

Upper River Master Plan

Compliance with Critical Area and Mississippi National Recreation Area

The *Upper Mississippi River Master Plan* is fully consistent with all the goals and policies of the federal *Mississippi River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) Comprehensive Management Plan* and with the state's Executive Order creating the Mississippi River Critical Area. Moreover, the outcome of the *Upper River Plan* is expected to be an outstanding model of sensitive and enlightened design that reconciles the natural, social, cultural and economic opportunities and needs of the river corridor. As Minneapolis updates its *Mississippi River Critical Area and MNRRA Plan* in 1999-2000, it will incorporate the features and recommendations of this *Upper River Master Plan*.

A few of the ways in which the *Master Plan* will be consistent with the requirements of the Critical Area Executive Order and the *MNRRA Comprehensive Management Plan* are summarized below:

- **Outdoor Recreation and Scenic Enjoyment:** The parkway system and its bicyclist and pedestrian trails will be extended, and locations established for public river overlooks at many vantage points. New parkland will be created and improved for a variety of outdoor activities, some active and some passive. Bicycle paths in the corridor will connect to the regional system of trails, and links into nearby residential neighborhoods will be established. The Upper River is expected to become an attraction of local, regional, state and national significance as part of the larger network of linear open space.
- **Natural Resources:** The edges of the river will be returned to natural conditions, habitat restored for small animals, birds and other species, and biologically-based riverbank restoration techniques applied. Surface water running toward the river will be filtered by ponds and other natural means.
- **Cultural Resources:** Remaining historic resources will be preserved, actively re-used, interpreted and used as important components of the river corridor.
- **Economic Development:** The number of jobs in the river corridor is expected to rise dramatically. The plan will respond to what is perceived to be the ongoing and inevitable changes in riverbank land use -- as outdoor storage and barge dependent operations relocate, new manufacturing and office jobs will replace them. Office development will take advantage of the scenic beauty of the river and, in combination with manufacturing employment, raise the overall level of income generated in the river corridor.
- **Public Understanding and Stewardship:** The public will be made more aware of the full range of resources the river offers through greatly improved public access to and across the river.
- **Visual Quality:** Views to and from the river will be greatly improved - nearly every change will be a scenic improvement from the present conditions. Parks and landscaped public open space will line the riverbanks, and adjacent land development will de-emphasize outdoor storage of raw materials in favor of attractive housing,

offices, restaurants and hotels. Developments will be sized and sited to be unobtrusive, and the suggested height limits of MNRRA will be taken into consideration. Building masses will be broken, subdued colors and materials used, parking screened, and larger developments clustered to take advantage of the site amenities and to protect natural resources. A 40-foot zone of natural restoration or preservation will be established in many locations along the riverbank.

- **Neighborhood Revitalization and Stabilization:** The natural beauty, outdoor recreation and economic development features of the river corridor will be leveraged to help improve the quality of nearby neighborhoods and the city as a whole.

The City of Minneapolis will use the following means, among others, to implement this *Master Plan* and ensure consistency with Critical Area and MNRRA requirements:

- The Minneapolis Zoning Code as updated in 1999 including the Shoreland and Floodplain Overlay Districts.
- A new Upper River Zoning Overlay District to implement elements of this *Master Plan* not regulated by other zoning districts. .
- A new Critical Area Overlay District that is expected to be proposed in the updated *Mississippi River Critical Area and MNRRA Plan*.