

The Promise of Parks

2018-2019 Minneapolis Parks Foundation Annual Report



MINNEAPOLIS
PARKS
FOUNDATION

The Minneapolis Parks Foundation transforms human lives through parks and public spaces by aligning philanthropic investment and community vision.

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Dear Friends,

In 2018, the board of the Minneapolis Parks Foundation came together to create a new strategic plan—a working document designed to capture both the practical blueprint of projects we must deliver to achieve our mission and the blue sky thinking that’s inspiring our vision for the future.

As you can see from the guiding principles that appear on this page, the Parks Foundation is committed to far more than parks. We’re about fulfilling the almost limitless potential that great parks and inspiring public spaces have in building stronger connections between neighbors, fostering better outcomes for kids, driving economic opportunity for all, and even helping cities find new solutions to our most challenging problems, from inequality to climate change.

In short, we believe in the promise of parks.

We’re pleased to report the promise of parks is a vision we share with a growing number of parks lovers and supporters, who made 2018 an outstanding year for the Minneapolis Parks Foundation’s fundraising efforts. Thanks to your generous contributions, we now have the resources needed to begin construction in this year on two of the RiverFirst Initiative’s signature projects—Water Works, the transformative destination park along the city’s historic Mill Ruins, and the Great Northern Greenway River Link, which will soon connect the north side of the city to the Mississippi River in a whole new way.

As we complete the first phase of the RiverFirst Capital Campaign this year, we’ll be relying on our strategic plan to point us to new ways to leverage the power of community vision and private philanthropy. A strategic plan is only as

effective as the people charged with executing it; fortunately, the diverse voices and forward vision of our board has always been a strength of our organization. While the community leaders who guide the Parks Foundation are familiar to many, what’s less well known is how deeply our hard-working board is truly committed to our mission of transforming human life through parks and public spaces.

We believe the true promise of the parks is met through people, which is why we invite you to be part of the conversation through our Next Generation of Parks series—soon celebrating its 10th anniversary season—or at any of the dozens of community gatherings and engagements we host throughout the year. Whether you connect with us at our popular “Sunrise on the Mississippi” annual fundraising event, or for one of our curated Walk & Talk park experiences, your thoughtful support is helping us to foster a Minneapolis parks system that can meet the needs of our next generation.

Thank you for the trust you’ve place in us and we look forward to seeing you in the parks!

Sincerely,

Tom Evers
Executive Director



Tom Paul
Board Chair



Strategic Plan Highlights

Developed by the Minneapolis Parks Foundation’s board of directors, these guiding themes will inform the Parks Foundation’s future investments. To learn more about our strategic plan for the future of Minneapolis parks, visit us online at mplsparksfoundation.org/2019strategicplan.

- **Equity and cultural inclusion:** When all people have access to valued parks and public space, feel welcome, and see themselves reflected in those spaces, a community is healthier, safer, and happier.
- **Community health and well-being:** Parks provide healthy air, water, and soil, and places to play and exercise, on both the individual and community level. Parks also provide places where we can learn about our neighbors and form new and deeper connections.
- **Connections to the natural world:** In our increasingly urbanized world, maintaining places of natural beauty, respite, and awe helps us maintain our humanity.
- **Resiliency to climate change:** Cities must adapt and develop new methods to protect and restore natural systems, clean water, and mitigate the economic impact of climate change.
- **Economic vitality:** Thriving parks and public spaces can attract investment and bring prosperity to the broader community.

Through powerful programs and generous community gifts in 2018, the Minneapolis Parks Foundation helped fulfill

The Promise of Parks

Big Ideas and Small Details

The Minneapolis Parks Foundation contributed \$2.8 million in 2018 toward the grand vision behind RiverFirst, without overlooking the smaller details that make our neighborhood parks system so vibrant. Your contributions made it possible to invest an additional \$209,000 in a variety of Minneapolis parks projects, from opening a new three-season restroom and wash station at Cedar South Beach, to filling 53 Little Free Libraries® in the parks with 5,500 books. Your support also helps the Parks Foundation to be an active partner in our cultural community, by supporting the Minneapolis Art Lending Library, and contributing to such community events as Slow Roll, Earth Day Clean-Up, Get Outdoors Day, and Open Streets.



