



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2021 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2021-338

Staff Lead: Rory Anderson

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: July 21, 2021

Project Title: Above The Falls Regional Park Acquisition

Project Budget: \$950,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Adam Arvidson

Organization: Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board

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Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: July 20, 2021

Reporting Schedule: December 1 / June 1 of each year.

Project Completion: July 31, 2023

Final Report Due Date: September 14, 2023

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 09q

Appropriation Language: \$950,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board to develop a restoration plan and acquire approximately 3.25 acres of industrial land for public access and habitat connectivity along the Mississippi River as part of Above the Falls Regional Park.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2024

Narrative

Project Summary: This project would acquire 3.25 acres of industrial land along the Mississippi River within the Above the Falls Regional Park.

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

All of the waterfront in Minneapolis has been public for more than 100 years—except the Mississippi River in North and Northeast Minneapolis. This historic gap in habitat and public access illuminates disparities across the city and creates a break in the Mississippi Flyway. Over years and with significant state assistance, parcels were purchased by MPRB and other public entities in the interest of implementing a grand park vision known as RiverFirst. That 2012 vision established a framework for Above the Falls Regional Park that would acquire and restore the entire riverfront, thereby closing historic access and habitat gaps.

On the west bank, nearly 3.5 miles of shoreline is in public hands and either is or will soon be converted to parkland with restored ecosystems. Stretching from near the Lowry Bridge northward to Interstate 694, this nearly continuous ribbon is comprised of Minneapolis's Upper Harbor Terminal (soon to have public park on its shoreline), MPRB's Northside Operations Center, and both the MPRB and Three Rivers Park District portions of North Mississippi Regional Park. It is only broken by a single parcel with 600 feet of shoreline. This project will close a small gap in this public riverfront.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? i.e. What are you seeking funding to do? You will be asked to expand on this in Activities and Milestones.

Acquisition of this single parcel will create a continuous public shoreline and establish habitat connectivity along 3.5 miles of the Mississippi River—the most traveled flyway in the U.S. With assistance from the ENRTF, this gap can finally be closed. The timing is ideal: the Upper Harbor Terminal—thanks to state bond funding—will see the creation of naturalized park spaces within the next five years. This will extend the existing natural areas of North Mississippi Regional Park another mile to the south, if this single gap can be bridged. Acquisition of this parcel will benefit the entire flyway and make investment in communities that have been historically left without public water access.

We understand this acquisition would be eligible for ENRTF-funded Parks Acquisition Opportunity Funds through the Metropolitan Council, because it is a site with restoration potential within a regional park boundary. We are bringing a proposal directly to LCCMR because this acquisition could exhaust the PAOF quickly and, because of its urban/industrial character, it could be viewed as out of character with typical PAOF purchases. MPRB feels it is worthwhile to make this proposal directly so it can be discussed individually.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

This project will help complete the continuous green ribbon of the Mississippi Flyway. To leave a 600 linear foot gap in the existing 3.5 miles of green would minimize the overall quality of the habitat and public access. The outcome of this project, therefore, is to contribute to the eventual acquisition of all the Minneapolis riverfront, as envisioned in plans that go back decades. Much work has been already completed to this end, and we are requesting funds to bridge the last gap.

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

City(s): Minneapolis

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): Metro

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Parcel Acquisition

Activity Budget: \$925,000

Activity Description:

MPRB would work with its partners and the current property owner to acquire fee title to the parcel. MPRB staff time, legal costs, appraisals, and closing costs would be paid by MPRB as part of the grant match, with the entirety of the ENRTF funding going to actual parcel acquisition. A preliminary (restricted) appraisal has been performed but a new appraisal would be ordered upon receipt of funding.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Appraisal, Negotiations, and Due Diligence	November 30, 2021
Parcel Acquisition	April 30, 2022

Activity 2: Restoration Planning

Activity Budget: \$25,000

Activity Description:

MPRB will hire an ecological restoration professional through a competitive process and work with them to prepare a restoration plan for the site. The restoration plan will guide future restoration of the site. After completion of the restoration plan, MPRB will seek additional funding through a variety of sources to implement the restoration of the site, likely in conjunction with restoration activities on adjacent parcels.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Selection of Restoration Ecologist Professional	April 30, 2022
Completion of Restoration Plan	November 30, 2022

Dissemination

Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.

This project does not include any research nor actual restoration. The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund will be acknowledged through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, on-site signage, and other communications per the ENTRF Acknowledgment Guidelines. The restoration plan will be posted to the MPRB website and will include ENRFT funding acknowledgement. Public notification of parcel acquisition will occur through the regular public channels of MPRB, including e-mail blasts, a public-facing website, and publicly accessible Board of Commissioners agendas and minutes.

