth of this place and the importance of leveraging opportunities for teaching at all stages of this initiative. Rather than focusing on the industrial story of Minneapolis, this work can tell the deeper truth of the Falls and restore the multitude of relationships disrupted by colonization. This approach led the team to focus on understanding the Falls as it is seen today, as well as working to see this place through the lens of what it once was (and still is) below the surface.



Ojibwa Portaging Around the Falls of St. Anthony, 1835-1836, George Catlin



Falls of St. Anthony, 1860, Minnesota Historical Society



Spirit Island, 1868, Hennepin County Library



'You Are on Native Land' sign at Owámní, photo by Tracy Nordstrom

Beginning with Truth

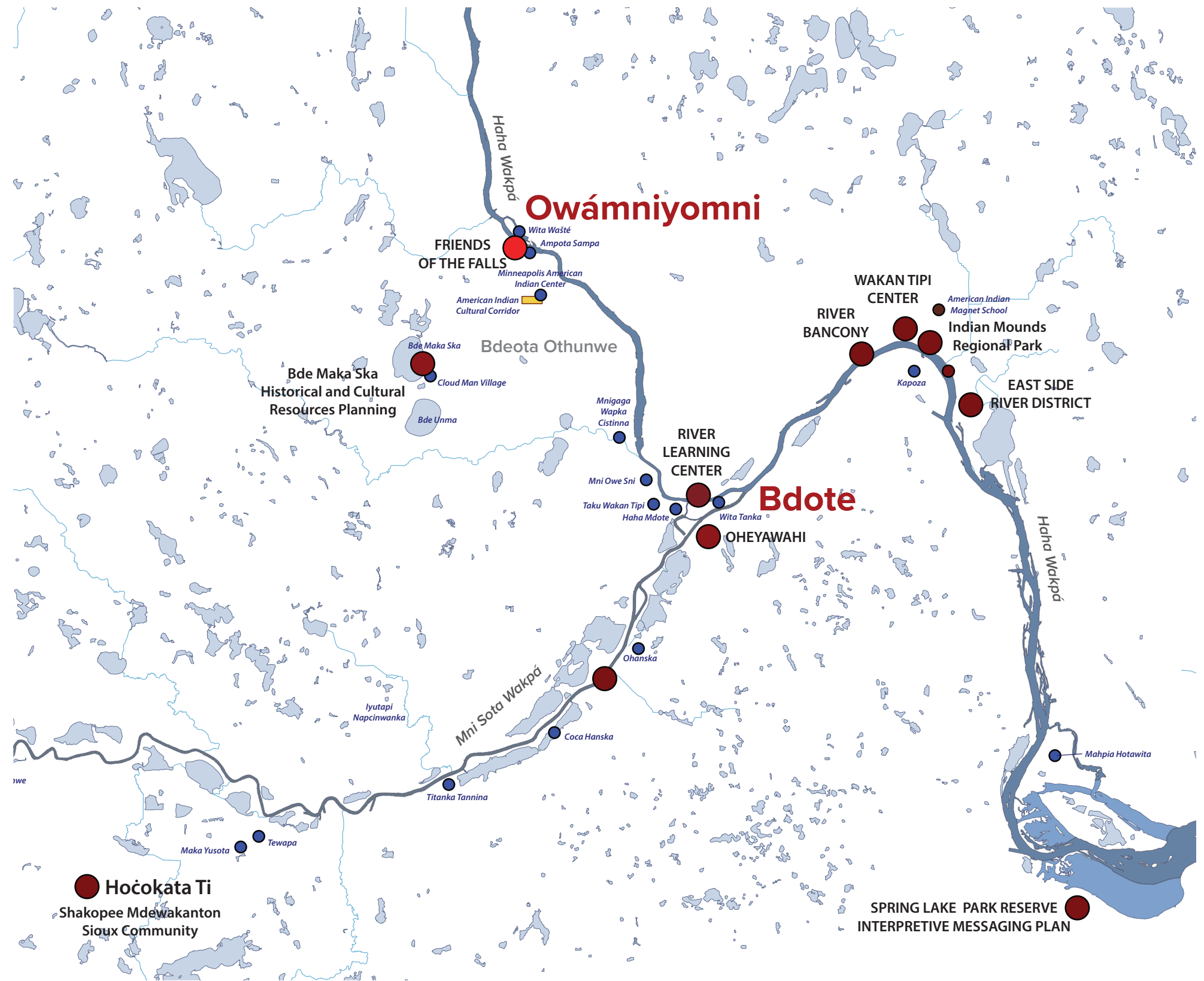
- This project must address the broader truth of the Falls and the generations of Dakota and other Native nations who lived in this place prior to industrialization.
- This place must engage the truth of the Dakota genocide, as well as the ongoing traumas of the colonized and the descendants of colonizers, in an effort toward collective healing. Returning to this place will be a painful process for some, and we should be sensitive to the needs of those most impacted by the history of the Falls.
- While industrialization desecrated the Falls and Spirit Island, the spirit of the water and the ongoing relationship with Indigenous people is still here.
- Through a Native-led and Native-centered process, this initiative seeks to indigenize this place and reveal deeper truths and Dakota values.

Collective Impact

Owámniyomni is part of a rich region of highly important Dakota sacred and cultural places. *The Falls Initiative* has an opportunity to add to a framework of meaningful and coordinated cultural revitalization efforts by many Native American organizations and other regional institutions. Coordinated programming, place-based design, and site-specific cultural education opportunities can reflect the unique history and possibilities of each site.

Design strategies at Owámniyomni that can strengthen collective impact efforts may include:

- Design to honor the unique natural and cultural identity specific to Owámniyomni
- Design to accommodate community and cultural activities best suited for this urban location
- Program activities at this location that complement programming at other regional cultural sites
- Provide for space and activities not possible at other locations
- Create awareness and communication channels with other regional institutions

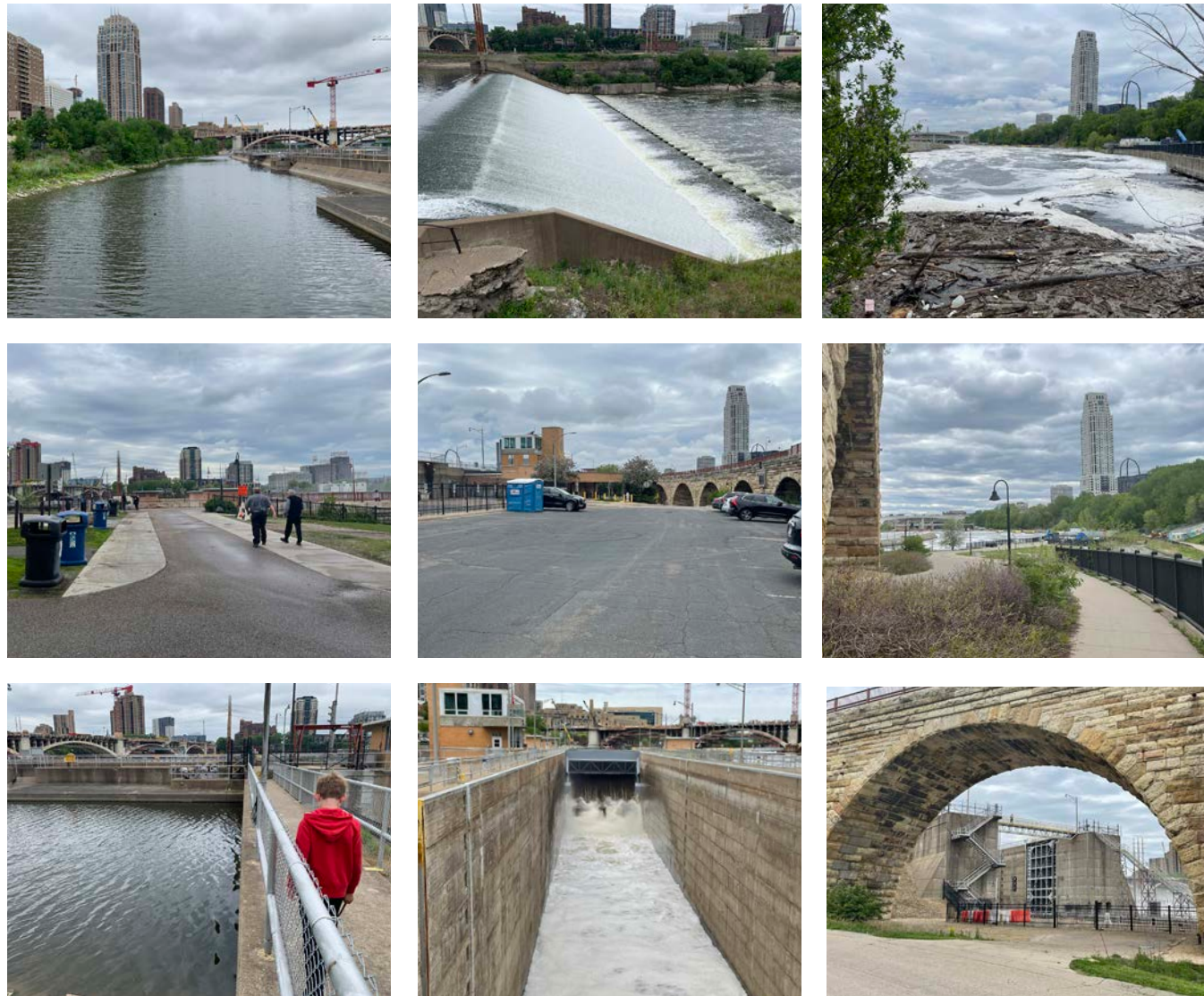


This page was developed in collaboration with Full Circle Indigenous Planning.



Section 2 - Place-Specific Learning

The Falls Today



"We keep thinking we are going to do what we want the River to do. Eventually the River will have her way. What does the River want?"

- Sharon Day (Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe)

Those who visit the Falls today will find generations of engineered structures that control the flow of the water. These systems represent multiple jurisdictions and interests. While the priorities of the Falls have changed with time and the water no longer powers mills or supports barge traffic, the legacy of these interests will need to be coordinated through the future of the place. Today, the National Park Service & Mississippi Park Connection facilitate seasonal public access to the top of the Lock, operate a visitor center, and host tours led by park rangers.

These ideas lay out goals for restoring the flow and health of water, ecological restoration of the land, and new opportunities for access. These goals, which emerged from the Native Partnership Council and a series of Community Conversations, will require deep collaboration among multiple government agencies and public organizations.



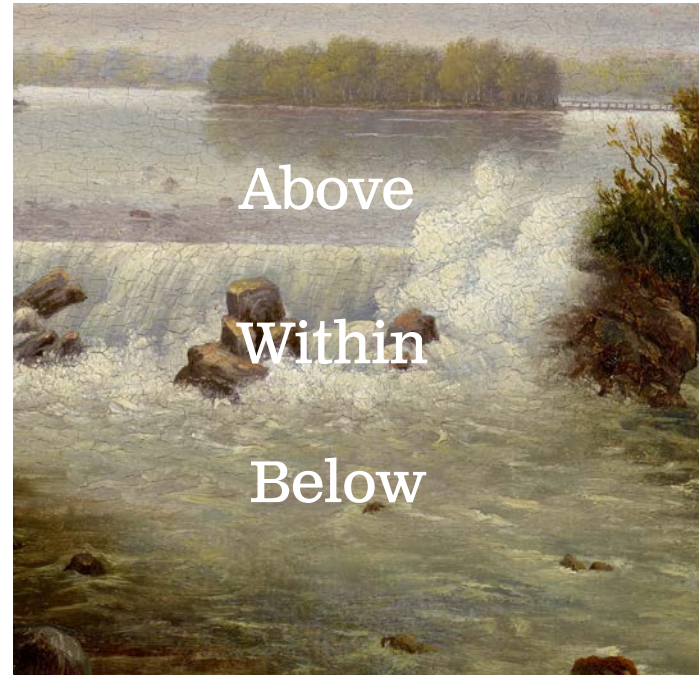
Operations and Jurisdictions Today

- 1 Observation tower, restroom, and service (Corps of Engineers and National Park Service)
- 2 Crossover wall (Corps of Engineers)
- 3 Fire department boat dock
- 4 Lock gates (still operational for flood control by Corps of Engineers)
- 5 Lock operations buildings (operated by Corps of Engineers)
- 6 Lock structure
- 7 Vehicle access from Portland Avenue
- 8 Stone Arch Bridge (MNDOT)
- 9 Access road easement (MPRB)
- 10 Xcel Energy Operations

Learning from Owámniyomni: Relationships Disrupted

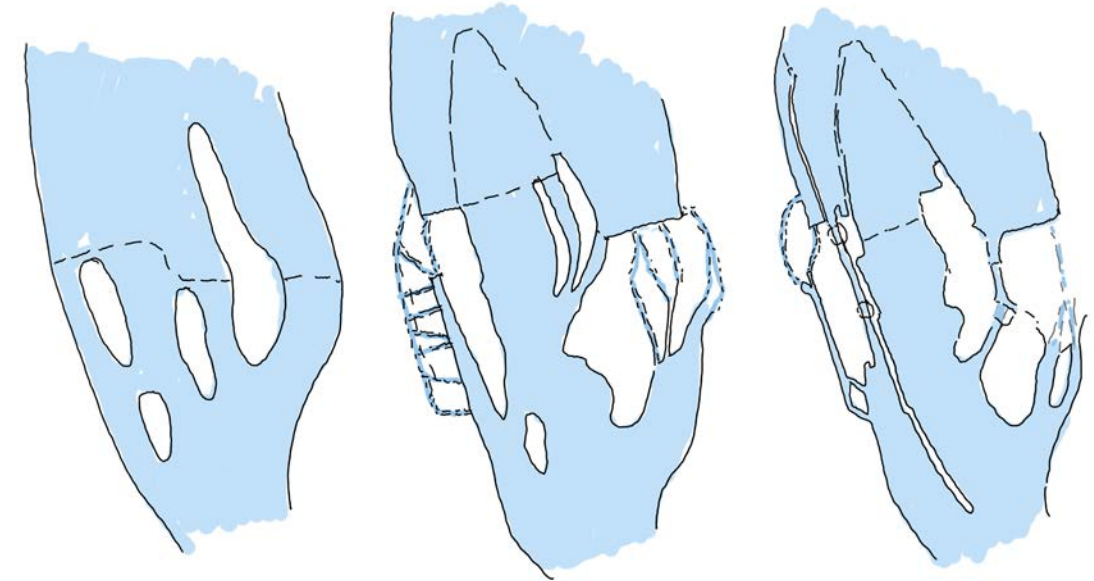
Most early depictions of the Falls (through the lens of Western painting or photography) show three distinct characters of land and water above, within, and below the cataract. Early narratives also highlight the different Dakota and Indigenous connections above and below Falls, as well as the species who lived here.

These interpretations informed a general framework for thinking about this project focused on the relationships and characteristics of land, water, and species that could guide a restoration of the place that didn't rely on a reconstructed image of the place. This framework was central to recommendations for the kinds of qualities and experiences that could inform early design ideas.



Paintings like The Falls of St. Anthony by Seth Eastman highlight the distinct qualities of water above, within, and below the Falls.

Industrialization constrained the Falls and changed the relationships between land and islands



1600s

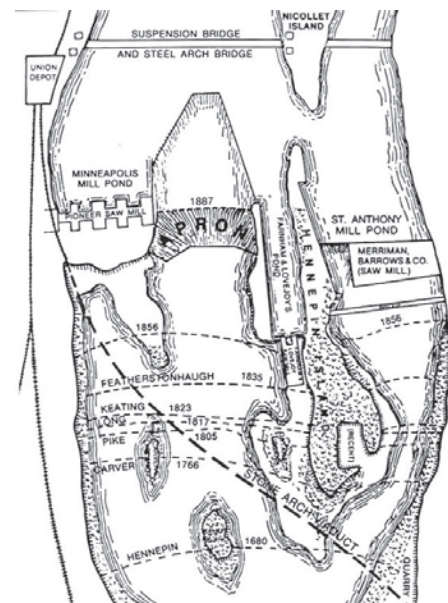
River with islands and side channels. A moment in time as rock eroded and the Falls continued to move upriver.

1800s

The Falls were fixed in place with the construction of the "apron," the flow was diverted to power mills, and fill connected the islands to riverbanks.

1900s

A shift from mills to the Lock and hydro power. Spirit Island is destroyed to open a shipping lane upriver.

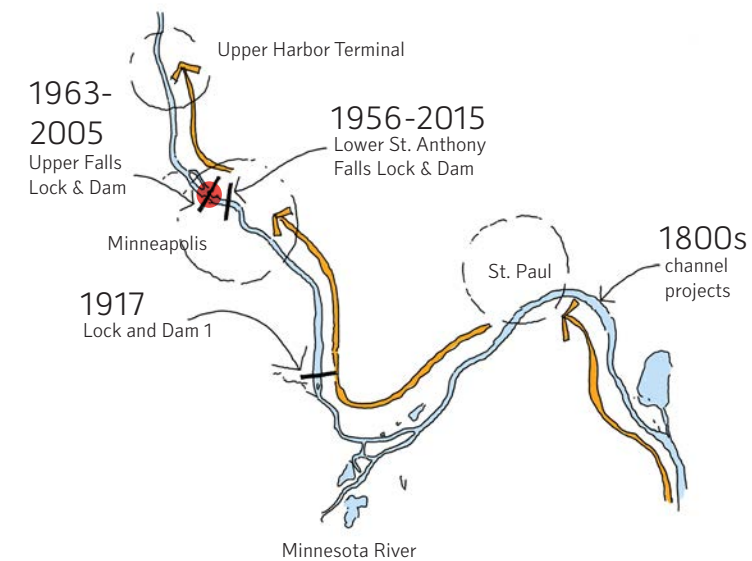


While fixed in its current location through industrialization today, the Falls was once a dynamic relationship between water and geology eroding and shifting upriver through time.

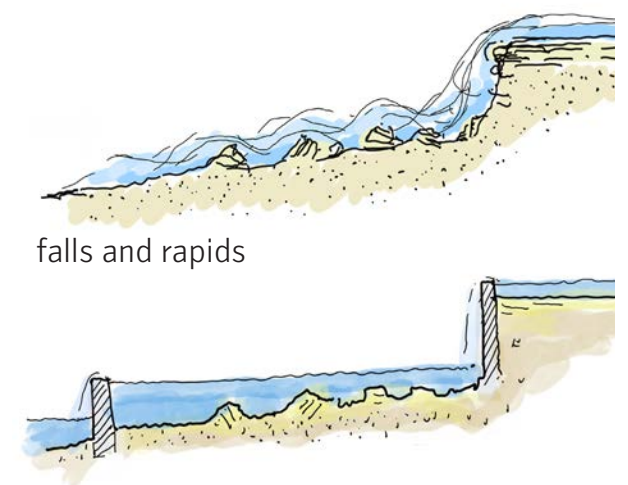


In 2020 the Corps of Engineers lowered the water level between Owámniyomni and Lower Lock, exposing land typically submerged since the construction of the dams.

A network of dams allowed navigation but erased the rapids



Many steps transformed the living River into a navigable and industrially productive system. Dams changed the relationship between land and water below the Falls.



dams and pools (today)

The industrialization of the River changed the fundamental relationships between land and water.