Walk & Talks

These curated small-group explorations of little-known Minneapolis parks and practices invited guests to hike the Winchell trail, dip their toes in the Webber Natural Swimming Pool, and learn more about how the Minneapolis parks system protects bees, butterflies and other pollinators. An overnight sensation with Minneapolis Parks Foundation supporters, who sold-out each of our walk-about in 2018, the events will be the inspiration for even more behind-the-scenes parks experiences in the years ahead.

Still Making a Splash

Northeast Park's new recreation center opened in March, thanks in part to a \$100,000 gift that the Lupient family, longtime supporters of the Minneapolis park system, made through the Parks Foundation. Next up, the Lupient family is underwriting design exploration for a bathhouse to replace the aging structure at the Jim Lupient Water Park.

RiverFirst Campaign Crests

The Minneapolis Parks Foundation's community of supporters surged by almost 20 percent in 2018, many of them drawn to the vision of the RiverFirst Initiative which secured more than \$16.4 million in gifts and commitments toward the \$17.9 million goal. A pivotal \$1 million gift from Bank of America in November 2018 positioned the Parks Foundation to meet the fundraising goal needed to break ground on both Water Works and the Great Northern Greenway River Link later this year.



Reimagining the Civic Commons

Fast becoming a "can't miss" event with Parks Foundation supporters, this year's annual fundraiser "Sunrise on the Mississippi" brought in a record \$100,000 and featured keynote speaker Lynn Ross. The former Obama administration urban planner explored how a robust civic commons — parks included — can help divided communities find common ground.



Ground Breaking

With Water Works and the Great Northern Greenway Overlook set to start construction, the north side of Minneapolis is about to see the Mississippi in a whole new way.



Camille Burke

When Camille Burke moved to Minneapolis from Milwaukee more than a decade ago, the banks of the Mississippi River were a big part of the draw.

“I grew up in LaCrosse, so I always loved being near the river, and here, it’s just such a gift to have it in the center of everything,” says Burke, who now lives a stone’s throw from the Stone Arch Bridge, Gold Medal Park, the Guthrie Theater, and a host of other amenities that have bloomed on the river bank since the city made a more intentional move toward the Mississippi. “Green space is so good for our mental and physical health, that the parks really are of a way of life for me.”

The joy she finds from walking, biking, and spending days with her grandchildren in nearby parks inspired Burke to join other donors by making a contribution to the RiverFirst Initiative, a bold public parks plan to transform 5.5 miles of industrial riverfront into a continuous park along the banks of the Mississippi.

Living within walking distance of St. Anthony Falls, Burke knows she’ll be making regular visits to Water Works, an innovative new park and public pavilion that promises to bring even more buzz to the popular Mill Ruins Park and nearby Stone Arch Bridge. But she was equally interested in supporting another signature project of RiverFirst, the Great Northern Greenway River Link, a key access point for North Minneapolis to the Mississippi River.

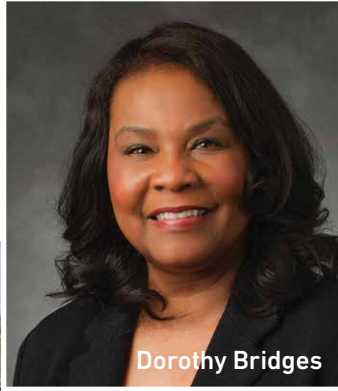
“It’s inspiring that we have an opportunity to connect everyone in the city to the parks in a way that’s never happened before,” says Burke. “That’s what I think is just wonderful about the Minneapolis Parks Foundation—they’re working hard to make sure that future parks projects are user-friendly and accessible to everyone. As a newcomer, that’s one of the things I think is very special about Minneapolis—a commitment to all.”

