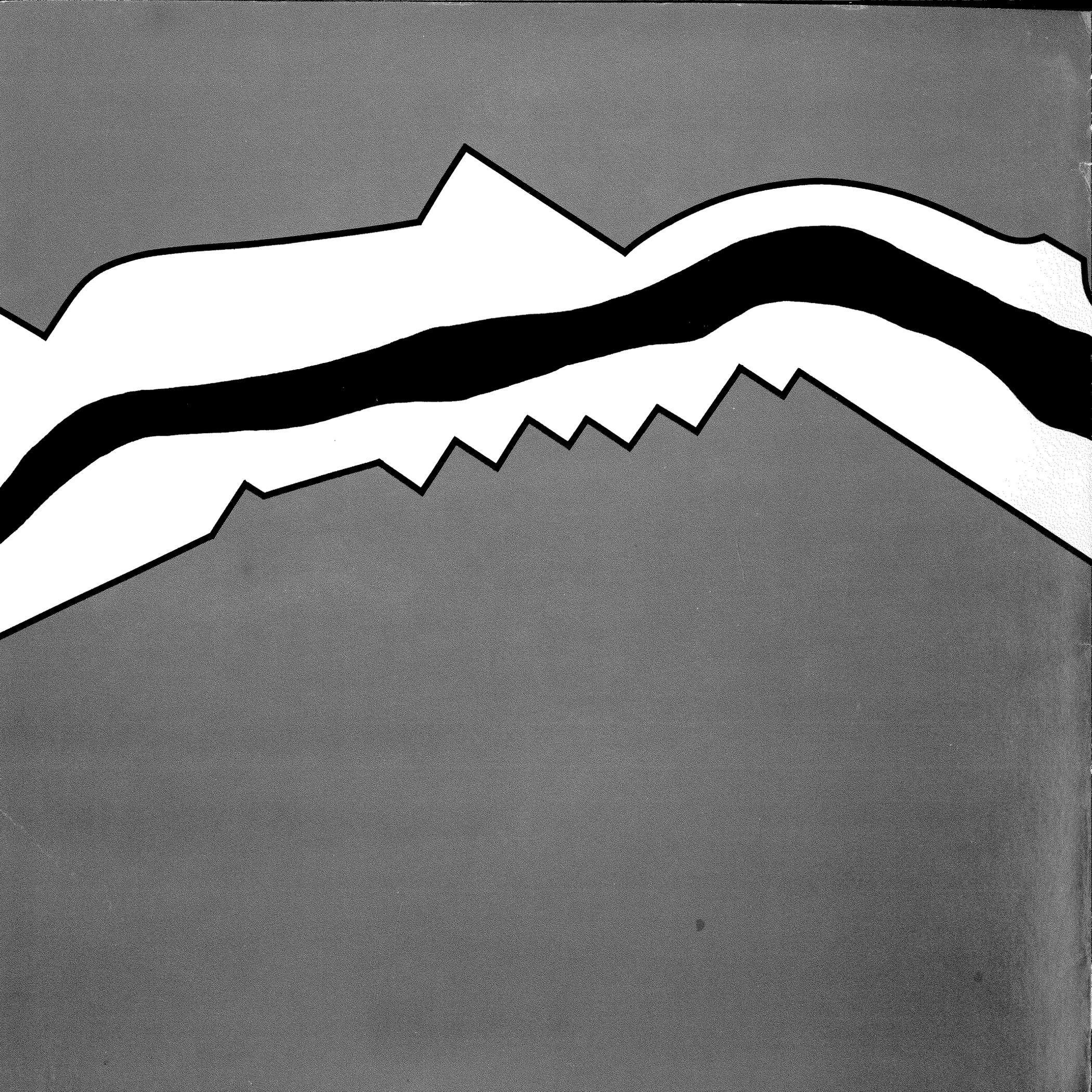


MISSISSIPPI / MINNEAPOLIS





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Autumn 1972

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MISSISSIPPI / MINNEAPOLIS — A PLAN AND



PROGRAM FOR RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT



SUMMARY

The MISSISSIPPI/MINNEAPOLIS . . . Old Man River . . . brown, oiled silk rolling under hot summer skies . . . glittering sequins of silvery blue on a wind-ruffled surface . . . roiling grey foam of spring waters spinning over the falls . . . glutting glacier of grey ice indistinguishable except for its breaks and cracks from the stark white of a frigid landscape. Always passing, casting reflections of the changing cityscape through which it slides.

But what does the river reflect as it flows through Minneapolis? Along the Upper and Central River it is the backside of the City—the run-down warehouses, raw fill, scattered housing, vacant land, and junk-shrouded banks—isolating from the citizenry an area steeped in potential beauty and hidden utility. Yet it reflects promise in the sandy flats and handsome tree-lined bluffs along the Lower River gorge which have hinted for decades at the latent potential of the entire Riverfront.

The river can reflect variety equal to its many moods. This comprehensive plan for the future Riverfront forecasts a rejuvenation of the Central area river image focused on a theater of public activity spaces clustered around St. Anthony Falls.

NICOLLET ISLAND . . . green open space interlaced with man-made canals for year round use, highlighted by an historic village and a learning center, tipped by an amphitheater for outdoor events, edged by a pedestrian path from which views of the echoing skylines will be seen and from which pedestrian access to all adjacent banks of the river will be readily available.