Learning from Owámniiyomni

Above the Falls

- Open to sky, exposed and elevated
- Even flow of water
- Softer shoreline with more direct connection from the land and gradient of planting



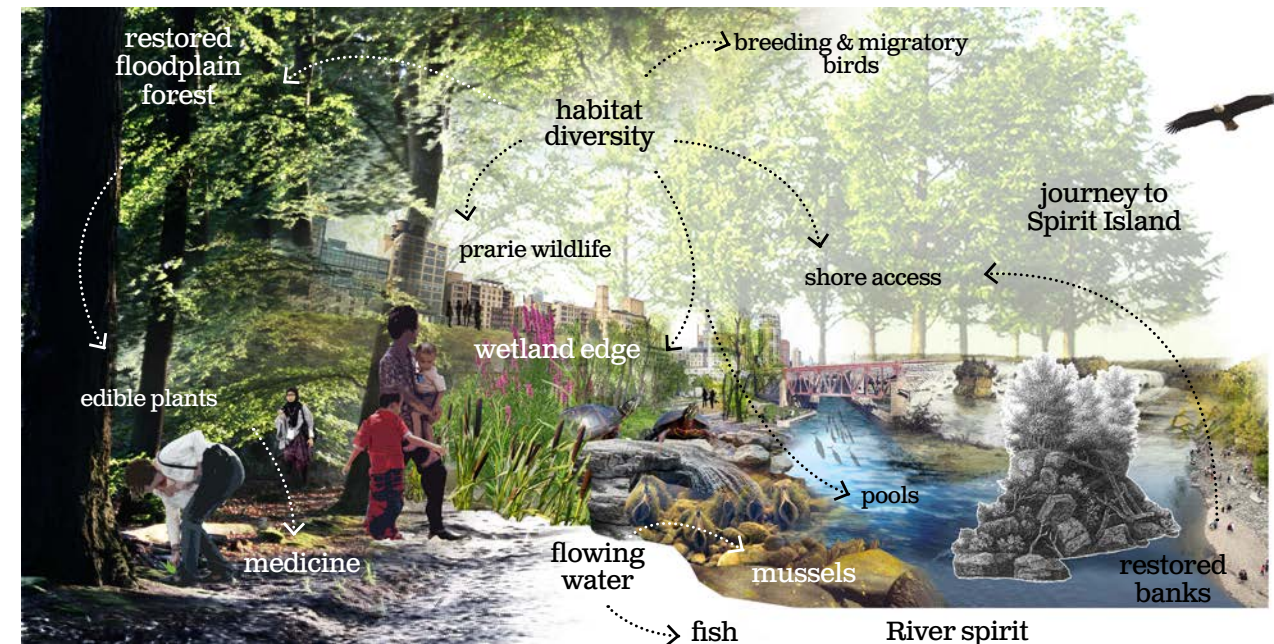
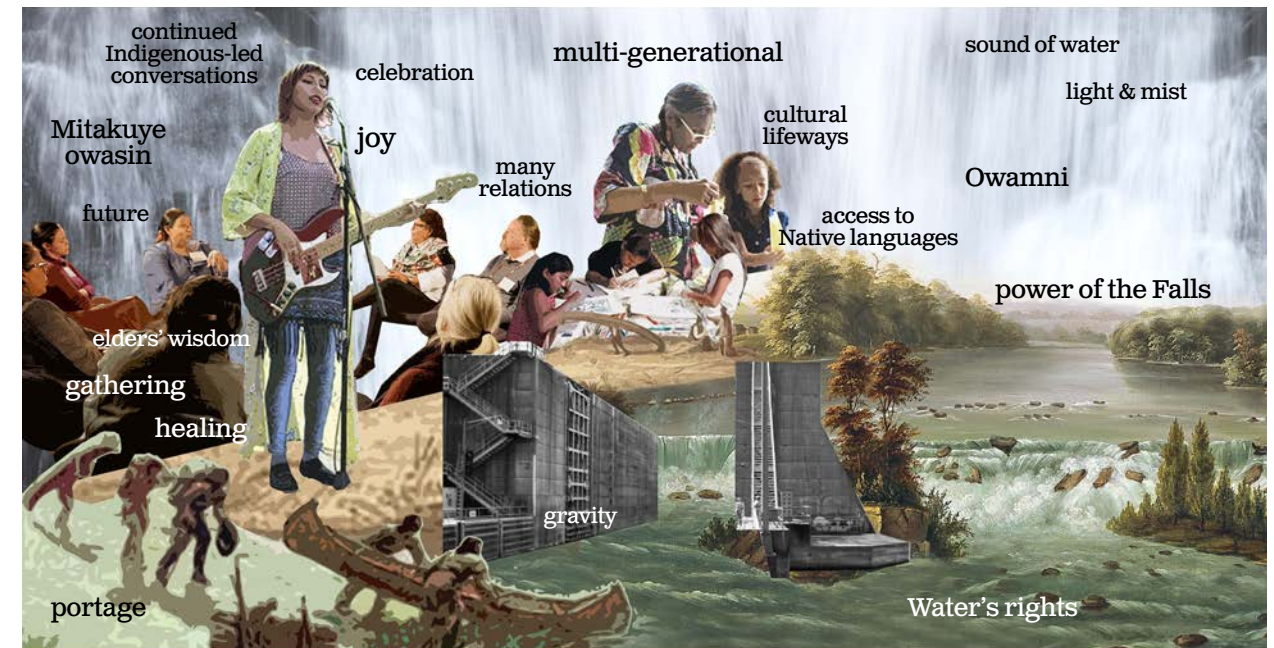
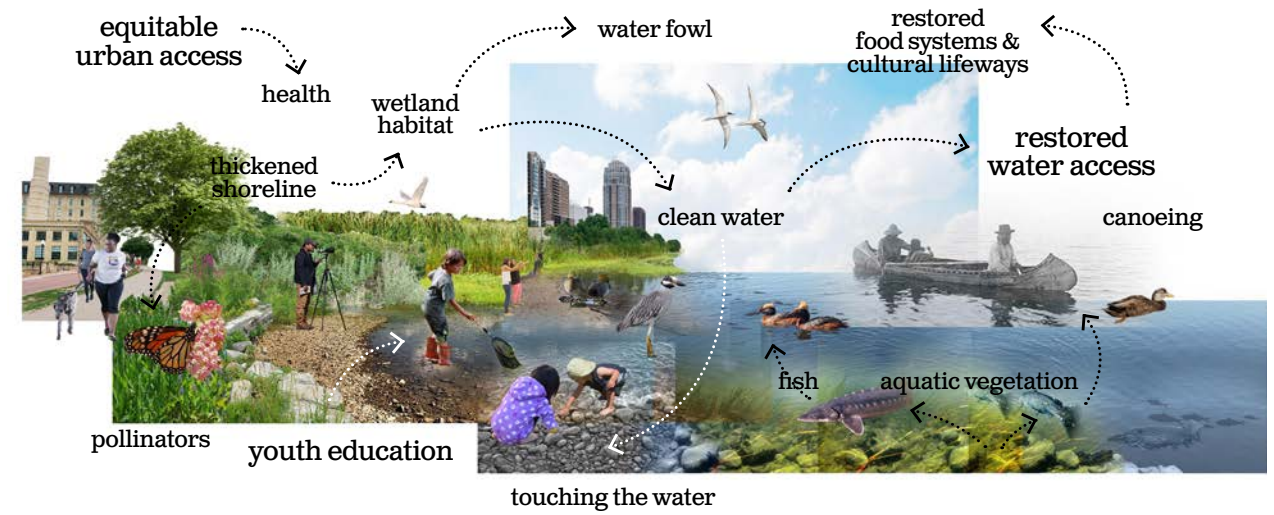
Within the Falls

- Place of connection and disruption
- Strong presence of water, light, sound
- Portage made this a place of gathering among nations
- Stronger sense of topography

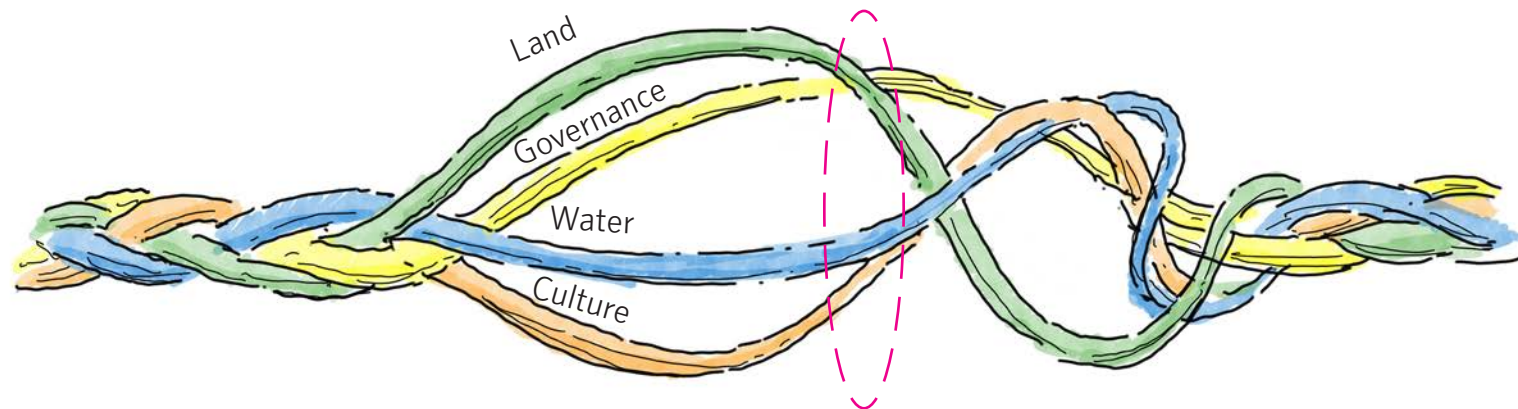


Below the Falls

- Immersed and immediate
- Journey from land through water and islands
- Varied edges, lots of diversity
- Reflective and reverential
- Spiritually powerful



Weaving Relationships to Reconnect this Place and Support Healing



Time of Connections

Time of Disruption

Returning and Reconnecting

Expanding Connections



"A core philosophy as Dakota people, water is yes a Spirit, and medicinal, and has life of its own...but water cannot be understood as separate

from the other parts of the living beings that interact with the River. Rights of River and Rights of Water definitely need to be brought in as an overarching theme, as well as interconnectedness of being a part of an interconnected whole."

- Maggie Lorenz (NPC)



"If we do our work well, we will draw other people. A lot of people want to engage, so we are setting the table well so others will join. It will

happen at the pace it happens and we are moving authentically."

- Robert Lilligren (NACDI)

Restoring the story disrupted at the Falls is a generational effort. The idea of weaving celebrates the central role that relationships play in this work and the continuity of the Indigenous story of this place.

The many threads of water, land, culture, and governance that were intentionally isolated to control the Falls through colonization cannot fully be reconnected in a single season of work. Removing fences, breaking down asphalt, and occupying the Falls through art and events can happen relatively quickly. Supporting new planting, connecting the water, and building support structures will take longer. Healing the water and broader ecological restoration will take longer yet.

Each season of work will present new opportunities to center Native voice and leadership at the Falls and is a reminder that the physical restoration of the place cannot happen without the values and healing central to this initiative. These values should continue to guide any future proposal for this place.



Values and Teaching that should Guide this Initiative

- 1 Continue to center Native voices in this Initiative and this place through ongoing partnerships, programs, values, and leadership.
- 2 This Initiative and this place must teach the truth of the Dakota genocide and colonization, as well as the continuity of the Dakota story to support a process of healing and restoration.
- 3 The River is a Spirit and a living relative. This project should be centered on water and the River, both asking what the River wants and supporting the health of the water in this place and the Rights of Water and Indigenous water programs more broadly.
- 4 The Falls is a powerful place. This project should approach that power from a position of respect while opening access where it has been withheld.
- 5 The Falls is filled with new ideas. Proposals for the future of this place are guided by what is there--both visible and disrupted. The land and water is a primary "program" and the needs of land and water should be a priority.
- 6 Central to the process of restoring the story disrupted of the Falls is responding to the Parallel Trauma of colonization and the truth of this place. This is a priority for early seasons.
- 7 Dakota Language is a language of verbs. Language needs to be a part of this place.
- 8 This project is guided by a process of Indigenizing the Falls: placing emphasis on restoring relationships and focusing on the deeper truths of the place and Dakota values, rather than reacting to colonial structures.
- 9 The Lock and other industrial structures are not the focus of this Initiative, but they can be transformed to amplify project goals.



Section 3 - Design Goals & Opportunities

Primary Project Goals to Support Owámniyomni as a Place of Healing

1 Engage the Lock to Expand the Narrative



2 Center the Water and Support the River's Flow



3 Listen to the Land and Hold Space for Relatives

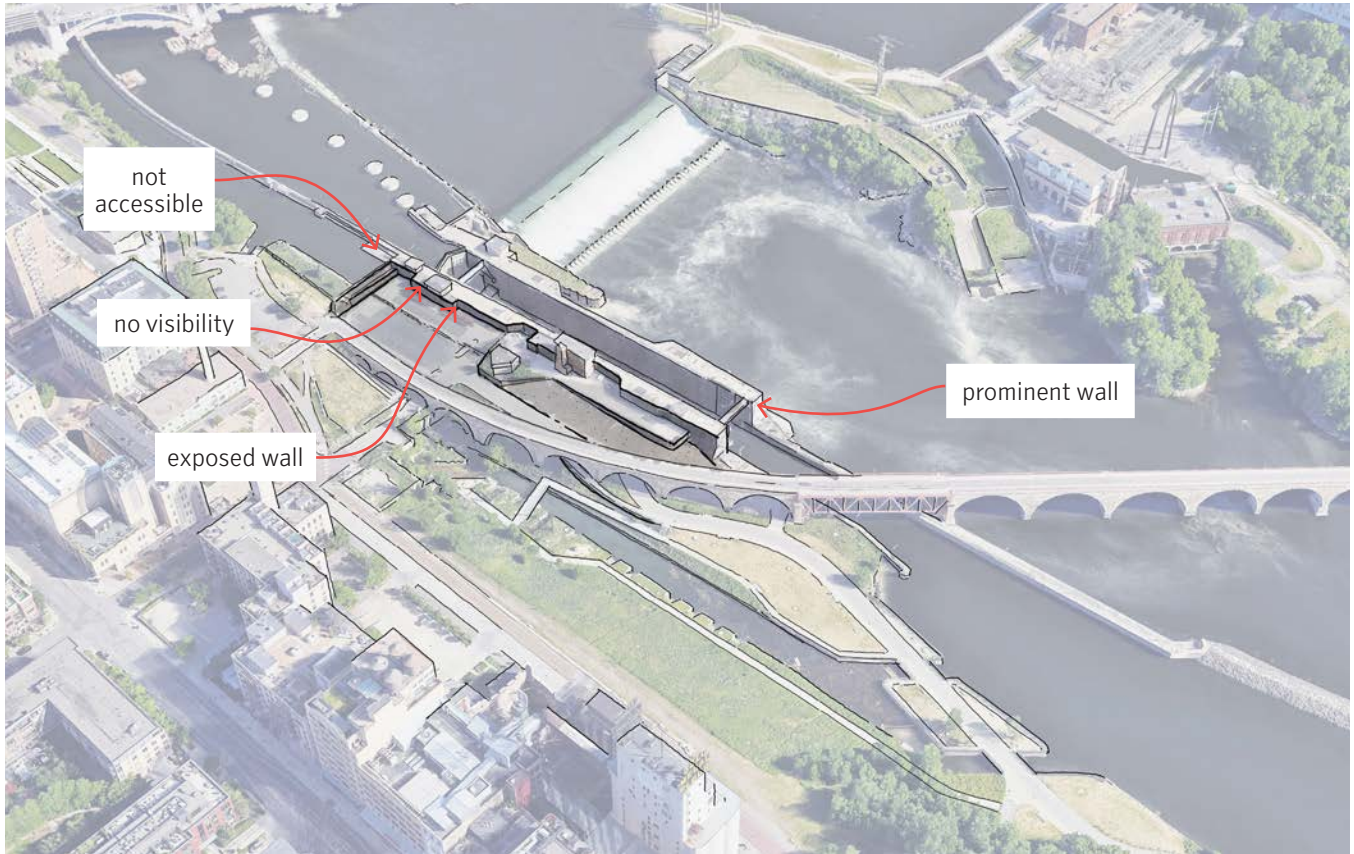
4 Center Native Voices through Programs, Partnerships, and Leadership



5 Restore the Falls as a Welcoming and Connecting Place at the River



1 Engage the Lock to Expand the Narrative

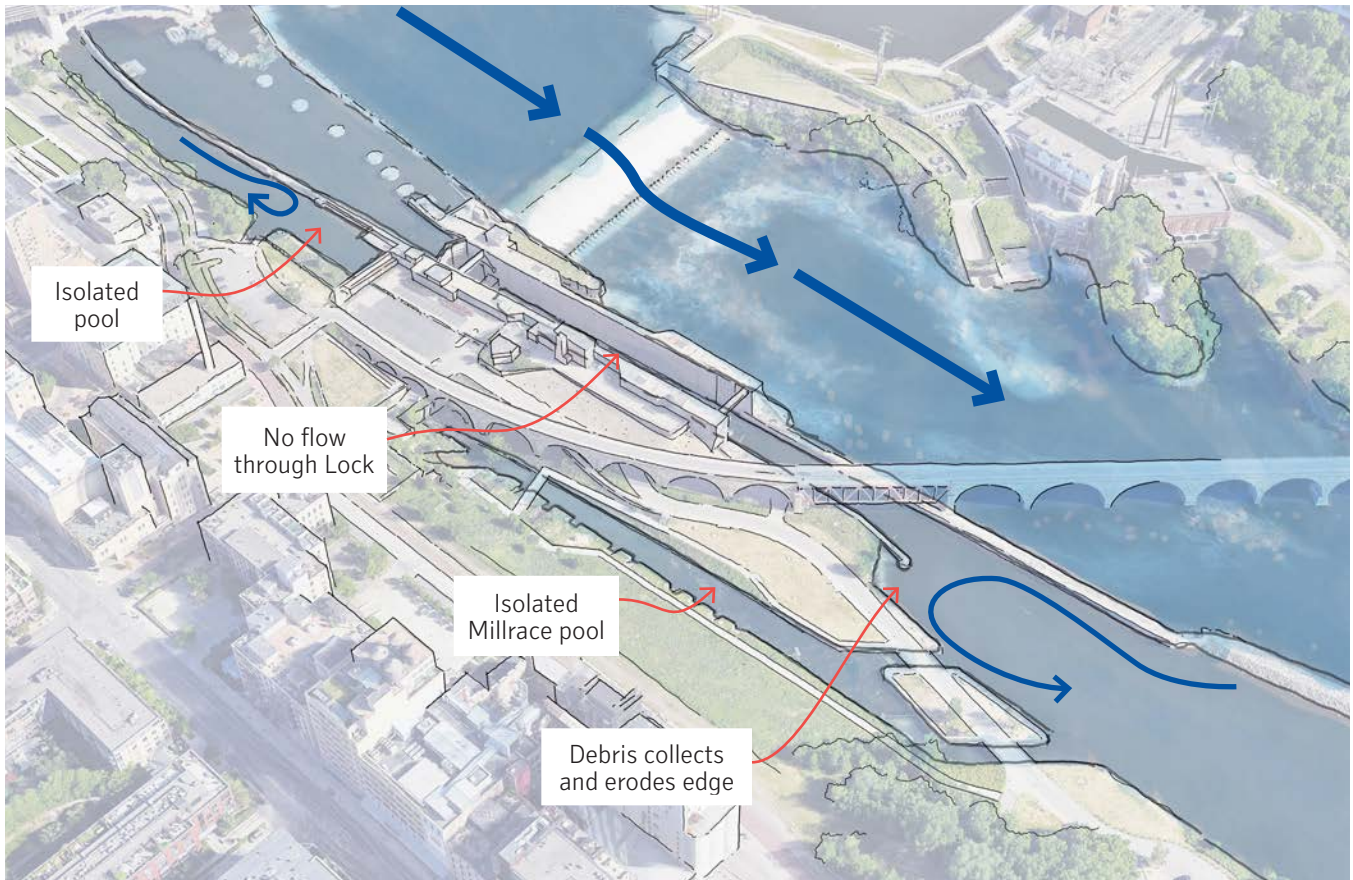


Today

- Currently the Lock and surrounding infrastructure overshadow the Dakota story and presence in this place
- Access to the top of the Lock is limited
- Current operations require multiple layers of fencing and gates
- The Lock walls dominate approach and connections to the water and the Falls



2 Center the Water and Support the River's Flow

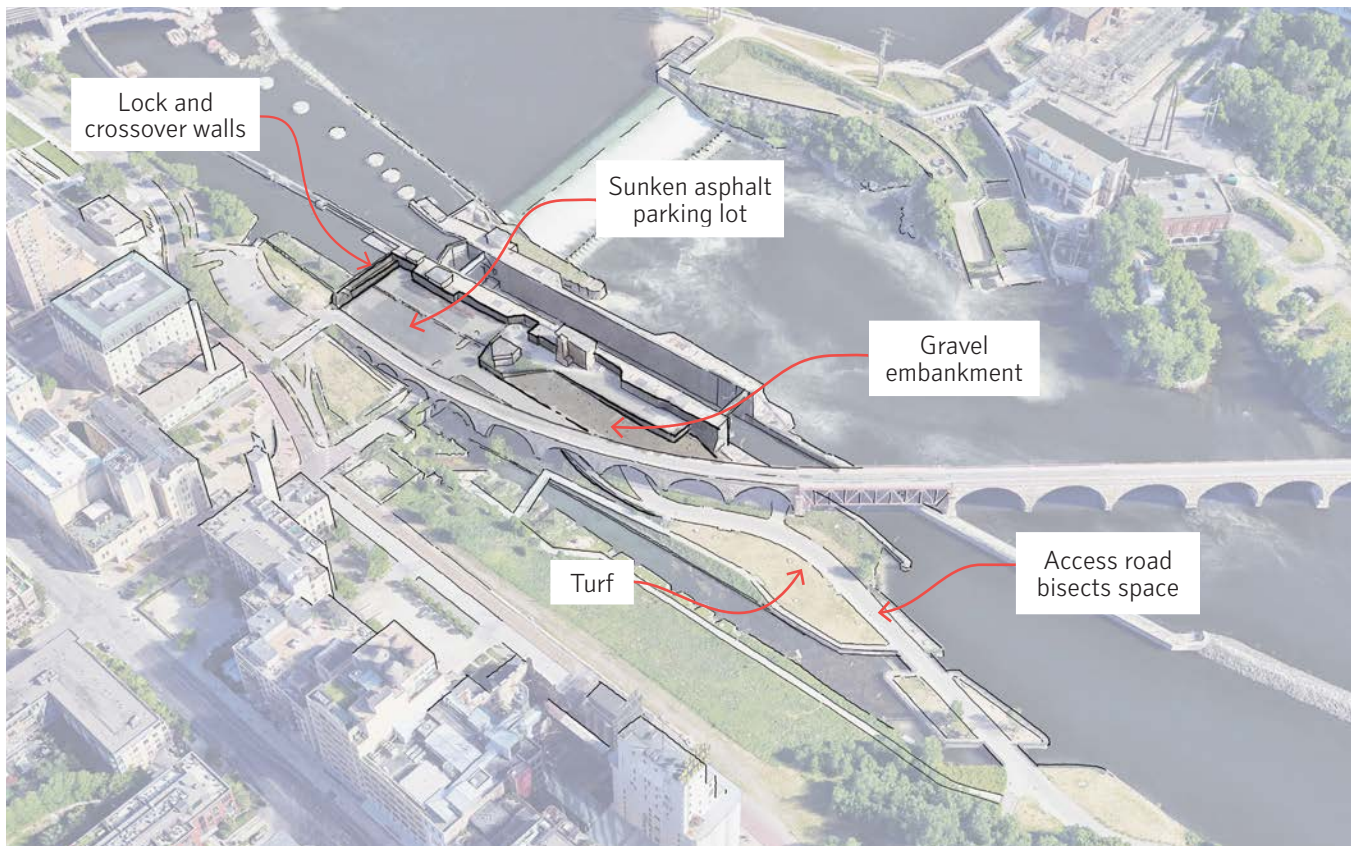


Today

- Industrialization split the flow of the river into side channels and dams to power the mills. Since these tunnels are no longer active, water above and below does not flow and is unhealthy
- Water no longer moves through the Lock outside of infrequent high-water periods when the gates are opened
- Below the Falls, trash collects at the mouth of the Lock and within the Millrace



