

# A VISION FOR THE FUTURE RIVER LEARNING CENTER!



**SAINT PAUL**  
MINNESOTA

GREAT RIVER PASSAGE  
CONSERVANCY

**August 11, 2022**  
**Community Meeting #3**

**W** Architecture and Landscape Architecture  
with 4RMULA + 106 Group + Solution Blue + ETM + CPMI

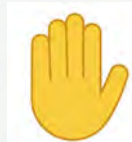


# Friendly Reminders

**RESPECT:** Please maintain a tone of respect during tonight's conversation. We reserve the right to remove anyone who communicates in a way we perceive to be discriminatory or harmful to other community members in attendance.

**MUTE:** You will have the opportunity to unmute and speak during the full group Q&A after the presentation.

**CHAT:** We will be recording the meeting and saving the Chat. Please be aware that all Chat activity, including private conversations, will show up in the script that the project team will use internally.



**TECH SUPPORT:** If you need tech support, please call Ian at 646-786-1676.

**Q&A:** Add questions and feedback to the chat. We will monitor and respond to questions submitted. Please be respectful to the project team or community members who are speaking.

**RAISE HAND:** Please raise your hand during Q&A. A Project team member will call on you in order that hands are raised.

To access the raise hand function from a laptop, use the reactions icon in the toolbar and use the button 'raise hand'.

To access the raise hand function from a mobile phone, click on the three dots labeled more to find the 'raise hand' icon.



# WELCOME!



Councilmember Tolbert



# WELCOME!

- **Welcome & Introduction** (10 mins)
- **Project and Partner Introduction** (10 mins)
- **Presentation** (45 mins)
- **Open Q&A** (45 mins)
- **Next Steps: Fall Celebration!**




# WELCOME!

## Community Meeting #3 Goals:

- **Report back on what we've learned about the community, Dakota Perspectives, and partner needs**
- **Introduce the single scheme design**
- **Answer any questions about the scheme**



An aerial photograph of Saint Paul, Minnesota, taken during the 'golden hour' of sunset. The Mississippi River flows through the center of the frame, reflecting the bright orange and yellow light from the sun, which is partially obscured by a layer of clouds on the right side of the image. The city's skyline is visible in the distance, with various buildings and industrial structures. The foreground is dominated by dense green trees and foliage. The overall atmosphere is serene and majestic.

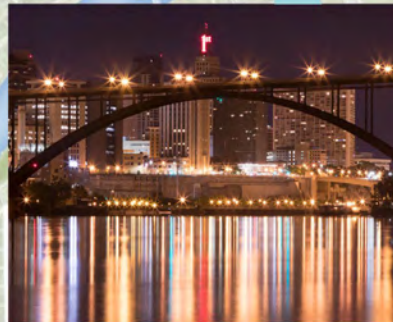
# **BUILDING THE RIVER CAPITAL**

Great River Passage | Saint Paul, MN



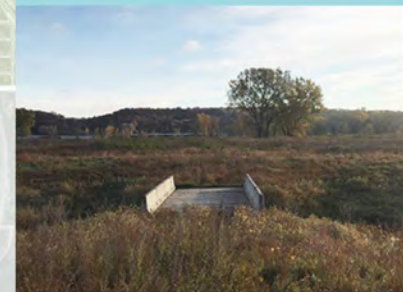
# FROM EDGE TO CENTER

DOWNTOWN  
SAINT PAUL



RIVER BALCONY

EAST SIDE RIVER  
DISTRICT



PIG'S EYE  
LAKE



RIVER LEARNING  
CENTER

WATERGATE  
MARINA





RIVER LEARNING  
CENTER

WATERGATE  
MARINA



**River Learning Center is**

**...A coalition of partners**



# Key Partners

**City of Saint  
Paul**

*Land Manager +  
Project Manager*

**Great River  
Passage  
Conservancy**

*Private  
Fundraising +  
Strategic Project  
Development*

**National Park  
Service**

*Tenant +  
Programming*

**Mississippi Park  
Connection**

*Programming +  
Fundraising*

**Your Boat Club**

*Marina tenant*



# Project Schedule



# Next Steps: Schematic Design

2022

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

Listen & Learn

● — 4/14 Community Meeting #1: Project Intro

Develop Ideas

● — 6/9 Community Meeting #2: Alternative Schemes

Confirm & Refine Ideas

● — 8/11 Community Meeting #3: Single Scheme

Fall Community Meeting #4: — ●  
Schematic Design Completion & Celebration!



# Next Steps: Project Schedule





# Project Website



River Learning Center | GATEWAY

photo by: Erin D. Carter

[Haga clic aquí, para idioma español](#) | [Soomaaliga Halkan Riix](#) | [Nias Nov Rau Lus Hmoob](#) |

လက်ညှိကိုအကိဆိန်လိမ့်အံ့

Experience the land, water and culture of the Mississippi River.

The River Learning Center is a city-led project combining a mixed-use, river-focused space and a National Park Service Headquarters at the Crosby Farm Regional Park, serving as a national gateway to the Mississippi River with year-round river learning and outdoor recreation experiences on and along Saint Paul's river.

Schematic design and engagement timeline



**FAQ**

<https://greatriverpassage.org/projects/river-learning-center/>



# River Learning Center is...

- A visible welcome gateway to the Mississippi
- A place to experience land, water and culture
- Beautiful, safe, welcoming and accessible to all
- Small-scale, light on the land, and forward thinking
- Regenerative and restorative: planned for future generations



River Learning Center is a balance of

**Dakota Perspective**

**Partner Needs**

**Site Conditions**

**Community Feedback**





~~Alternatives~~

**SINGLE  
SCHEME**

**Continued  
Development**

# **What we learned about the Dakota Perspective**

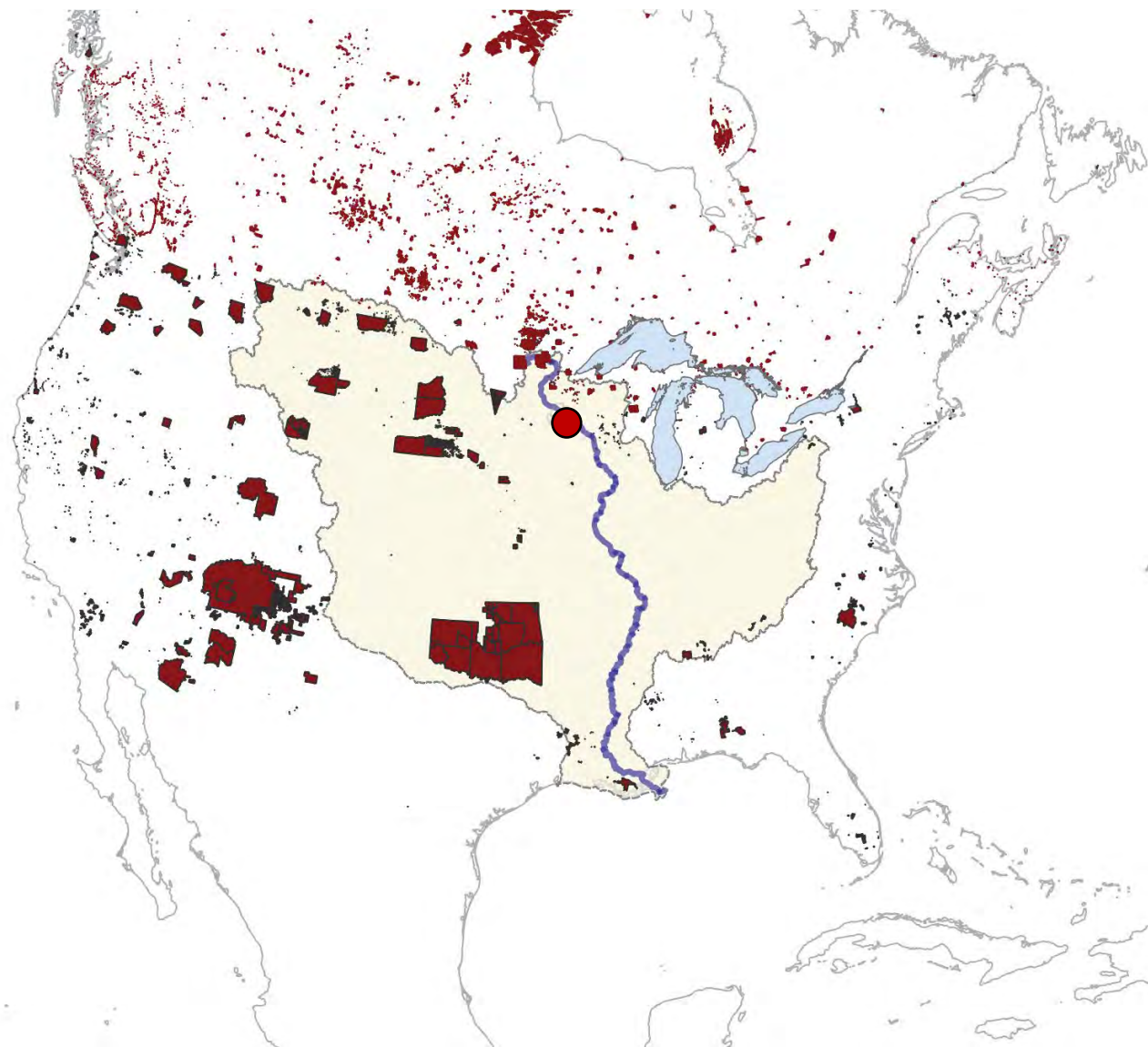


**These are Dakota homelands.**





## Indigenous Connections to the Mississippi River



## Dakota Presence and Influence



Map source: "Aboriginal Map of North America denoting the Boundaries and Locations of various Indian Tribes". *The House of Commons*, Britain: 1857.





Regional Indigenous Communities



Mni Sota

Wakpá Thánka or Haha Wakpa

MINNEAPOLIS

ST. PAUL

RIVER  
LEARNING  
CENTER SITE

Bdoté

Wakpá Mnisota



# River Learning Center: Dakota Cultural Design Objectives

## Bdote

- 
- 1 This is not a "park."
  - 2 This is shared community place. No one owns it.
  - 3 This is not a single location, but part of a connected system of natural and cultural areas. Everything is related. Restore lost connections.
  - 4 Minimize footprint of anything built here. Listen to the water. Listen to the land. Listen to the sun. Listen to the plants and animals. Let ecology drive the design.
  - 5 Any buildings created should not look like colonist structures, recalling farm structures or Fort Snelling.
  - 6 Go beyond sustainability, be regenerative and restorative.
  - 7 Portray the authentic history of the area, good and bad.
  - 8 Provide areas where private ceremonies and storytelling can happen for Indigenous People.
  - 9 Make sure Native people share in opportunities created by this project: cultural, economic, and access.
  - 10 Plan and design for our grandchildren and theirs, generations to come.

- 1 Design to provoke a sense of respect and responsibility for visitors to understand the importance and sacredness of this place. Convey that this is a place to care for and protect.
- 2 Design to provide adequate site amenities and to convey a welcoming and inclusive environment that honors the personal experience and physical abilities of all visitors.
- 3 Design and program this site to acknowledge its place in the larger regional Dakota cultural landscape. Capitalize on what is unique to this place and consider other local and regional cultural facilities.
- 4 Build only what is needed to experience the river landscape and to learn about the culture, ecology, geology and history of Bdote. Honor the river as a living being and build lightly to respect the landscape. This landscape needs both physical and spiritual healing.
- 5 Building form, shape, materials and aesthetics should take inspiration from the landscape and ecology of this place. Places and design elements that convey the history and culture of the Dakota should take inspiration from Dakota culture and include continued Dakota voices throughout the design process.
- 6 This is a damaged landscape and needs healing. This project should listen to the land and let ecology drive the design to honor, not fight the natural forces of this landscape.
- 7 All features of this project should convey and tell the authentic history of this place, and any portrayal about the Dakota and Indigenous culture and history must be authored, designed, and maintained by the Indigenous community.
- 8 This is a sacred place that has been continuously used for Dakota and Indigenous cultural ceremony and practices. This is a place of erased and misunderstood history and has the opportunity to be part of an effort to reconnect Indigenous people to the sacredness of this place. Dedicated space for Indigenous ceremony would honor this history and goals for community cultural revitalization.
- 9 These are Dakota homelands, forcibly taken and damaged for commercial and recreational purposes. This project has the opportunity to create cultural and economic opportunity and it is important to consider who benefits from development. Spaces and opportunities for the Indigenous community to meet, work, hold ceremony and share in the economic benefit of this place must be considered.
- 10 Design, budget, material, maintenance, cultural, and programmatic use of this place should carefully consider the long-term ecological and social impact of the decisions we make today. We must consider and prioritize the impact of future generations to come.



# River Learning Center: Dakota Culturally-Informed Place-Making Strategies

## A - REGIONAL PLACE-MAKING OPPORTUNITIES

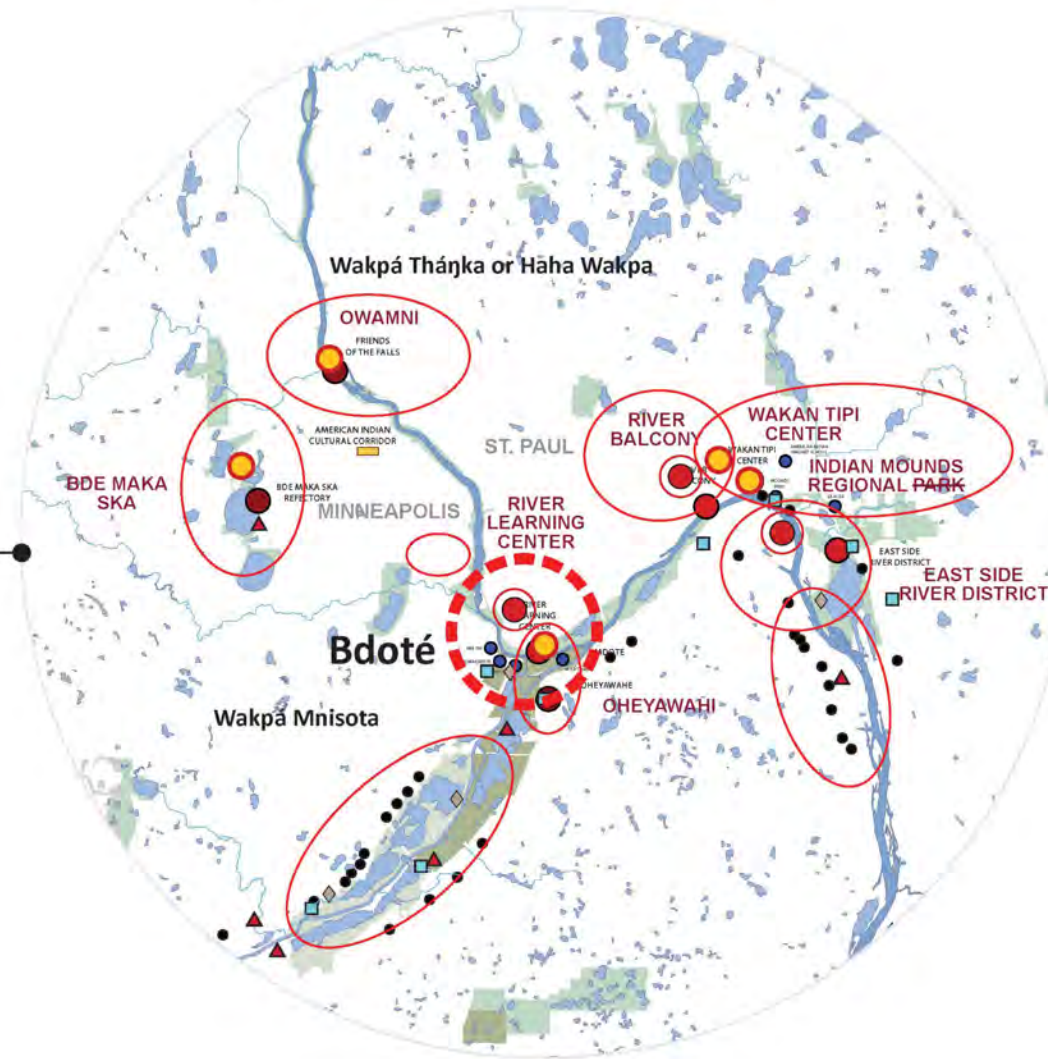
B - SENSE OF ARRIVAL

C - RESPECTING THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

D - SITE ZONING AND BUILT FORM

The River Learning Center is in a rich region of highly important cultural sites. This project has the opportunity to enhance the overall cultural identity of the region and to add to important and coordinated cultural revival efforts.

- Convey the unique qualities of this site
- Compliment, not compete with the programming and identity of other Dakota / Indigenous institutions
- Share programming and space with other institutions
- Clearly define what this place is, a “Learning Center?” What should go here vs. other cultural sites? Coordinate with other efforts.



PARTIAL LIST OF CULTURALLY  
SIGNIFICANT PLACES

# River Learning Center: Dakota Culturally-Informed Place-Making Strategies

A - REGIONAL PLACE-MAKING OPPORTUNITIES

**B - SENSE OF ARRIVAL**

C - RESPECTING THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

D - SITE ZONING AND BUILT FORM

Carefully consider the arrival experience. Celebrate that there is something special about this place and convey clearly that this is a sacred Dakota cultural landscape to protect. This can be a beautiful but subtle expression of the relationship between Dakota culture and the landscape providing a reflection of the unique identity of this place.

