



Upper Mississippi planned and proceeding

What's working

There's a renewed respect for the river and a commitment to protect and enhance this resource.

- We're restoring the river and moving away from a river lined with industry.
- Comprehensive planning — Above the Falls and regional park plans, for example — is helping us move forward and obtain funding.
- Staffs are connecting multiple efforts and multiple jurisdictions. As a result, we're integrating plans.
- The Community Planning and Economic Development Department is keeping the focus on the river.
- The environment is being considered in land use decisions.

We're seeing investment along and near the riverfront.

- Coloplast, the Grain Belt Brewery project and the Pierre Bottineau Library are all examples of investment.
- The first phase of the river parkway is under way.
- Hennepin County will be reconstructing the Lowry Avenue bridge.
- Hennepin County has become more sensitive to community input. It understands the importance of bike and walking trails, and it's working with the Park and Recreation Board and Northeast residents.
- We've raised enough money to move the pioneer statue and plant 200 trees on the B.F. Nelson Park site.

What isn't working

The economic downturn and market practices are impeding development.

- Right now, it's difficult to get anything financed on the private side.
- We're competing with other high amenity areas for new development.
- The Upper River is more difficult to redevelop because we're displacing viable businesses.
- It's difficult to get the market to look farther upriver than Gold Medal Park.
- The area between Lowry Avenue and 36th Avenue North looks like no man's land. Nobody pays attention to it.
- Coloplast is concerned about its ability to move toward its vision of a medical device campus. One side of the area is beautiful, but the other side is a scrap yard.
- Although Hennepin County is going ahead with the Lowry Avenue bridge, the trail connection is not funded.

- The emerging Riverfront Corporation presents a great opportunity for partnership.

There's more resident interest and engagement about the river.

- In north and northeast Minneapolis, people are talking about the river, bike trails, parks and shoreline restoration. When the public cares, they prod elected officials and things get done.
- The *Minneapolis River Forum Current* e-mail keeps people informed about events along the river.

There are more opportunities for recreation and nature appreciation along the river.

- The Carl W. Kroening Interpretive Center is coming into its own.
- The Mississippi River Trail's connection in Minneapolis is already on the ground and will be a key segment of the 3,000-mile system that eventually will connect the Mississippi Headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico.
- In 2010, there will be a bike trail from the river to northeast Minneapolis. That project has spurred discussion about a bike trail in north Minneapolis.
- Tour boats on Boom Island are doing well.
- More people are putting boats into the river.
- People are discovering that the river is one of the most spectacular fisheries in the state.
- Minneapolis is one of the few big cities with a national park within its boundaries.

Our vision for the future and our action strategies aren't clear.

- There's no consensus on the City's policy for river development. The policy is predicated on a robust housing market upriver, but the market is uncertain.
- It's a challenge for City staff to handle the workload. Given the extensive time commitment requirements, people at every level are wondering if the City's policy is still right.
- Hennepin County isn't incorporating stormwater management and green space early enough in its planning process.
- Keeping industry along the river to retain jobs hampers plans for green space.
- Navigation on the river will change in the next 30 to 50 years, but we don't know what demands will be made on the system and how that will affect infrastructure.

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What should be done next

Review and refine the City's plans and policies.

- Times have changed since the City's policy was adopted. Take a look at land use issues, set priorities and determine what's doable within a reasonable timeframe. Set the stage very methodically — sequencing is important. Developers won't make decisions until they know what the City is doing.
- Work through policy inconsistencies in our industrial land use study so we can take a more holistic approach.
- Be ready for federal funding when it comes.

Consider new tools and tactics.

- Consider how to use the legacy sales tax funds.
- Because of eminent domain changes, we need to find new ways to gain control of key parcels. This economic downturn is a good time to purchase land that fits with our plan for the river.

- Think about the future use of tax forfeiture properties. There are big parcels we should be looking at.
- Find a solution for the scrap yards. There may be European models we can learn from.
- Keep artists in the city by purchasing buildings near the river to create affordable spaces.
- Don't harm our best cultural landmarks for green energy projects. The proposed St. Anthony Falls hydro development would impact historic and cultural areas.

Maintain focus on development.

- Create developer interest by making infrastructure improvements. Government action is needed to keep the momentum going until the market returns.
- Strengthen connections to the river via Broadway and continue with our plan for West River Road. Keep focused on these areas despite cost and time issues.
- Make use of the upper harbor terminal. It's an asset that can seed future development.

“Developers don’t make the market – they follow the market. Developers don’t like to be pioneers. To get the market to look farther upriver, you have to create more interest via infrastructure.”

- Developer
