

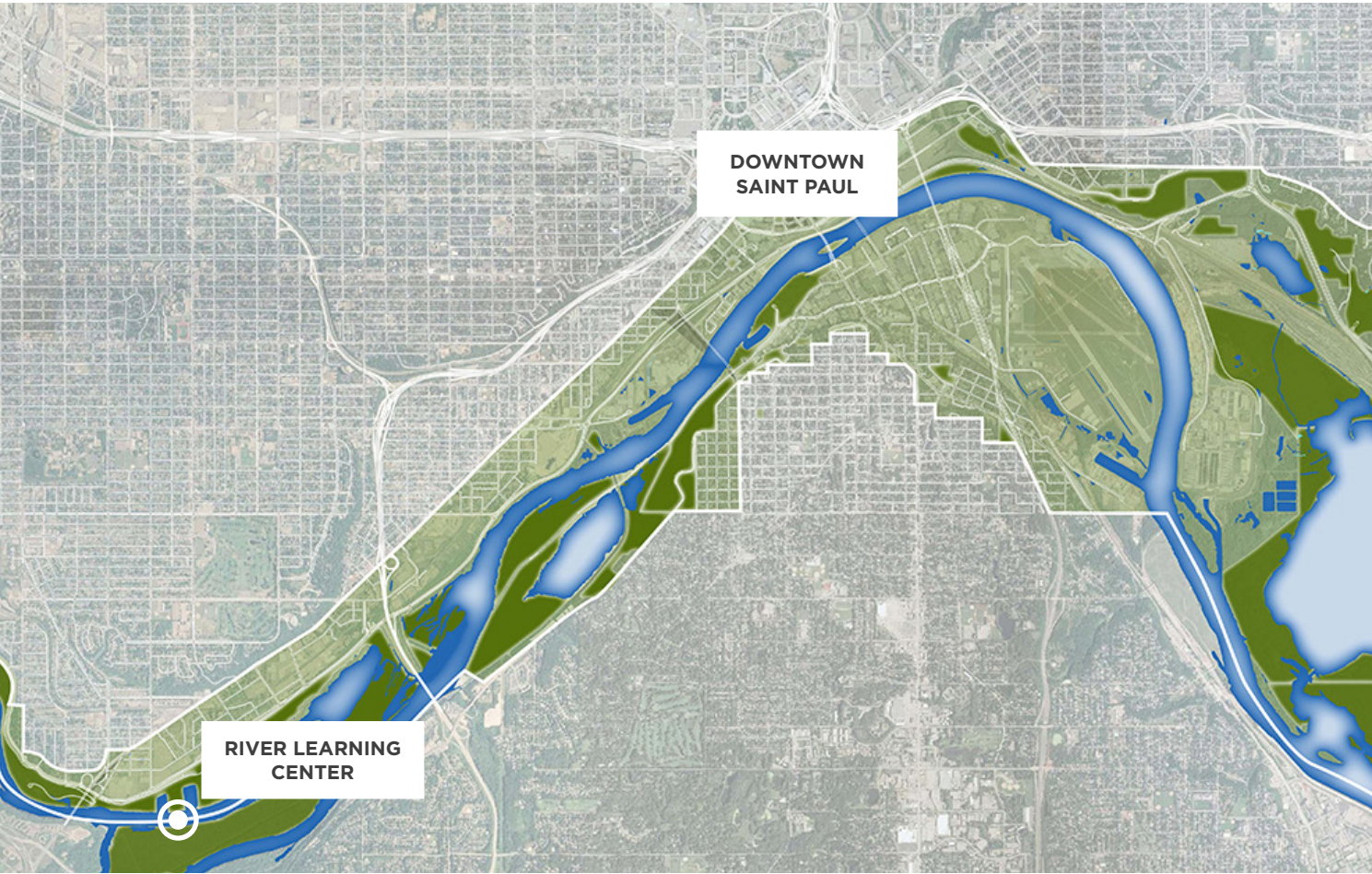


GREAT RIVER PASSAGE

MISSISSIPPI RIVER LEARNING CENTER

Experience the Land + Water + Culture
of the Mississippi River

The combined River Learning Center and proposed National Park Service Headquarters and Visitor Center will be a one-of-a-kind national hub of Mississippi River-focused recreation, education and environmental stewardship.