Consider safety, vehicular turning, pedestrian and bicycle traffic.



If there are structures built at the top of this site, provide a clearly identified entry sequence

Be mindful about the "messaging" that any entry signage has. It should not convey "Government" or anything that might be considered exclusive or elitist.



# River Learning Center: Dakota Culturally-Informed Place-Making Strategies

A - REGIONAL PLACE-MAKING OPPORTUNITIES

B - SENSE OF ARRIVAL

**C - RESPECTING THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE**

D - SITE ZONING AND BUILT FORM

Carefully consider elevated walkways with ecological value

Incorporate caves as part of the project



The overlook can tell the story of the interconnected cultural sites and punctuate the historical presence of the Dakota throughout the region. This is also an opportunity to tell the story of the forest canopy.

Alt #2: The Path - Bluff to Floodplain



Providing the space and programming to reconnect with the cultural practice of traveling through the waterways is welcomed. This should allow for equitable access by the Dakota and Indigenous community.

Islands were often a place of ceremony. Provide dedicated space for private ceremony here.

Creating a channel and island align with the natural history of islands in the river landscape and that the river is alive. The creates an opportunity to have the river edge feel less engineered and to restore small islands to the river landscape. River edge plantings should be what is there naturally and should not appear human-made.

# River Learning Center: Dakota Culturally-Informed Place-Making Strategies

A - REGIONAL PLACE-MAKING OPPORTUNITIES

B - SENSE OF ARRIVAL

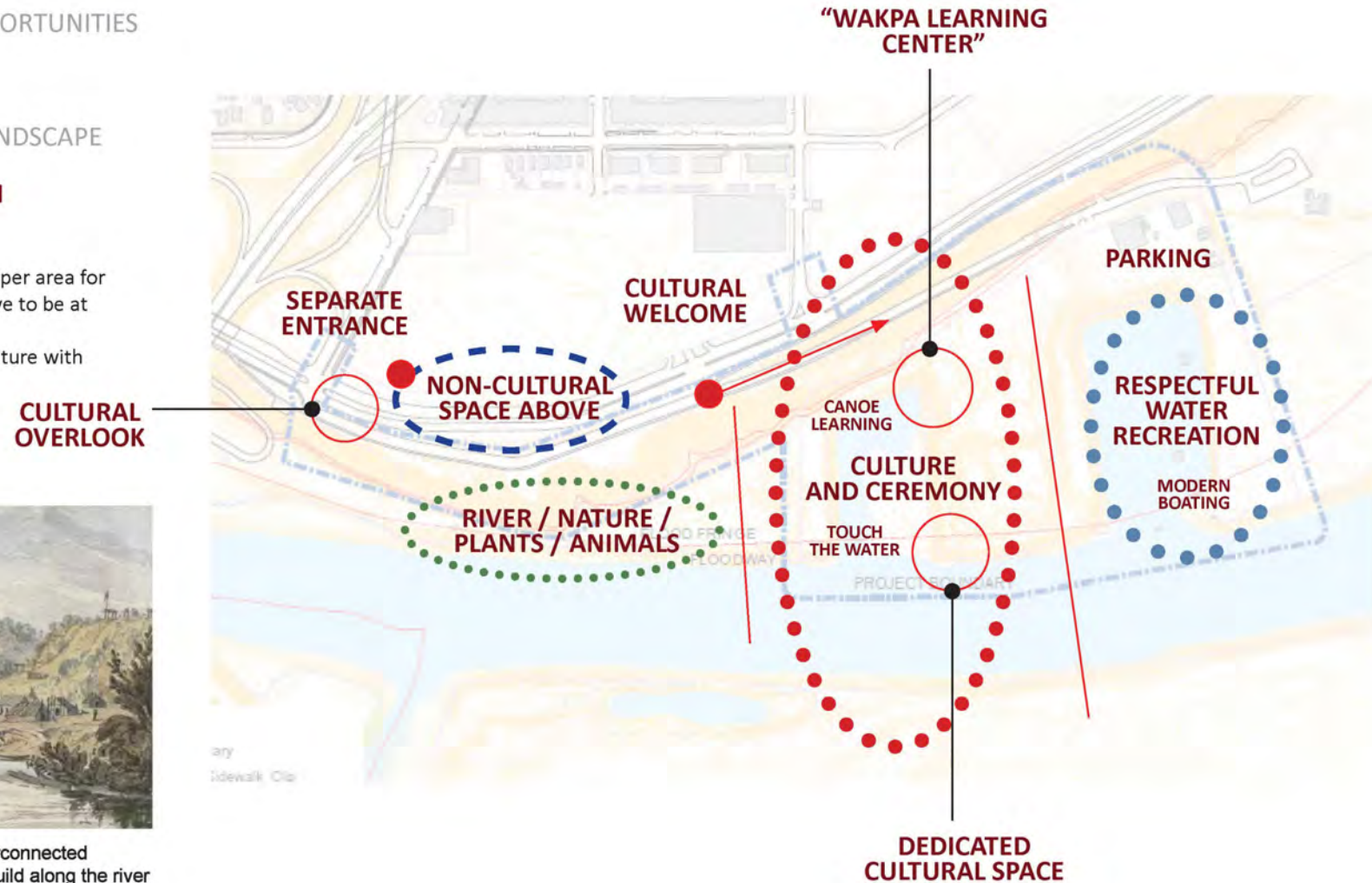
C - RESPECTING THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

## D - SITE ZONING AND BUILT FORM

- Build as little as possible below. Use upper area for any structures where it is not imperative to be at the river.
- Separate recreation and culture and nature with buffer zones



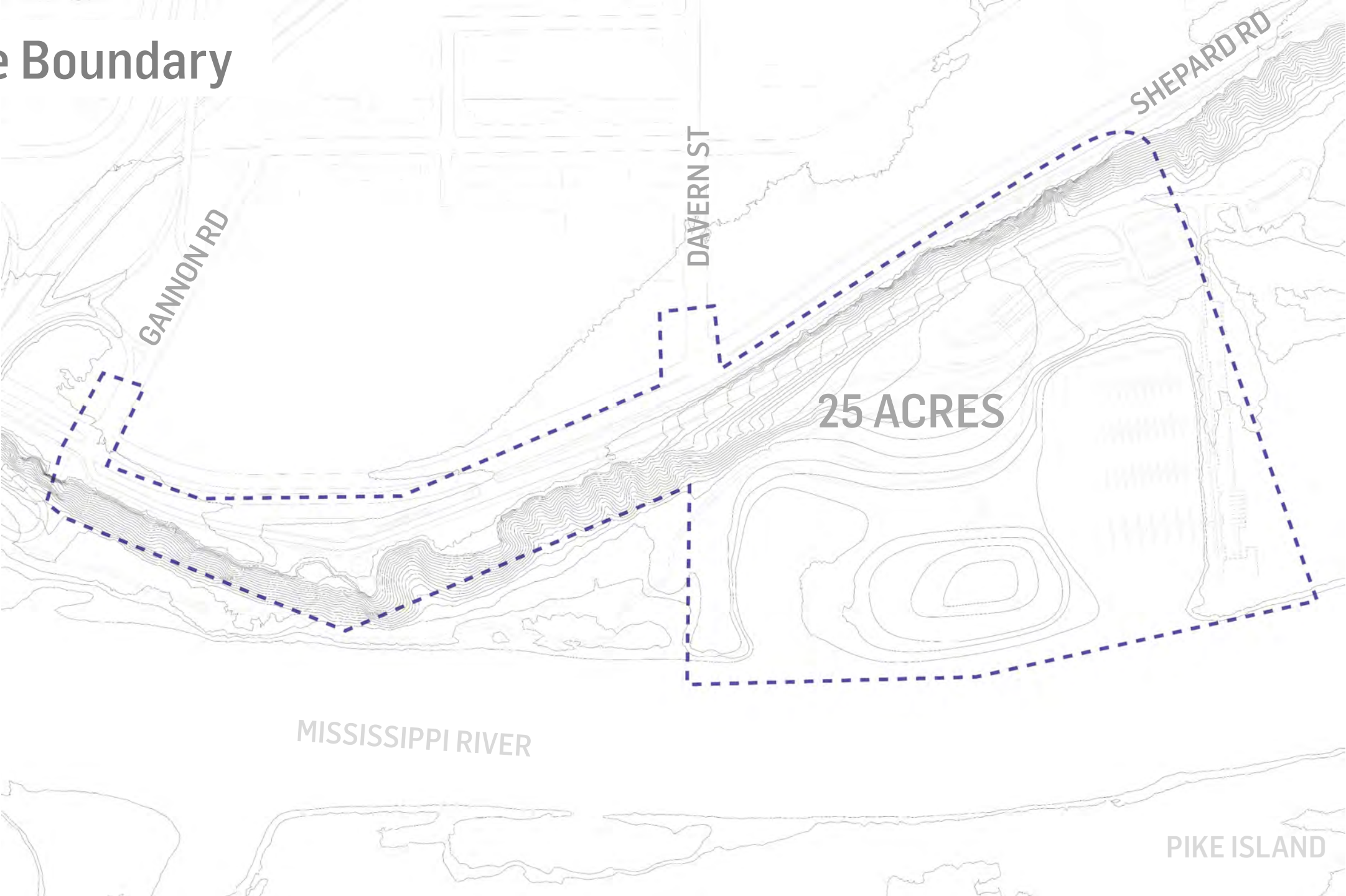
The Dakota lived and traveled along the interconnected waterways at Bdote and beyond. It is ok to build along the river and to engage the waters edge, IF it is done minimally and programmed activities are conducted respectfully.





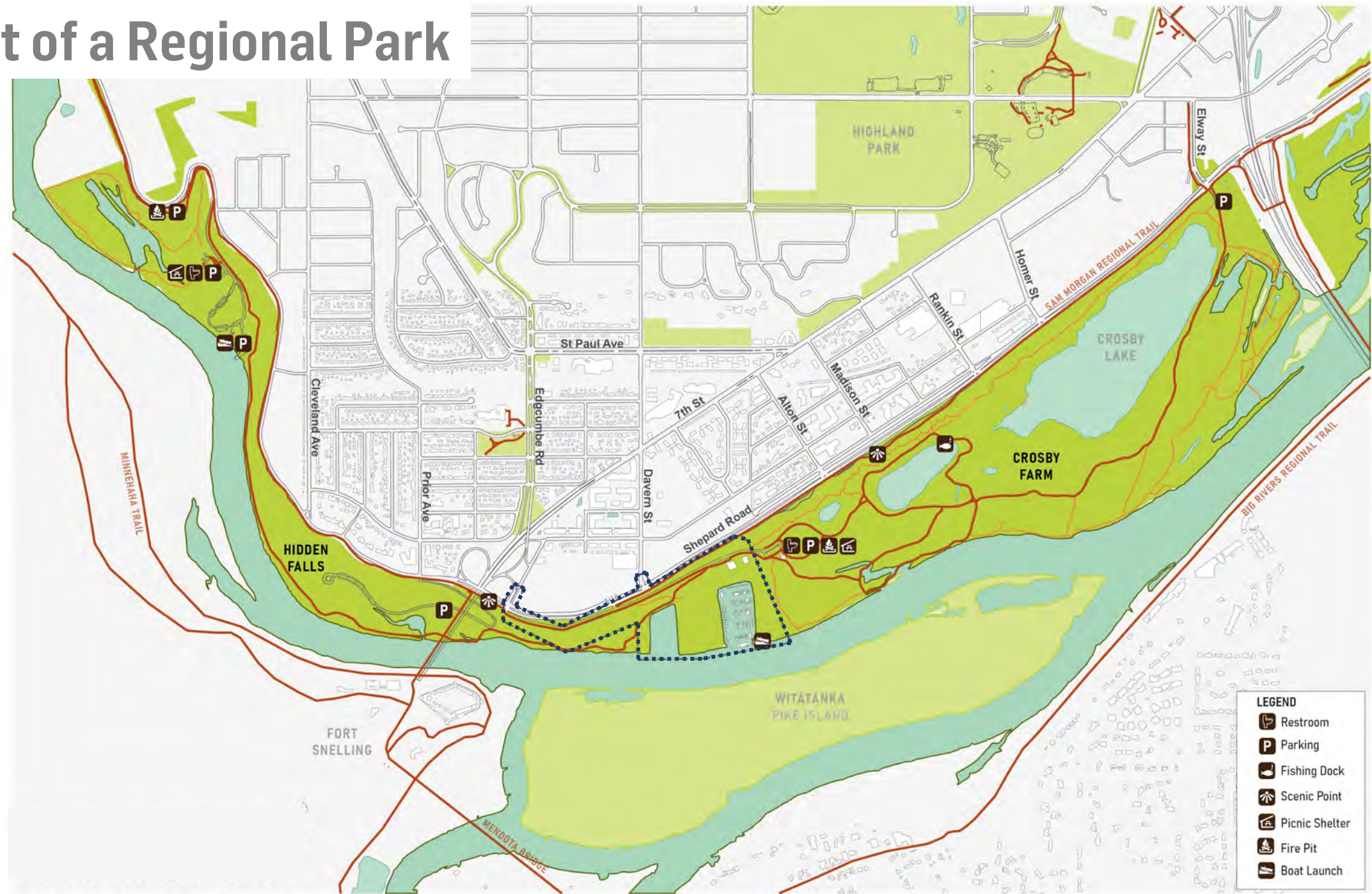
# **What we learned about Site Conditions**