3 Listen to the Land and Hold Space for Relatives

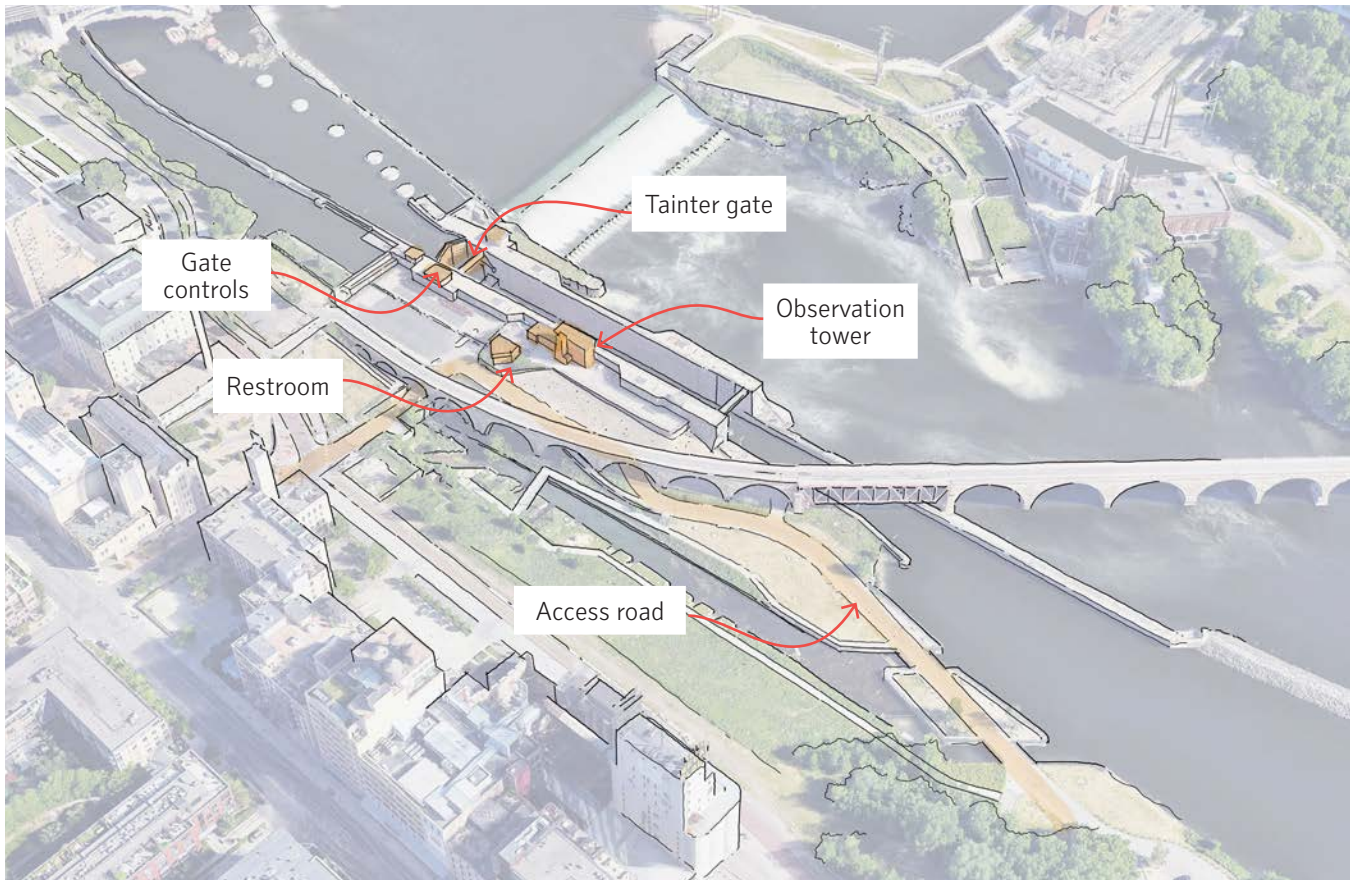


Today

- Majority of this place today is paving, gravel, or turf grass
- Current parking lot is surrounded by the walls of the dam, Lock, and Stone Arch Bridge
- Gravel embankment blocks orientation downriver



4 Center Native Voices through Programs, Partnerships, and Leadership

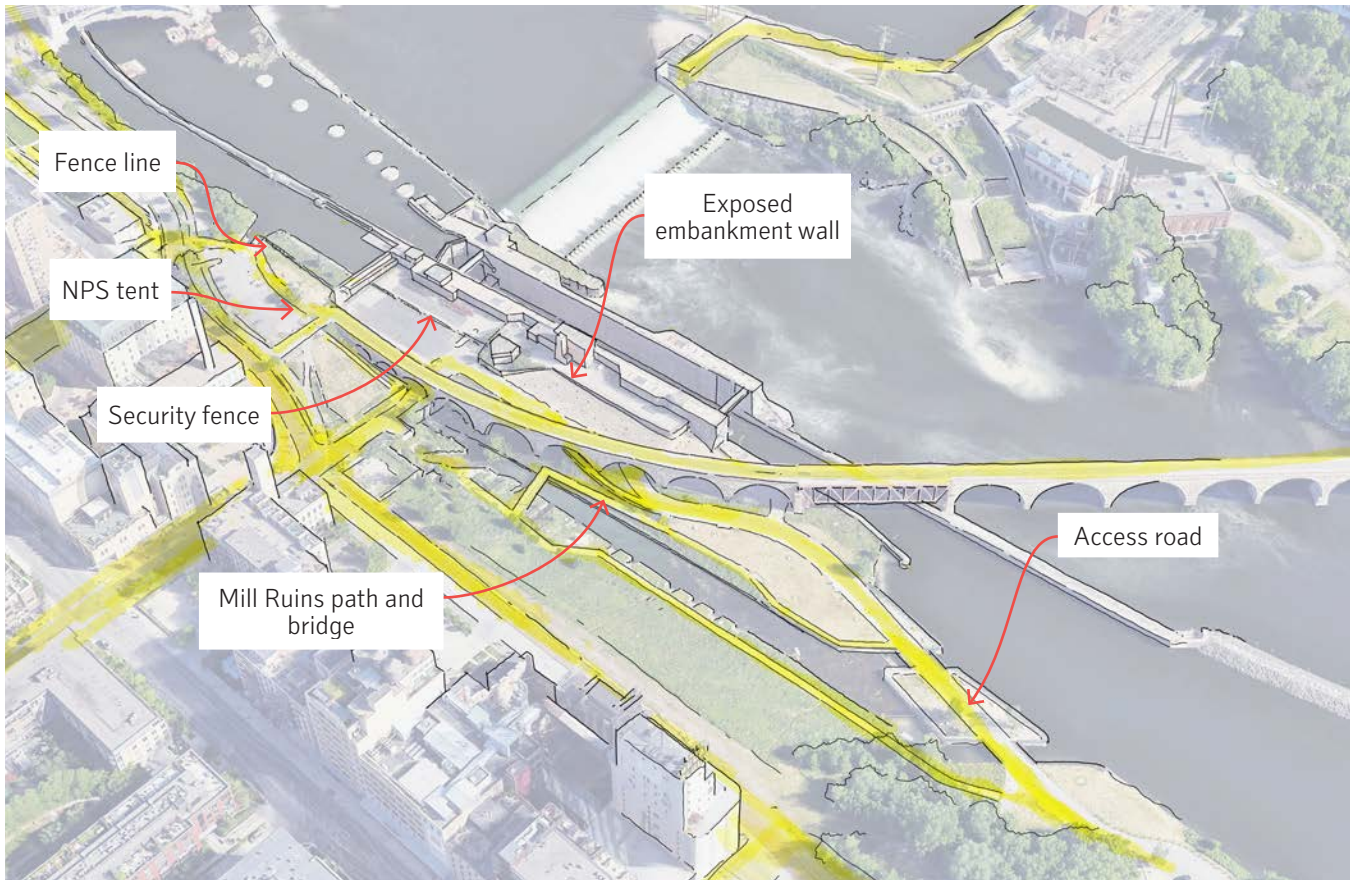


Today

- Until now there has been no clear presence of Native voices at the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock
- NPS offers tours of the Lock
- There are no clear places for gathering, celebration, or ceremony with connection to the River



5 Restore the Falls as a Welcoming and Connecting Place at the River



Today

- Lock was not designed as a public experience. Layers of fences and gates are necessary for current operations but not publicly welcoming
- Accessible connections are limited and secondary
- NPS provides tours of the Lock, which are open to public and supported by a tent near the Stone Arch Bridge
- There are no clear places for gathering, celebration, or ceremony with connection to the River





1 Engage the Lock to Expand the Narrative



2 Center the Water and Support the River's Flow



3 Listen to the Land and Hold Space for Relatives



4 Center Native Voices through Programs, Partnerships, and Leadership



5 Restore the Falls as a Welcoming and Connecting Place at the River

Falls Today



Owámniyomni

guide wall

side channel

Future Waterworks Park Phase 2

parking lot

Lock

Stone Arch Bridge

guide wall

Millrace

access road

Mill Ruins Park

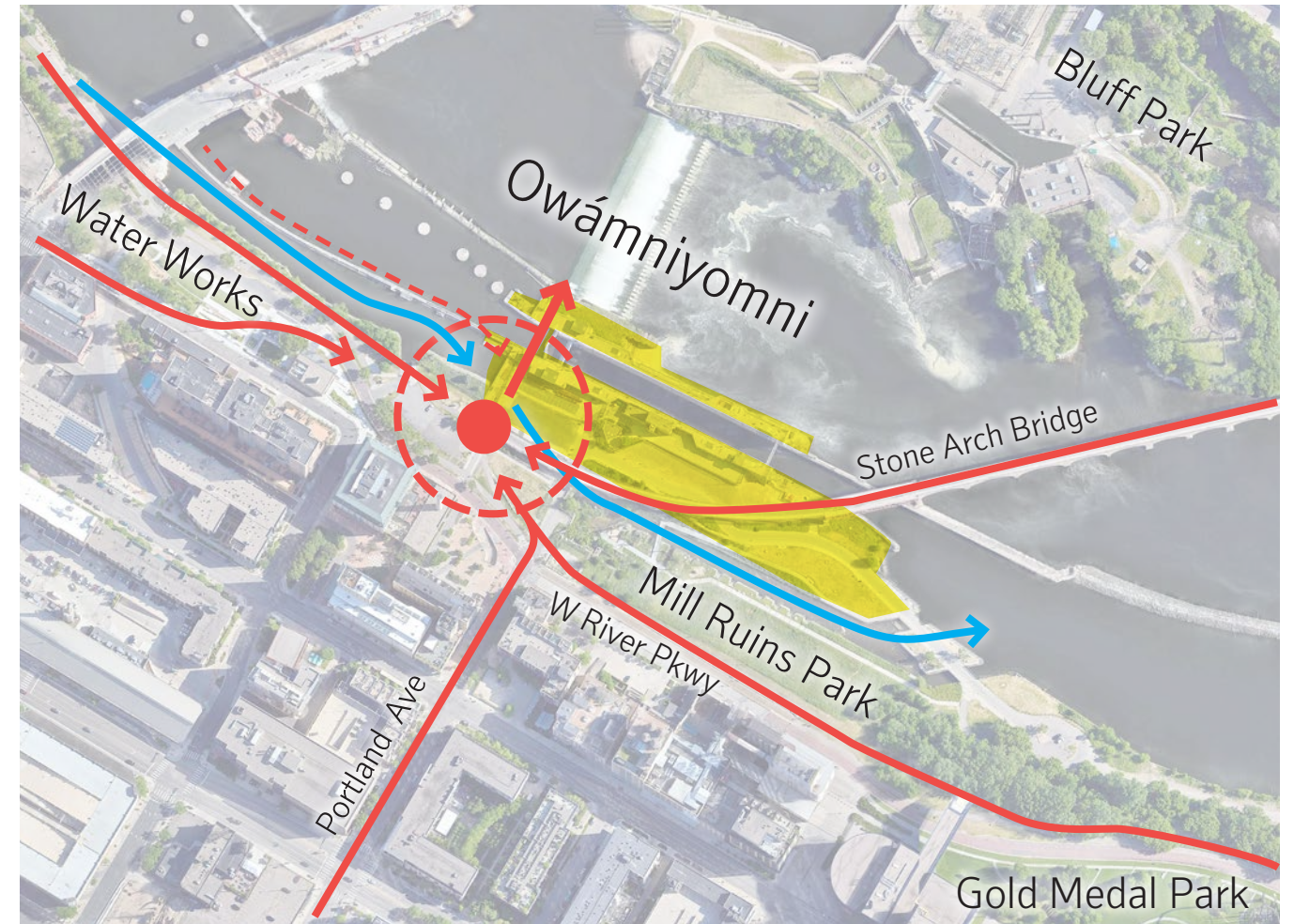
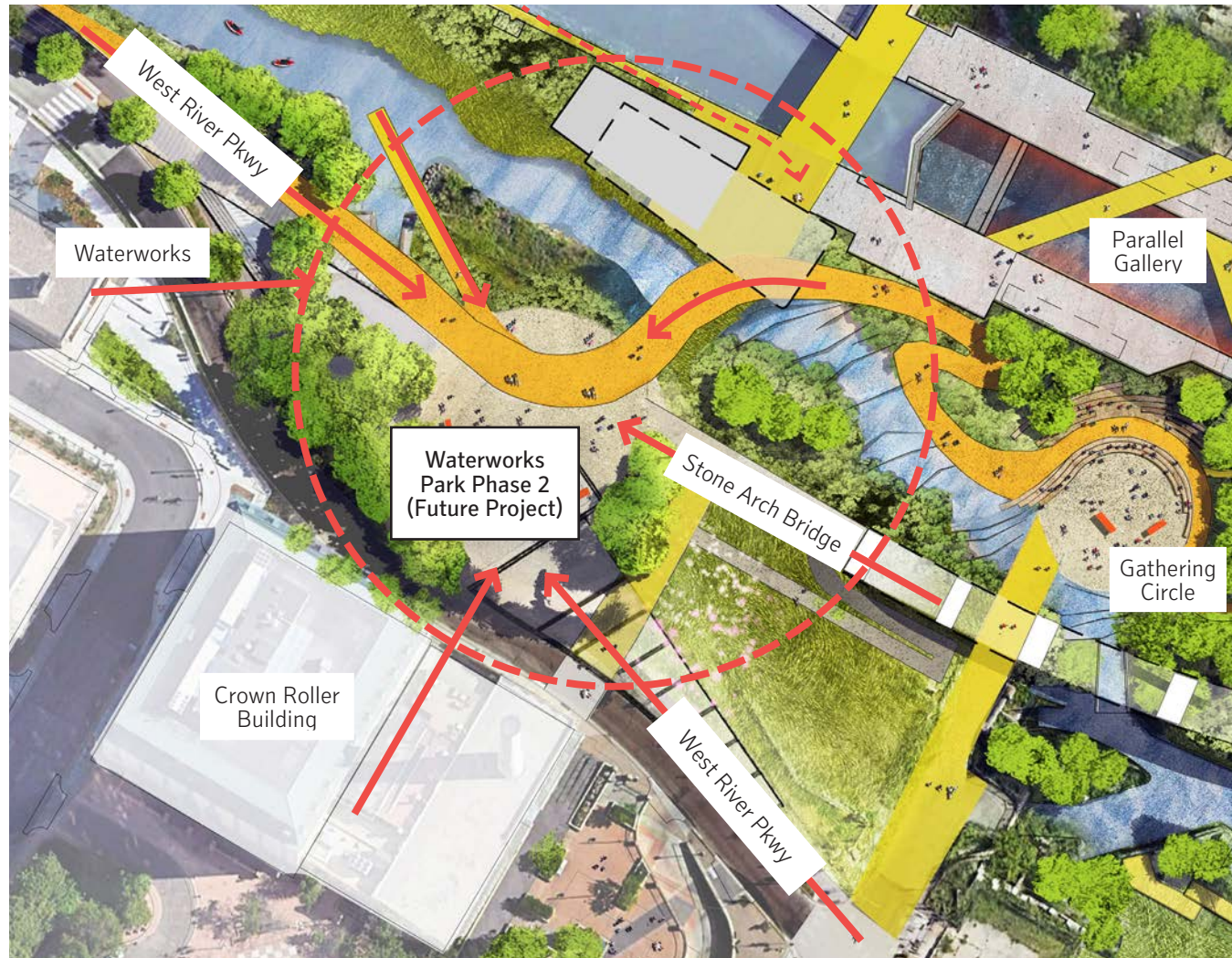
Portland Avenue

W River Parkway

Wita Wanagi (Spirit Island)

Converge

Welcome the many paths drawn together at the Falls



What we heard:

- Importance of welcoming and safe approach for all
- Orient to larger River initiatives and surrounding opportunities
- Presence of Dakota and Indigenous cultures and values
- Integration with Waterworks Park Phase 2



"Homecoming for Dakota people. Communities should embrace the notion of Indigenous people wanting to re-imagine a contemporary city that includes more of who they are."

- Melissa Olson (Minnesota Chippewa Tribe at Leech Lake)

Situated at the Upper portion of the Falls, this area is a point of arrival that links the Stone Arch Bridge, the City, and the River. It marks the beginning of the cultural corridor that weaves through the site, that facilitates welcome and visitor education to Dakota, Native, and non-Native visitors. The space is flexible and has the potential to host large-scale gatherings and festivals.

Programming Priorities

- Pop-ups
- Festivals/events
- Native language education
- Dance/drum circle
- Interpretive signage/QR codes
- Knowledge-sharing

"We were semi-nomadic people, so when we were put on reservations it made it hard for us to continue to go to our places. Always want to include all Native communities who made this place their home." - Shelley Buck (NPC)