MAIN STREET . . . an historic promenade down a granite block street, a spine connecting two river

edge plazas . . . reconstructed 19th century stone and brick buildings keyed by the Pillsbury "A" Mill . . . a colorful, bustling residential/commercial district where the banners of cafes and boutiques under gas lights will beckon to visitors.

HENNEPIN ISLAND . . . rough-contoured, wooded, quiescent peninsulas connected by pedestrian bridges . . . access to an observation platform near the rushing water of the falls . . . a uniquely natural area in the heart of the City.

THE GATEWAY . . . the excitement of Downtown extended to the river's edge . . . a cultural center and industrial museum . . . edged by a promenade and elevated walkway . . . a new face for the City . . . a real gateway to the commercial City center.

Residential development of a wide variety will embrace this kaleidoscope of public space, sharing proximity to the river and to Downtown employment. Increased land values netting substantial economic benefits to the City will accrue from new residential development matched by equally valuable social and psychological benefits of Riverfront living.

On the east bank, residential development integrated with unique commercial uses will extend along Main Street from St. Anthony West past Hennepin Island. Each group of residences will be clustered around an area of highly mixed activity, and each will be provided with ready access to the Main Street promenade and the islands.

On the upper end of Main Street (East Hennepin) high density housing would cluster around a pedestrian mini-mall, stepped back from the river to Eastgate. A

web of river bank paths would extend to the Main Street concourse, backed by terraced and high-rise housing. On the lower end of Main, medium and high density housing would define a plaza and ending for Main Street, strongly tied to the wooded bluffs above Hennepin Island.

In St. Anthony West, moderate density housing would face another Riverfront activity center—the Boom Island Marina, where rented slips for private boat owners, rental boats for the public, and boat storage and repair facilities would stimulate high recreational use of the water.

On the west bank, an improved Gateway would be flanked by two more urban residential neighborhoods; Riverfront West and Riverfront East. These two large residential areas, buffered from nearby commerce and industry, would contain terraced and high-rise units echoing the river bluff contours.

Variety is the theme of Riverfront open space design—picnicking, strolling, hiking, sitting, skating, ski touring, fishing, boating, observation of nature—historic and contemporary values—passive and active recreation—a time, a place, an activity for groups or individuals of all ages.

For visitors as well as for new residents of the area, the open space system described for MISSISSIPPI/MINNEAPOLIS offers exciting year-round aesthetic and recreational enjoyment. From many points in the City, motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians will be directed to river edge paths by a uniform signing system. Once there, hikers and bicyclists will be able to traverse many miles of highly varied pathways.

Pedestrian windows—functional, visual routes with coordinated outdoor furniture and lighting—

will lead from adjacent neighborhoods to the river edge. Even motorists crossing the river will be notified of its proximity by improved landscaping and signs on and near bridge approaches.

In addition to Central area spaces, further design and development of North Mississippi Park, the University Flats, Cedar-Riverside's waterfront and others are called for.

Growth of both recreational and commercial water use is also envisioned. Four boats circumnavigating the Central River and, perhaps, voyaging to St. Paul—private cruisers docking at Riverfront marinas—and shells and canoes gliding through the Lower River pool will add other dimensions to Riverfront opportunities.

Priority for upper Riverfront Land use will be assigned to industries with barging operations, reinforcing the position of MISSISSIPPI/MINNEAPOLIS within the mid-continental network of commercial waterways. Planned industrial development buffered from the river by a greenway, where possible, will offer employment opportunities to Northside residents and will assist in ordering districts now containing chaotic industrial, commercial, and residential land use patterns.

The revitalization of the Riverfront in Minneapolis can only be accomplished through a continually positive step by step process. It is too diverse to be considered a "project" in the usual sense, but can be better defined as a long-term, multi-faceted program. Likewise, redeveloping the Riverfront is too monumental a task to be accomplished with a single major thrust—a short-lived enthusiasm—but must constitute a sustained drive for the next 20-25 years. Within this over-all program must be molded a number of component programs:

public and private development; monitoring, review, and control; and public awareness and involvement. The entire effort must transcend a "planning process" or a "physical development process" to become instead a "campaign," a campaign to return Minneapolis to the source of its heritage.

The final segment of this report discusses the above concerns. It proposes roles and responsibilities in both the public and private sectors. It describes a feasible time framework and an estimate of what the costs will be. And it spells out some of the very important actions to be taken immediately. Such a program section can only serve as a beginning, however. It must be further refined as the Riverfront development process unfolds.

The action program must be as alive as the Riverfront it hopes to shape, and to have this kind of vitality it must be flexible.

The purpose of this Riverfront plan and action program is to provide a creative framework for change—direction for the great number of individuals and organizations concerned about the health of the City, eager to turn the City's face toward the river. While details are of value, it is the maximizing of Riverfront potential—of living on a waterfront, walking to work, boating on the river, and hiking the length of the City—that is most important and at the same time within the bounds of MISSISSIPPI/MINNEAPOLIS reality.

The critical elements of the report are found in the section on "Major Concepts," page 47, and in the section on "Action," beginning on page 120. In addition, the entire report may be quickly perused by examining the graphic work and related captions along with reading the boldfaced segments.

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