# Site Boundary



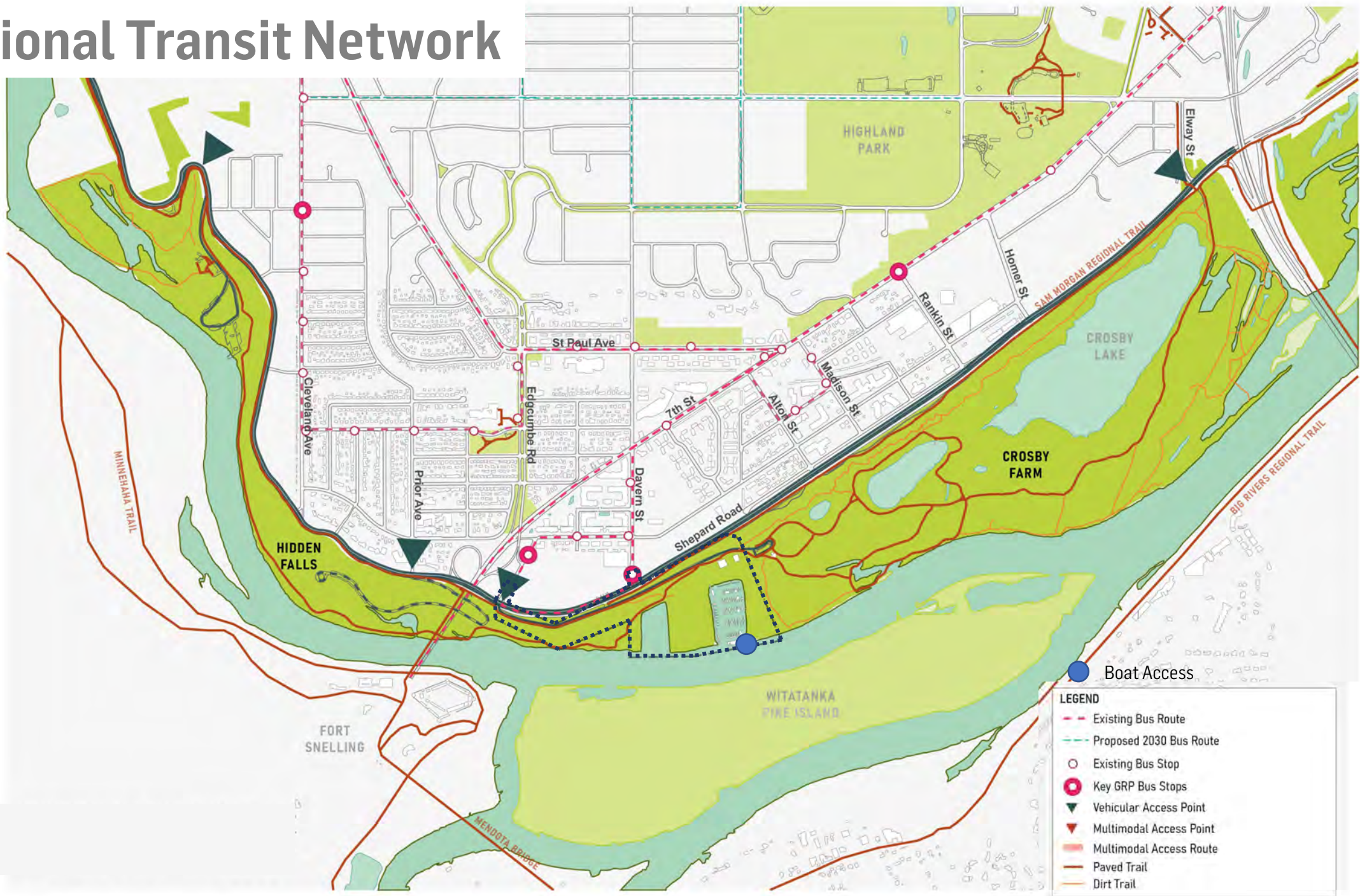


# Part of a Regional Park



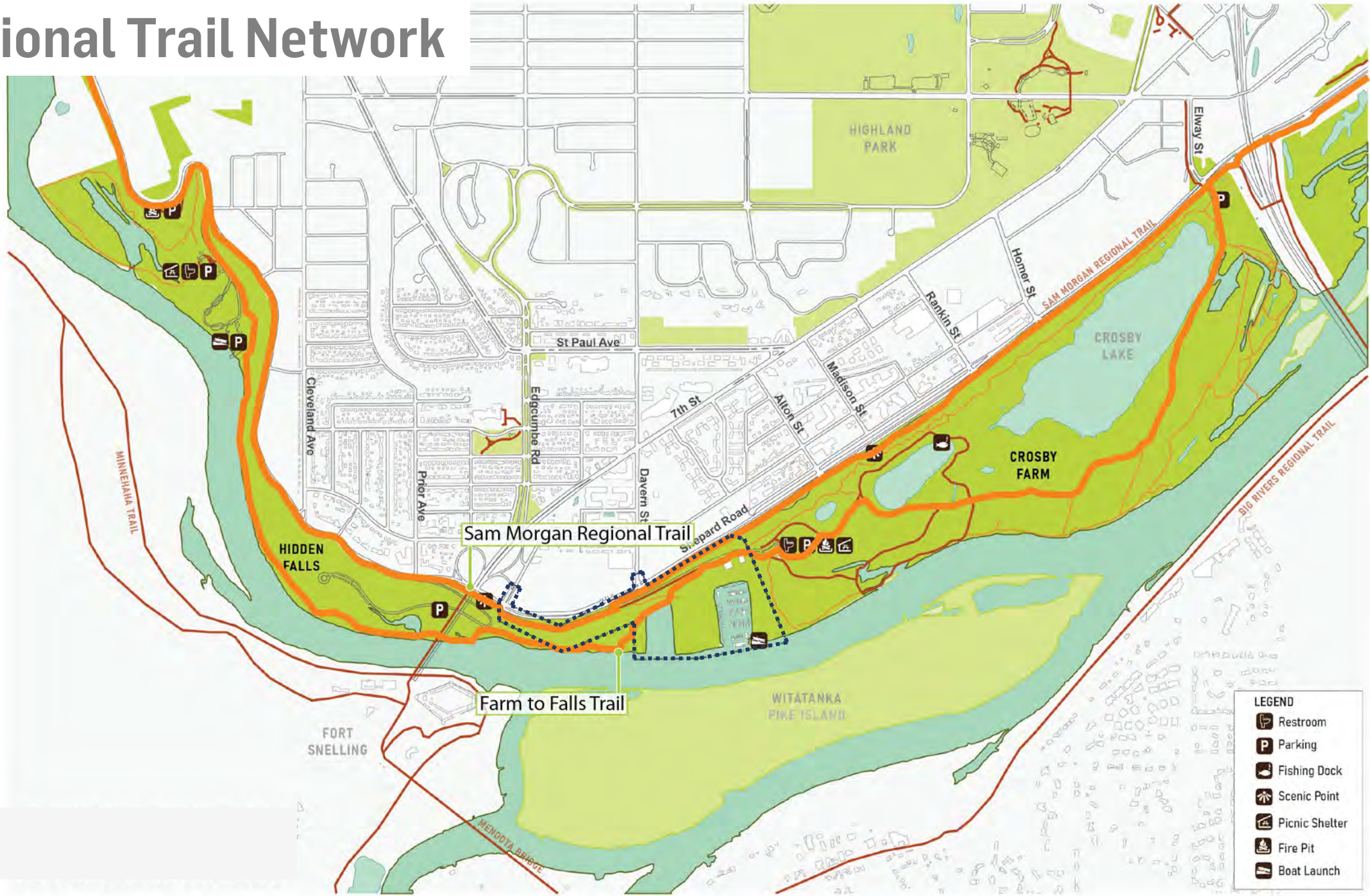


# Regional Transit Network





# Regional Trail Network



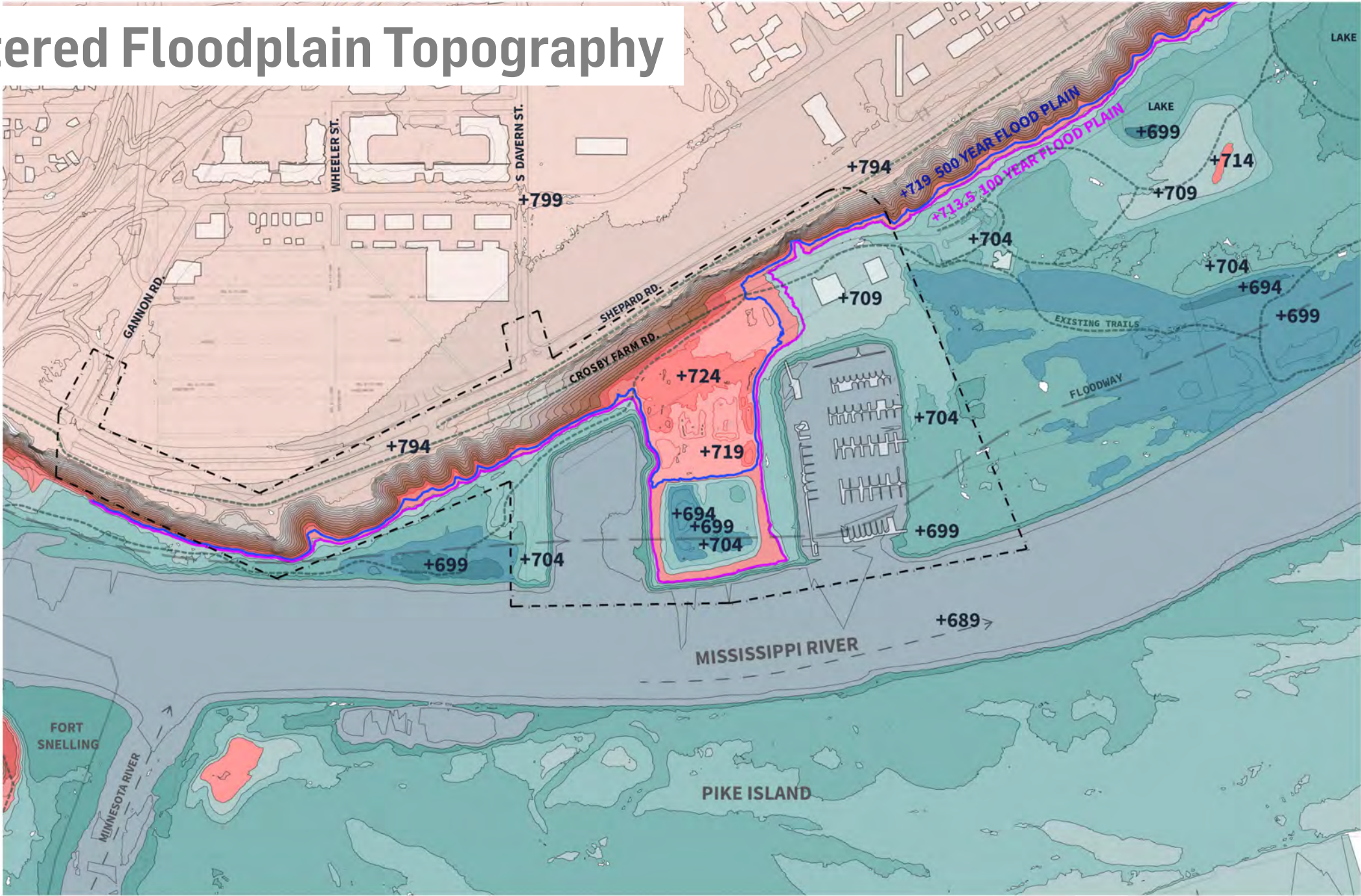


# Pedestrian Crossings currently difficult



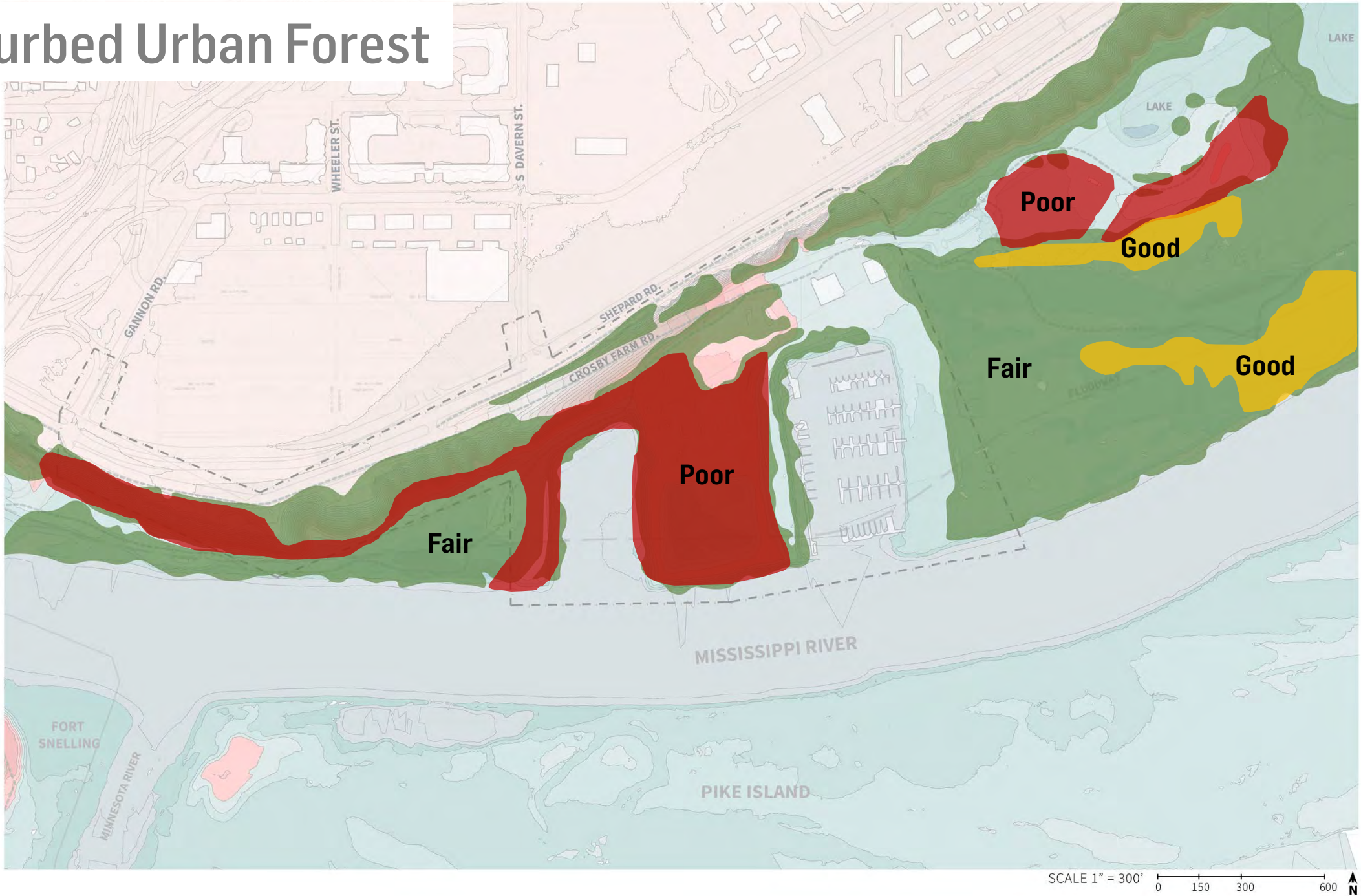


# Altered Floodplain Topography



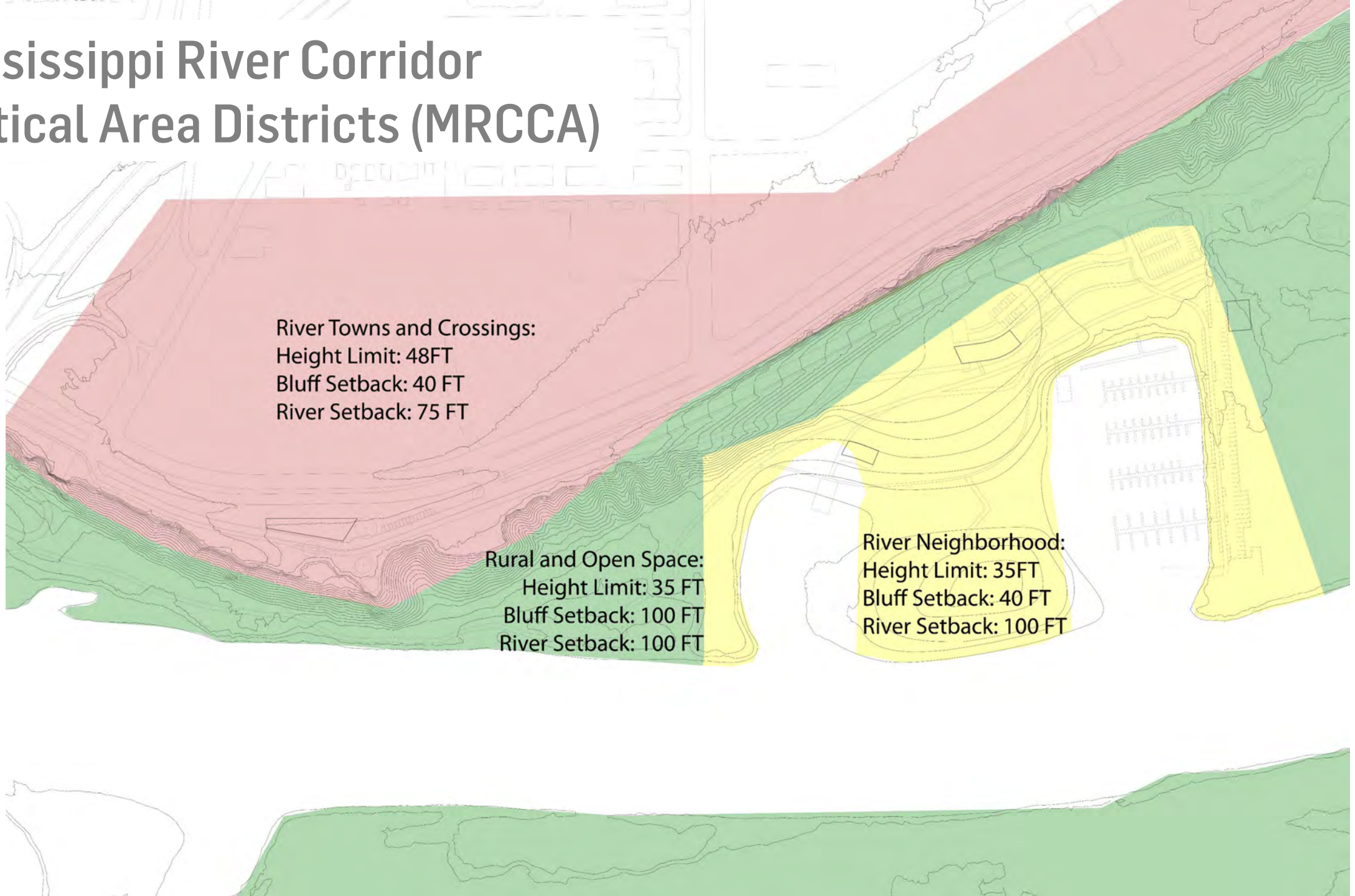


# Disturbed Urban Forest





# Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Districts (MRCCA)