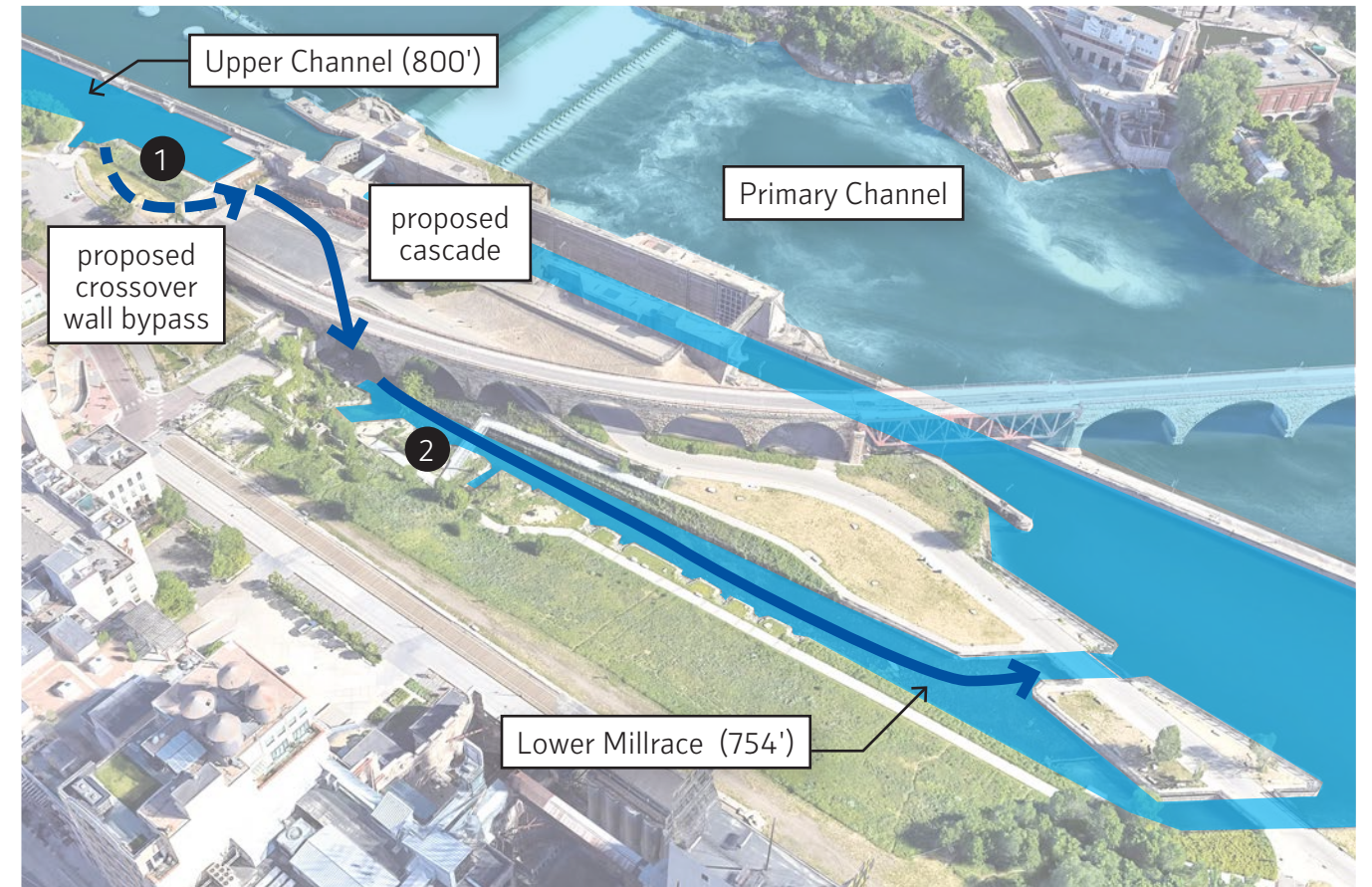
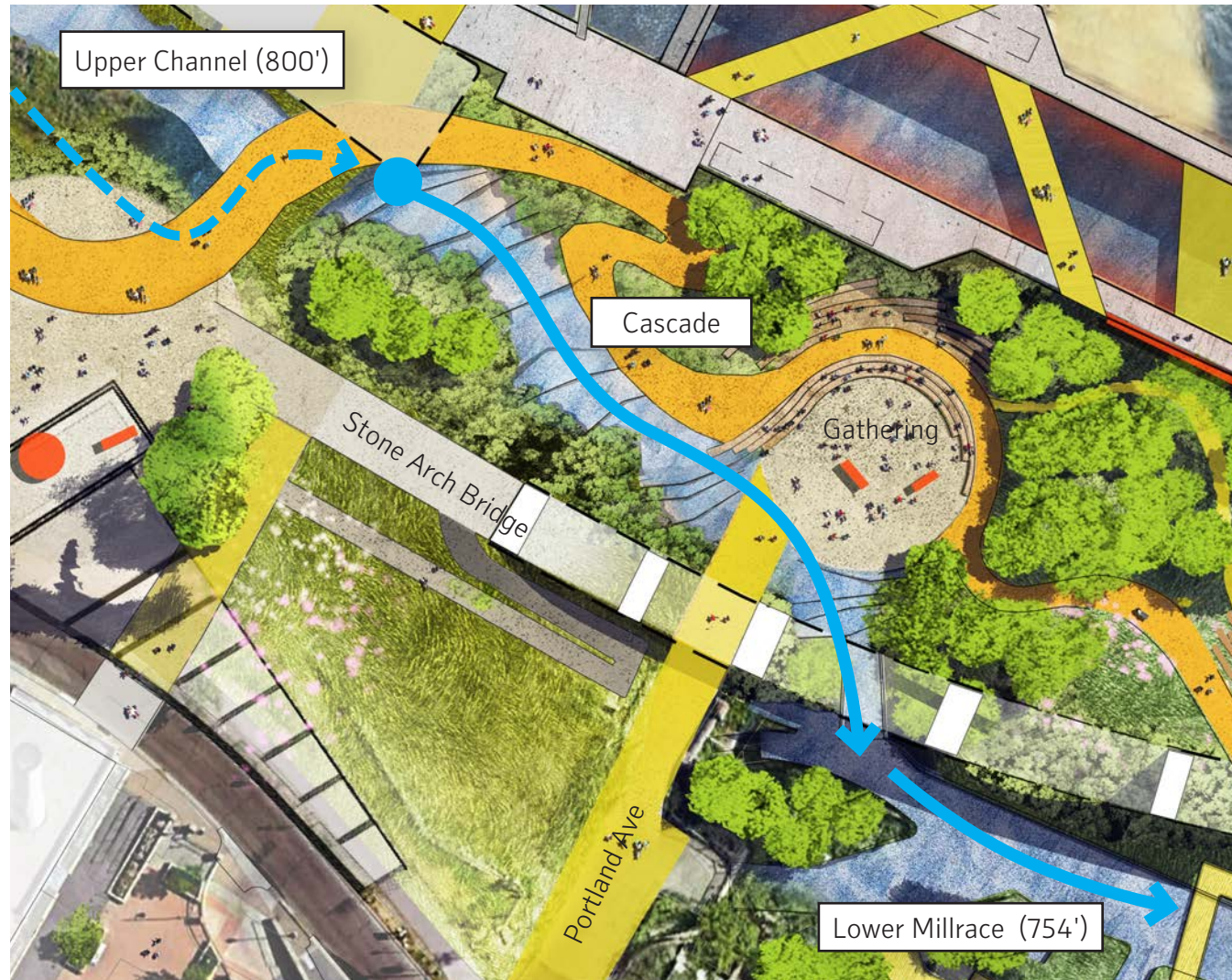
The current approach to convergence of the Stone Arch Bridge, Lock, and W River Parkway lacks clarity and doesn't offer much welcome despite the number of people connecting here each day.

Connect



Connecting the Water

Supporting the health and presence of the water



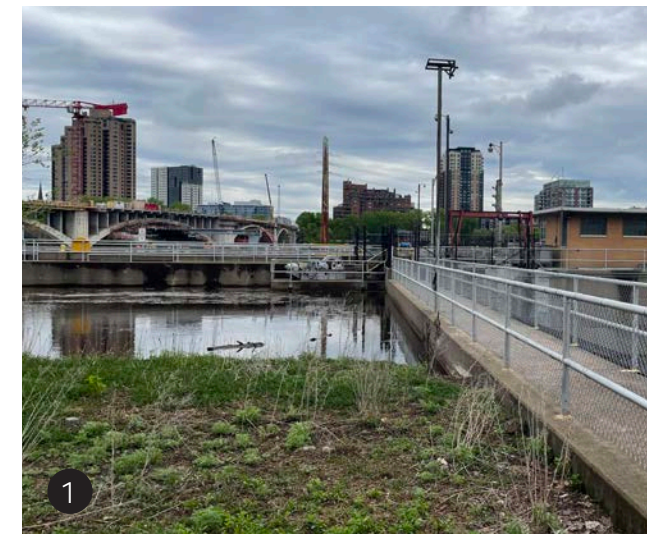
Invasive species will be prevented from moving upstream through the proposed bypass.

What we heard:

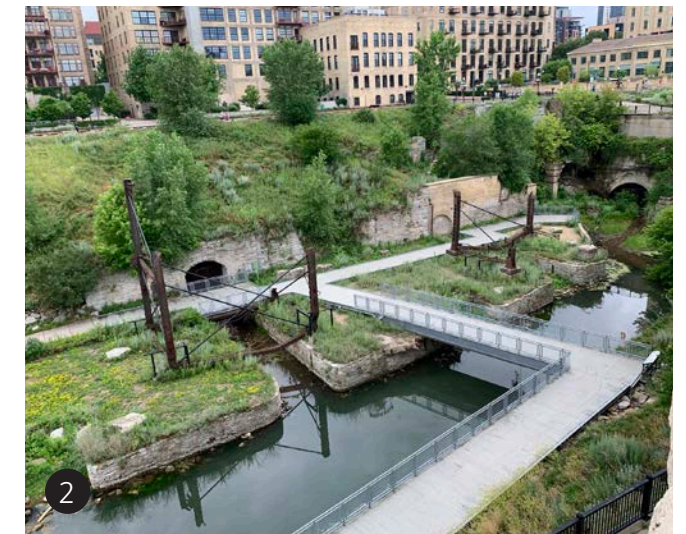
- Let the water flow
- Support the health and life of water and larger River
- Places where people can directly interact with the water
- Center the water

The ever-changing, mighty Mississippi River at historic Owámniyomni (St. Anthony Falls) once cascaded over a 50-foot limestone drop that expanded across the site. Today, water does not move through the site, and the remaining historic escarpment is largely covered by infrastructure, concealing the story of water and its experience in this powerful place. Connecting the water above and below the Falls will aim to continue the story disrupted. Movement of water through the site and the currently stagnant Lower Millrace will support the flow, health, and multispecies life of this place.

Note: Research examining the St. Anthony Falls escarpment was shared with the Native Partnership Council and GGN on March 30, 2022 by University of Minnesota graduate student Blake Slette. More information is expected to be published in *Open Rivers Journal* in 2023.

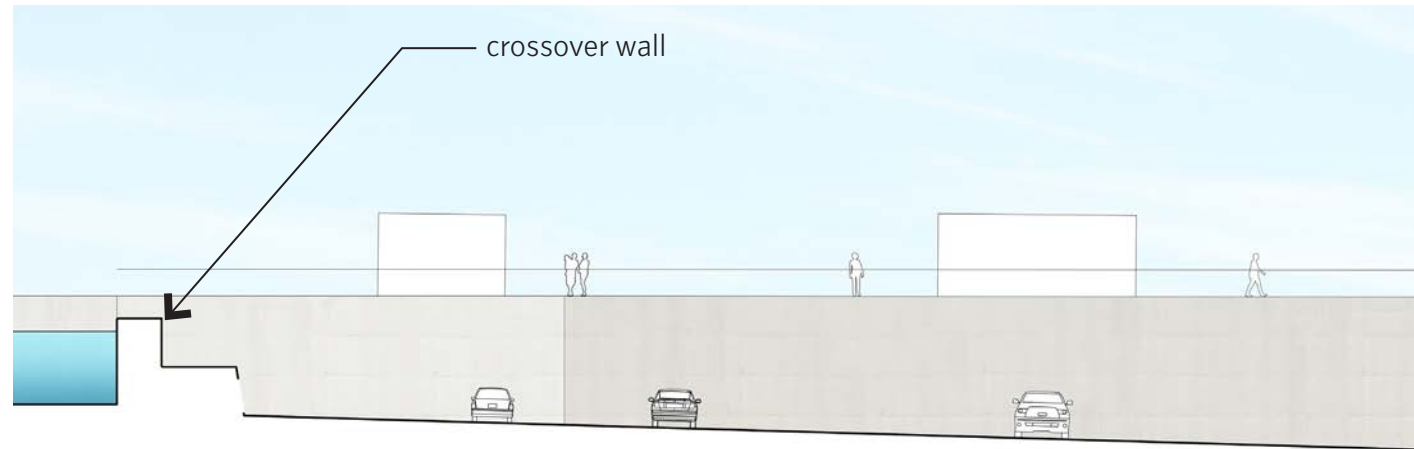


Water in the Upper Channel is contained by the Lock's guide wall and crossover wall. It is currently a static pool disconnected from the flow of water through the Falls.

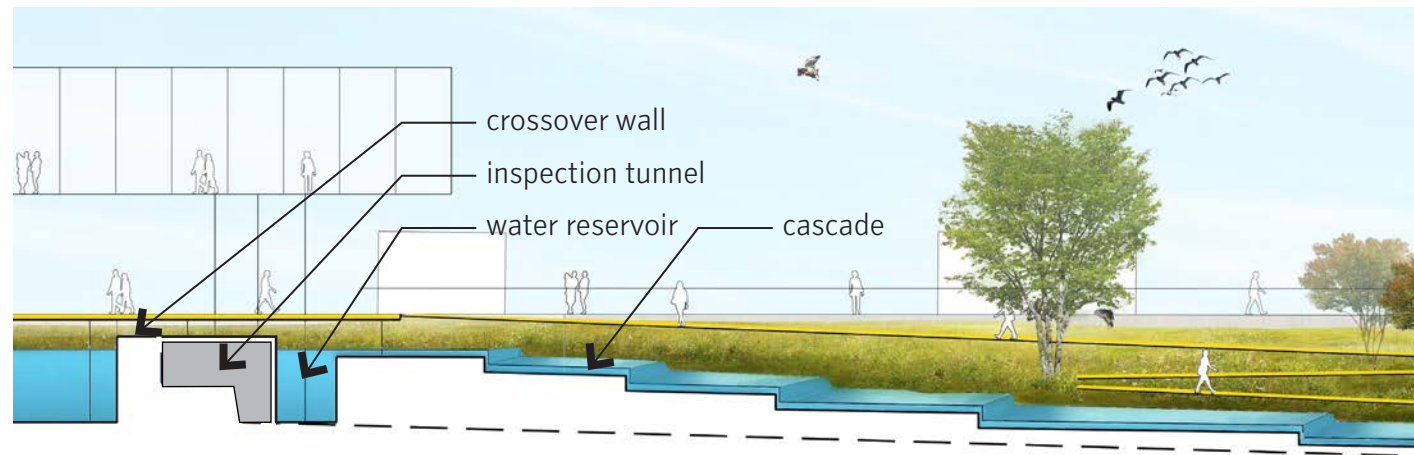


The Lower Millrace is currently a back channel that is generally stagnant. The proposed cascade will draw water through the Millrace to improve the health of the water with an active flow.

Connecting the Water



Existing



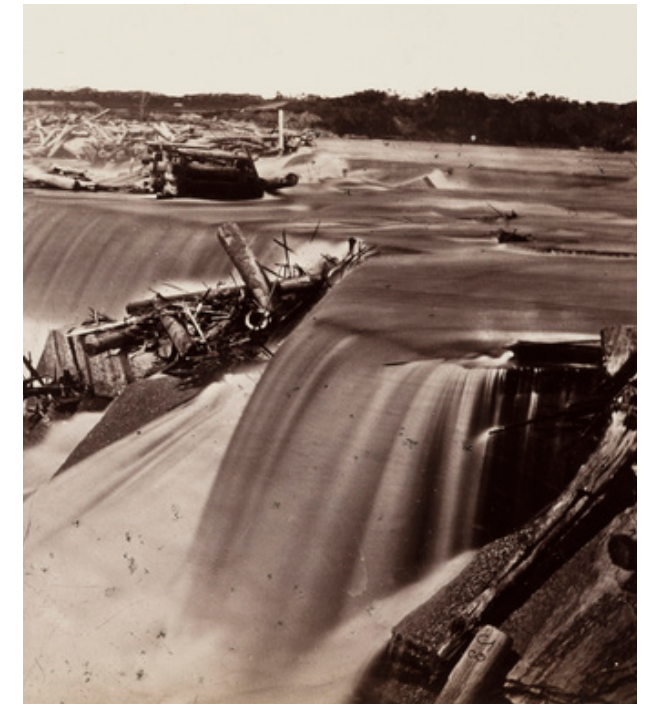
Proposed



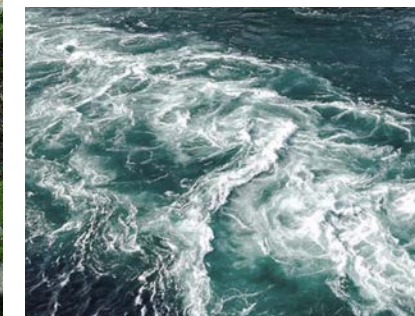
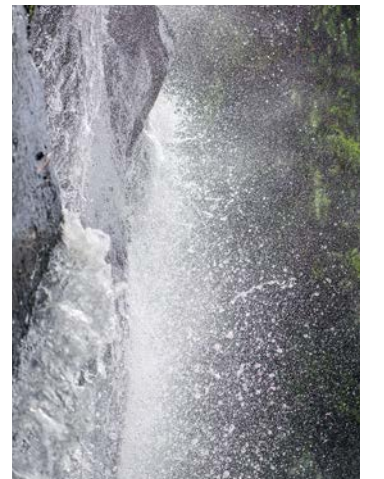
Location of proposed water connection between new cascade and Lower Millrace



Existing flowing water condition at the Falls



While the idea of a new cascade that connects the static pools above and below the Falls is not intended to be a reproduction of a natural condition, it can draw lessons from the qualities of stone and water that were once present.



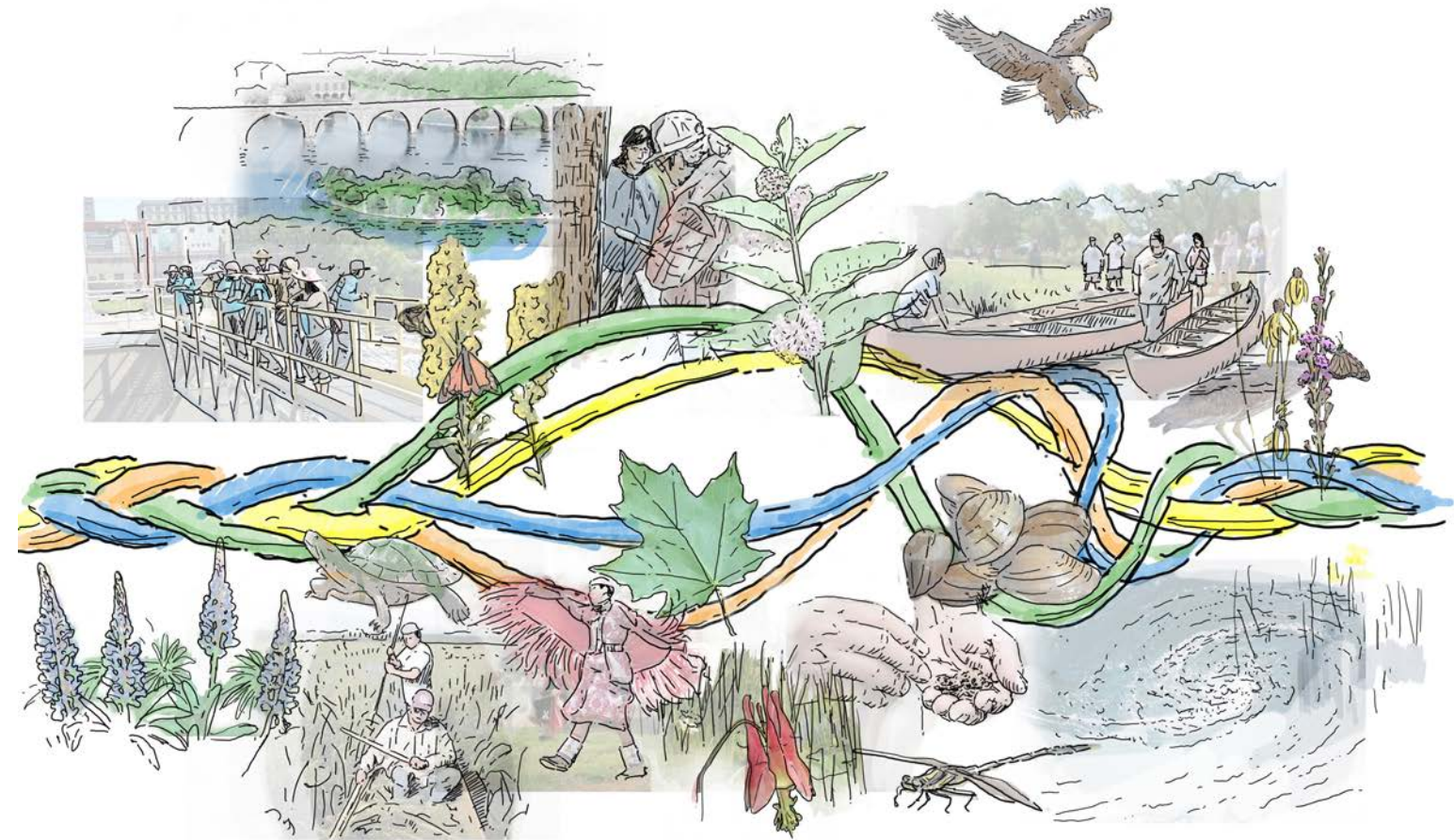
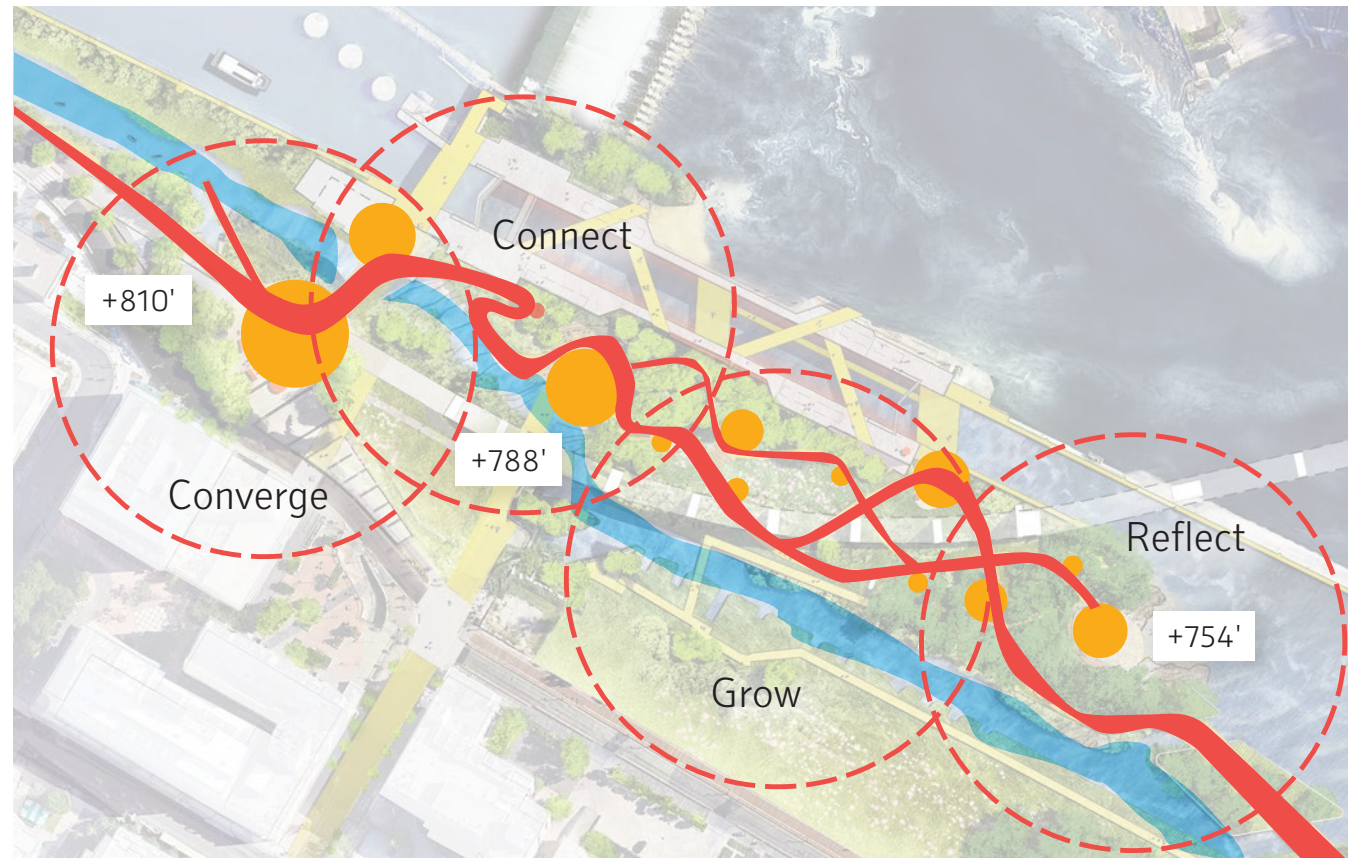
The flowing water will bring much-needed movement, variation, and health to the stagnant water of the Lower Millrace, and it will reconnect the upper and lower waters that were divided by the Lock. The proposed cascade will be in dialogue with the Falls.

