

January 4, 2018

Kjersti Monson, Project Manager
The Falls Initiative
1314 Marquette Avenue, Suite 205
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403

Dear Kjersti,

I am writing to express my sincere support for The Falls Initiative and willingness to share our experience with financing, building, and operating an iconic Mississippi riverfront facility, the Science Museum of Minnesota in downtown Saint Paul. We have operated in our current location since 1999 and have a wealth of experience to share and an opportunity to partner with The Falls Initiative to grow educational programming to the benefit of the citizenry of Minnesota.

The Science Museum of Minnesota last year became the first museum in the country to join the U.S. Water Alliance, the largest nationwide organization dedicated to the stewardship of water resources. Membership includes public utilities and agencies, the business community, researchers and policy organizations. As a statewide asset, the Science Museum wants to grow our leadership as a researcher, educator, and advocate for Minnesota's water resources, including our mighty Mississippi river.

The Falls Initiative is a transformative opportunity to continue developing access to one of our state's preeminent natural spaces, and to create an informative and common space for current and future generations. The initiative aligns with the Science Museum's mission to "Turn on the science: Inspire learning. Inform policy. Improve lives." The initiative also aligns with the Science Museum's values of inclusion, community vitality, fun and accessible learning, and leadership through collaboration.

We look forward to collaborating with you toward our mutual best interests, and the best interests of the people of the State of Minnesota.

Most sincerely,



Alison Rempel Brown
President & CEO



120 West Kellogg Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55102
(651) 221-9444 | smm.org



*Working to protect the Mississippi River
and its watershed in the Twin Cities area.*

101 East Fifth Street
Suite 2000
Saint Paul, MN 55101

651-222-2193
www.fmr.org
info@fmr.org

September 28, 2017

Chair Elizabeth Glidden and Members of IGR Committee
Minneapolis City Council
307 City Hall
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: Reuse of the St. Anthony Lock Visitor Center

Dear Chair Glidden and Committee Members:

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) is a local non-profit community-based organization that works to protect and enhance the natural and cultural assets of the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities region. We have more than 5,000 members, volunteers and advocates who care deeply about the river's unique resources, and collectively we have been a voice for the public values of the River for the past 25 years. FMR has been deeply engaged in planning for the future of the Minneapolis riverfront, and we commend the City for pursuing a healthy, vibrant riverfront that is accessible to all.

Working in partnership with the Stop Carp Coalition, FMR played a lead role in advocating with Congress to close the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock in order to prevent the upstream spread of invasive Asian carp. When the lock closed in June 2015, the relatively short era of commercial navigation in Minneapolis came to an end. But closing the door on barges opened up new opportunities for public enjoyment of the river, including the long-planned-for redevelopment of the Upper Harbor Terminal, as well as the more recent exciting proposals to repurpose the lock as a Visitor and Interpretive Center.

FMR has worked with Friends of the Lock and Dam (FL&D) in the visioning of the Visitor and Interpretive Center and we strongly support the concept. This location adjacent to the Stone Arch Bridge and in the heart of the historic district presents a unique opportunity to create an iconic destination that would be a great place to tell the River story and dramatically increase the public's access to the River. Thank you to the committee and the City Council for supporting the Visitor Center concept and including it in the City's bonding list for design dollars.

In today's difficult funding environment, a big idea like this requires leadership, flexibility and partnership with both the public and private sectors. FL&D has shown the leadership ability and commitment to an inclusive planning process with a broad coalition. It has already raised the match for the design bonding dollars and the funds needed to advocate

with the Federal Government for this reuse. FL&D has proposed the kind of public/private partnership that will enable us to successfully advocate with the Corp and the Congress to make the Lock and Dam site available. FMR will play a key role in this coalition and will use its advocacy efforts to help make this proposal a reality. We urge the Council to continue this effort and to direct City staff to work with FL&D and FMR to advance our shared goal of a public use for the site going forward.

The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA)—our National Park on the Mississippi, is already a place to celebrate. But a new St. Anthony Lock Visitor Center could increase use enough to make MNRRA the most visited National Park in the Midwest (imagine, more than the Gateway Arch in St. Louis or Mt. Rushmore in South Dakota).