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this be funded?

Long term maintenance and management of the parcel, including protection prior to restoration activities, will be performed by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board as part of its overall maintenance programs. Such activities do include paid staff work, volunteers, and partnerships with nonprofit organizations. MPRB will seek additional funding from a variety of sources to accomplish future restoration of the site.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Invasive Carp Management Research in Lake Nokomis Subwatershed	M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 06g	\$189,000
Expanding Nature Knowledge and Experience with New Interactive Exhibits at North Mississippi Regional Park	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 05h	\$500,000

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
Restoration Ecologist Professional to be determined	Professional or Technical Service Contract	The Restoration Ecologist Professional will prepare the restoration plan for the site, based on BWSR guidelines.				0		\$25,000
							Sub Total	\$25,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
	Fee Title Acquisition	3.25 Parcels: 1						\$925,000
							Sub Total	\$925,000
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								

							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$950,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board General Fund as designated for general staffing and fringe.	Matching funds will be used for all personnel costs, including community engagement, landowner negotiation, and project administration for the acquisition and restoration activities.	Secured	\$50,000
Cash	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board General Fund as designated for land acquisition.	Land acquisition designated funds will be used for all acquisition soft costs, as well as a portion of land costs.	Secured	\$225,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$275,000
			Funds Total	\$275,000

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
PID: 0302924310012	Hennepin	The site has frontage on the Mississippi River but has been historically used for industrial uses. There is no intact ecosystem on the site. However, as part of Above the Falls Regional Park, this parcel would connect public lands and restored waterfront to the north (North Mississippi Regional Park) and the south (Upper Harbor Terminal) in an approximately 3.5-mile continuous public riverfront.	Fee Title	3.25	0.11	\$1,150,000	Private	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Has not begun
Totals				3.25	0.11	\$1,150,000			

Fee Acquisition

1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including an explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.

The extents of Above the Falls Regional Park were determined through extensive community engagement as part of the RiverFirst vision in 2011 and 2012. The boundary of this park is recognized by the Metropolitan Council and it includes both publicly owned and privately owned parcels. The ultimate vision is to acquire and bring into MPRB ownership all parcels within the boundary, including the one included in this request. Specific decisions around which parcels to acquire when is dependent on three main factors: willingness of the owner to sell, impact on completeness of the park, and available funding. This parcel is being brought forward because we understand the owner may have an interest in divesting the property and (as described in the project narrative) the positive impact on habitat and water access connectivity will be high. MPRB will be unable to acquire this parcel without outside assistance.

2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified for the acquisition purposes you propose. Include the URL to the plan if one is available.

Though not strictly a natural resources plan, the MPRB- and City of Minneapolis-adopted RiverFirst Vision calls for the acquisition and restoration of this parcel, along with the entire riverfront in North and Northeast Minneapolis. The principles of RiverFirst are displayed in MPRB's Master Plan for Above the Falls Regional Park, which has been adopted by the Board of Commissioners and is pending at the Metropolitan Council. A link to the ATF Master Plan is found below.

https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park_care__improvements/park_projects/current_projects/above-the-falls-regional-park-master-plan-update/

3. For any parcels acquired in fee title, a restoration and management plan must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future.

Components of the restoration and management plan will include a description of current conditions, with a focus on hydrology, geology, and the aquatic biotic community as they apply large river systems; description of a target restoration community, which is most likely to be partly an aquatic to emergent wetland/riparian system and partly an upland grassland or savanna system; a timeline for restoration; and guidance for ongoing management of the restored areas. The restoration plan will be included in the creation of any future construction plans for the project and will guide both future construction and ongoing management. This plan will be kept both in MPRB staff project files and in the MPRB archive, as well as posted publicly on the MPRB website.

4. For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained.

Not applicable.

5. If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction.

MPRB confirms that M.S. 116P.17 will be followed and that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [fa94f3bc-630.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

Map of North Minneapolis along the Mississippi River showing proposed acquisition parcel along with adjacent MPRB and City owned parcels....

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
MPRB Approved and Signed Resolution 2020-175	05d5466d-327.pdf
Background Check Form	1356918e-20c.pdf

Optional Attachments

Media Links

Title	Link
Above the Falls Master Plan	https://www.minneapolis-parks.org/park_care_improvements/park_projects/current_projects/above-the-falls-regional-park-master-plan-update/

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

The recommended funding differs from MPRB's initial request. Recommended funding was equivalent to the amount requested for Activity 1: Acquisition. The work plan has been modified to include ONLY acquisition and restoration planning, not actual restoration. Because restoration planning is required for ENRTF-funded acquisitions, funds have been reduced in Activity 1 to cover Activity 2, and the MPRB match has been increased to cover that modification.

Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

The following are acknowledgements and conditions beyond those already included in the above workplan:

Do you understand and acknowledge the ENRTF repayment requirements if the use of capital equipment changes?

N/A

Do you agree travel expenses must follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?

N/A

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

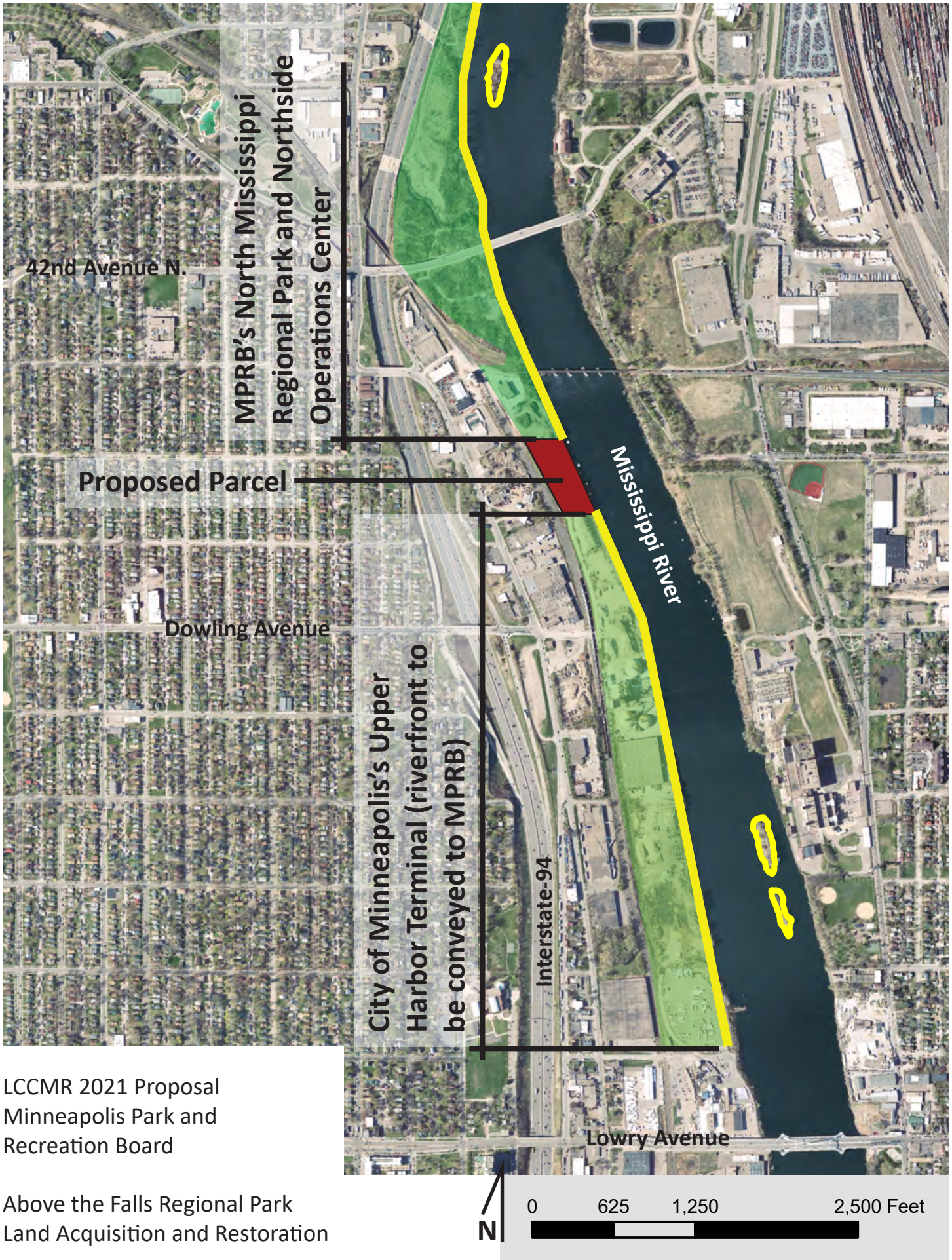
N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No



LCCMR 2021 Proposal
Minneapolis Park and
Recreation Board

Above the Falls Regional Park
Land Acquisition and Restoration