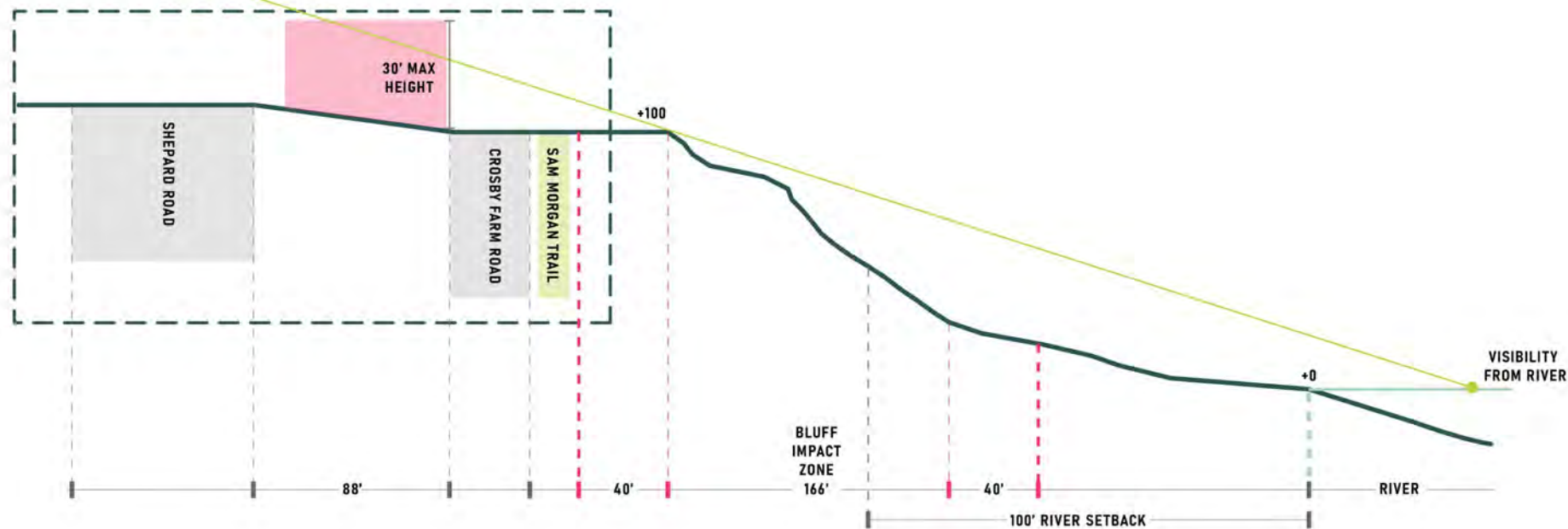


# Height Restrictions

MRCCA RN Regulations – 35' max height    City Zoning – 30' max height



MRCCA RTC Regulations – 48' max height    City Zoning – 30' max height

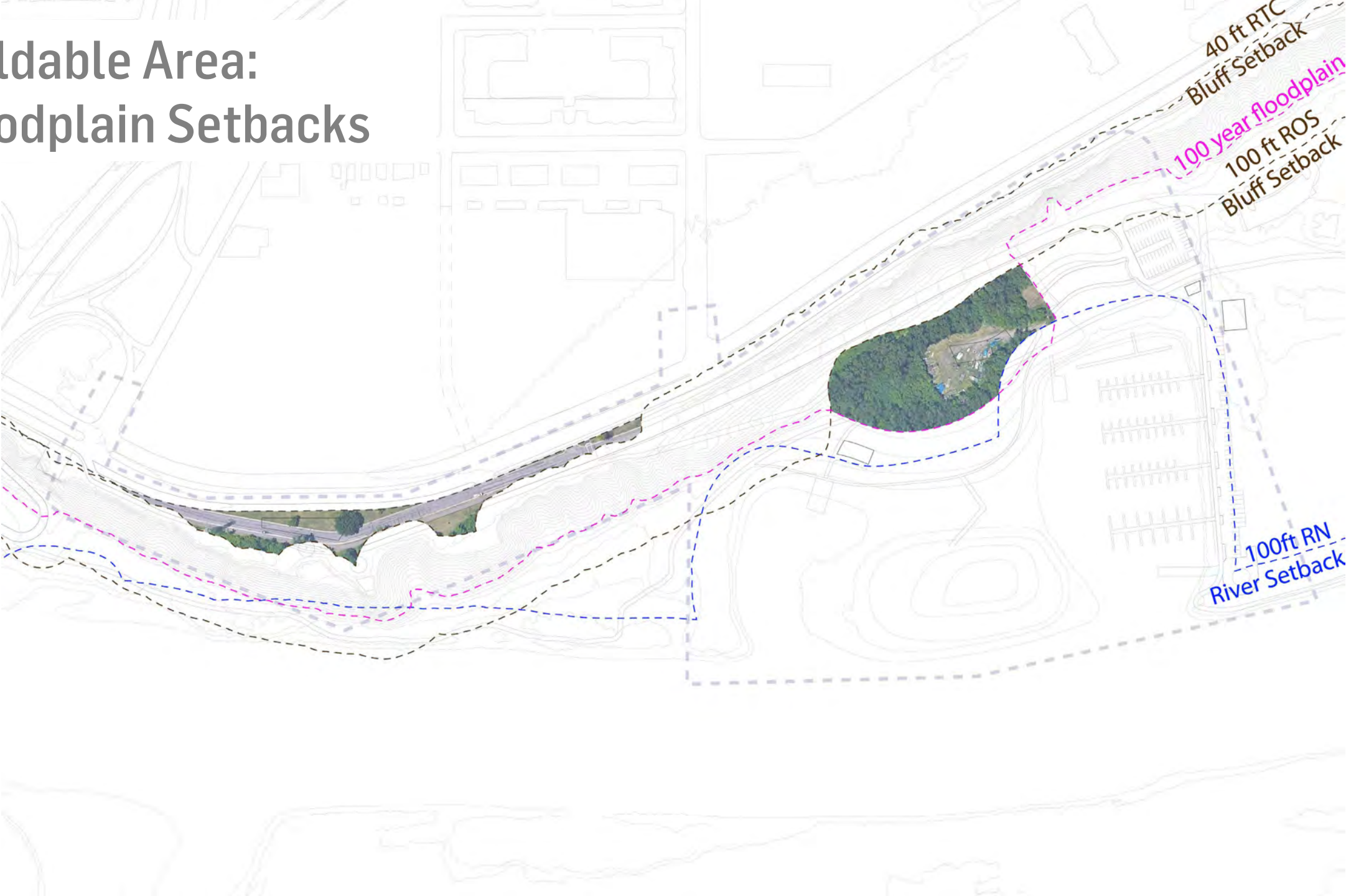




# Buildable Area: MRCCA Setbacks

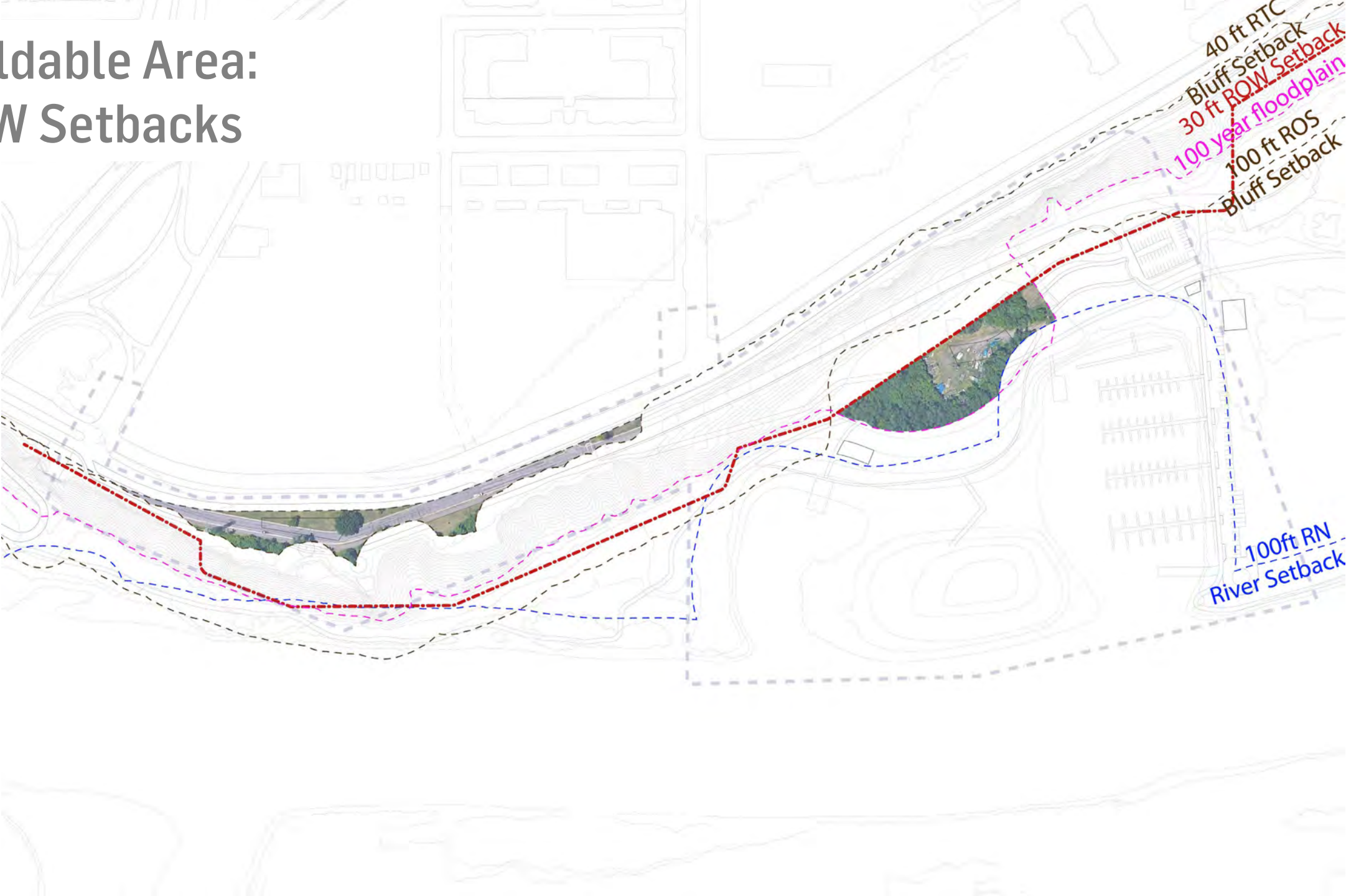


# Buildable Area: Floodplain Setbacks





# Buildable Area: ROW Setbacks



# **What we learned about Partner Needs**



# Building Partner Updates

**“54,900 total square feet is really big!”**

Community reaction

# Building Partner Updates

**Wilderness Inquiry will  
be a major program  
partner but will no  
longer be on the  
campus.**

**54,900 sq ft**



**35,300 sq ft**

**Community Meeting #2**

**Community Meeting #3**



# What we learned from Community Feedback

# Project Outreach to date

## Community Advisory Committee:

CAC Meeting #1: 02/15, In Person, On Site  
Community Group and Stakeholder Meeting: 02/16,  
In Person, Watergate Marina  
CAC Meeting #2: 04/12, Zoom  
CAC Meeting #3: 06/07, Zoom

## Partner's Meetings:

Partner Meeting #1: 02/15, In Person  
Partner Meeting #2: 05/09, Zoom  
Partner Meeting #3: 06/06, Zoom  
Partner Meeting #4: 06/27, Zoom  
Partner Meeting #5: 07/12, Zoom

## Technical Advisory Committee:

Technical Advisory Committee #1: 02/16, On Site  
Technical Advisory Committee #2: 05/11, Zoom  
Technical Advisory Committee #3: 07/11, Zoom

## Community Meetings:

Community Meeting #1: 04/14, Zoom  
Community Meeting #2: 06/09, In Person

## Community Outreach:

Phalen Lake School Event: 03/24  
Committee and Stakeholder Survey (Survey #1):  
03/28  
African American and Black Focus Group: 03/30  
Hispanic/Latinx Focus Group: 05/03  
Public Survey 1 (Survey #2): 05/04  
Sibley Manor Event: 06/17  
African Global Roots: 06/24  
Public Survey 2 (Survey #3): 06/24  
Full Circle Indigenous Planning Outreach on  
Alternatives: 06/29  
Highland Park Library Engagement: 07/08

## Other Feedback:

DNR 3 Alternatives Feedback 05/24  
Public Comments via Email 06/10  
Friends of the Mississippi Letter 06/14  
CRWD 3 Schemes Feedback 06/14  
St. Paul Planning 3 Schemes Feedback 07/07  
FMR, MPC, and WI Fellows 07/08

## Electronic Communications:

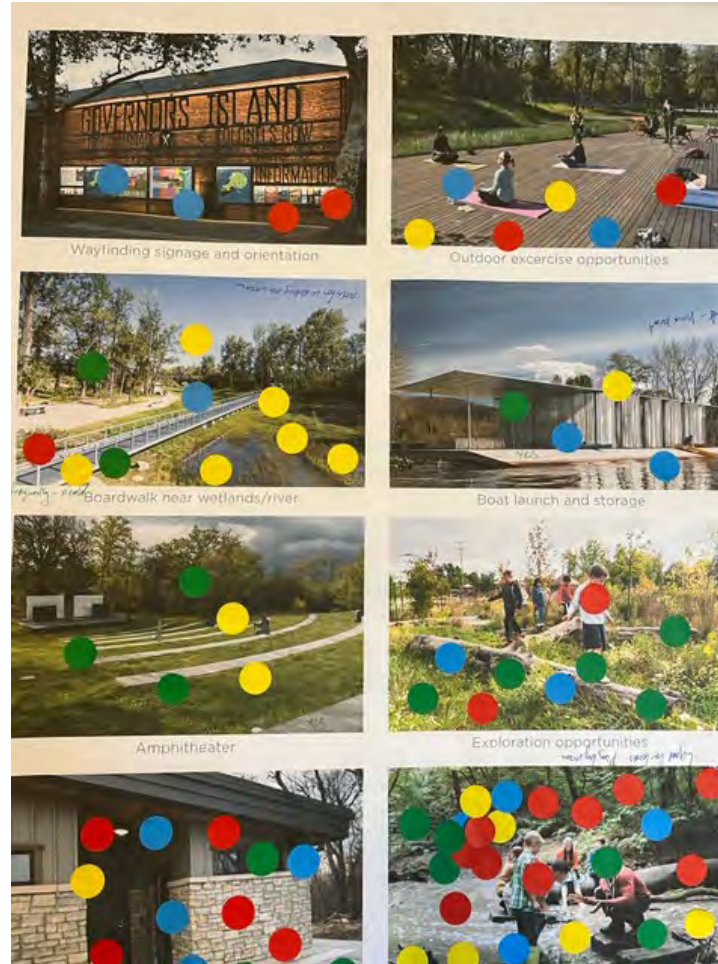
Community engagement updates and opportunities  
shared across multiple platforms



# Community Input



Community Meeting #2



Phalen Lake Elementary School



Highland Library Board



## Survey Results: three words



## Community Meeting #2



# Welcoming Gateway



1. Bike Racks – 357 (69%)



2. Picnic Pavilion – 265 (52%)



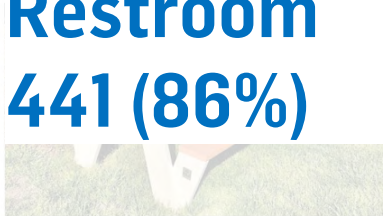
**Restroom  
441 (86%)**



4. Prayer/Meditation Space



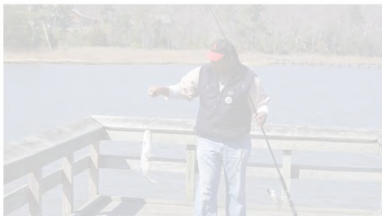
5. Cafe



6. Solar WiFi



7. Fire Pit



8. Fishing Pier



9. Kayak Launch / Boat Storage

Visual Survey:

**WHAT AMENITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?**

RIVER LEARNING CENTER

**Q3: (Multiple Choice)**

**Which of the following do you like as inspiration(s) for the welcoming entrance at the top of the bluff?**



#1: Bridge to Vertical Access



#2: Welcome Center: Community space + Restrooms



#3: Entry Plaza: Kiosks + Restrooms



**Entry Plaza, Plants, and Signs– 56%**



# Accessible Campus



1 Welcome Plaza



2 By the Water



3 Outdoor Amphitheater



6. Outdoor Classroom– 321 (51%)

## Tree Grove Plaza – 327 (64%)



7 Shade Pavilion



8 Indoor Gathering Space



9 Festivals

Visual Survey:  
HOW DO YOU WANT TO GATHER HERE?

RIVER LEARNING CENTER

Q6: (Multiple Choice)  
Which walking/biking structure do you like as inspiration(s) for this project?



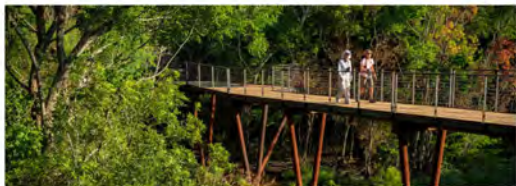
#1: Elevator and Stairs



#2: Stairs and Ramps



#3: Elevated Walk



## Canopy Walk – 70%

Q7:  
Which type of building configuration do you like the most? Why?



## Minimize Footprint– 81%



# Touching the Water

## Touch the Water – 358 (70%)



1 Lookout/Bridge



2 Touch the Water



3 Beach



4 Cultural Events/Ceremonies



5. Canoeing/Kayaking – 346 (68%)



6. Educational/Rec – 330 (64%)



7 Ice Fishing



8 Boat Launch & Storage



9 Pontoon Boating

Visual Survey:

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO AT THE RIVER?

RIVER LEARNING CENTER

Q9:  
Which river edge do you like the most? Why?



#1: The Bridge

Shorter and wider inlets to free up more park space between the bluff and the River. Dedicate the smaller inlet for human powered boats.



#2: The Path

Restore the two man-made islands to offer safer and easier access to the River.



Marina size to free up more park space between the bluff and the River.

