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DEFINITION

Larsen Design was contracted to create this Signage and Wayfinding Master Plan for the Minneapolis Riverfront District.

The project includes the establishment of goals and strategies; a review of existing graphic systems that may require integration; case studies of other city sign systems; criteria and approval; and an outline of approval criteria and processes. The Master Plan provides a vision and framework to produce an integrated wayfinding and signage system. It will be used as a tool to gain support and approval in preparation for the implementation phase. It will also be used to estimate fabrication and installation costs of the signs.

The intent for the Signage and Wayfinding Master Plan is to realize a critical element which will add to the success of the Minneapolis Riverfront District. The area already has many unique attributes, cultural attractions, and commercial development. Creating a comprehensive wayfinding plan and a unique signage system will define and identify the District, create a strong sense of place, help visitors find their way, and enhance the experience of historical, recreational, cultural and commercial amenities.

Beyond identifying the District and guiding visitors, we also hope to support Riverfront marketing goals: raising awareness, attracting visitors, demonstrating the city's commitment, supporting continued development, and raising the perceived value of the area.

The ultimate goal is to help the Minneapolis Riverfront District become a defining element of the city, Hennepin County, and the state.

PROJECT SUMMARY



PROJECT GOALS

Riverfront Identification Goals

- Clearly identify the Minneapolis Riverfront District
 - > Help visitors know when they are in the District
 - > Identify the District to the general public
 - > Create a sense of place
- Unify signage within the District
 - > Create a cohesive framework for District signage
 - > Reduce clutter, congestion and confusion
- Create signage that is appropriate for the District
 - > Reflect the unique brand and character of the area
 - > Enhance the experience
 - > Create signage that is unique to the area

Riverfront Identity Strategy

- Treat the Riverfront as a large single destination
- Position signs to identify the District to the public
- Look for creative means to unify the Riverfront
- Create District signage that is unique and reflects the heritage of the area

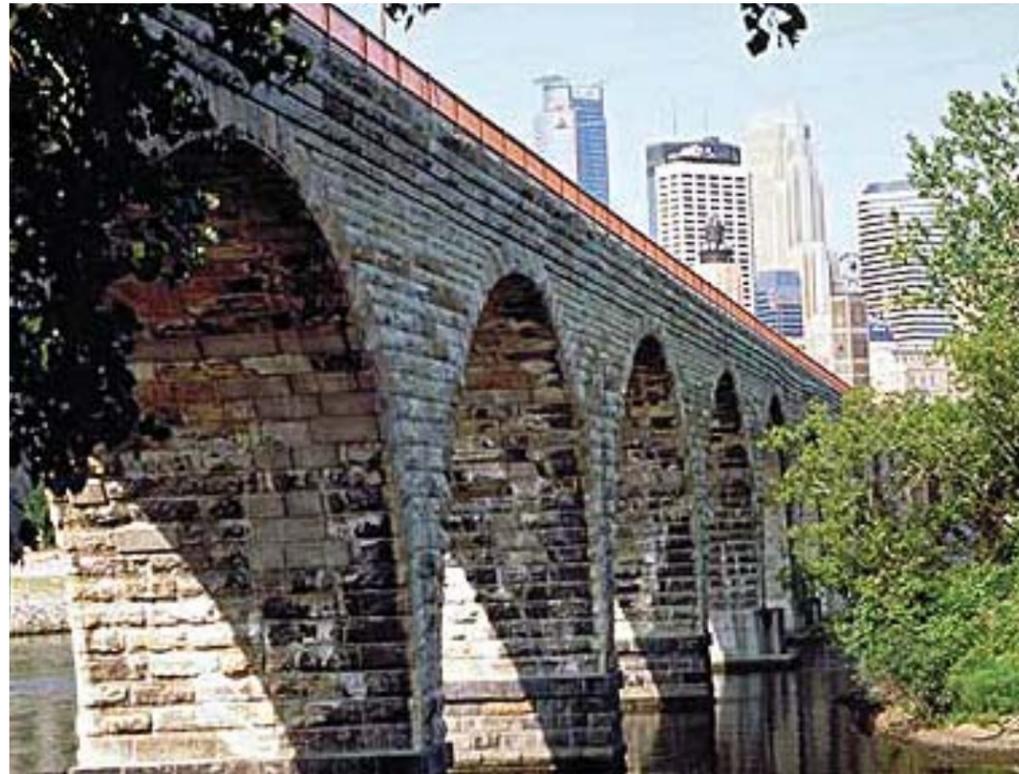
Riverfront Wayfinding Goals

- Direct visitors to the Minneapolis Riverfront District
 - > Within the larger metro area (key interstate arteries)
 - > Within the Minneapolis downtown area
 - > From the Old St. Anthony area
- Guide visitors to key destinations within the District
 - > Parking lots and ramps
 - > Specific areas and attractions
 - > Across the river

Riverfront Wayfinding Strategy

- Employ established sign standards outside of the District
- Identify primary and preferred traffic patterns
- Key off other high-traffic destinations
- Identify key gateways, nodes and boundaries
- Leverage historic designation for sign placement
- Scale signs appropriately to traffic and pedestrians
- Use a “less is more” philosophy

PROJECT SUMMARY



BRAND CHARACTER

Before designing and implementing a sign system for the Minneapolis Riverfront District, it is important to understand what is unique to the area, and how these unique attractions and destinations relate to other destinations within the Twin Cities area. This “brand character” of the area must guide development of signage so that it will reflect and enhance the overall experience of the District.