Connecting the Water



The Journey/Portage

A universal-abilities path to connect the waters and weave the many Dakota teachings and stories of this place



"How can we begin to heal? How can we understand and acknowledge this site, this home, of our Dakota people, if we don't have access?"

- Carrie Aspinwall (CDA)

The Journey connects the waters above and below the Falls through a universal-abilities path. This path serves as a framework for connecting the many stories and activities of this place. Opportunities for gathering large and small, moments of reflection and teaching, and the presence of Native language through signage and multimedia can expand the impact of this feature.



"The Water, this River, the Mississippi, has always been a relative, and we have to acknowledge that, and we have to take care of her like She takes care of us... We have a responsibility to maintain a connection with the River."

- Juanita Espinosa (NPC)

Incorporation of sound recordings of Dakota language along the path, interpretation materials, and art along with places to pause, rest, and reflect.

The primary pathway ranges from elevated path when crossing the water to grounded path on the downriver side.

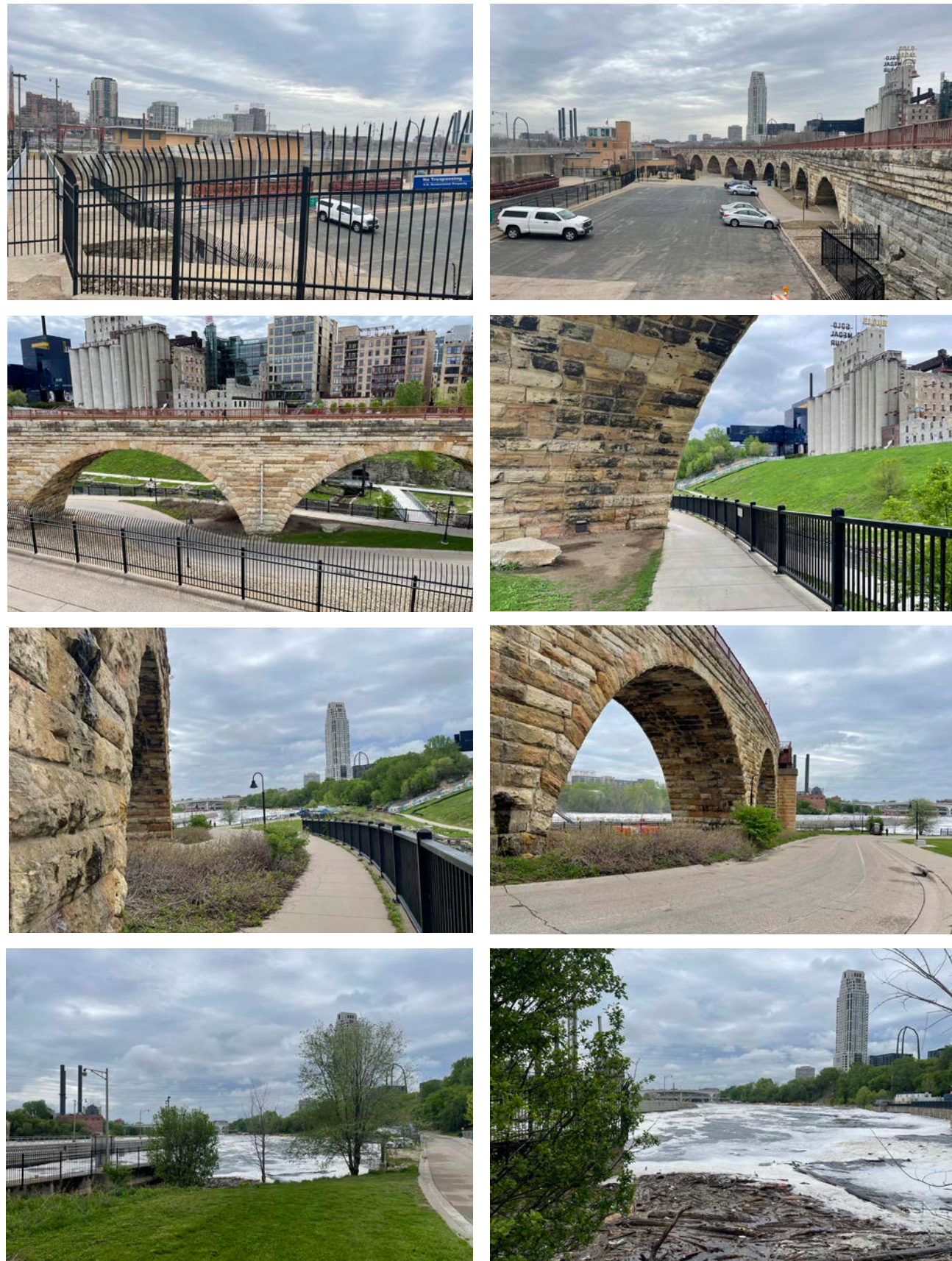
Programming Priorities

- Shade trees and native ecology
- Multispecies habitat
- Multimedia interpretive signage
- Hearing and seeing the water
- Walking paths
- Dakota cultural and edible landscapes
- Youth education



Prior to colonization, the portage of canoes at Owánniyomni supported a place of cultural convergence where nations came together as depicted in George Catlin's, *Ojibwa Portaging Around the Falls of St. Anthony, 1835-1836*

From Above to Below Today



The Journey/Portage pathway is designed to provide a universal-abilities route from the elevation of the Stone Arch Bridge and adjacent streets down to touch the water below Owámmiyomni. This approach connects special moments and orientations along the way.

Gathering

A visible place for gathering, celebration, and demonstration at the Falls



Concept sketch of Gathering highlighting connection between elevation above the falls and Parallel Gallery down to the existing elevation at Portland Avenue. By tucking the space into the newly established slope, an informal seating opportunity oriented to the proposed cascade is created.

What we heard:

- Place for public gathering
- Seasonal use with temporary structures
- Access from Portland Avenue
- Place for celebration, gathering, continuing and deepening conversations
- Temporary art, event, food exchange, and exhibits
- Place to connect generations

Currently the parking lot serving Corps operations, the Gathering circle sits at the intersection of Water, Path, and entrance to the site from under the Stone Arch Bridge. The space is flexible and can be used for celebration, ceremony, gathering, and continuing and deepening conversations. The Circle is nestled into the site and removes you from the city. There will be sounds of water flowing and falling from the cascade in parallel to the larger Falls, and the echoes from the Lock chamber.

Programming Priorities

- Storytelling
- Traditional structures
- Basket weaving
- Art exhibits
- Performance
- Farmers market
- Ceremony space
- Intergenerational knowledge-sharing
- Experiences of water



The scale of the gathering space is similar to that of the Minneapolis American Indian Center

Gathering



Seasonal structure



Cultural Events and Teaching



Storytelling and Continued Conversations



Art Installations connected to Parallel Gallery



Music and Dance Performance



Food Truck Event



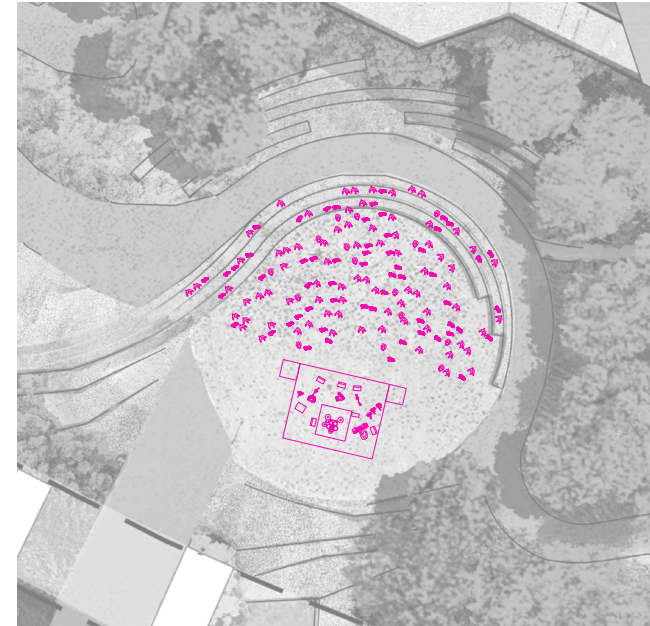
Craft Market



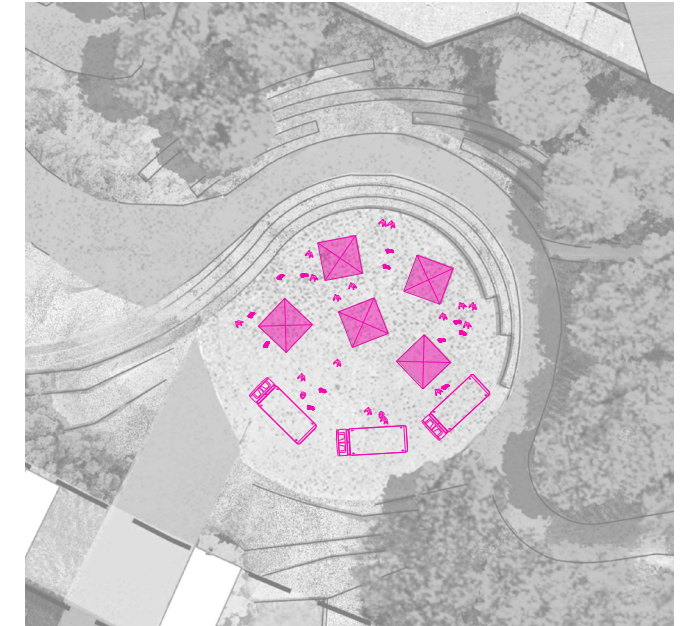
Intergenerational Wisdom Sharing and Education



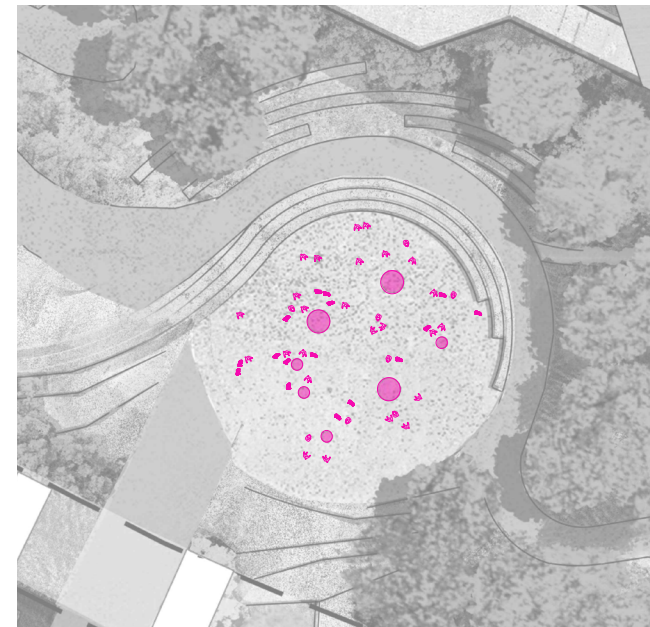
Food and plant market



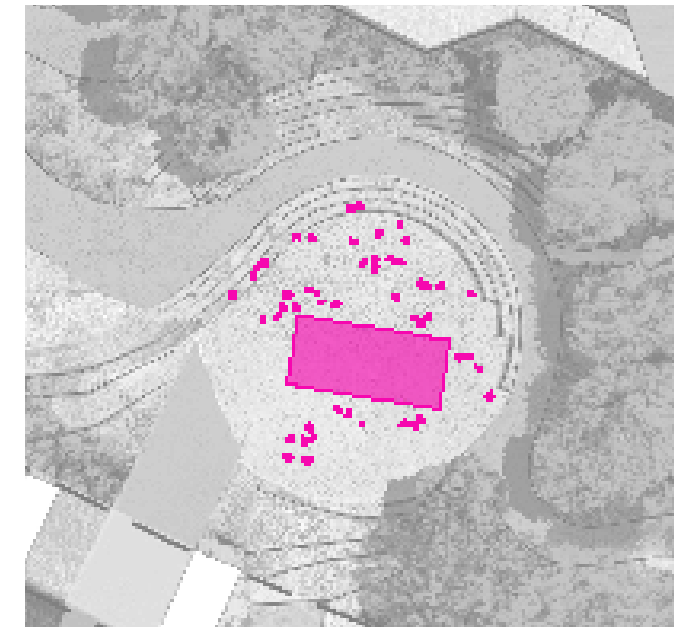
Performance



Market/ Food Event



Art Installation



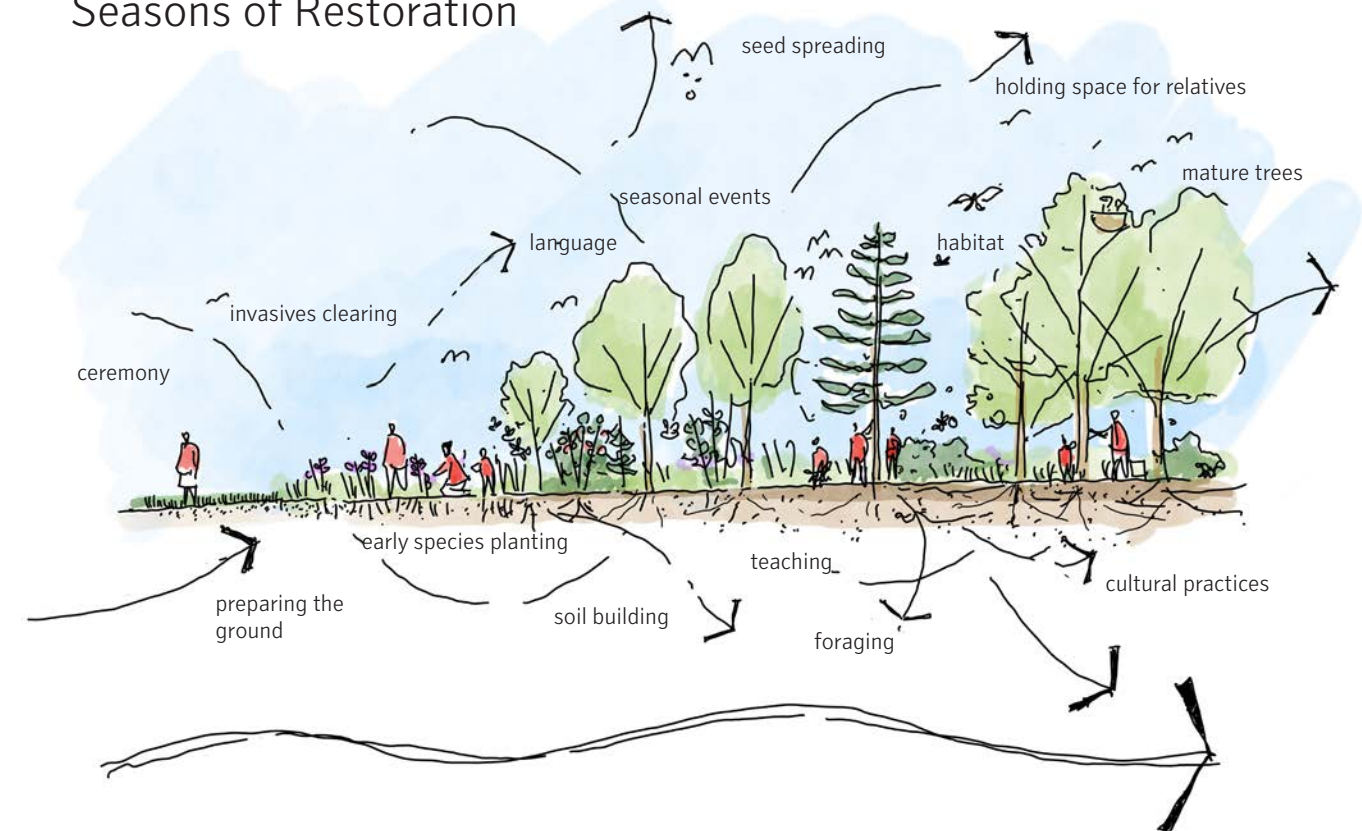
Seasonal Structure

Garden for Teaching

Holding space for Plant and Animal Relatives



Seasons of Restoration



Rather than seeing a divide between nature and culture, this garden emphasizes the connectedness of all species. Plants are not a setting but an active and valued part of restoring the story of Owámniyomni and the Dakota.

What we heard:

- Hold space for plants and other relatives as a part of the healing of this place
- Planting as living and changing with time, not a fixed permanent design
- Learning reciprocity - participation and partnerships for teaching and supporting restoration, especially with youth programs
- Celebrate Dakota language to teach about relationships among relatives
- Plants and animals are teachers, plants are also medicine
- Incorporate small moments for teaching and outdoor classrooms

"It's a story that reflects what's happening in the world. The dominant culture doesn't see the earth as alive, but a resource to be extracted and used. They never saw it as a place of birth and life, but as an economic resource that needed to be extracted to run the mills."
 - Juanita Espinosa (NPC)

The teaching gardens will support the multitude of educational programming in the Lower Falls, for both Native and non-Native people, across generations. The textured and immersive landscape of the Lower Falls provides opportunities for education around ancestral Dakota use of native plants for food, ceremony, and medicine.

Restoration of the land and its relations is at the heart of this place by supporting the lives of multispecies relatives. Such restoration will require seasons of transformation and public participation, with local partnerships and programming. Grown from a relational worldview, this will be a place to learn care and reciprocity for environments here and beyond.

Programming Priorities

- Dakota medicine and edible gardens
- Outdoor classrooms
- Playground equipment
- Youth education and demonstrations
- Riverbank restoration and habitat enhancement



"One idea to use pioneer species to heal the landscape, create soil, cover over – choke cherries will come up. Landscape as a source not a sink. The medicine we used, the jam we made – we can teach kids all along the riverfront not just this site. A place of beginning."
 - John Koepke (FoF Board)



These gardens can be a place of intergenerational teaching around cultural relationships with plants.

Growing Relationships through Time

Restoring the land and multispecies connections



Potential Habitats
 ■ Riparian Woodland
 ■ Upland Woodland & Prairie
 ■ Riparian Wetland

What we heard:

- Shape the land to support habitat diversity for plant and animal relatives
- Support restoration as a process that continues to change through time
- Soften edges where there are currently hard walls for ecological connectivity and diversity
- Ensure infrastructure is light on the land
- Prioritize partnership with local organizations

In order to restore a story disrupted, the Falls must support a process of building relationships among all that colonization has disrupted. Restoration of the land, ecology, and multispecies relations is essential to this process.

Ecological restoration in this place includes clearing the ground, amending the soil, softening hard edges and the shoreline for greater connectivity and habitat diversity, and shaping and planting the land to support multispecies relations.

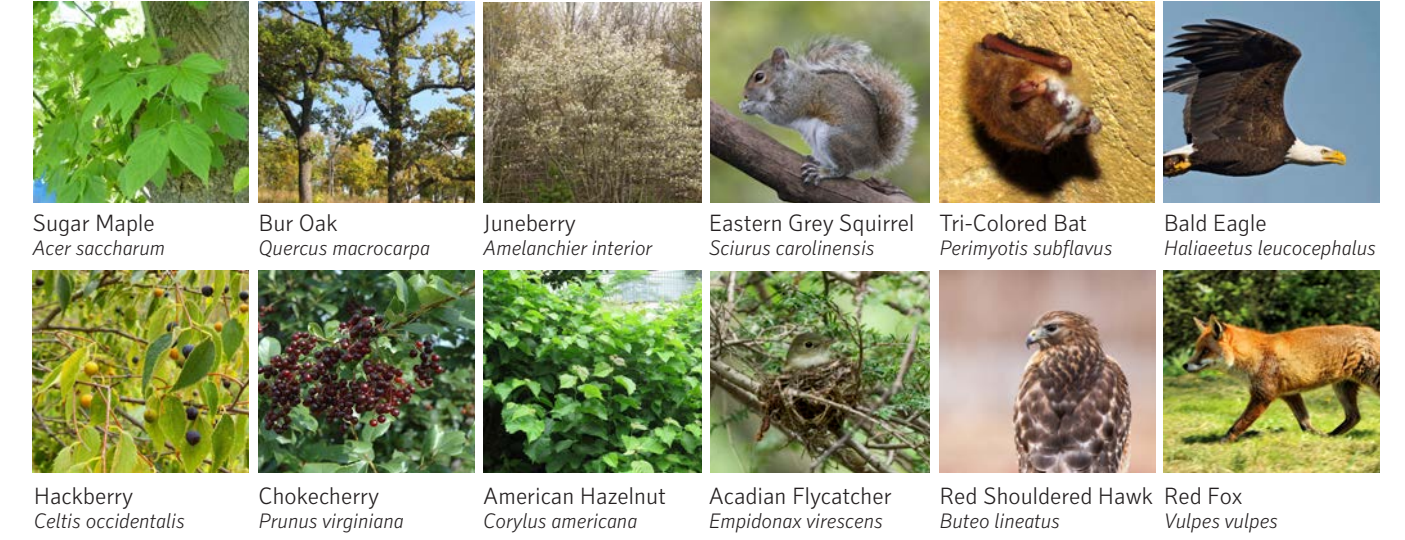
The Falls will have planted characteristics that support existing and potential native ecological communities, including restored forest, prairie, and riparian conditions. The Upper Falls will be restored with native upland woodland trees including oak and maple species, and a lush prairie understory. Along water edges and the riverine shoreline of the Lower Falls, riparian trees including cottonwood, alder and silver maple species will be planted. New plantings will not only support existing and grow future habitats, but will also revive the ecology of native species that are significant to Dakota and Indigenous cultural practices.