QUESTIONS + PREFERENCES

## New Channel– 81%

# Connecting to Nature



**Walking and Strolling**  
**473 (92%)**



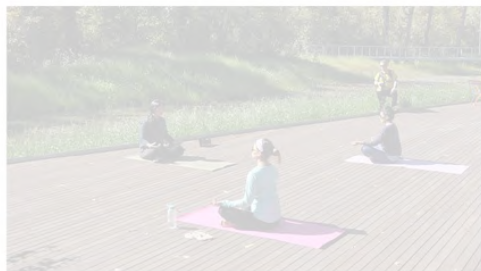
2. Biking – 299 (58%)



**Forest Canopy Walk**  
**332 (64%)**



4 Fat Tire Biking



5 Outdoor Exercise



6 Snowshoeing



7. Edu/Rec Programs - 316 (61%)



8 Nature Play



**Exploration – 367 (71%)**

Visual Survey:

**WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO IN THE LANDSCAPE?**



# River Learning Center experience is...

1. A WELCOMING GATEWAY
2. AN ACCESSIBLE CAMPUS
3. TOUCHING THE WATER
4. CONNECTING TO NATURE

River Learning Center is a  
**WELCOMING GATEWAY**  
to the Mississippi River



# Community Access Concerns

“Sometimes I don't go because there are **not good direct accessible access points**”

“I think **something big at the top** would be helpful for folks to know that's where the entrance is to the park.”

“I would like it to **be more accessible by foot and bike** from West Seventh neighborhood, for families”

“I think building the **welcome center on top of the bluff** would be more in harmony with nature rather than building in the flood plain.”

“Depending on how the site is developed, some kind of **eye-catching gateway, sign, etc.** would be helpful, since the entrance is not necessarily super easy for drivers to see.”

# River Learning Center: Dakota Culturally-Informed Place-Making Strategies

A - REGIONAL PLACE-MAKING OPPORTUNITIES

**B - SENSE OF ARRIVAL**

C - RESPECTING THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

D - SITE ZONING AND BUILT FORM

E - PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Carefully consider the arrival experience. Celebrate that there is something special about this place and convey clearly that this is a sacred Dakota cultural landscape to protect. This can be a beautiful but subtle expression of the relationship between Dakota culture and the landscape providing a reflection of the unique identity of this place.

Consider safety, vehicular turning, pedestrian and bicycle traffic.



Be mindful about the "messaging" that any entry signage has. It should not convey "Government" or anything that might be considered exclusive or elitist.

If there are structures built at the top of this site, provide a clearly identified entry sequence



# Welcoming Gateway



+BLUFF GATEWAY



+FLOODPLAIN GATEWAY



# Bluff Gateway Goals

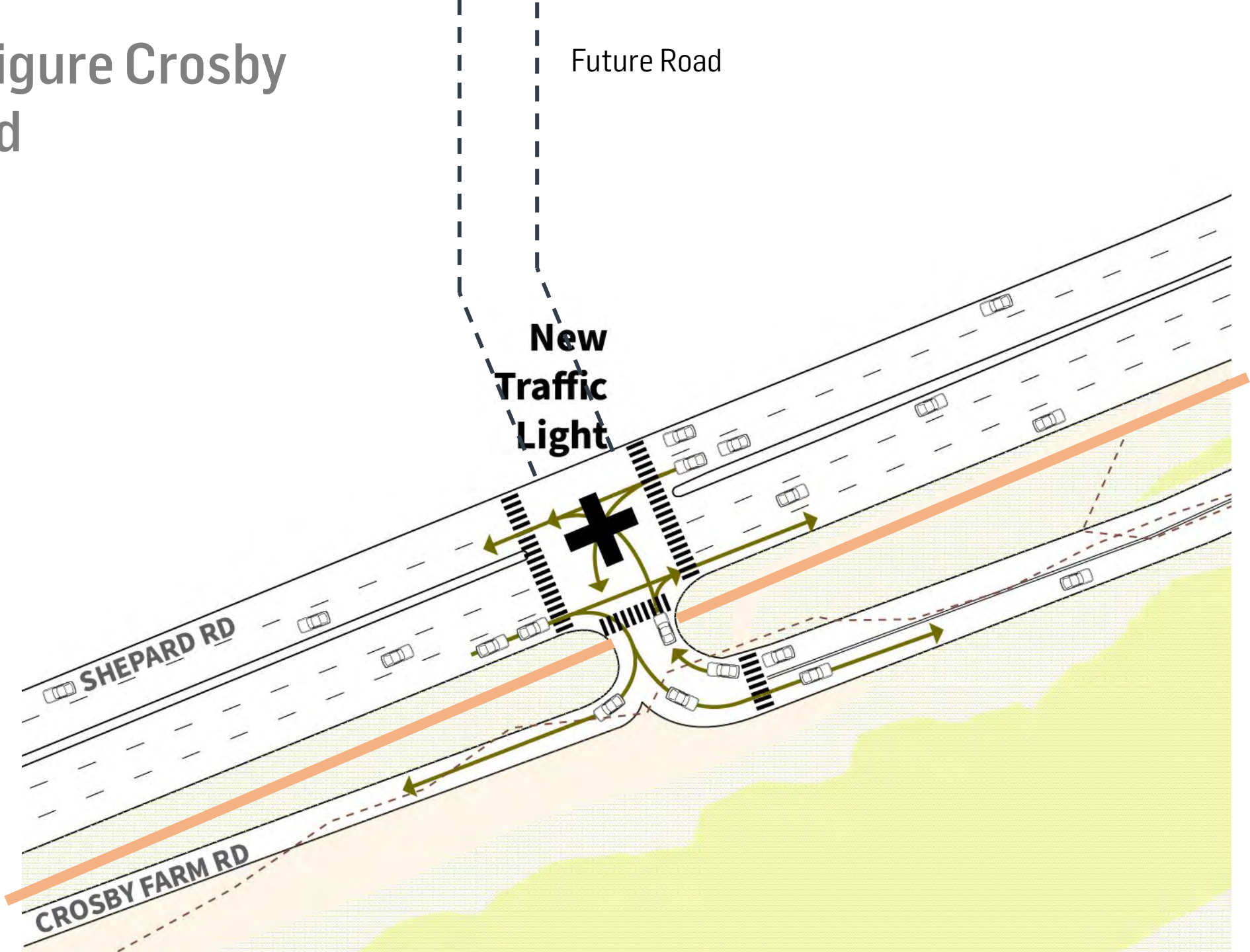
- Connect to Sam Morgan Trail
- Draw people into park
- Provide orientation to park below
- Improve pedestrian crossings at Shepard Rd

+BLUFF GATEWAY





# Reconfigure Crosby Farm Rd





# Shepard Rd Condition





# Shepard Rd Gateway

“Some kind of eye-catching gateway, sign, etc. would be helpful”





# Bluff Welcome Area

TWO RIVERS  
OVERLOOK

IMPROVED GANNON  
INTERSECTION AND CROSSWALK

NEW STREET TREES

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
HEADQUARTERS + GRPC + MPC

NEW SIGNALIZED  
INTERSECTION AND CROSSWALK

IMPROVED DAVERN  
INTERSECTION AND CROSSWALK

CANOPY WALK

SAM MORGAN REGIONAL TRAIL

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

SHEPARD RD

DAVERN ST





# Floodplain Gateway Goals:

- Create a more public and accessible riverfront
- Create a welcoming arrival space
- Restore native habitat and provide storm water management



+FLOODPLAIN GATEWAY

The image is an aerial photograph of a riverfront area. A red dashed line outlines a specific region, which is the 'Floodplain Gateway'. This region includes a parking lot, a building, and some trees. To the left of the outlined area is a large parking lot and a road. To the right is a marina with many boats. The river is visible at the bottom of the image.



# Existing View at Marina





# Proposed arrival meadow and education garden

“Can the caves become part of the project?”





# Floodplain Welcome



SHEPARD RD

FENCED MAINTENANCE  
STORAGE

EXISTING PARKING

ARRIVAL MEADOW / EDUCATION GARDEN

CAVE

STORMWATER PLANTING

VISITOR PARKING

HANDICAP PARKING

BUS DROP-OFF

CANOPY WALK

FLOODPLAIN FOREST BOARDWALK

FARM TO FALLS TRAIL

CROSBY FARM RD



River Learning Center is an  
Accessible Campus of learning facilities:

**RIVER LEARNING CENTER  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
BOATHOUSE & MARINA**

# Community Campus Concerns

“Desire low impact, **nature based** experiences...”

“**Better bathrooms**”

“Can the **caves** become part of the project?”

“I think building the **welcome center on top of the bluff** would be more in harmony with nature rather than building in the flood plain.”

“I like the **accessible paths that blend into the landscape** and allow access for everyone, especially those with mobility issues.”

“I would like a place to get **food and water**”

“**Visibility and safety** –more accessibility”

“Schemes are grossly **oversized**”

“I prefer the **split** building”



# River Learning Center Campus



+BLUFF CAMPUS



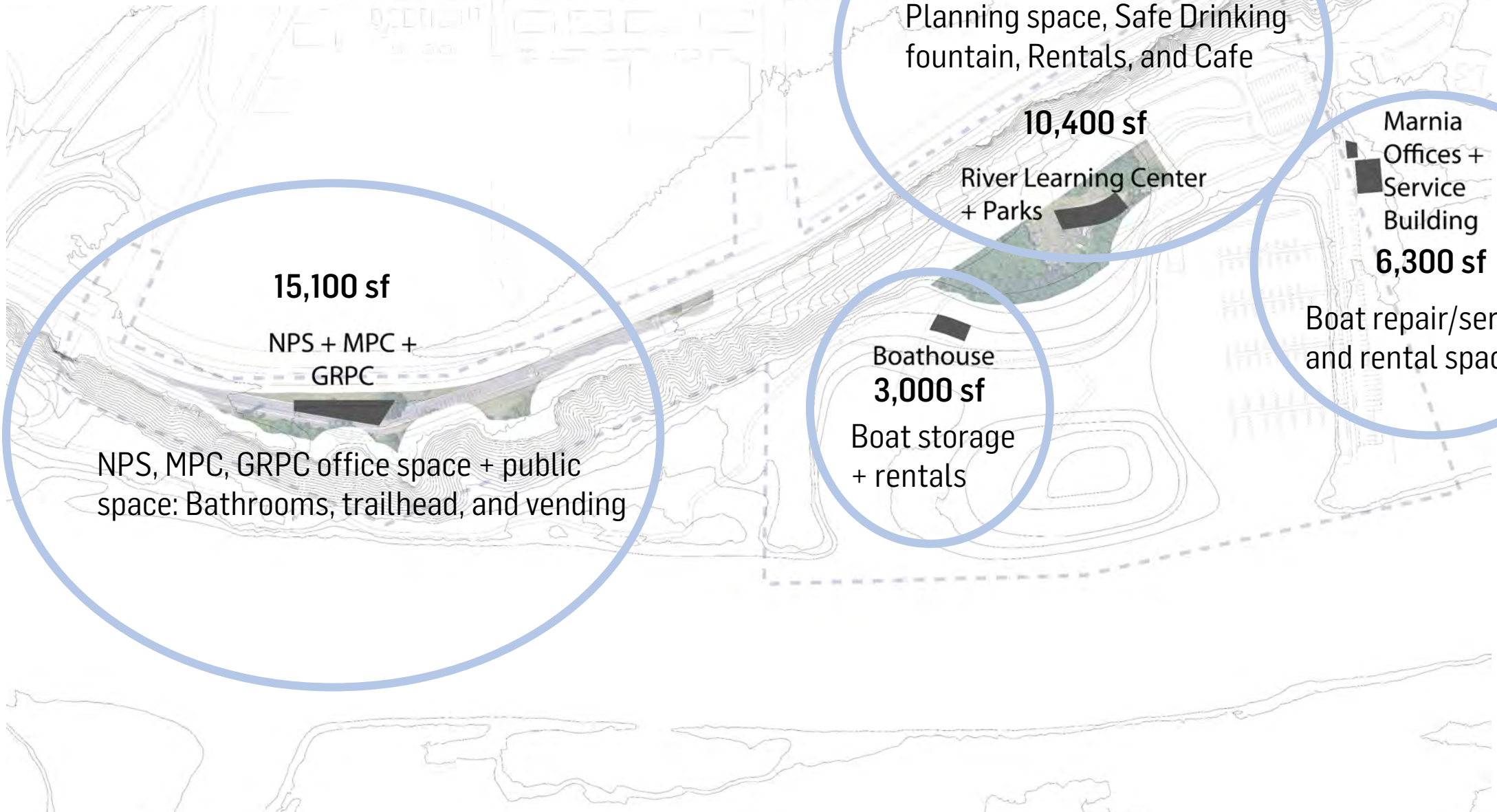
+FLOODPLAIN CAMPUS

# Total Reduced Building Program--- 35,200-36,700 sf.

- Bluff Structure: 15,000-16,500
  - National Park Service + Mississippi Park Connection admin
  - GRPC admin
  - Public Restrooms
  - Potential vending and/or Community Room
- Floodplain Structures: 20,200
  - River Learning Center and public restrooms
  - St Paul Parks
  - Your Boat Club
  - Boat house
  - Remote Storage



# Buildable Area: New Buildings



**15,100 sf**

NPS + MPC +  
GRPC

NPS, MPC, GRPC office space + public  
space: Bathrooms, trailhead, and vending

Flexible/Classroom space,  
Public Restrooms, Program  
Planning space, Safe Drinking  
fountain, Rentals, and Cafe

**10,400 sf**

River Learning Center  
+ Parks

Boathouse  
**3,000 sf**

Boat storage  
+ rentals

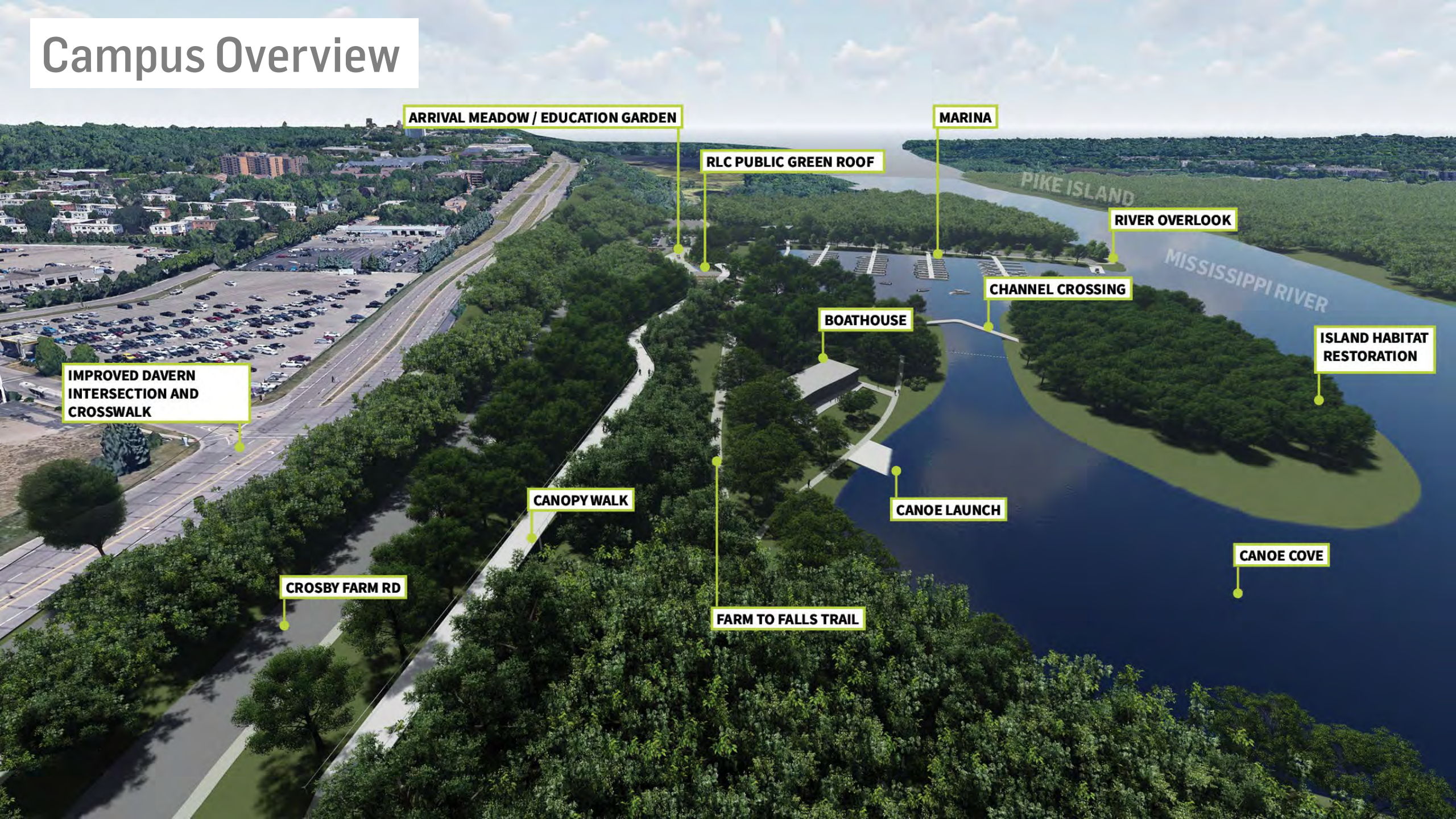
Marnia  
Offices +  
Service  
Building

**6,300 sf**

Boat repair/servicing  
and rental space



# Campus Overview



ARRIVAL MEADOW / EDUCATION GARDEN

MARINA

RLC PUBLIC GREEN ROOF

RIVER OVERLOOK

CHANNEL CROSSING

BOATHOUSE

ISLAND HABITAT RESTORATION

IMPROVED DAVERN INTERSECTION AND CROSSWALK

CANOPY WALK

CANOE LAUNCH

CANOE COVE

CROSBY FARM RD

FARM TO FALLS TRAIL



An aerial photograph of a coastal area. A road runs horizontally across the middle, with a sidewalk and a grassy area below it. A dashed brown line outlines a section of the road and the area below it, labeled '+BLUFF CAMPUS'. To the right of the road, there is a large body of water. The background shows a mix of greenery, trees, and some buildings.