We urge you to pursue this incredible opportunity. Together we can create the most unique and accessible riverfront in the entire nation. Thank you for your continued support.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at 651-222-2193 ext. 13

For the River,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Whitney L. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Whitney L. Clark
Executive Director



81 south 9th st
suite 260
mpls, mn 55402

June 1, 2017

Chair Elizabeth Glidden
Intergovernmental Relations Committee
Minneapolis City Council
City Hall
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: Request of "The Falls" for State Bonding for Design

Dear Chair Glidden and Members of the Committee:

We understand that the Friends of the Lock and Dam (FL&D) has requested the City add to its list of bonding projects an amount of \$1.5 Million (to be matched \$2 private to \$1 public) for design funding for "The Falls." **The Minneapolis downtown council (mdc) wholeheartedly supports this request.**

"The Falls" proposal is an exceptional civic endeavor to create a premier visitor and interpretive center at the St. Anthony Lock site now that navigation has been ended. This is entirely consistent with mdc's adopted *Intersections: Downtown 2025 Plan*. Goal 7 of the Plan identifies the Riverfront as the focal point for creating a **"world class destination"** for the city, calling for a **"central gathering point to orient a visitor and [be] the key attraction at the water's edge."** The plan recognizes the Stone Arch Bridge as having opened the Riverfront to pedestrian use (over 2.5 million visitors last year) and the St. Anthony Falls as our singular natural wonder that can bring us to the stature of "Baltimore's Inner Harbor, Seattle's Pike Place Market, San Antonio's Riverwalk or San Francisco's Embarcadero."

Recently Meet Minneapolis has issued the City's first ever tourism plan. This even more clearly supports this need. Here is what the *Destination Transformation, 2040* Goal 3 says:

BUILD AN ICONIC VISITORS CENTER ON DOWNTOWN'S CENTRAL RIVERFRONT.

- Activate the Mississippi River as the heart of Minneapolis' tourism experience.
- Use public and private investment to integrate the riverfront into the city...

Minneapolis has a long history of civic-minded individuals and groups working with government to make great things happen. Our greatest assets, like the Walker Art Center, the Cowles Center for Dance or the Minneapolis Institute of Arts were visions that make our City unique and attractive. FL&D's concept for "The Falls" is a similar endeavor. FL&D is comprised of many individuals who have worked tirelessly and successfully for major riverfront improvements, stretching from the Central Riverfront to the Upper Harbor. The concept of "The Falls" for a National Park Service Visitor Center to be shared with the Park Board, Historical Society and our City's tourism programs, plus a 44,000 sq. ft.



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interpretive center, restaurant and event center, would exactly meet the objectives of these plans.

In recent years, the State has joined with non-profit project sponsors and Cities to make many major cultural projects a reality. This program, called *State Bond Financed Property*, has been a key factor in our region becoming known as a cultural mecca. Recent examples include the Guthrie Theater, Cowles Center for Dance and MacPhail Center for Music in Minneapolis. St. Paul has had a push for such funding in recent years with high success, including the Children's Museum, Palace Theater and the Ordway, to name a few. This project would not compete with other normal City bonding (as it is in the public/private support category), brings no financial cost or risk to the City, and offers a unique opportunity to fulfill our shared civic goal to create a major attraction on the Riverfront.

The Minneapolis Downtown Council recognizes the extraordinary power this public private partnership would bring to the "The Falls" and urges the Council to add this project to its IGR list of City bonding projects. Such an action will greatly enhance the early timing and success of this exceptional endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Cramer'.

Steve Cramer
president and ceo

Cc:
Council Member Alondra Cano
Council Member Jacob Frey
Council Member Andrew Johnson
Council Member Barbara Johnson
Council Member Abdi Warsame
Mayor Betsy Hodges
Spencer Cronk
Superintendent Jayne Miller
Melvin Tennant
Kjersti Monson



Minneapolis

City by Nature

October 1, 2017

Chair Elizabeth Glidden and IGR Committee Members
Minneapolis City Council
307 City Hall
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear Chair Glidden and Committee Members:

RE: St. Anthony Falls Upper Lock Visitor Center

Meet Minneapolis Convention and Visitors Association, wholeheartedly supports the \$1.5M bonding request to construct a Visitor and Interpretive Center at the site of the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock. The Central Mississippi Riverfront in Minneapolis is a true destination for visitors to our state and for Minnesota residents. It is critical that the site is preserved and enhanced for current and future visitors.