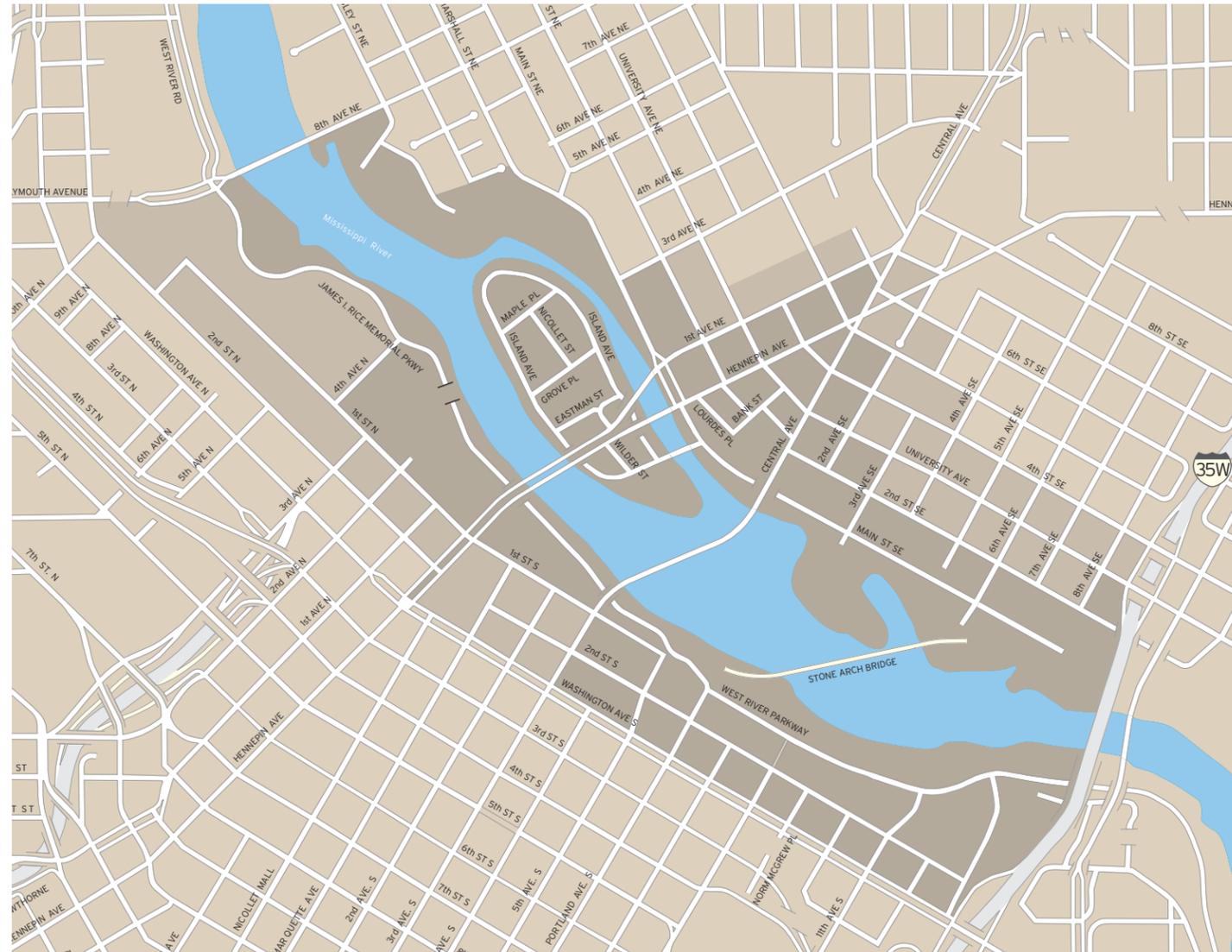
Distinguishing Elements

- The Mississippi River and St. Anthony Falls
- History — the industrial roots of the city
- Unique cultural, architectural and commercial assets
- Parks, parkways, trails and greenspace
- Outdoor recreation, activities and events
- Residential development and neighborhoods

Riverfront Brand Attributes

- Historic “industrial”
- Authentic (not artificial)
- Diverse and dynamic
- Natural and beautiful
- Family-friendly

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DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

The Minneapolis Riverfront District stretches from Plymouth Avenue NE to Interstate 35W and along both sides of the Mississippi River, generally from Washington Avenue South to 4th Street SE. It also includes the retail district of Old St. Anthony.

These boundaries, although somewhat soft, were determined by a number of factors. The primary district area is the parkland on each bank of the river, including Nicollet Island, Boom Island Park, Father Hennepin Bluffs Park, First Bridge Park, West River Parkway, and Mill Ruins Park. Other core amenities include the Stone Arch Bridge, the Lock and Dam Visitor Center, Mill City Museum, Historic Main Street, and the Mississippi River itself, along with St. Anthony Falls.

The boundaries were stretched to include critical retail and residential developments. Washington Avenue was chosen as the southern boundary because of its importance as a primary route for traffic and district-edge signage. On the north side of Hennepin Avenue, this boundary drops back to 2nd Street because of the strong connection of Washington Avenue to the Warehouse District.

For many of the same reasons that Washington Avenue was chosen as a boundary, University Avenue and 4th Street SE were chosen as the northern edge.

It also made sense to include the many residential developments that were already associating themselves with the river (River Station, The Falls, etc.).

Due to continued development within the District, transition areas were identified. (These are indicated on this map with lighter shading.) These areas may grow increasingly important for the overall wayfinding and signage program over time.