## Bluff Campus Goals:

- Provide “trailhead” on Sam Morgan Trail
- Provide public restrooms and vending
- Provide info on RLC and regional park below
- Keep existing trees

**+BLUFF CAMPUS**



# Existing Crosby Farm Rd





# Bluff Building

An architectural rendering of a modern building complex, the Bluff Building, situated on a hillside. The building features large glass walls and is surrounded by lush greenery, including tall trees and manicured lawns. A paved path leads through the grounds, where several people are walking and a cyclist is riding. A red car is parked on a road adjacent to the path. The scene is bright and sunny, with shadows cast by the trees and building.

“Welcome center on top of the bluff would be more in harmony with nature “



# Bluff Campus



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
HEADQUARTERS + PUBLIC RESTROOMS

STAFF PARKING

SHEPARD RD

DAVERN ST

CANOPY WALK

SAM MORGAN REGIONAL TRAIL

EXISTING OAK

EXISTING OAK

BLUFF OVERLOOK

RAISED STREET BED

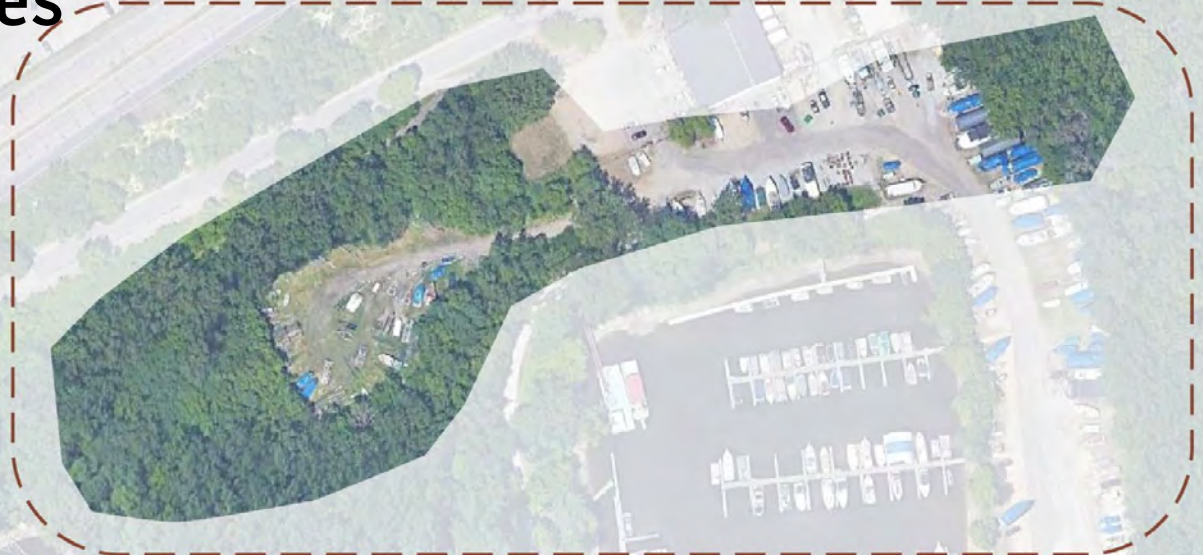
ONE-WAY WESTBOUND CROSBY  
FARM RD WITH PARALLEL PARKING

MISSISSIPPI RIVER



# Floodplain Campus Goals

- Light on the land
- Create a welcoming learning facility with indoor and outdoor spaces
- Provide public restrooms
- Provide a small café space



+FLOODPLAIN CAMPUS

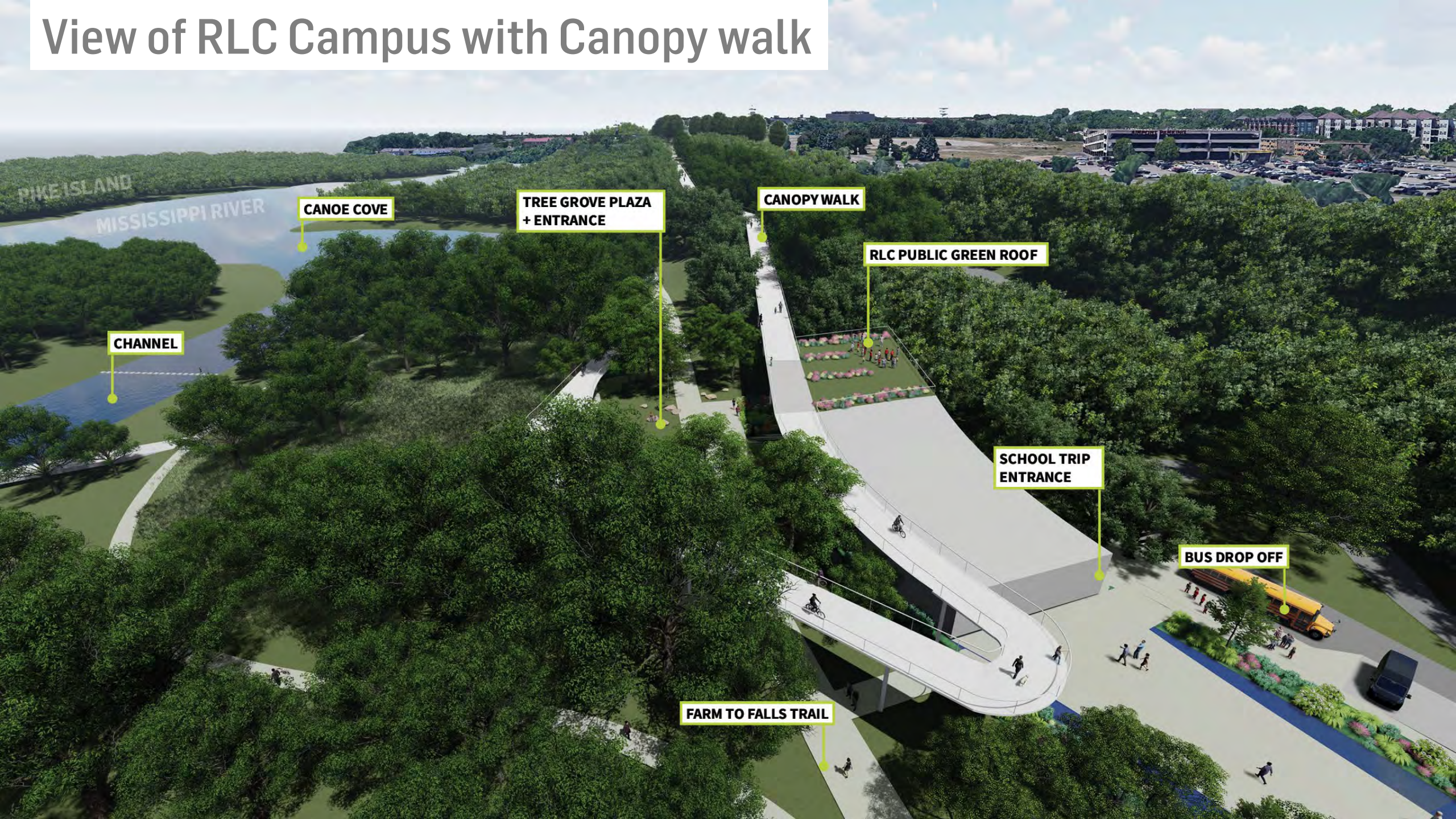


# RLC Campus occupies already disturbed areas





# View of RLC Campus with Canopy walk



PIKE ISLAND

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

CANOE COVE

TREE GROVE PLAZA  
+ ENTRANCE

CANOPY WALK

RLC PUBLIC GREEN ROOF

CHANNEL

SCHOOL TRIP  
ENTRANCE

BUS DROP OFF

FARM TO FALLS TRAIL



# View from Canopy Walk

“More accessibility is needed”





# View from RLC Public Roof



“Allow access  
for everyone,  
especially  
those with  
mobility  
issues.”



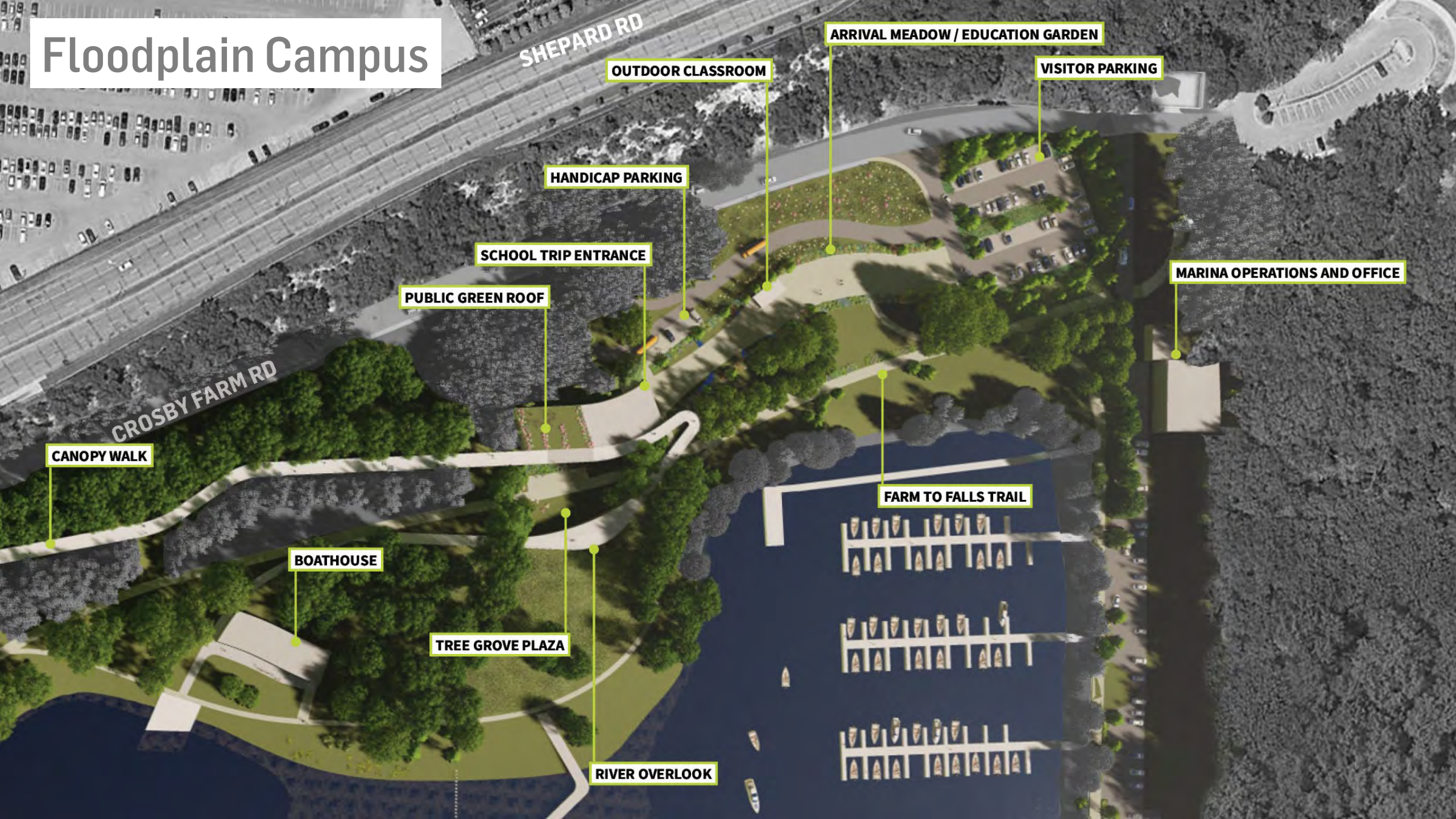
# Tree Grove Arrival Court view from relocated “Falls to Farm” trail



“Anchoring welcoming space”



# Floodplain Campus



SHEPARD RD

ARRIVAL MEADOW / EDUCATION GARDEN

VISITOR PARKING

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

HANDICAP PARKING

SCHOOL TRIP ENTRANCE

PUBLIC GREEN ROOF

MARINA OPERATIONS AND OFFICE

CROSBY FARM RD

CANOPY WALK

BOATHOUSE

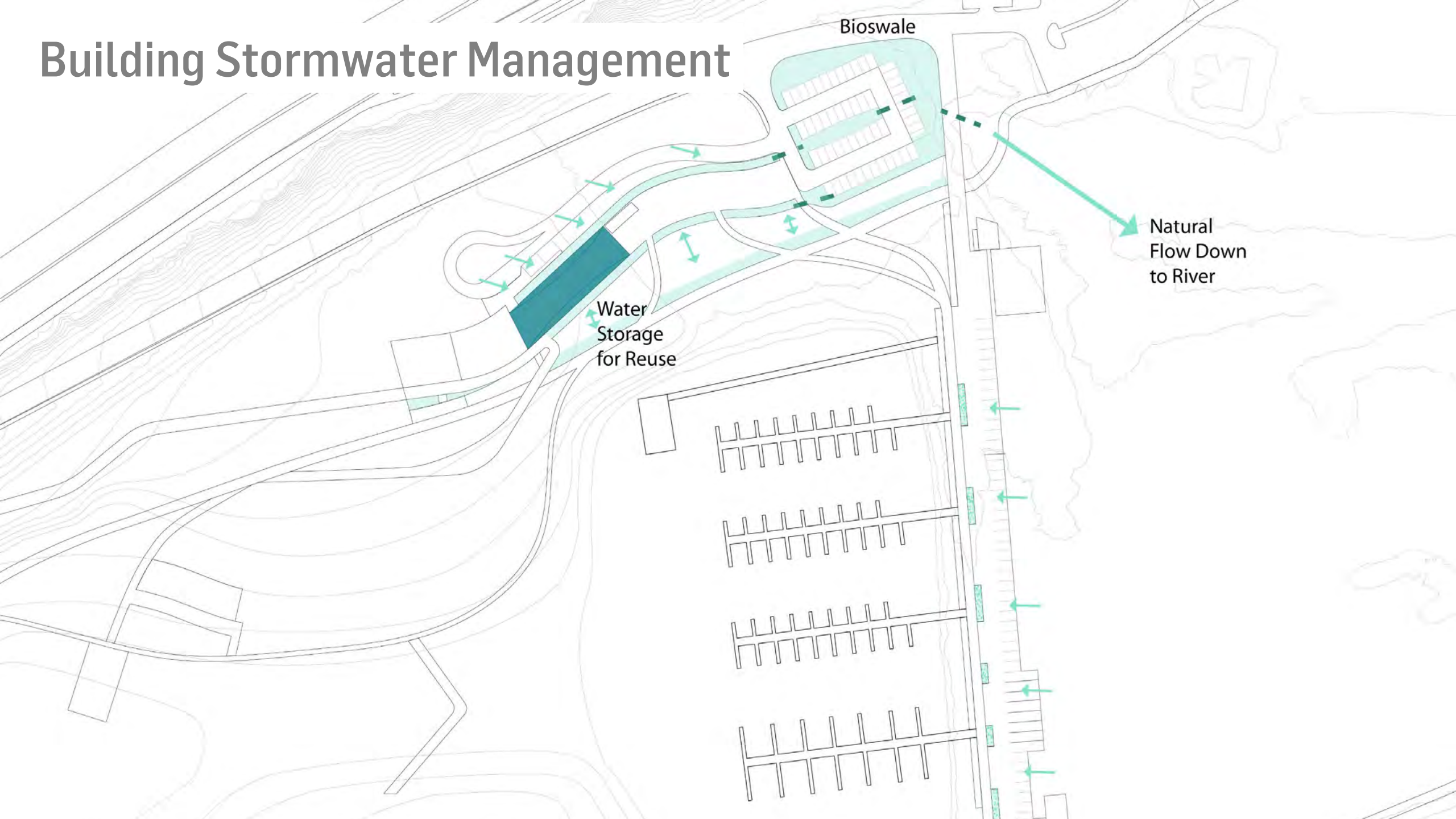
FARM TO FALLS TRAIL

TREE GROVE PLAZA

RIVER OVERLOOK



# Building Stormwater Management





# Precedents:





River Learning Center is for  
**TOUCHING THE WATER**



# Community Desires

“Walking paths next to water with access to the water”

“Connection to the water without disrupting natural formations”

“Get close to the water. Learn about the watershed and the river system as a whole.”

