



SAINT PAUL RIVER NARRATIVE TOOLKIT: BUILDING THE RIVER CAPITAL

Welcome to Saint Paul's river narrative toolkit – an all-inclusive guide to talking about Saint Paul as a River Capital and promoting its position on the banks of the Mississippi River. In this toolkit you will find messaging, social media handles and hashtags, naming conventions and photo and video for you to use freely in your own communications. Our hope is that together, we will begin to amplify and elevate Saint Paul's greatest natural asset – the Mississippi River – and take advantage of all the benefits it offers and investment, activity and vibrancy it attracts.

Included in this toolkit is messaging around the City of Saint Paul's Great River Passage Initiative, the Great River Passage Conservancy and the three capital projects being driven by the City and Conservancy along the Mississippi River in Saint Paul.

Questions on how to use the toolkit? Feel free to reach out to Ashley Aram at ashley@goffpublic.com.

Questions on what's happening with the Great River Passage work? Reach out to Mary deLaittre at mary@greatriverpassage.org.

River narrative messaging

As your organizations showcase Saint Paul and look to attract businesses, visitors, residents, investments and programming to our great city, we want to provide you with consistent messages to position the city as a River Capital and talk about the Mississippi River as an asset and attraction for your key audiences. We encourage you to use some or all of these messages, in no particular order, as it makes sense for your organization. Please feel free to change up the language to match your voice and tone. The key statistics and data points should provide engaging and relevant content for you when talking about the Mississippi River.

High-level messages

- Saint Paul is uniquely located on America's fourth coast: the Mississippi River. The river is homeland to the Dakota people and holds cultural importance for the tribal community and indigenous residents.
- As a River Capital, our city's unique history, culture and economy are connected to the 17 miles of river that flow through it.
- Saint Paul's future is the river, which is why business, government and nonprofit leaders are collectively focused on reconnecting to our greatest natural asset.
- Building on a 40-year legacy, this work is accelerating. More than \$2.7 billion of investment is currently going into projects along Saint Paul's riverfront alone.
- We know that building a better River Capital through capital investments, programming and activities, and partnerships along the river will spark further economic development, attract and retain residents, and improve community health and well-being.

Topic-specific messages

History and culture

- The Mississippi River is homeland to the Dakota people and holds cultural importance for the tribal community and indigenous residents.
- The Dakota and other Indigenous peoples whose cultural, spiritual, and economic practices are inherently woven into this landscape, hold this land sacred. We recognize them as the original stewards of this land who had thriving and vibrant communities prior to white settlement.
- With 3,500 acres of riverside parkland, 17 river-adjacent parks including the only national park along the entire Mississippi, six major trails, and five historic and preserved sites in Saint Paul alone, the river's centuries-long legacy is tied to our community identity.
- The river has always flowed through us, from the Dakota who made their physical and spiritual home along the river to the building of our capital city on its banks to the last 40 years of work to reengage with the river.
- As a city and a region, we aim to bring greater awareness to the river's place in our history and culture by increasing access to the river across a larger, more diverse community.

Environment and conservation

- The fourth largest watershed in the world, the Mississippi River serves as an important migration and flyway route for birds, and as a habitat for more than 300 species of animals.
- The only national park along the entire stretch of the Mississippi River resides in Saint Paul.
- It provides drinking water for one million Minnesotans.
- It is the largest, most complex flood plain river ecosystem in the Northern Hemisphere.
- The climate crisis is taking its toll on the river, but Saint Paul's river advocates are focused on protecting it and the wildlife that call it home.
- Collectively, we can heal our river landscape, protect the river ecosystem and encourage the next generation of river stewards to care for our greatest natural asset.



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Economic development

- The Mississippi River is an essential economic engine in Saint Paul and the greater region, allowing Minnesota to connect with and compete in the global marketplace.
- In Saint Paul alone, there are more than 1,200 jobs tied to the Mississippi River.
- Nearly 10 million tons of commodities are carried up and down the river each year, including approximately 60% of our state's agricultural exports.
- Of the 10 million tons of commodities, 5 million tons go through Saint Paul's four river terminals which are owned and managed by the Saint Paul Port Authority.
- Commodities include grain, corn, soybeans, wheat, sand fertilizer, road salt and coal.
- These terminals are home to 30 businesses, providing nearly 750 well-paying jobs and a \$51 million payroll.

- There is a concerted effort to expand on this river economy beyond its role as an industrial engine. More than \$2.7 billion of investment is going into projects along Saint Paul's riverfront alone, creating thousands of jobs, both temporary and full-time.
- Our focus on quality of life and river-centered development will allow us to attract and retain more residents, which in turn will attract more employers and bring vitality to our community.
- Our river economy – along with deliberate and equitable economic development – will help Saint Paul and the entire region recover financially from the impacts of COVID-19.