Riparian Woodland and Wetland



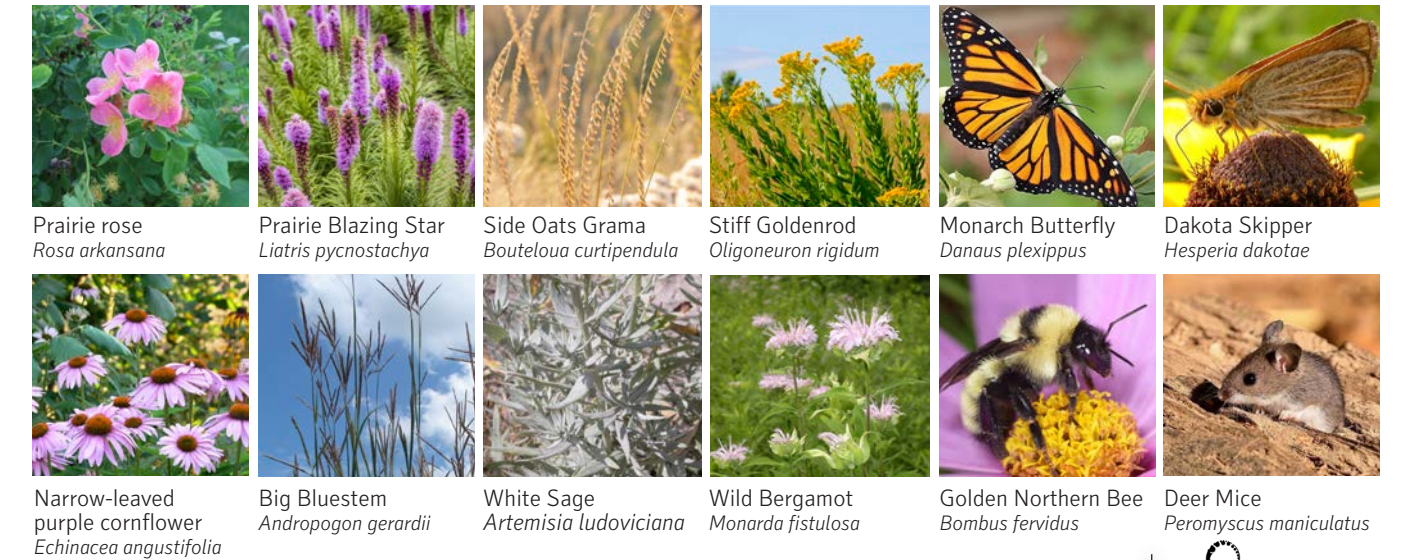
Silver Maple <i>Acer saccharinum</i>	American Bur-Reed <i>Sparganium eurycarpum</i>	Winged Mapleleaf <i>Quadrula fragosa</i>	Small Mouth Bass <i>Acer saccharum</i>	Common Loon <i>Gavia immer</i>	Trumpeter Swan <i>Cygnus buccinator</i>
Eastern Cottonwood <i>Populus deltoides</i>	Pale Bulrush <i>Scripus pallidus</i>	Mudpuppy <i>Necturus maculosus</i>	Black Sandshell Mussel <i>Ligumia recta</i>	Night Heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Common Map Turtle <i>Graptemys geographica</i>

Upland Woodland



Sugar Maple <i>Acer saccharum</i>	Bur Oak <i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	Juneberry <i>Amelanchier interior</i>	Eastern Grey Squirrel <i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	Tri-Colored Bat <i>Perimyotis subflavus</i>	Bald Eagle <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>
Hackberry <i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	Chokecherry <i>Prunus virginiana</i>	American Hazelnut <i>Corylus americana</i>	Acadian Flycatcher <i>Empidonax virescens</i>	Red Shouldered Hawk <i>Buteo lineatus</i>	Red Fox <i>Vulpes vulpes</i>

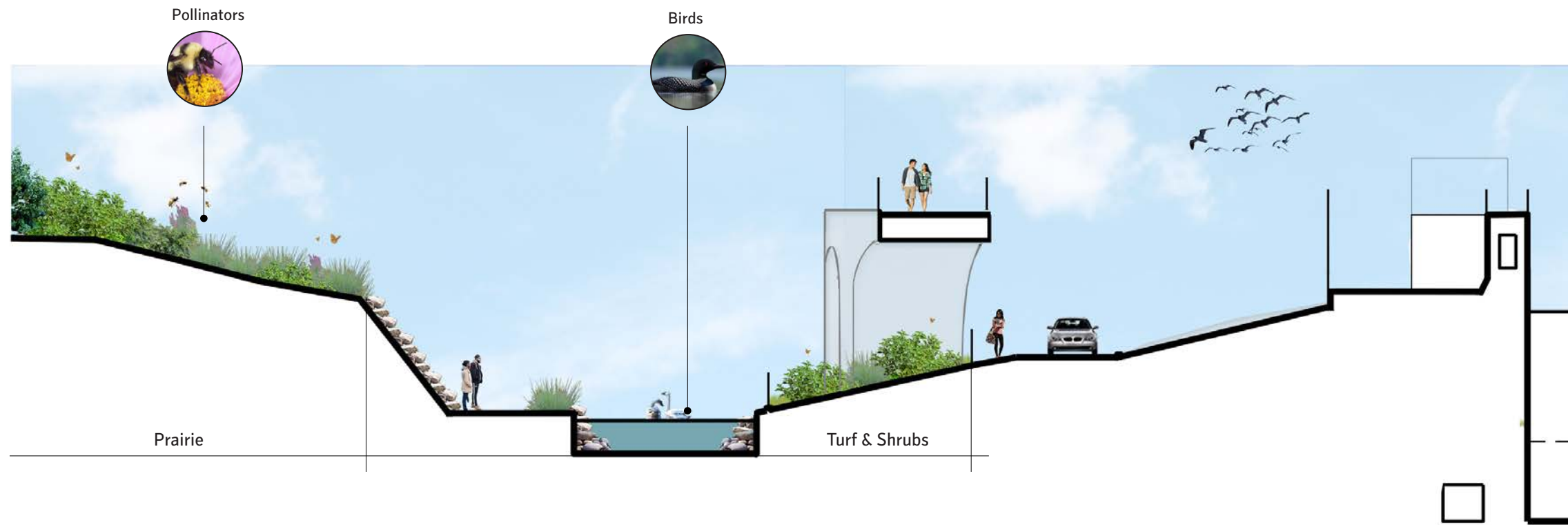
Prairie



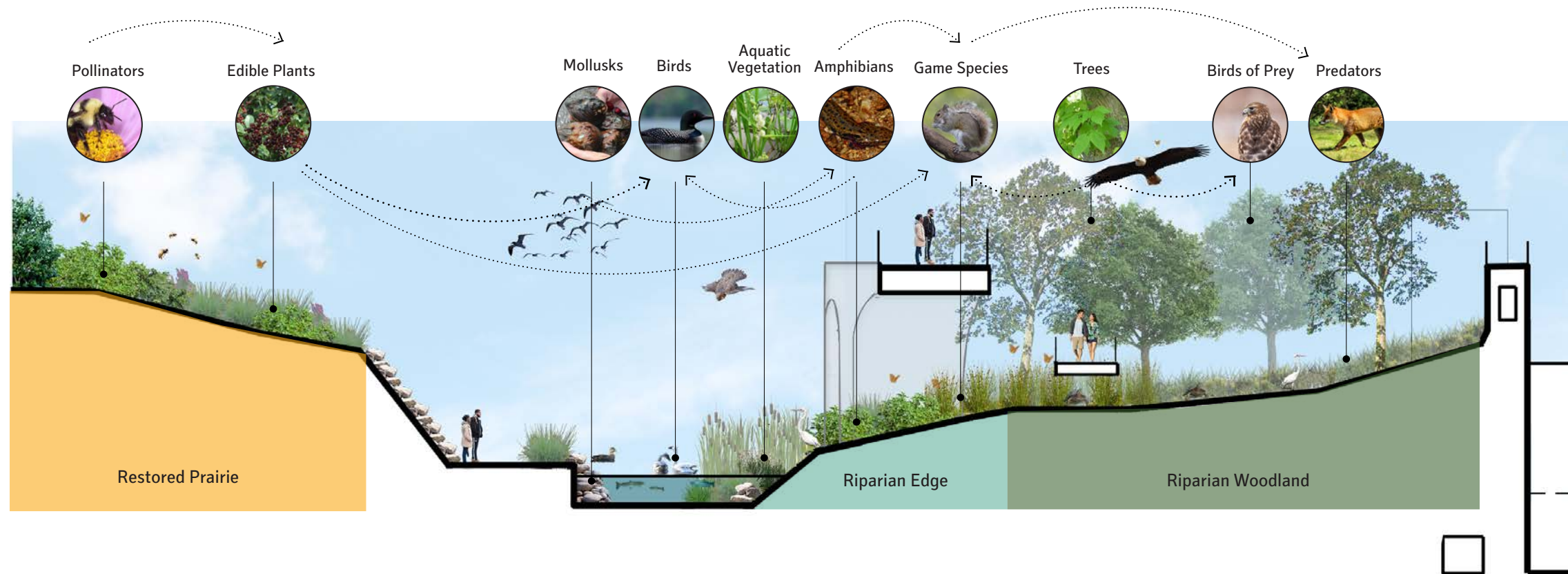
Prairie rose <i>Rosa arkansana</i>	Prairie Blazing Star <i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>	Side Oats Grama <i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	Stiff Goldenrod <i>Oligoneuron rigidum</i>	Monarch Butterfly <i>Danaus plexippus</i>	Dakota Skipper <i>Hesperia dakotae</i>
Narrow-leaved purple cornflower <i>Echinacea angustifolia</i>	Big Bluestem <i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	White Sage <i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i>	Wild Bergamot <i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Golden Northern Bee <i>Bombus fervidus</i>	Deer Mice <i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i>

Growing Relationships through Time

Restoring the land and multispecies connections



Existing Ecologies

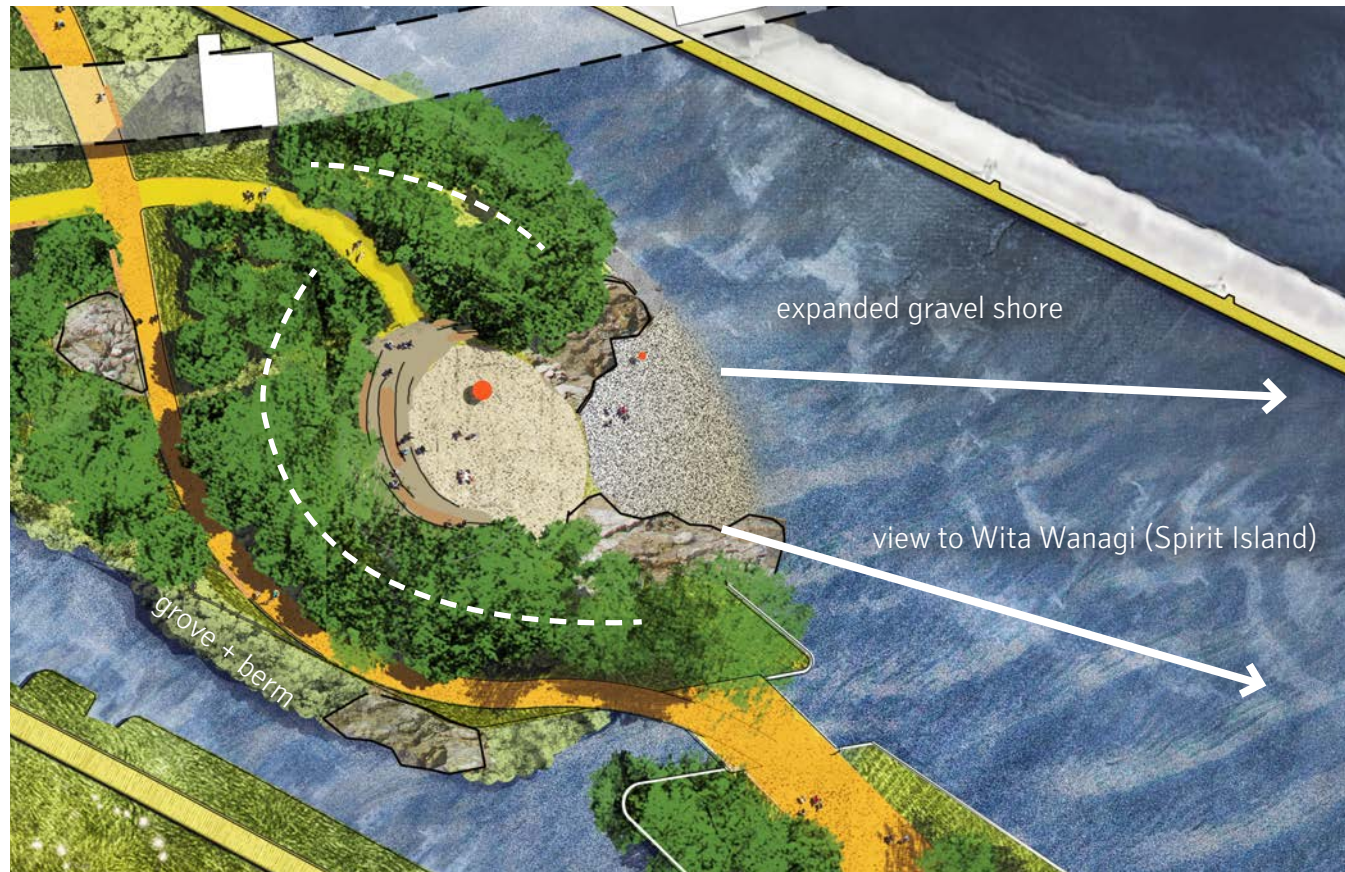


Existing and Potential Ecologies Proposed in the Future



Touching the Water

A protected place at the water's edge for reverence and remembering



What we heard:

- A place of reverence and respect, with a view towards Spirit Island
- Education around Spirit Island
- A place to touch the water
- Support Rights of Nature
- Education around Dakota and Native cultural life ways and food systems
- Connect Native youth with ancestral practices and knowledge of water
- Revive the canoe
- Seating and shelter for comfortable reflection and rest

"A lot of our traditional values are tied to water - rights to nature, rights to life, water is life. Our rights are connected to rights of nature. How do we convey that to broader community in this area, how to codify that in writing and recognize the cultural programs of Native people here?"
 - Wakinyan LaPointe (NPC)

The journey of the universal-abilities path descends through the forested Lower Falls and opens up towards meeting the River at the shore. Hard edges at the shore are softened to welcome riparian habitats and allow for a more generous experience of the water's edge. Mounded ground and riparian woodland frame the view to the River and allow enclosure for intimate experiences with Wita Wanagi (Spirit Island). Spruce trees and limestone boulders near the shore recall historic planting and materiality of the Island. Nestled among trees and sculpted land is a gathering circle for collective education and reflection.



Moving through a threshold of lush woodland, the path opens up to a dynamic meeting of land and water. A place to be present with Wita Wanagi (Spirit Island) and engage with the water.

Programming Priorities

- Canoeing
- Line fishing
- Picnic tables
- Intimate ceremony
- Honoring Spirit Island
- Touching the water
- Foraging



The stone materiality, texture, and of the shore that was visible during the drawdown

Wita Wanagi (Spirit Island)

Remembering and Making Present



"As we've gone through this process the one aspect of the place that is profound is that Spirit Island was a place for birth. Women went there to give birth. That power and recognition and honor of that place at that time is something we should explore more for how we want to tell the story."

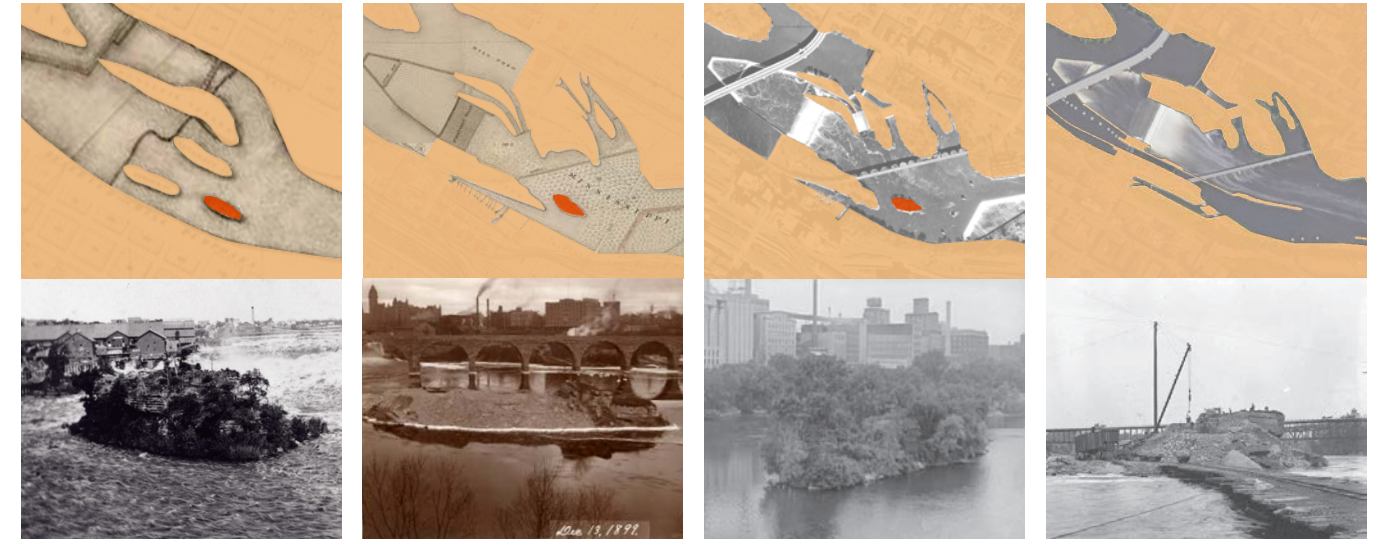
- Ed Minnema (NACDI)

Located just below the historic Falls within its mist and whirlpools, Wita Wanagi (Spirit Island) was and remains an important spiritual site for Dakota people. The Island was a place where Dakota women traditionally went to give birth, as well as a significant meeting place for Native people and their neighbors. Eagles nested atop its forest of trees. Quarried through industrialization, it was completely demolished with the construction of the Lock. This missing history has been rendered invisible for generations.

Encountering the water and Spirit Island at the shore, the place is significant for truth-telling and education around the stories, power and meaning of the Island.

Spirit Island can be further honored through marking its presence with Native-led art and multimedia.