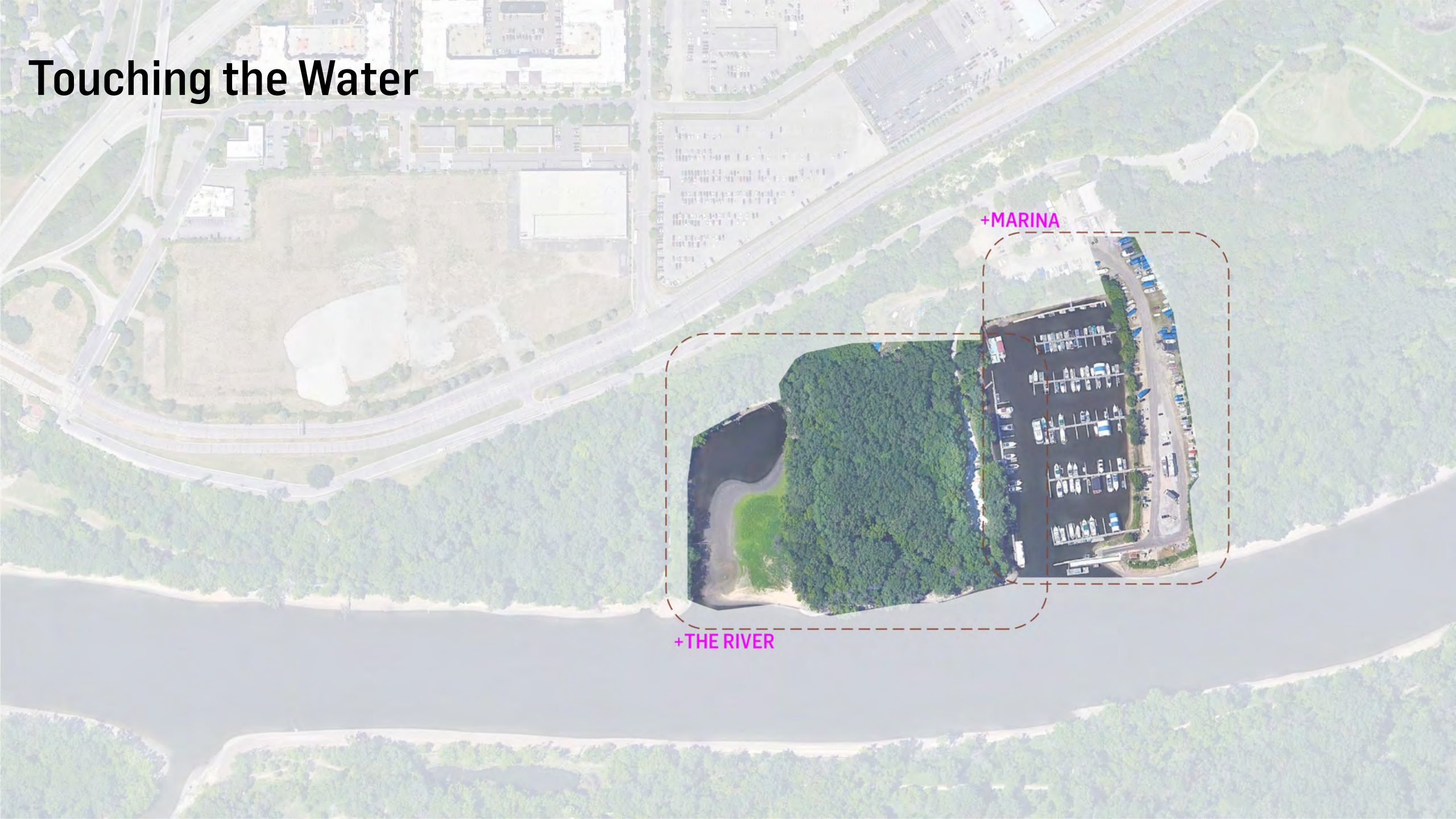
“Boat/canoe renting for general public”

“Access to safe water access knowing the river can be a turbulent place”

“I want to be able to go the water's edge and shore fish.”



# Touching the Water





# The River Goals:

- Provide public access to the waterfront-  
remove unnatural steep slopes
- Improve Forest Ecology
- Naturalize habitat



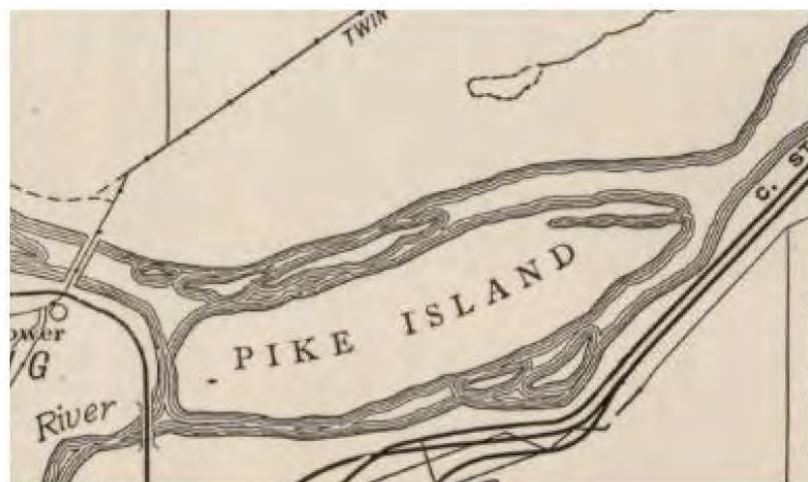
+THE RIVER

An aerial photograph of a river bend. A large, forested island is situated in the middle of the bend. To the right of the island is a marina with many boats docked. To the left of the island is a road and a parking lot. The river is a light brown color. A dashed brown line outlines the island and the marina area. The text '+THE RIVER' is written in purple at the bottom of the image.



# Dynamic River Edge

## 1924-2021



1924



1950




2021



# Floodplain Topography

The map displays a topographic view of a floodplain area. The Mississippi River is shown at the bottom, with a dashed line indicating the river's edge. To the left, the Minnesota River and Fort Snelling are visible. The map includes several roads: Gannon Rd, Wheeler St, S Davern St, Shepard Rd, and Crosby Farm Rd. Elevation contours are marked with values such as +794, +799, +719, +714, +709, +704, +699, +689, +694, and +704. Two floodplain boundaries are highlighted: the 500 Year Flood Plain (pink line) and the 100 Year Flood Plain (blue line). The map also shows existing trails, a floodway, and various land features like Lake Superior and Pike Island.

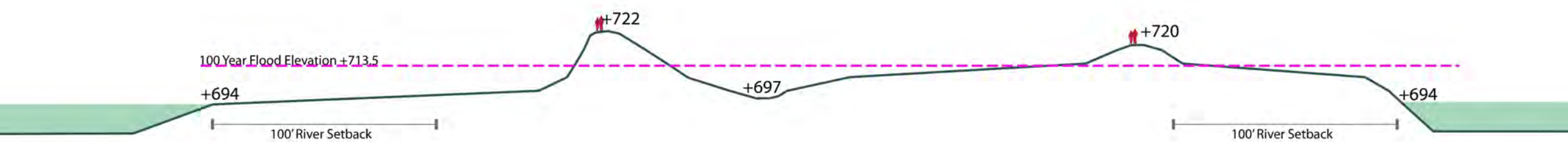
SCALE 1" = 300'



0 150 300 600 N



# Existing Topography limits water access



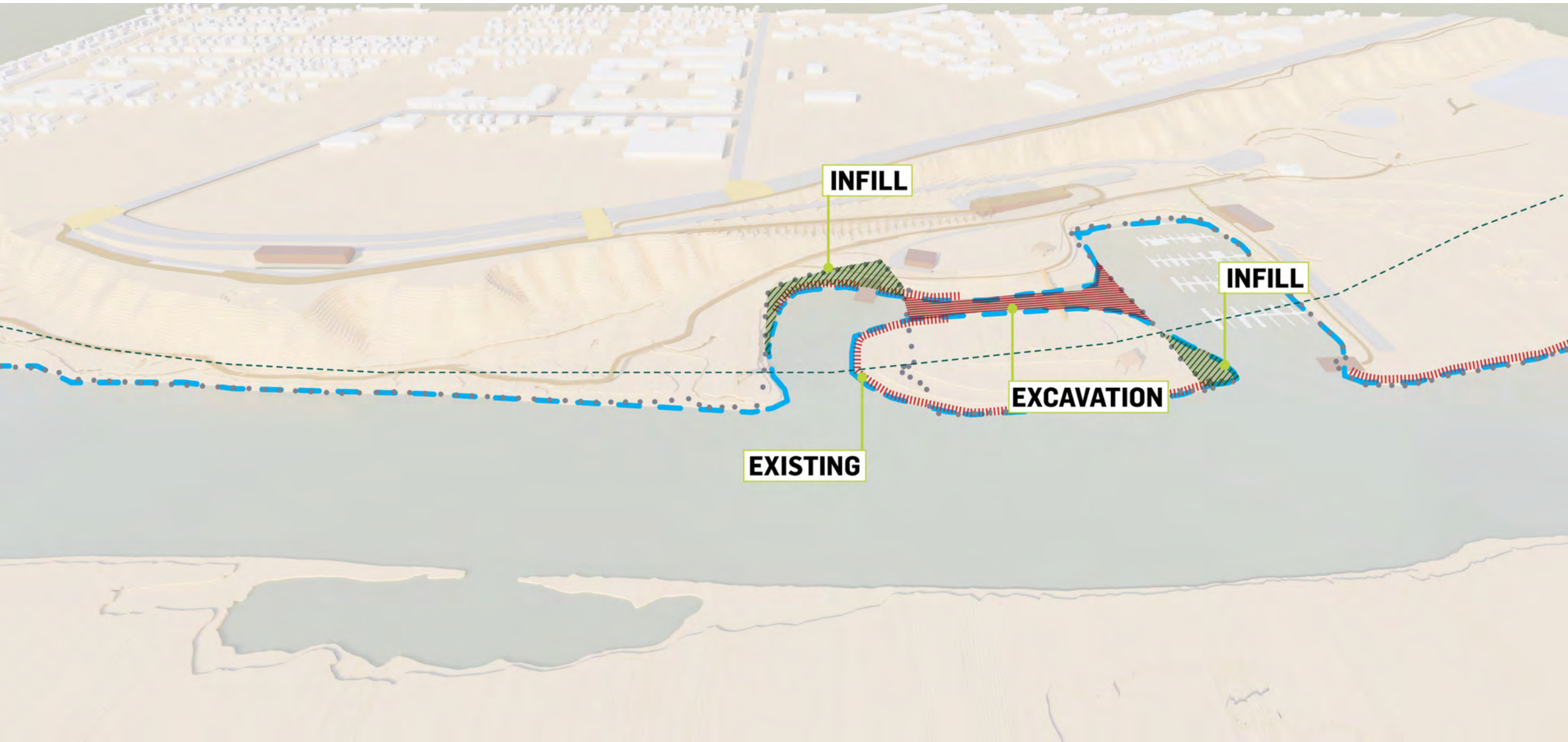


# More gentle slopes to the water promote access





# Proposed Area – Infill and Excavation





# Walkway Near Channel

“Walking paths next to water  
with access to the water”





# View of Channel



“Access to safe water knowing  
the river can be a turbulent  
place”

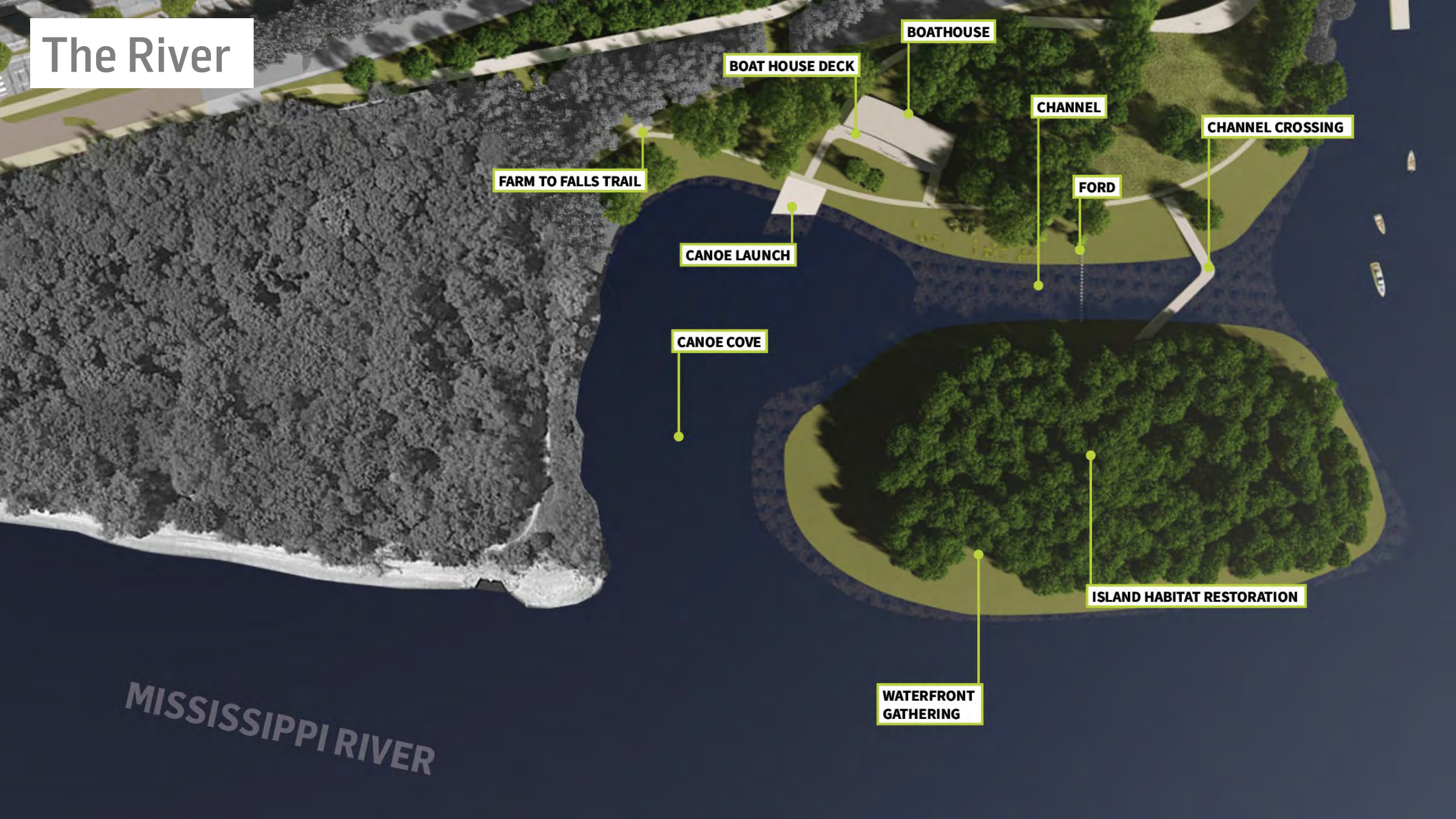


# Precedents





# The River



FARM TO FALLS TRAIL

BOAT HOUSE DECK

BOATHOUSE

CHANNEL

CHANNEL CROSSING

FORD

CANOE LAUNCH

CANOE COVE

ISLAND HABITAT RESTORATION

WATERFRONT  
GATHERING

MISSISSIPPI RIVER



# Marina Goals:

- Make it more public
- Combine Marina Operation with Pedestrian Access to water
- Provide shared Marina and Visitor Parking
- Accommodate Winter Boat Storage Needs
- Accommodate boat rentals and transient slips

+MARINA





# Marina Site

Private





# Existing Marina Edge





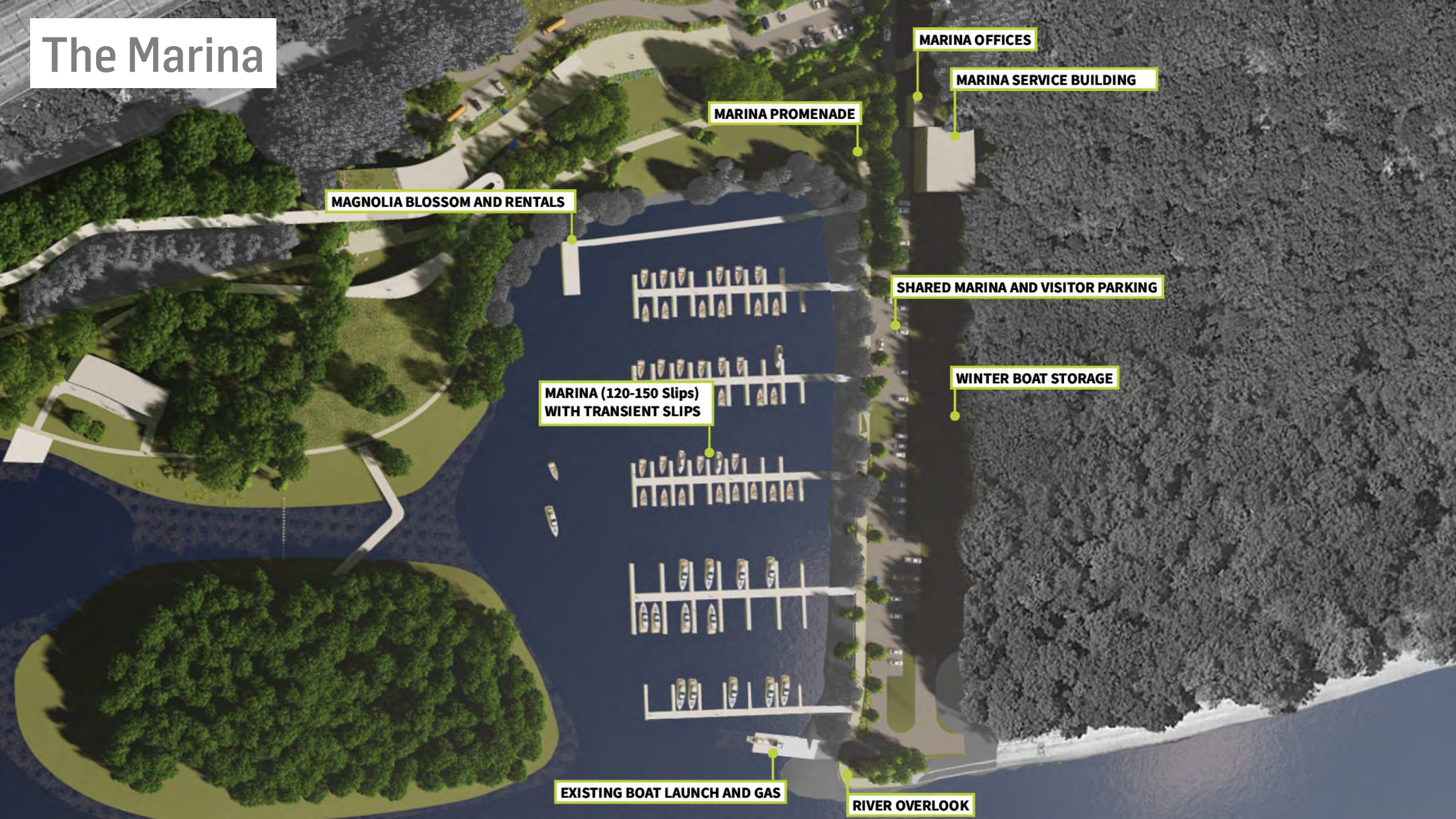
# Public Marina Promenade

An architectural rendering of a public marina promenade. The scene shows a wide, paved walkway running alongside a body of water. On the left, there is a parking lot with several cars, including a white SUV and a dark station wagon. A row of trees and shrubs separates the parking lot from the promenade. On the right, the promenade continues along the water's edge, with a grassy area and a white concrete barrier separating it from the water. Several large, mature trees are planted along the promenade, providing shade. In the background, more trees and a distant building are visible under a blue sky with light clouds. A few people are walking along the promenade, adding a sense of scale and activity to the scene.