Innovation and Inclusion

That message resonated with more donors than ever last year, as the Minneapolis Parks Foundation shared the vision for RiverFirst through more than 95 visits and gatherings, making connections with nearly 700 supporters and potential donors. Thanks to a \$2 million challenge grant from the Pohlad Family Foundation that matched leadership gifts, and a \$1 million anchor gift from Bank of America, that fundraising momentum put the Minneapolis Parks Foundation within striking range of its full \$17.9 million funding goal.

"I believe the multidimensional nature of what the Parks Foundation is doing—looking at diversity and inclusion along with design innovation—is something that matters to donors," says board member Dorothy Bridges, who retired as senior vice president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis in 2018, and will assume the role of board chair in 2020. "We want beautiful public spaces, and we want every visitor in these spaces to feel welcomed."

Bridges says that's part of what makes the construction start for the new **Great Northern Greenway River Link** so exciting to her and her neighbors in North and Northeast Minneapolis. "This project is so vitally important to North Minneapolis, which has been cut off from the river, one of its most valuable amenities, for years. This will be an important test case not just for what's possible through the parks right now, but also for what we want our parks to be in the future."



Dorothy Bridges



Great Northern Greenway Overlook

Creativity and Community Vision

Finding creative ways to reconnect the north side of Minneapolis to the Mississippi is now the challenge for Twin Cities-based TEN x TEN Landscape Architecture and 4RM+ULA Architecture, the design team selected to finalize the form and function of the Great Northern Greenway Overlook, the first phase of the multiphase River Link project.

"One of the big themes of this project is equity and increasing awareness and access to the river for residents of the north side community, and we've done several things with our design concepts to further those goals," says 4RM+ULA managing partner James Garrett Jr. Garrett notes that many users of nearby Farview Park, famous for its beautiful view of the Minneapolis skyline, may



James Garrett Jr.

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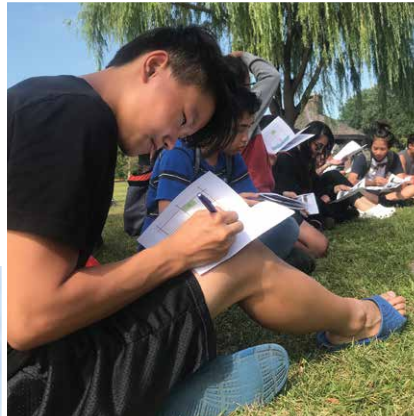
Paul Bauknight

have no idea they're just a short walk from the river. "We want to make sure the overlook is very visible to the community, with a tall beacon element that will be visible from Farview Park to very intentionally draw people toward the Mississippi."

Environmental Design apprentices from Juxtaposition Arts, which has been part of a three-year partnership at the Minneapolis Parks Foundation, have also shared ideas of their own for attracting a new generation of north side parks users. "They proposed talking and listening stations, so people can share their experiences in the community, linking the past and the present together through stories and personal anecdotes," says Garrett. "We think it's a powerful idea and we'd like to find ways to build on that."

Ensuring that community-driven ideas like this find their way into the final product is also the aim of the Minneapolis Parks Foundation's Project Implementation Director, a new role created in 2018 to bring private sector expertise and a consistent vision to the signature projects of RiverFirst and other neighborhood parks efforts the Parks Foundation supports. Architect Paul Bauknight, a former Parks Foundation board member and founder of The Urban Design Lab, was tapped for the new position, which is timed to take advantage of this once-in-a-generation opportunity for major parks development.

"It's an exciting time, because once these projects start to take shape, and become tangible, the public will really start to notice what's happening on the river," says Bauknight. "People who haven't thought of the river as their own will get a chance to experience it, to internalize it. It will be a place to go, of course, but it will also be the beginning of correcting years of inequality. It will be a demonstration of a new way of thinking about the parks, and a way of acknowledging, finally, that the Mississippi River belongs to everyone."