In our efforts to attract major conventions, meetings, and leisure travel to the Minneapolis region, we identify the Mississippi Riverfront as an iconic destination that brings together our city's strongest selling points—its remarkable parks, nature, and history at the site of one of the great rivers of the world.

A year-long research project in 2016 culminated in the release of *Destination Transformation 2030 – A Tourism Master Plan* for the City of Minneapolis. A goal of the plan is to develop an iconic visitor's center on the downtown's central riverfront and to activate the Mississippi River as the heart of the Minneapolis tourism experience. A visitor's center will complement the cultural attractions at this site including the Mill City Museum and the Guthrie Theater.

For many visitors to Minneapolis, the Mississippi River remains elusive, too difficult to find and not enough to do when they arrive. A visitor center, as proposed by the Friends of the Lock and Dam and located at the site of the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock, would provide a fresh focal point for the river and an appropriate starting place for tourists visiting the region. With an estimated 5 million annual visits to this area, it is an opportunity to create additional economic activity all along the river.

The Mississippi River is a vital resource for our community, one that beautifully represents the joys of our city and is for all of Minnesota. Meet Minneapolis is grateful that the City of Minneapolis has the vision to create such a dynamic venue on the riverfront and encourages the State to assist them in funding the project for future generations. This is an incredible opportunity for our city and state.

Sincerely,

Melvin Tennant, CAE
President & CEO

250 Marquette Avenue | Suite 1300 | Minneapolis, MN 55401
minneapolis.org | 1.888.676.6757

Meet Minneapolis
Convention & Visitors Association

Meet Minneapolis is an equal opportunity employer



Wilderness Inquiry

Minneapolis City Council
Chair Elizabeth Glidden and Members of IGR Committee
City Hall
Minneapolis, MN 55415

September 28, 2017

Re: St. Anthony Lock Visitor Center

Dear Chair Glidden and Committee Members:

Wilderness Inquiry has been taking people of all abilities into the outdoors for over 40 years. We have used the Mississippi, one of our most accessible locations, to put thousands of Minneapolis kids into canoes for the first time. We have worked with the National Park Service, the State and the Park Board for decades to provide this unique experience with the river in our backyard. With the closing of the Lock to navigation, it offers a unique opportunity to greatly enhance river access and use for our programs and citizens generally.

We have seen the plans for a Visitor and Interpretive Center proposed by Friends of the Lock and Dam (FL&D). These concepts are a great way to open the riverfront for water access. We have collaborated with FL&D in the visioning of the Visitor Center and particularly the idea it could include an on-river site for Wilderness Inquiry. The idea of a canoe and kayak portage around the Falls at this site and a convenient launch location for canoe and kayak users would greatly increase such use. We are an active participant in the coalition to support the efforts of FL&D to create, with many community and governmental partners, this major facility. Combined with other River projects, such as Hall's Island and the Upper Harbor, the Lock and Dam Visitor and Interpretive Center will create a *unique urban outdoor opportunity* for our City's youth and the public.

Thank you to the committee and the City Council for including the Visitor Center in the City's bonding list for \$1.5 Million of pre-design and design dollars. We will continue to be an active participant in that design effort. We appreciate the leadership role of the City in supporting the overall concept as part of the revitalized *and accessible* River.

Everyone knows that accomplishment of this kind of project requires a "public-private" partnership for funding and operation. FL&D has shown the leadership ability and commitment to an inclusive planning process with a broad coalition of groups and governmental entities to make this kind of project happen. The bonding request is a critical step to advancement of the proposed reuse—if we have the design in hand, it will advance all the conversations with the Corp and Congress on the project and will make it ready to move forward.

Thank you for your continued support. Please call me if you have any questions or would like to learn more about the mission of Wilderness Inquiry.