“For newcomers, the marina creates a first impression that says I’m not welcome.”



# The Marina



MAGNOLIA BLOSSOM AND RENTALS

MARINA PROMENADE

MARINA OFFICES

MARINA SERVICE BUILDING

SHARED MARINA AND VISITOR PARKING

WINTER BOAT STORAGE

MARINA (120-150 Slips)  
WITH TRANSIENT SLIPS

EXISTING BOAT LAUNCH AND GAS

RIVER OVERLOOK



River Learning Center is  
**CONNECTING TO NATURE**



# Connecting to Nature

“I’m looking to experience the same **natural floodplain** that has been there for years.”

“I would like to go there with my young kids to **quietly explore nature and the river...**”

“A place to be **in the woods...**”

“Emphasize the **Dakota heritage**, the **Urban Wilderness**, the full expanse of the **Mississippi and the wildlife it supports** - and the role of this particular segment of it. “

“...**honoring the river** and keeping it as wild as possible.”



# CONNECTING TO NATURE GOALS:

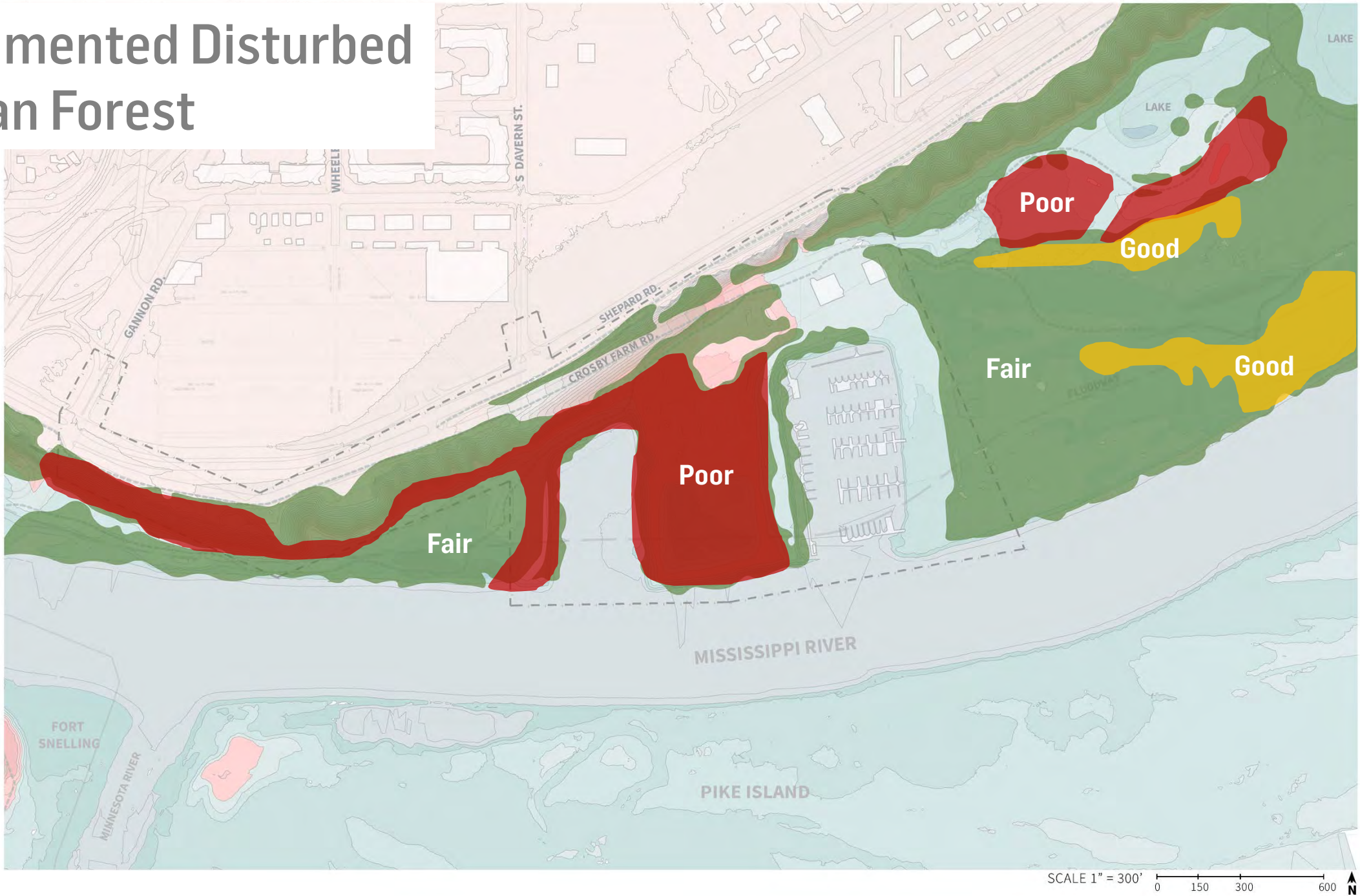
- Connect the fragmented forest areas of Hidden Falls/Crosby Farm Regional Park
- Restore native forests in areas of former disturbance



+CONNECTING TO NATURE

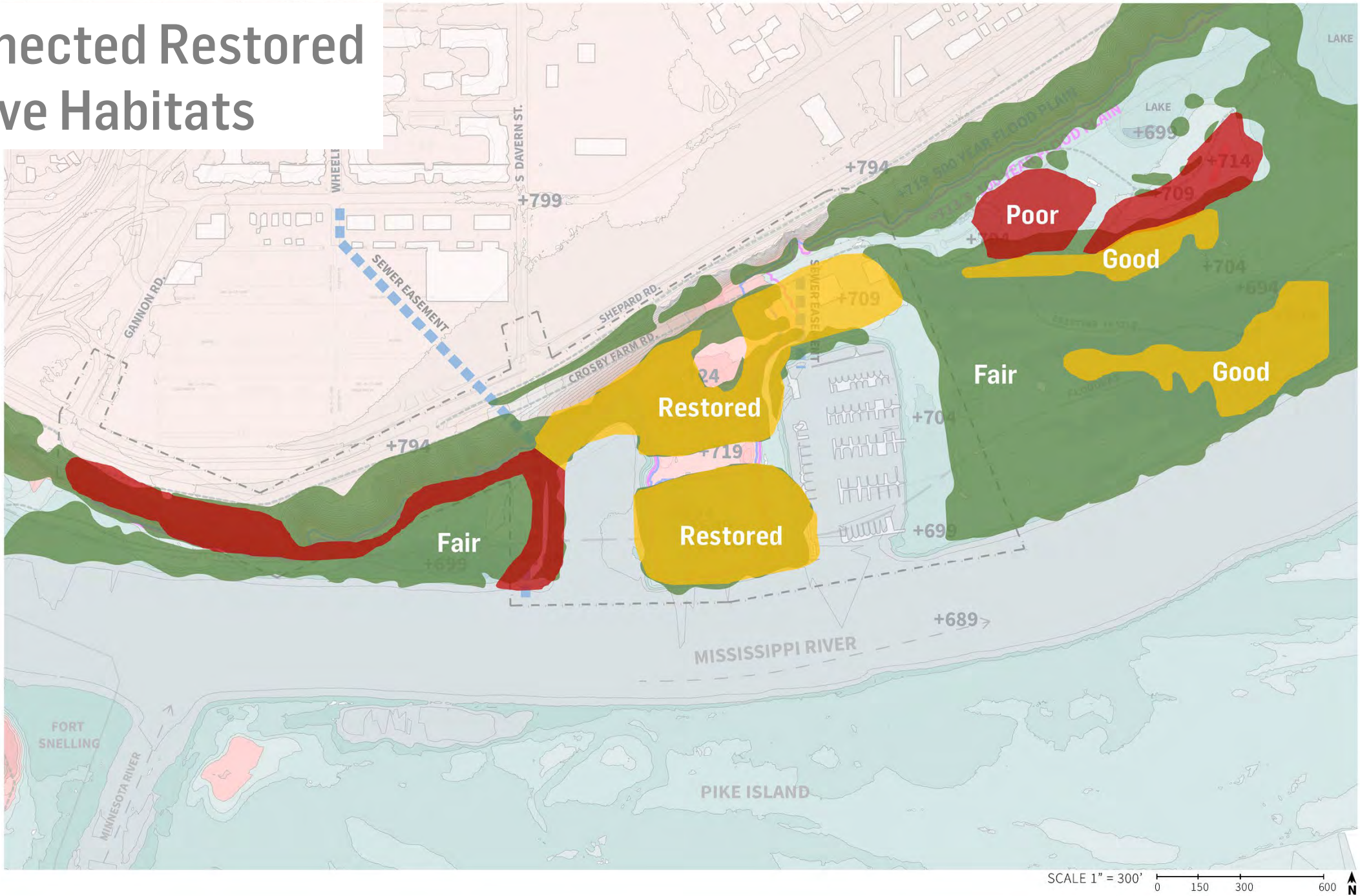


# Fragmented Disturbed Urban Forest





# Connected Restored Native Habitats





# Farm to Falls - Westbound



"I'm looking to experience the same natural floodplain that has been there for years."



# Connected to Nature



ARRIVAL MEADOW / EDUCATION GARDEN

MARINA OPERATIONS

RIVER LEARNING CENTER + PARKS

BOATHOUSE

SAM MORGAN REGIONAL TRAIL

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
HEADQUARTERS +PUBLIC RESTROOMS

CANOPY WALK

FARM TO FALLS TRAILS

HABITAT RESTORATION

CHANNEL

ISLAND HABITAT RESTORATION

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

PIKE ISLAND

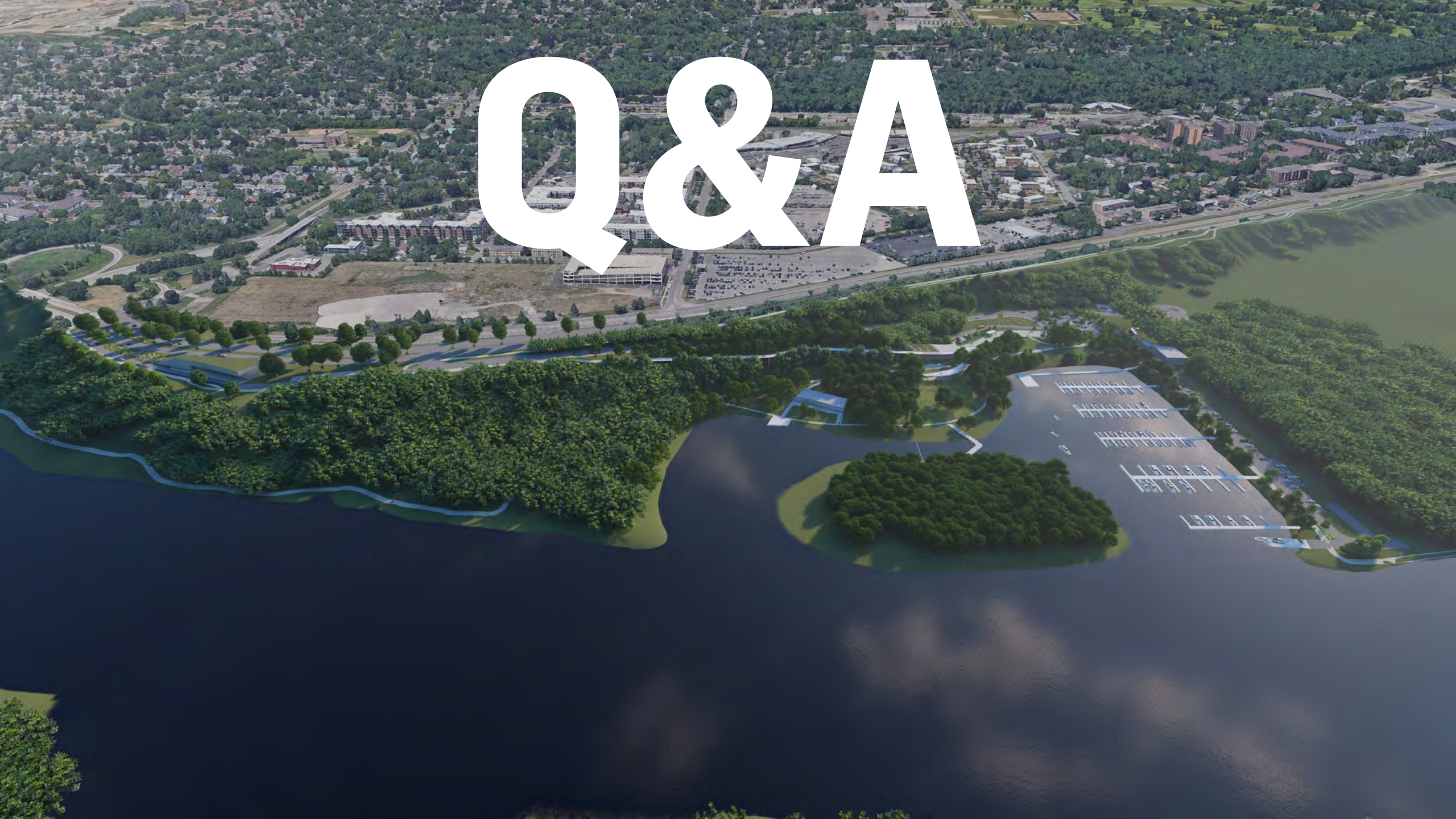


# Site Overview





# Q & A





# Consultant Team Available for Questions



**Barbara Wilks**

Lead Designer, Architect,  
Landscape Architect  
W Architecture



**Ian Dillon**

Project Manager  
W Architecture



**James Garrett**

Architecture  
4RM+ULA



**Sam Olbekson**

Indigenous Planning  
Full Circle Indigenous Planning



**John Hink**

Civil Engineering  
Solution Blue



**Rick Voigt**

Hydrology  
Solution Blue



# Q&A

An aerial photograph of a park development project. In the foreground, a large, dark blue lake is visible. To the right of the lake, there is a large, paved parking lot with many spaces. To the left of the parking lot, there is a large, green, wooded area. In the background, there is a residential area with many houses and trees. The overall scene is a mix of natural and developed land.

- **What is your favorite part of the project?**
- **Are you in general agreement with the proposed direction?**
- **What would you like to see added?**



An aerial photograph of a city landscape. In the foreground, a large body of water (a lake or river) is visible. A proposed development, shown in blue and green, includes a large parking lot with many spaces, a small building, and a path leading to a wooded area. The background shows a dense urban area with various buildings, including a large multi-story building, and a highway. The text "Next Steps:" is overlaid in large white letters at the top.

# Next Steps:

## Fall Community In-Person Celebration – October 6th



# Thank you for coming!



**Please visit the project website  
for more information:**

<https://greatriverpassage.org/projects/river-learning-center/>