Desecration of Wita Wanagi (Spirit Island)



Mid-1800s: Island covered in hemlock, spruce, cottonwood and oak forests

Late 1800s: Island cleared of forest for limestone quarrying and island edges break down from timber transport on the water

Mid-1900s: Island re-vegetated

1963: Spirit Island erased with the construction of the Lock

NPC Guidance for the Future



1. Area should be prioritized as a place of honoring, with respectful access

2. Protection and reverence for both individual and collective ceremony

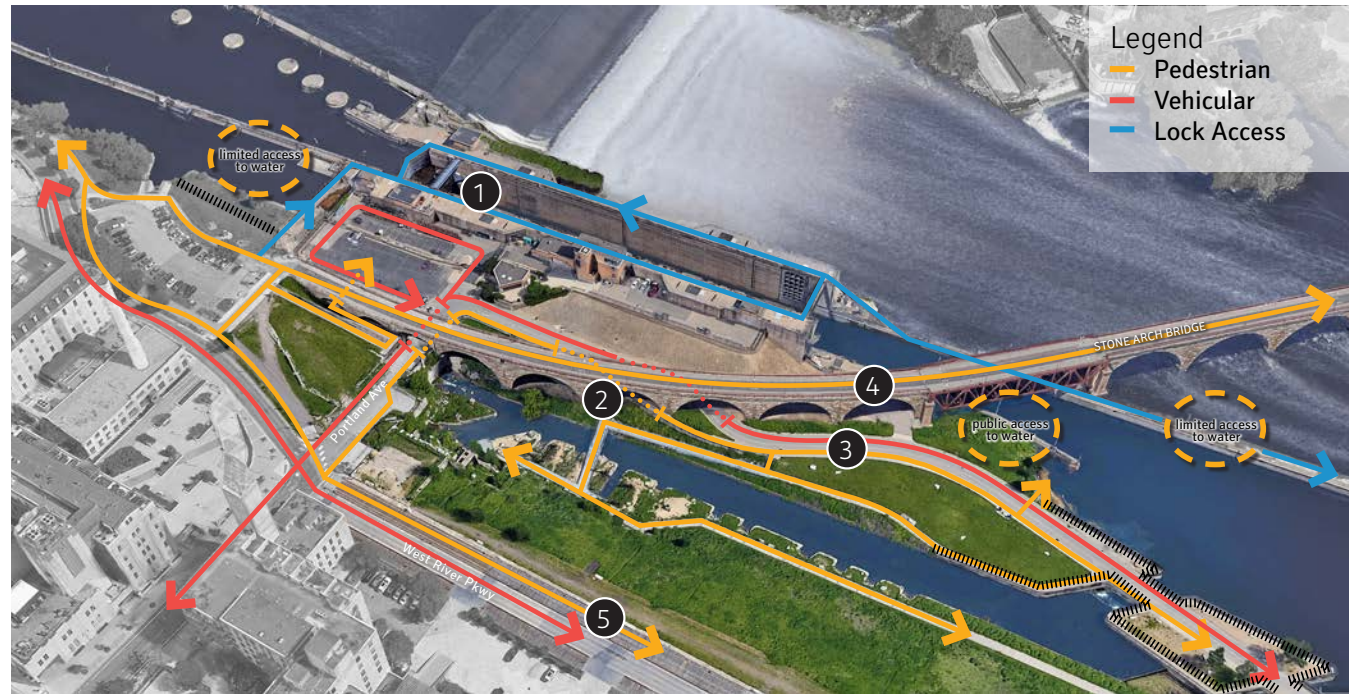
3. Teaching, remembering, gathering, and sharing stories

4. Presenting Spirit Island led by Native Artists

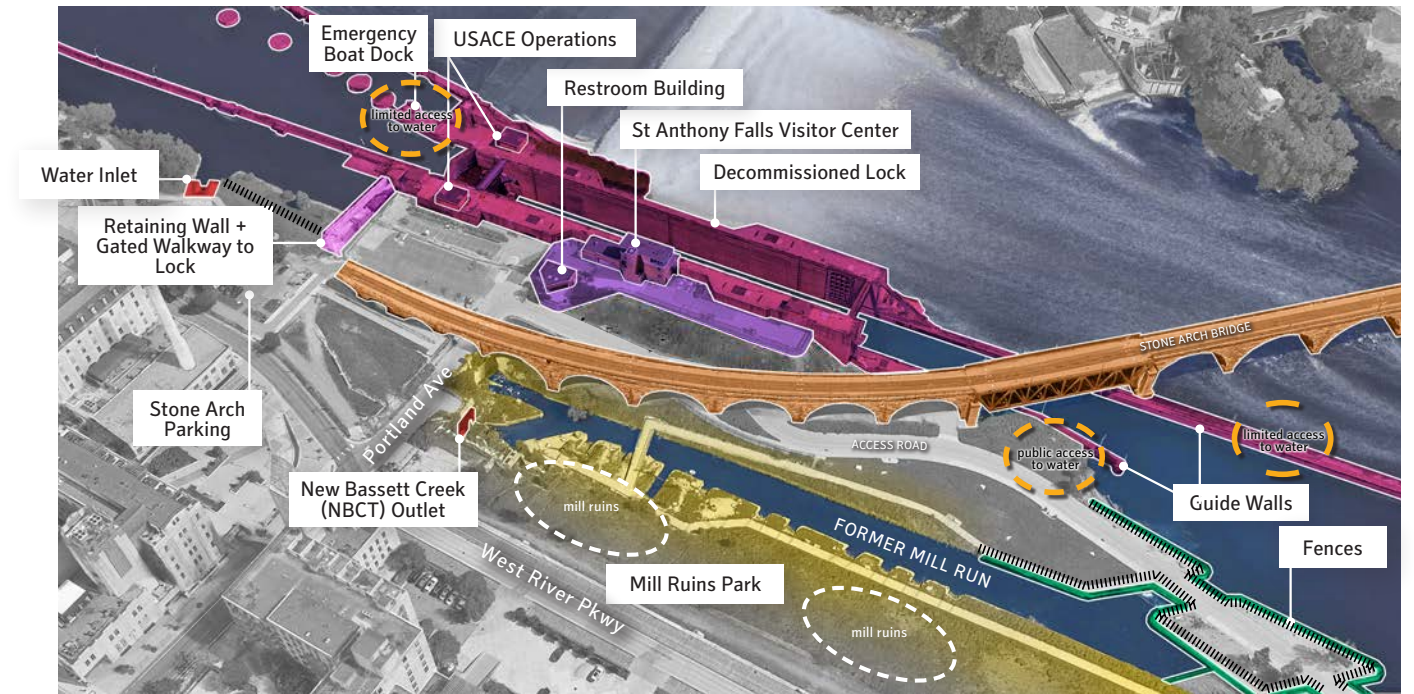


**Section 4 - Additional Information,
Conveyance, and Early Opportunities**

Circulation and Access



Existing Structures



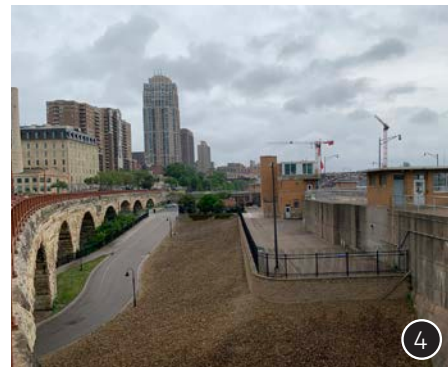
View: On the Lock, facing east to Stone Arch Bridge



View: Under the Bridge, facing south at Mill Ruins Park



View: Under the Bridge, facing north



View: On the Stone Arch Bridge, facing west



View: On West River Parkway, southeast-bound

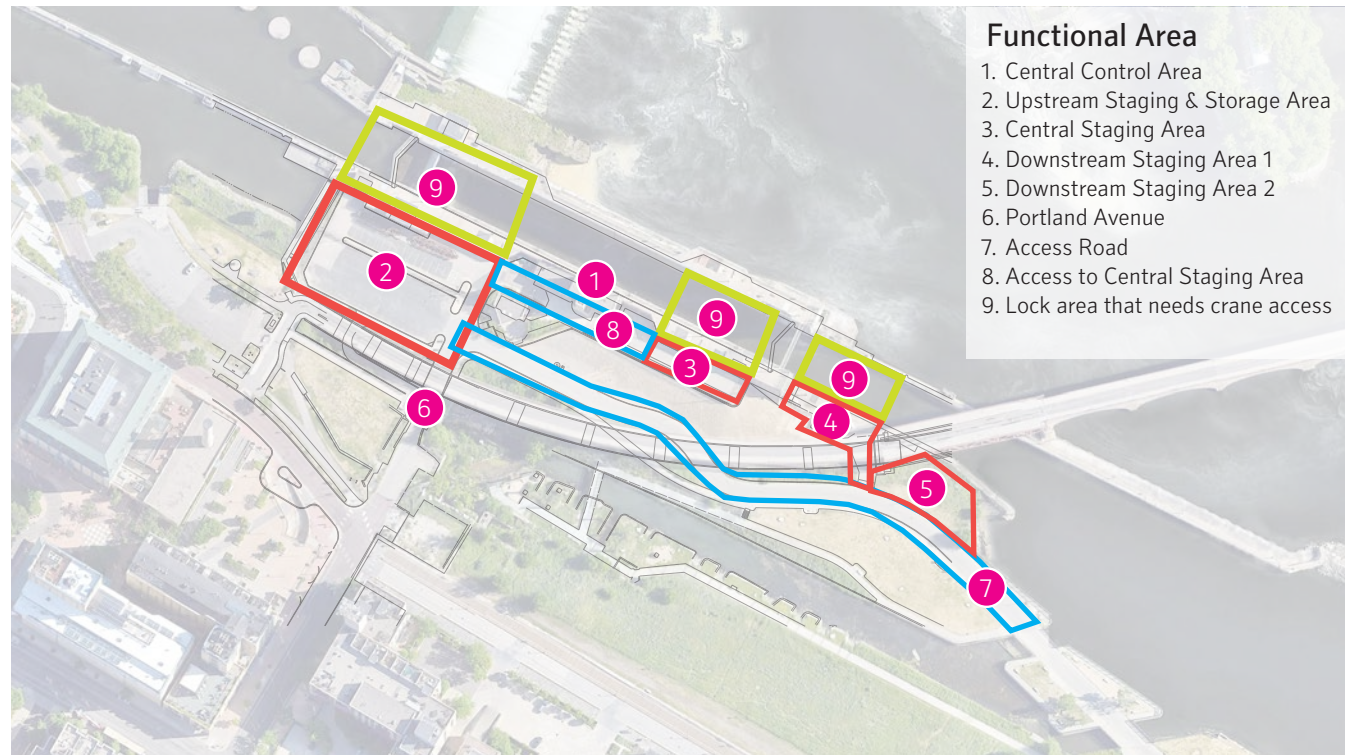


Stone Arch Bridge and fenced central control station platform on top of sand slope



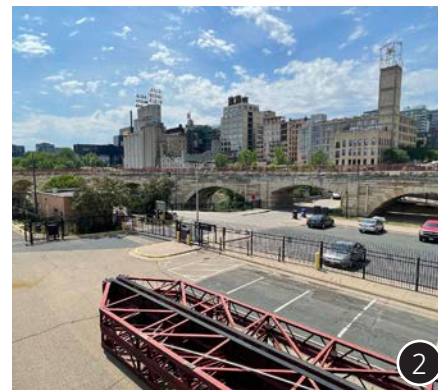
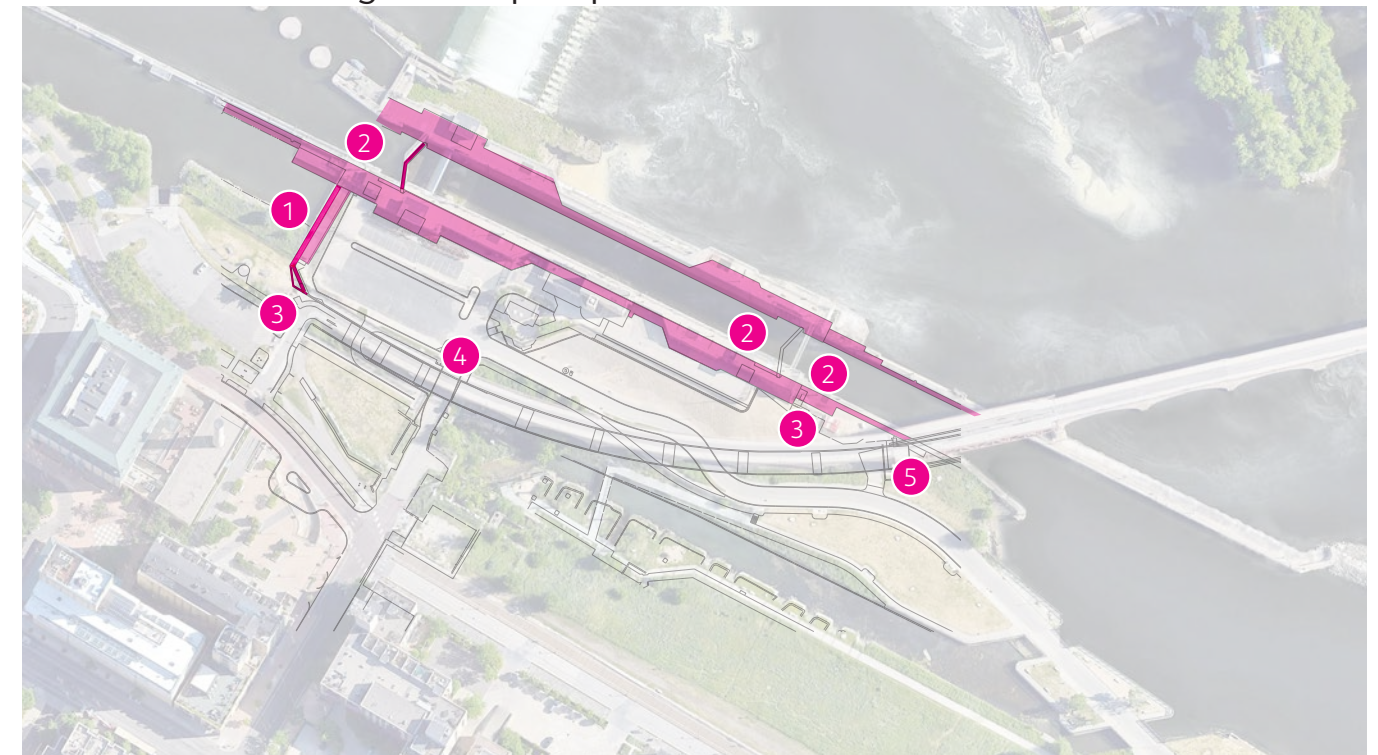
Decommissioned Lock and Dam

Current Operations



Future Operations - USACE

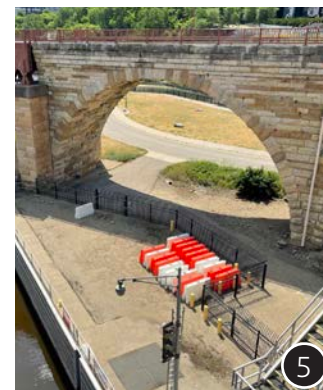
Our understanding of Corps operation needs



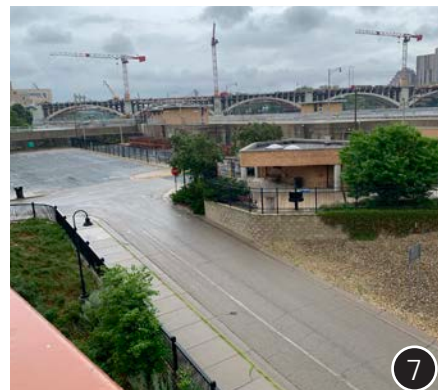
Upstream staging and storage Area



Stone Arch Bridge and fenced central control station



Downstream staging area



Existing MPRB Road



Central control area utilities



Tainter gate

Constraints/opportunities

- 1 Inspection access to dam wall
- 2 Crane access
- 3 Public safety control
- 4 Portland Avenue

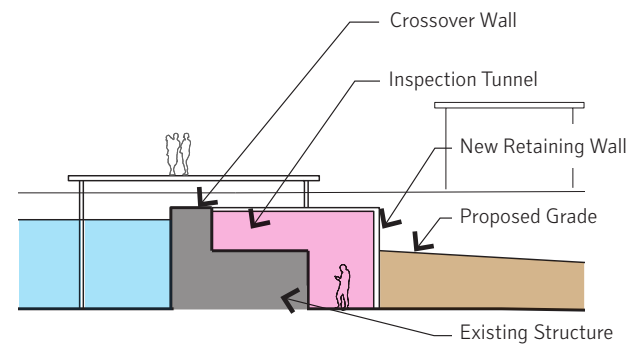
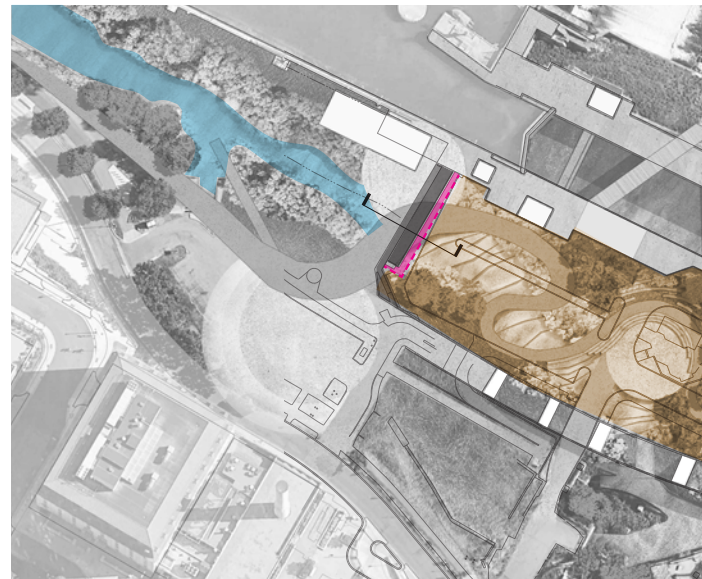
Strategies

- Inspection tunnel to allow access to dam wall
- Possible locations for future crane access
- Control measures to address public safety
- Maintaining Portland Avenue access

Future Operations - USACE

Strategies developed with Studio Civic | Duval

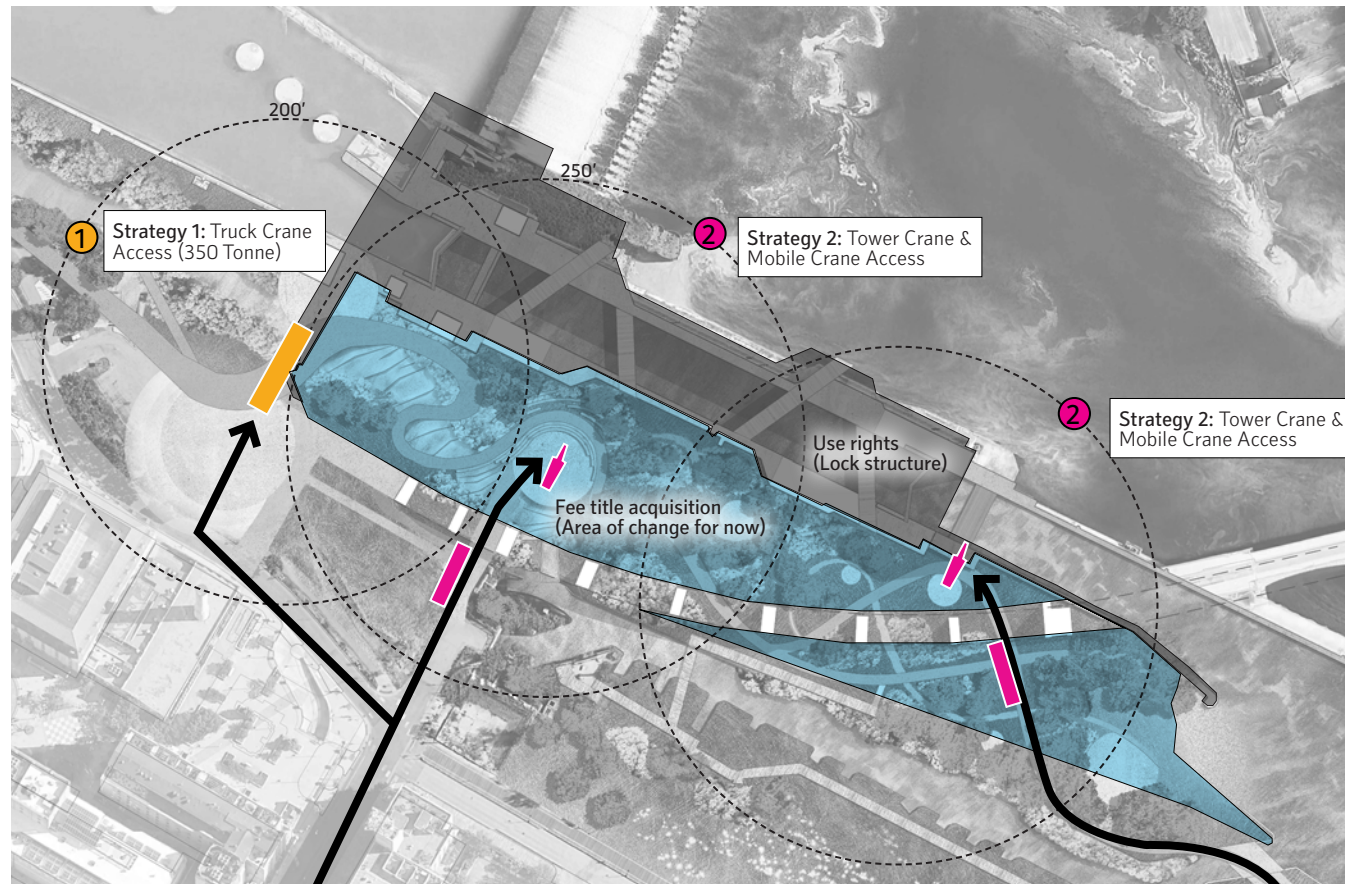
Inspection tunnel



Strategy: Covered Inspection Tunnel Next To Crossover Wall

There will be a proposed inspection tunnel running alongside the dam wall to allow for further maintenance and inspection of the wall.