Health and well-being

- Today, more than four million people – including 30,000 school-aged children – visit parks along the Mississippi River annually to take part in programs, recreation, education and environmental experiences.
- We are seeing this become even more essential in the COVID-19 era as people turn to natural, outdoor spaces for balance.
- A recent survey found that 70% of Americans living in cities feel that parks are essential to their physical and mental health in this time of isolation and social distance.



Great River Passage Conservancy

- Designing public spaces that take advantage of our location on America's fourth coast will provide more opportunities for residents and visitors to connect with the Mississippi River, and promote both the physical and mental health of our communities.

Equity

- Our parks and outdoor spaces should be beautiful, safe, welcoming, inclusive and accessible to all.
- We know that Black and Indigenous communities and other communities of color have historically had fewer opportunities to engage with those spaces, including the Mississippi River.
- Our efforts to build a better River Capital cannot be successful if they do not, at their core, create connections for people of all backgrounds and abilities to experience our greatest natural asset.
- The river's identity as sacred Dakota land is integral in all efforts to preserve, connect and protect its unique landscape. Acknowledging tribal sovereignty and educating ourselves and our communities about the land upon which we are building the River Capital is crucial.

Great River Passage messages

Great River Passage Initiative

- The Great River Passage is a City-led initiative aimed at building the River Capital through the creation of a vibrant, accessible and protected Saint Paul riverfront.
- To achieve this, the City is taking a comprehensive, integrated approach to connecting two of Saint Paul's greatest assets – its people and the Mississippi River – by partnering with landowners, jurisdictions and private business owners along the river, in addition to river advocates.
- In 2013, the City adopted the Great River Passage Master Plan, a comprehensive framework for activating the city's 3,500 acres of parkland along the river, which outlined three key projects: the River Learning Center, the River Balcony, and the East Side River District. A companion Great River

Passage Interpretive Plan was completed in 2015. Both serve as guiding documents for the Great River Passage Initiative.

- To support this work, the City partners with the Great River Passage Conservancy, the Initiative's independent nonprofit fundraising and advocacy arm.

Great River Passage Conservancy

- The Great River Passage Conservancy's mission is to raise resources that support the community's vision for connecting Saint Paul's two greatest assets: Its people and the Mississippi River.
- Working in partnership with the City of Saint Paul's Great River Passage Initiative, the Great River Passage Conservancy leads advocacy and private fundraising efforts for capital projects along Saint Paul's 17 miles of the Mississippi River.
- The Conservancy's board represents a unique cross-section of community leaders, from philanthropy and government to corporate and local tribal leadership.
- To ensure a collaborative and effective effort, the Great River Passage Conservancy has brought together more than 50 stakeholders and 45 organizations that invest in and operate programming along the river, in addition to private businesses and state, local, and tribal governments.
- As a convener, the Great River Passage Conservancy prioritizes knitting together a broad range of perspectives, so that its three river-focused projects – the River Learning Center, River Balcony and East Side River District – are informed by diverse communities and designed to be accessible and welcoming.
- The Conservancy was recently selected to be a member of the High Line Network and to participate in its 2021 Equitable Impacts Framework pilot, aimed at making equitable development of capital projects across North America a reality.

Naming conventions

Below are some options when referring to the Mississippi River, Saint Paul, and Minnesota. This will allow for some consistency and begin driving some awareness to our goal of becoming the River Capital and recentering our public life around the river. Not comfortable using these? That's ok! Use what makes sense within your organization's style and voice.

How to reference the Mississippi River:

First reference:

- The Mississippi River

Options for second reference:

- The river
- America's fourth coast (the fourth coast)
- The Mississippi

Second reference option for Saint Paul:

- The River Capital

Second reference option for Minnesota:

- The Headwaters State

Social media

We hope that you'll join us in sharing news about the Great River Passage capital projects, and any other development or programming news happening along the Mississippi River in Saint Paul, on your organizational social channels. Be sure to follow the organizations below to stay up to date with what's happening, and use the hashtags listed when sharing content. Bonus points if you reshare partner content!

Social media hashtags

#RiverCapital

#WeAreTheRiver

Partner organizations

Great River Passage Conservancy: [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

City of Saint Paul: [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

Ramsey County: [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

Mississippi Park Connection: [Website](#) | [Facebook](#)

Imagery

Need a photo that represents downtown Saint Paul, or showcases the great outdoors in Saint Paul? The Mississippi River is our greatest natural asset and a great image to share when showcasing Saint Paul to visitors, potential employers, developers and others. To make things easy, we've curated photos and video of the Mississippi River in Saint Paul in a variety of seasons and areas. Feel free to use these in your materials, providing the appropriate attribution when necessary (the photographer to credit is included in the file name).

You can access the media library [here](#).