Sincerely,

Greg Lais
Executive Director
(612) 676-9409



**MISSISSIPPI PARK
CONNECTION**
Discover your river

September 28, 2017

Minneapolis City Council
IGR Committee
City Hall
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: St. Anthony Lock Visitor Center

Mississippi Park Connection is the official non-profit partner for the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, a national park that flows through the heart of Minneapolis. Our mission is to strengthen the connection between people and the Mississippi River by enriching the life of the river and the lives of all who experience our national park. Mississippi Park Connection has been the source of much of the funding for the current National Park Service visitor operations at the Upper St. Anthony Lock and Dam. This year we were joined in this support by Friends of the Lock and Dam to provide extended hours and greater interpretive services. The public response to this effort has been incredible. It has shown that a Visitor and Interpretive Center reuse can be the key ingredient in the Central Riverfront becoming a major public attraction for the park and the community and the gateway to the many other riverfront changes now being proposed (Upper Harbor, Hall's Island and 26th Avenue bike connection, for example).

The National Park Service has strongly supported the idea of access to the lock and a visitor center reuse with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. NPS is now working under a 5-year Use Agreement to provide visitor center services at the lock. However, we all recognize that there needs to be a long-term arrangement and official Corps and Congressional action to make a major development at the Lock and Dam viable. Mississippi Park Connection is very supportive of the city's request for bonding dollars to advance the design of such a Visitor and Interpretive Center. We have joined the coalition to support the efforts of Friends of the Lock and Dam to spearhead this work and the successful negotiation of the proper long term use arrangement for the lock.

We know the ultimate resolution of the ownership and operation will take work both here and at the federal level. We urge the city to establish a suitable working group within its departments to advance the concept for this unique public private effort. The bonding request is an essential first step to advance a well-conceived plan for reuse. Mississippi Park Connection will continue to be an active partner in supporting National Park Service programs at the Lock and in the anticipated future Visitor and Interpretive Center. We also will be a continued active participant with the city and Friends of the Lock and Dam to make this exceptional project happen. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Katie Nyberg
Executive Director



October 1, 2017

Chair Elizabeth Glidden and Members of IGR Committee
Minneapolis City Council
307 City Hall
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: The future of the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock

Dear Chair Glidden and Committee Members:

Since 1919, the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. We work with our more than 1.3 million members and supporters nationwide, including 23,000 in Minnesota, to preserve our nation's natural, cultural and historic heritage for future generations. The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA), established in 1988, was created to honor the river's history and protect the natural resources contained within the park's 72-mile corridor.

NPCA worked with other organizations in the Stop Carp Coalition, which succeeded in protecting the river from upstream migration of invasive Asian carp. Through our advocacy, Congress ordered the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock closed in 2015. This closure opened a unique opportunity to provide people with an on-the-river experience and bring the power of the National Park Service arrowhead to the riverfront in downtown Minneapolis.

After the lock closed, the National Park Service entered into an agreement with the lock owner, the Army Corps of Engineers, to provide ranger-led tours at the site during the summer season. Over the last two seasons, the number of visitors to the lock has increased eight-fold from about 2,000 to more than 16,000 in 2017. The demand and interest in exploring the lock with our nation's greatest storytellers is already growing.

In order to build on this excitement and capture the opportunity to really shine a spotlight on our national park, NPCA led a group of design professionals and more than 150 community members to develop a vision for the lock with the park service at its center. The Friends of the Lock and Dam (FLD) was critical in developing this vision and will play an equally important role in the planning, design and implementation of a vision for the lock as a vital part of Minneapolis and our local national park.

Minnesota Field Office

546 Rice Street, Suite 100 | St. Paul, MN 55103 | P 612.270.8564 | F 651.290.0167 | npca.org

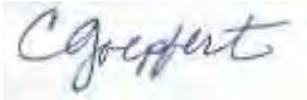
NPCA recently released *Transforming the Lock: A Vision for a National Park Visitor Experience*, (npca.org/transformingthelock), which captures the community-driven ideas for what people want to see, experience and learn at the lock. These ideas demonstrate that the community wants to see something extraordinary happen at the lock with the national park as a central feature and help lay a foundation as FLD leads efforts for future planning and design.

NPCA strongly supports moving forward with the next stage, and we look forward to working in the coalition that FLD has pulled together to bring great ideas to reality.

We thank the City Council for including design funding for the lock in the City's bonding priority list and urge the Council to continue to support this effort. This is an incredible opportunity for the City of Minneapolis, the National Park Service and all the people who live nearby and visit the city. With your leadership and support, the lock can become a truly world class destination.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at cgoepfert@npca.org or (612) 270-8564.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Cgoepfert", on a light-colored background.

Christine Goepfert
Senior Program Manager
Midwest Region

Minnesota Field Office

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