Great Northern Greenway Overlook



Juxtaposition Arts has partnered on summer design and engagement for three years.



RiverFirst Campaign Capital and Related Funding

Visionary Support

We are grateful for the significant philanthropic support of the following individuals, corporations, and foundations that share the Minneapolis Parks Foundation's vision for creating a continuous riverfront park system for future generations and for investing in the RiverFirst Capital Campaign.

\$1,000,000 +

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Conversation Starter

Bold intersections and big ideas spark inspiring discussions at the Next Generation of Parks event series, starting its 10th season in 2019.

“The Next Generation of Parks series brings innovations in parks that are taking place around the world to our front door so we can learn about them together. [The series broadens our local dialogue about parks and recreation as we envision or re-envision Minneapolis parks and recreation](#),” says Jennifer Ringold, Deputy Superintendent of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, who frequently brings new colleagues to attend the Minneapolis Parks Foundation’s Next Generation of Parks events. “The series is a valuable training resource that’s accessible, free, and leaves you with some food for thought.”



Jennifer Ringold



Sarah Duniway

Sarah Duniway takes her dog for a run every day, but after hearing journalist Florence Williams speak at a recent Next Generation of Parks event, she’s decided to do it a little differently.

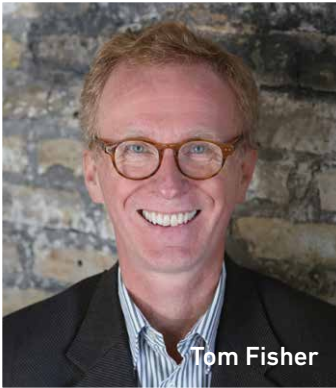
“We know that getting outdoors makes us happy, but after hearing Williams talk about her book *The Nature Fix*, [I was inspired to change my route to make sure I go through a park and get a different dose of trees and nature every day](#),” says Duniway, a Minneapolis Parks Foundation board member and an attorney at Gray Plant Mooty. “Discoveries like that are what I love about these talks—they’re creative, they’re thought-provoking, and they’re also a little challenging, in a good way, when it comes to advancing the conversation about parks.”

That’s all part of the mission of the Next Generation of Parks event series, which enjoyed a record-setting attendance year in 2018 with a roster that also

included creative-placemaking artist Lily Yeh, Minneapolis Parks Fellow Bruce Chamberlain, Sabina Ali, a community parks activist in Toronto, and *The Nature Fix* author Florence Williams. Now set to begin its 10th season, the series is one of the ways the Parks Foundation works to bring forward fresh voices and new ideas about how to build parks for the future.



Stephanie Curtis and Lily Yeh



Tom Fisher

“If we’re going to continue being the number one park city in the country, we have to always be learning from others, and upping our game, and I think this series has helped bring a lot of attention to that,” says Tom Fisher, Director of the Minnesota Design Center, and an architecture professor at the University of Minnesota. Over the last decade, he says, topics in the series have reflected growing trends in the field, covering not just innovative park design, but also the ways that inventive public spaces can enhance mental health, for instance, or mitigate the effects of climate change. “There’s a recognition that an investment in the parks isn’t just an investment in green space—it’s an investment in the health of people and in their community,” he says. “I think the series has broadened best practices as well as helped us to expand the conversation about what is a park.”

In some ways, the Next Generation of Parks series is the latest iteration of a conversation that started in Minneapolis back in 1872, when landscape architect Horace Cleveland came to give a lecture about the importance of preserving open spaces in the rapidly growing cities of the American west. His far-reaching vision was so inspiring that he was invited to share it with community leaders in St. Paul two days later, igniting a community-wide conversation that set the groundwork for the parks system we enjoy today, from the Grand Rounds to Como Park. In his Next Gen presentation this year, Parks Fellow Bruce Chamberlain helped bring the history of Minneapolis’s relationship to the Mississippi River up



Senator Patricia Torres Ray and Sabina Ali

to date, exploring how the signature projects of the RiverFirst Initiative will fulfill the dreams of those early parks founders, finally linking every corner of the city through a continuous riverfront park system.