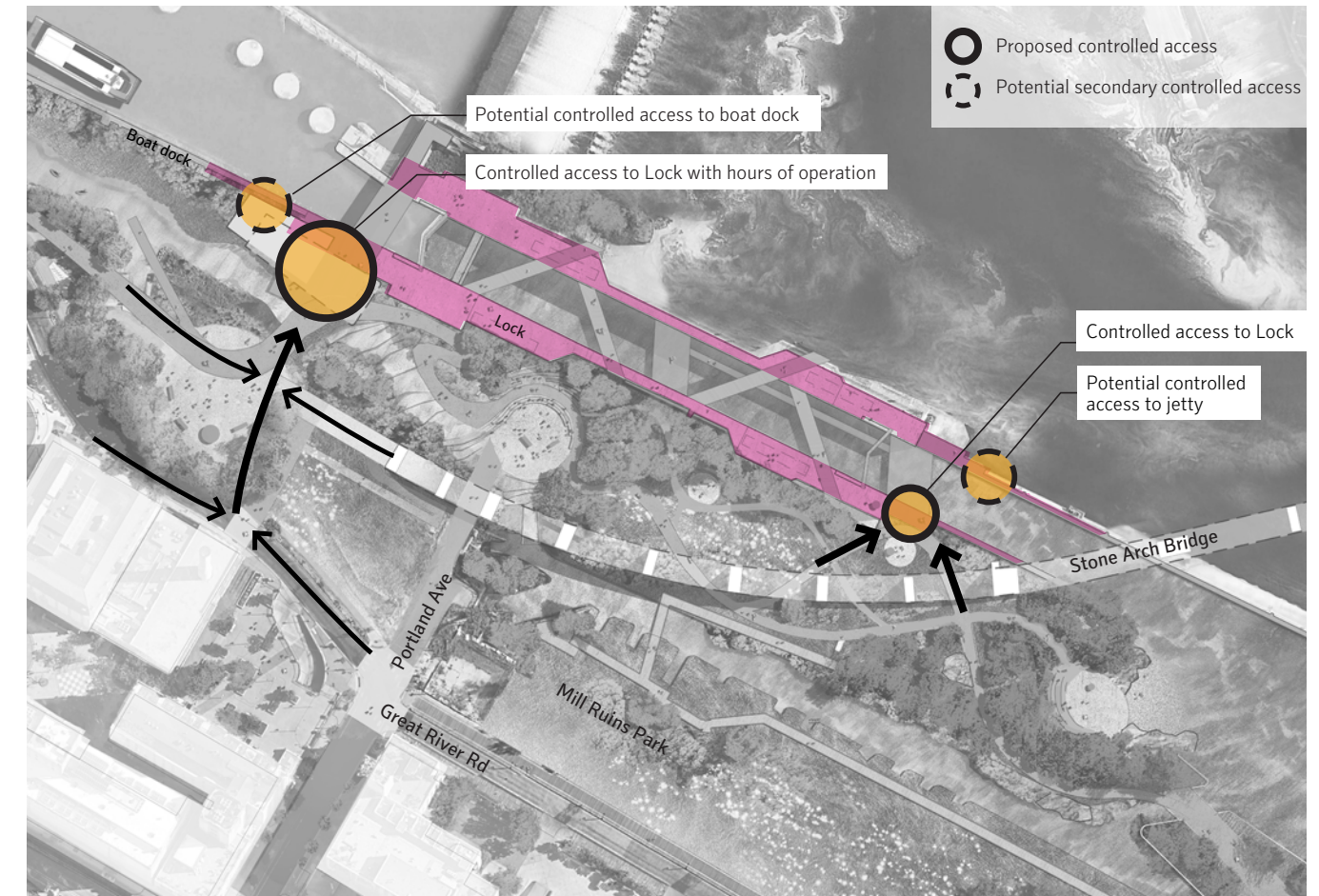
Future crane access



- Strategy 1: Matting may provide larger radius for crane if needed. Truck crane may have to use 'use rights' area
- Strategy 2: Truck for tower and mobile crane cannot fit under Stone Arch Bridge (10' clearance vs. 13' truck height)

Future Operations - USACE

Public safety

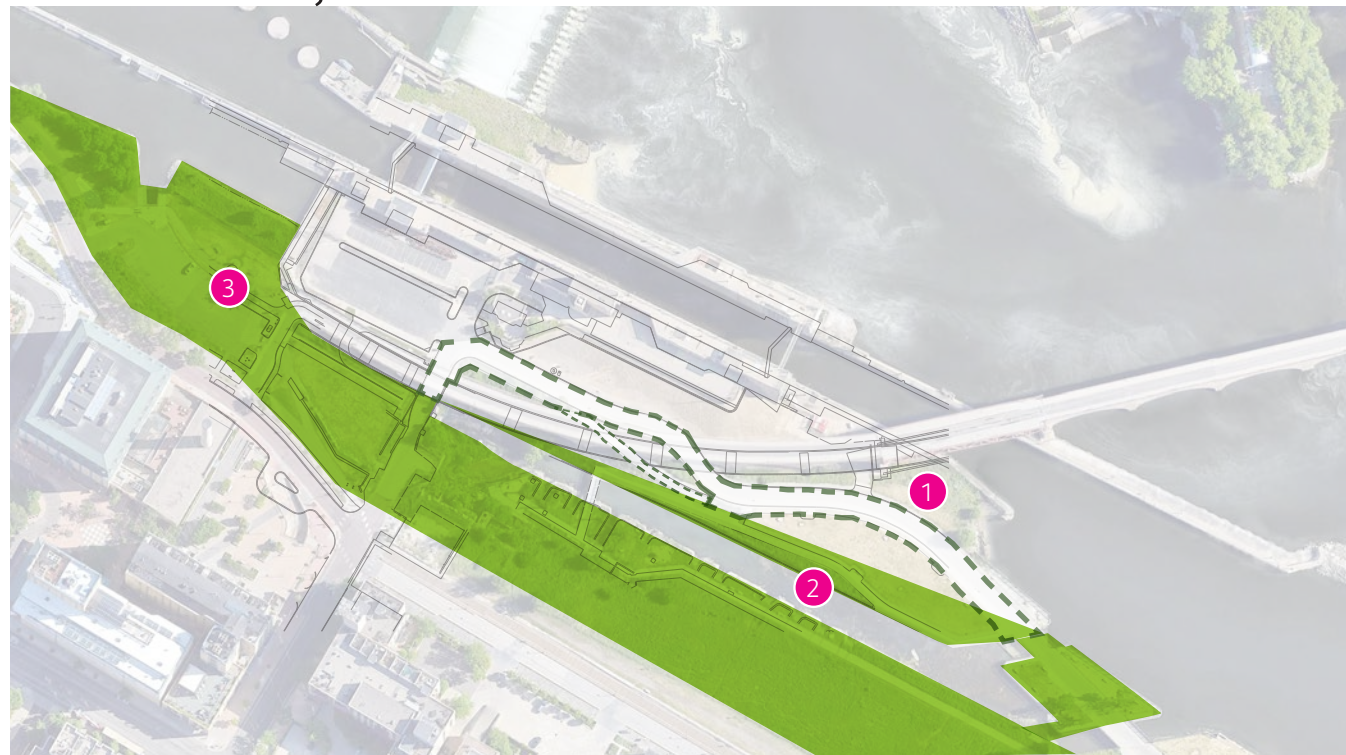


Summary of Recommendations

- More capacious access road downstream of the Stone Arch Bridge for crane/maintenance access to downstream end of site
- Risky to dock boats too close to the gates, proposed shift towards 3rd Avenue Bridge
- Bridge/deck at downstream end of site may need to be shifted so bulkheads can be placed
- Lock walls might suck in fill, should consider plugging walls
- Not much concern over fins' structural integrity, more concern about how difficult they'll be to remove
- Authorized purpose may become more aligned with ecosystem restoration. Used to be language that encouraged Corps to expedite divisions about properties being studied
- What has been proposed for crane access will help in upper area and middle area, but still need access for crane in lower area (addressed in updated plan)

Future Operations - Minneapolis Park Board

Board needs & jurisdictions



Constraints/opportunities

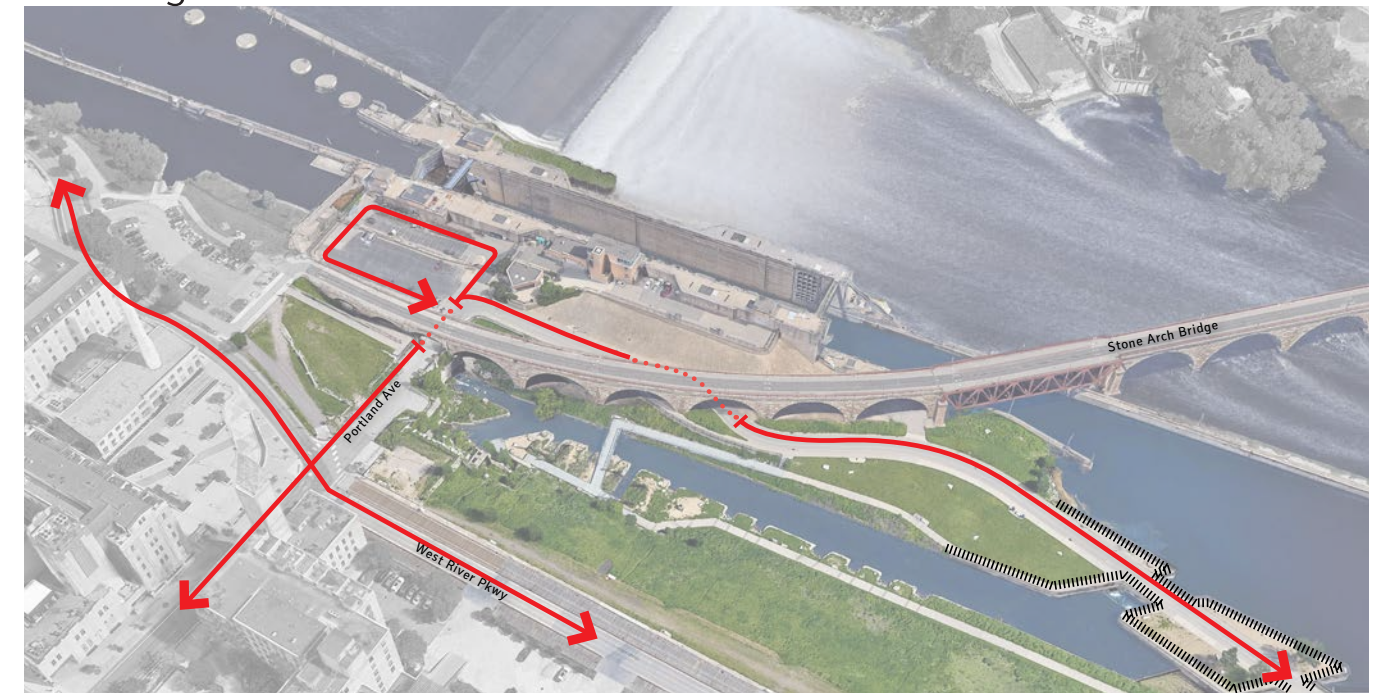
- 1 Existing road cuts through the site, limiting access
- 2 Existing shoreline walls act as hard edge to the water
- 3 Seamless connection to future Waterworks Park Phase 2

Strategies

- Road replacement with drivable pedestrian path
- Shore softening and planting that enhances connection to Mill Ruins Park
- Crane access on Waterworks Park Phase 2 land
- Daylighting water on site by piping under Waterworks Park Phase 2 land

Future Operations - Minneapolis Park Board

Existing vehicular circulation & access



— Heavy/service access
(i.e., cranes, food trucks, heavy maintenance)

Proposed vehicular circulation & access



— Heavy/service access
(i.e., cranes, food trucks, heavy maintenance)

••• Limited light access
(light maintenance)

Coordination Needs - Minneapolis Park Board

Proposed water connection through future Waterworks Park Phase 2



Water flow under Waterworks Park Phase 2

Summary of recommendations

Roadway Easement

- MPRB will clarify any constraints on that federal funding
- Vehicle access considerations: life cycle maintenance, emergency response, general maintenance

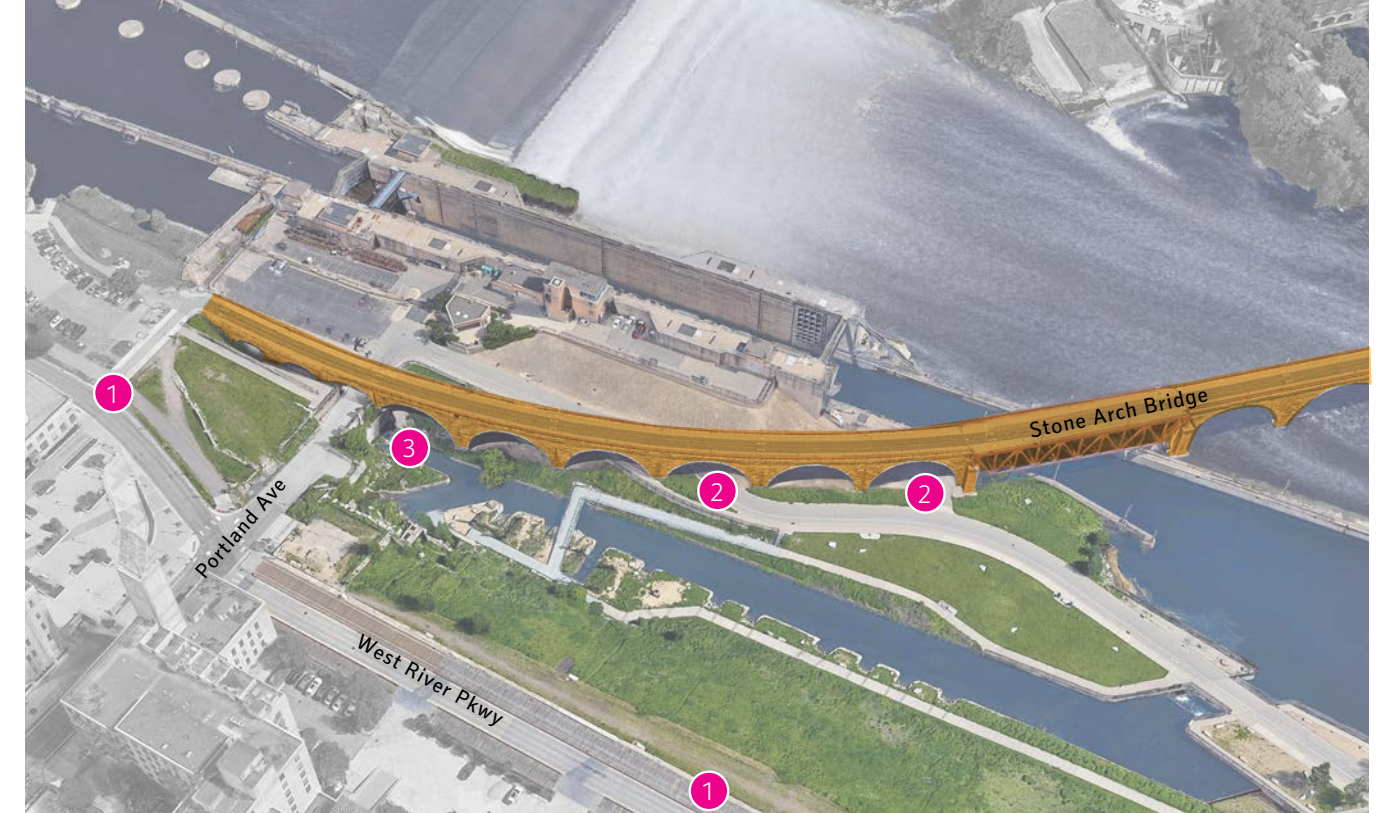
Access to Crane

- OK to provide access via Waterworks Park Phase 2 - make it a design criteria for the future improvement
- USACE easement likely path forward

Living water element through Site

- Agreement to route a pipe through Waterworks Park Phase 2
- Living water is the mutually supported purpose - right flow rate TBD
- Xcel appropriation agreement for (provide a CFS range)

Coordination Needs - MNDOT



Constraints/opportunities

- 1 Visual continuity of bridge
- 2 Access to structure for maintenance
- 3 Water near the piers

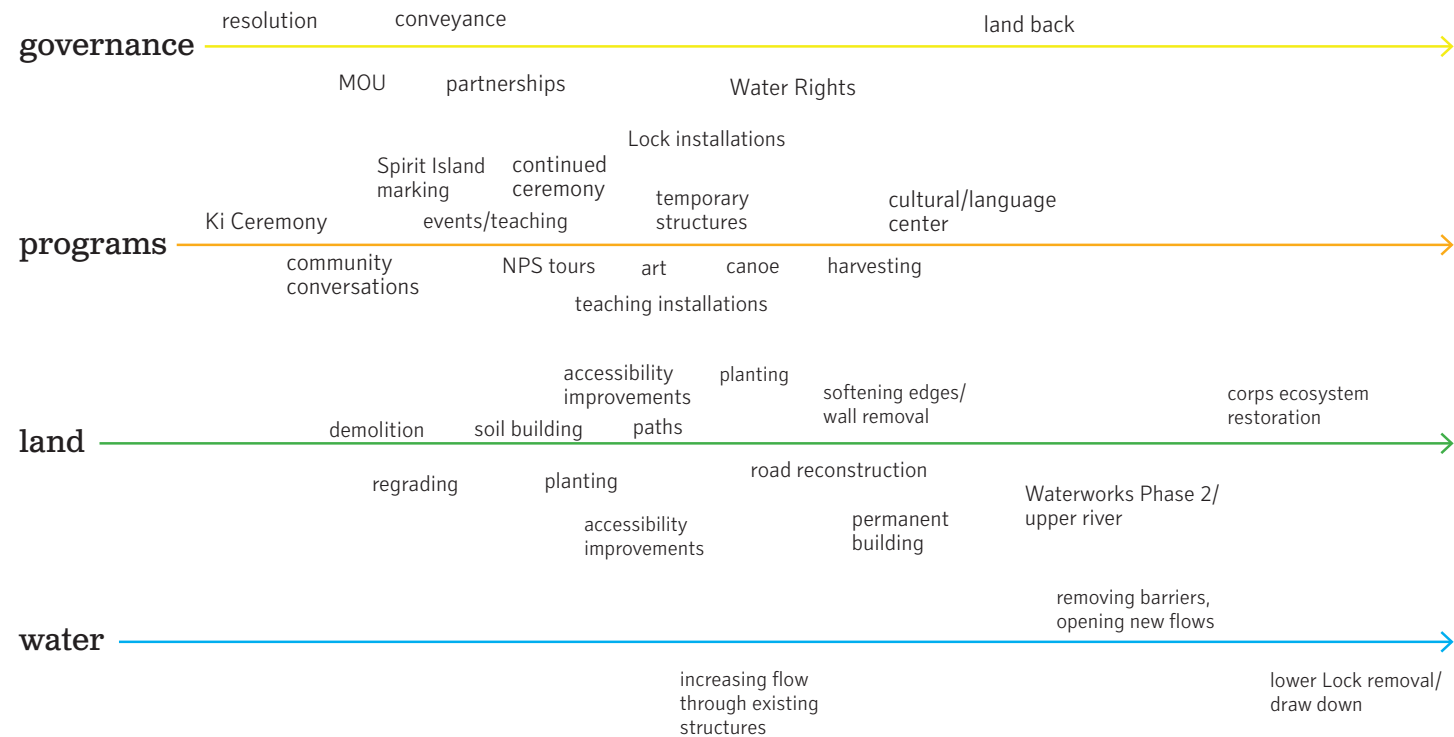
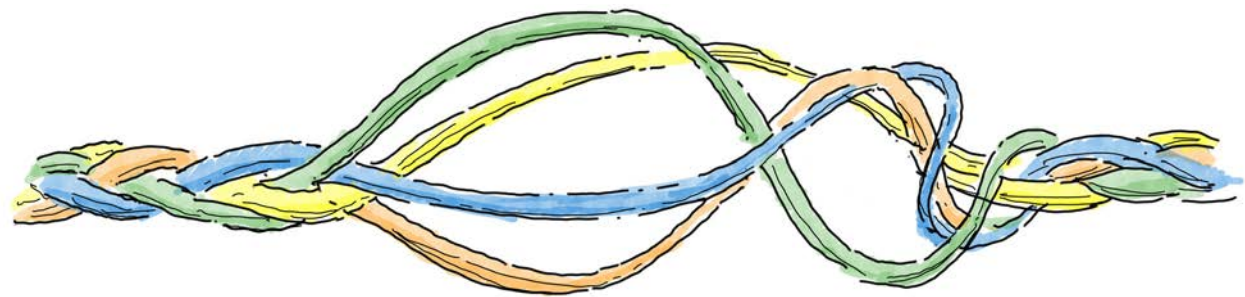
Strategies

- Strategic placement of trees to allow for bridge visibility
- Lighting to allow for visibility
- Drivable surfaces in similar locations as existing road
- Stone retaining channel for water channel

Summary of recommendations

- City view and view from W35
- Traffic count for added connections

Seasonal Approach to Phasing



Caption and credit. If no caption, just credit at bottom of page.

First Season Priorities

- letting the water flow through piping around existing structures
- preparing the ground by clearing the site of obstacles, amending soils, and planting
- interpretive signage, truth-telling through variety of programs, ecological education, tours, art installations, water advocacy
- temporary structures and light infrastructure (bathrooms, shade structures, seating, paths)



Long-term Priorities

- letting water flow through existing structures
- softening the site wall edges, which will require future studies and partnerships
- Native Artist scope for Spirit Island interpretation, gallery, artist residencies, water governance
- permanent structures (Welcome Center, elevator core, classrooms, etc.)

Early Enhancements



Water: Letting the Water Flow

- 1 initial water connection from upper to lower
- 2 increasing water flow
- 3 quality assessment for existing and future water flow

Land: Preparing the Ground

- 4 removing obstacles for improved access: fences, Lock embankment wall
- 5 enriching the soil
- 6 seeding the ground for plant growth over time
- 7 addition of light touch paths

Welcome & Access Structures

- a Welcome Center & restrooms
- b elevator access
- c shade structures & seating

Programs: Building Relationships

- 8 truth-telling and teaching of the place and its history as Dakota land, for Native and non-Native people (ceremony, art installations, etc.)
- 9 education on caring for the place and its relations
- 10 interpretive signage with Dakota language
- 11 public events, tours, teaching

Governance: Deepening Partnerships

- advance discussion around water's rights and land ownership
- continued cycles of participation and learning to support larger, long term transformation of the place
- developing program with Native-aligned grassroots organizations
- connecting with local and regional projects and places



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