MISSISSIPPI RIVER LEARNING CENTER + NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HEADQUARTERS

This forward thinking, mixed-use, river-focused center will combine National Park Service Headquarters with year-round environmental, cultural, and historical learning plus outdoor recreation experiences along Saint Paul's stretch of the Mississippi River.

Located at the Watergate Marina site at Crosby Farm Regional Park, the River Learning Center will transform this currently isolated area into an easy-to-reach hub that strengthens the community's connection to an incredible natural resource and fosters generations of park users and river stewards.

"This will be a place to connect with the river—to stand in it, float on it, touch it, and hear it."

—Anna Waugh, Interim Director Mississippi Park Connection, a River Learning Center partner

BUILDING THE RIVER CAPITAL

The River Learning Center builds on a 40-year legacy of reorienting Saint Paul to the Mississippi. By connecting our city's two greatest assets—its people and the river—we can **bring the river back from the edge to the center of public life and community identity**. With 17 miles of river, 26 miles of river edge, and 3,500 acres of publicly owned land, **Saint Paul's economy, ecology, and cultural identity are defined by the river.**

As it flows through us, the Mississippi is the lifeblood of the River Capital:

- One of the world's most important commercial waterways
- Source of drinking water for Saint Paul (and 50 other cities)
- One of North America's great migration routes for 40% of the country's birds
- A place of natural beauty for reflection and recreation
- Home to several significant and sacred Dakota sites

As such, our history, culture, health, and wellbeing are inextricably linked to the Mississippi. **We are the river**, and we are committed to making the River Learning Center a beautiful, safe, welcoming, and accessible place for all.





DESIGNING A GATEWAY: THE RIVER IS FOR ALL OF US

The Twin Cities stretch of the Mississippi is a national park, but today has few spots to safely access the river. With its two sheltered bays opening up the river in new ways to thousands of local and national visitors, the River Learning Center will be the gateway to the Mississippi. It is the contemporary meeting point of:

- Forward-thinking design that is small in scale, light on the land, and responds to the interplay of the site's dynamic river conditions and sensitive riparian ecology
- Restorative landscape design
- Equity-focused design and engagement
- A true public-private partnership in ownership, funding, programming, and management

“The River Learning Center will be a new landmark on the Mississippi River, supporting our region’s growth and transforming Saint Paul’s identity into an internationally renowned River Capital.”
—Peter Frosch, Chief Executive Officer of GREATER MSP

CREATING A RIVER CENTER

The River Learning Center will be perfectly situated at a strategic, 25-acre city-owned site, at the convergence of key cultural, historical, ecological, recreational, and developmental sites, with MSP Airport, Mall of America, and Ft. Snelling nearby. Of particular note is the site’s proximity to the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers, Bdote, within Dakota homeland. Through the Conservancy’s Dakota Engagement Initiative, the River Learning Center will honor and share Dakota culture and history.

“International travelers visit the US to experience the Grand Canyon, Disney World, Las Vegas and near the top of the list is the Mississippi River. The Mississippi River Learning Center will provide access to the river not only for local visitors but also opens the opportunity to market to global travelers passing through MSP International Airport.”

—Jana Webster, Executive Director, Airport Foundation MSP



TRANSFORMING OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE RIVER, EXPERIENCING NATURE

With key partners hosting programming at the site, Mississippi River Learning Center visitors will:

- Be moved by the river, whether literally (in a kayak) or by connecting with the natural beauty and wildlife

- Get in touch with the river, by trying out recreational equipment, exploring the landscape, and gaining confidence in the outdoors
- Get involved by helping with projects and initiatives that protect the river, and by experiencing the river through the lens of diverse cultures
- Be healthy physically and mentally by connecting with others in a safe and welcoming setting





DEVELOPING GENERATIONS OF RIVER STEWARDS

The River Learning Center will host year-round environmental, cultural, and historical education and recreation opportunities that are integrated into the region's routines, traditions, and collective identity.