As the Minneapolis Parks Foundation looks ahead to the next decade of Next Generation of Parks events, Christine Moir, the Parks Foundation events manager who coordinates the series, says audiences can expect even wider-ranging discussions about what’s possible through the parks. “We had a really diverse group of speakers this year, which is one of the reasons the season was so successful,” she says, noting that nearly two-thirds of guests registered for the free events are new to the Minneapolis Parks Foundation. “We have evolved from inspiring conversations about design, to exploring the complex intersection of health, economics, creativity, and so much more. I would say the common theme that runs through all of these events is that parks touch all of us.”



The Parks Foundation frequently invites our partners to participate in roundtables or workshops with our Next Generation of Parks speakers, like this one at MCAD on healing through art with Lily Yeh. Hosting more intimate, deep-dive events like these is part of our mission to collaborate with community.

Paying it Forward

A new endowment fund is just one of the ways the Minneapolis Parks Foundation is working to serve a city of parks-lovers.

Where will your money do the most good after you're gone?

"Like most people, I hadn't really thought about that question too much," says Bill W., 63. But when his financial planner suggested he pull together a list of nonprofits to include in his estate plan, he started to reflect on a lifetime of memories in Minneapolis and noticed a familiar theme.

"The parks have always been a part of my life, and they bring so much good to other people," he says. "Back in the eighties, I got hooked on rollerblading, and I bet I did that Calhoun, Harriet, Lake of the Isles circuit five nights a week. Even now, just going for a drive around the parkways in the winter or taking my mountain bike to Boom Island is always a good way to spend the day. It came into my head one day that giving to the Minneapolis parks would be a good place to leave a little bit of myself behind, so I picked up the phone and got it started."

This year, Bill became one of a growing number of parks lovers who are including the Minneapolis Parks Foundation in their estate plans—a circle of donors that's more than doubled in recent years. In fact, options for making a planned gift are now better than ever thanks to a new endowment fund launched in 2018 with the help of the Minnesota Community Foundation.

"They provide technical assistance to small nonprofits like the Parks Foundation, which gives our donors access to their expertise if they have questions about how they'd like to structure their estate," says Jennifer Downham, the Minneapolis Parks Foundation's chief development officer. "It gives our donors confidence that regardless of what's going on in the political landscape, or with changes in leadership, or with evolutions of mission, that there's a structure in place to honor the original intent of the gift." **For parks lovers who want to ensure their contribution will keep working for the next generation of parks users, there's no better way to leave a legacy than to make a planned gift to the Parks Foundation's endowment.**

To learn more about the Minneapolis Parks Foundation Endowment Fund, visit the Parks Foundation's "Leave a Legacy" page online, or email Jennifer Downham, Chief Development Officer, at Jdownham@MplsParksFoundation.org. Donors who name the Parks Foundation in their estate plans become members of the Heritage Oak Society.



Inspired by his lifelong love of parks, from inline skating to winter trails, Bill W. (not pictured) is including the Parks Foundation in his estate plans.

Thank You, Donors

Realizing the promise of parks, now and into the future, is only possible with the generous support of the following individuals, families, foundations, and corporations.

Your contributions in 2018 allowed the Minneapolis Parks Foundation to meet its mission, aligning philanthropic investment and community vision. *Since 2003, your support has made it possible for the Parks Foundation to raise more than \$20 million for transformative Minneapolis parks.*

Horace Cleveland Circle

Recognizing the significant contribution of donors who have made cumulative general operating support gifts of \$50,000 or more.

Sue Bennett	Mary McCarthy	Paul and Mary Reyelts
Julia Dayton	and Brian Zelickson	Angus and
Richard Erickson	Elizabeth Redleaf	Margaret Wurtele

Heritage Oak Society

Recognizing those donors who have thoughtfully included the Minneapolis Parks Foundation in their estate plans.

Anonymous (4)	Steve King
Meg Forney and Jon Fagerson	Leighton Ladd
Jocey Hale and Glenn Miller	Don Yager and Rick Groger

\$1,000,000 and above

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\$100–\$249

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Mark Addicks and Thomas Hoch
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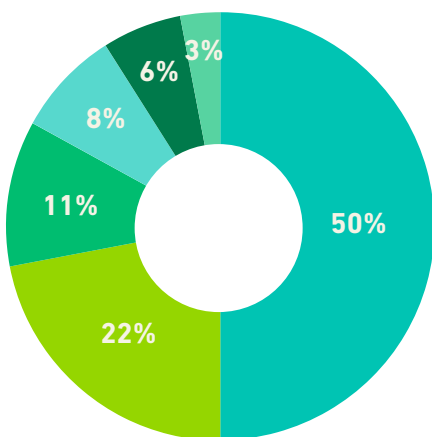
****In-kind support**

2018 Financial Statements

Income/Expense Statement – Unrestricted		2018
Income		
Contributions		614,547
RiverFirst Program Support		319,144
Government Grants		33,950
Special Events		101,625
Investment & Other Income		133,537
Total Income		\$1,202,803
Expense		
Program Expenses		871,986
Core Mission-Support Services: Finance, HR, Board, Operations		140,450
Development		172,190
Total Expense		\$1,184,626
Change in Net Assets		\$18,177

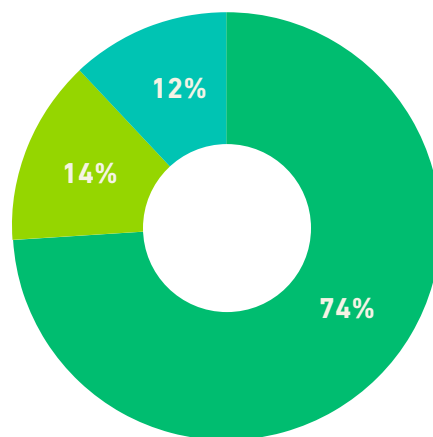
Balance Sheet		12/31/2018
Assets		
Cash & Cash-equivalents		1,135,206
Other Current Assets		190,076
Property & Equipment		11,093
RiverFirst Campaign Fund		7,746,025
Total Assets		\$9,082,400
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable		17,098
Other Liabilities		22,474
RiverFirst Campaign Fund		7,746,025
Total Liabilities		\$7,785,597
Net Assets: Unrestricted		
Undesignated		445,585
Endowment		25,000
RiverFirst		750,000
Total Unrestricted		\$1,220,585
Total Restricted		\$76,218
Total Net Assets		\$1,296,803

Sources of Income



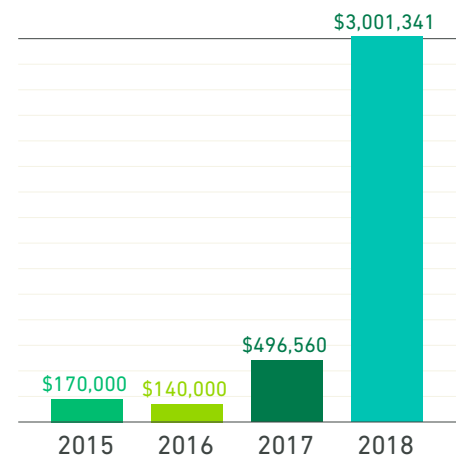
Individuals 50%
 Foundations 22%
 Investment Income 11%
 Fundraising Event 8%
 Corporations 6%
 Government 3%

Expenses



Program 74%
 Development 14%
 Finance, HR, Board, Operations 12%

Investments in Minneapolis Parks





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The Minneapolis Parks Foundation transforms human lives through parks and public spaces by aligning philanthropic investment and community vision.