We will build a river-centered community that values the Mississippi and will care for it in the future.

"The River Learning Center will be a tremendous local resource for Saint Paul students and teachers.

The Mississippi River is an inspiring place for learning, offering infinite curricular opportunities for PreK-12. The Center will expand our long-standing partnership with the National Park Service to teach and inspire our community of learners."

—Marty Davis, Supervisor, PreK-12 Science, SPPS

LEADERSHIP + PARTNERSHIPS

The River Learning Center creates a unique opportunity to combine resources, expertise, and capacity at a signature, strategic destination on one of the three great rivers of the world. Our key partners:

CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Land Owner + Project Manager

The Great River Passage Initiative is a City of Saint Paul-led endeavor supported by funding from the City and State. As such, the City is integral to the success of the River Learning Center, owning the project, managing programming, and bringing project management expertise to the process.

GREAT RIVER PASSAGE CONSERVANCY

Private Fundraising + Strategic Project Development

The Great River Passage Conservancy is the City's private fundraising, advocacy, and strategic project development partner for the River Learning Center and other capital projects along Saint Paul's 17 miles of the Mississippi River. The Great River Passage Conservancy is leading the project through public and private fundraising, partnership management, and strategic project and program development.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Tenant + Programming

Since 1916, the National Park Service (NPS) has been entrusted with the care of our national parks.

As stewards of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, the National Park Service is partnering with the City of Saint Paul to establish the River Learning Center as their headquarters. NPS will lead education and interpretive programming from the center and on adjoining land, water, and trails in collaboration with numerous partners.

MISSISSIPPI PARK CONNECTION

Programming + Fundraising

Established in 2007, Mississippi Park Connection (MPC) is the nonprofit partner of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, conducting a range of fundraising, philanthropic, volunteer, community engagement, and related activities to benefit the community.

MPC co-leads River Learning Center fundraising efforts and will be a tenant at the River Learning Center, running a range of programs from the facility, including youth education, volunteer stewardship, public programs, and events.

YOUR BOAT CLUB

Marina Manager + Programming

Your Boat Club (YBC) is the City of Saint Paul's contracted operator of Watergate Marina and an advisor on marina operations and design as the River Learning Center project progresses. YBC are great advocates for getting on the water and have significantly increased the number of people doing so from Watergate Marina in their first year of operation (2022). YBC will continue to manage slip rentals, service boats onsite, and rent watercraft for daily use on the river.

WILDERNESS INQUIRY

Programming

Wilderness Inquiry is a nonprofit organization that connects people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to the natural world and one another through shared adventures and education.

Working collaboratively with partners, Wilderness Inquiry will support program development and be one of the primary organizations offering year-round educational and recreational programs at the site.

WE ARE THE RIVER



Photo credit: Monica Bryant

MISSISSIPPI RIVER LEARNING CENTER PROGRESS TO DATE

- Completed technical study (2017), feasibility analysis (2018) and programming survey (2019)
- Signed a General Agreement outlining the City and National Park Service partnership in pursuit of the project (January 2020)
- Launched Mississippi Park Connection/Wilderness Inquiry/Great River Passage Conservancy co-fundraising partnership and campaign (2020-21)
- Raised public/private funds for schematic design (2020-21)
- Completed schematic design, engagement and phasing strategy (October 2022)

NEXT STEPS

A six-month transition period to include:

- Partner roles and responsibilities
- Finance strategy
- State bonding initiative
- Programming

TIMELINE AND MILESTONES

Jan 2022—Oct 2022	Nov 2022—May 2023	Jun 2023—Jun 2024	Jul 2024—Sep 2025	Fall 2025
SCHEMATIC DESIGN	GOVERNANCE, FINANCE STRATEGY, PROGRAMMING	DESIGN DEVELOPMENT CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS	CONSTRUCTION	GRAND OPENING

INITIAL COST ESTIMATE: \$65 MILLION

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