



Currently

GREAT RIVER PASSAGE CONSERVANCY



Connecting
People
to Place
to Project



Dear Fellow River Enthusiasts,

Late fall is a time of great change, and nowhere is that more true than on our great river.

As the Mississippi readies itself for winter, our work along it is also changing as we move into new phases of our three key projects. By the time the river flows freely again in spring, schematic design for both the River Balcony and River Learning Center will be in full swing, and we will have final Equitable Impact Framework recommendations to act on as **we create spaces that are welcoming to all.**

Change is also in motion on our board of directors, with Dr. Jolly moving on after three years as Conservancy board chair. As we welcome Board Member Peter Myers into his new role as chair, we're reminded of his recent words about the Mississippi and our work. "Saint Paul is so fortunate to have this river," he shared. "Slowly but surely, it's becoming part of the public consciousness. **But there's so much more to be done.**"

The Conservancy and our partners are here to do it, in every season. If you'd like to further fuel that work heading into 2022, you can make a year-end gift using the enclosed envelope. Thank you for being part of our journey along Saint Paul's 17 miles of the Mississippi River.



Eric J. Jolly, Ph.D.

Board Chair
Great River Passage Conservancy
President and CEO,
Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation



Mary E. deLaittre

Founding Executive Director
Great River Passage Conservancy

INSIDE THE CONSERVANCY

River Balcony Team Comes Together

The Conservancy was honored to host the River Balcony's design team, **Field Operations**, along with **30-plus stakeholders**, for a walking tour of the project site earlier this month.

Tour-goers included river ambassadors representing civic leadership, business and property owners, philanthropy, and nonprofits. The questions were insightful and the discussion was lively, creating a great opportunity for the design team to hear from a diverse cross-section of the River Balcony community.

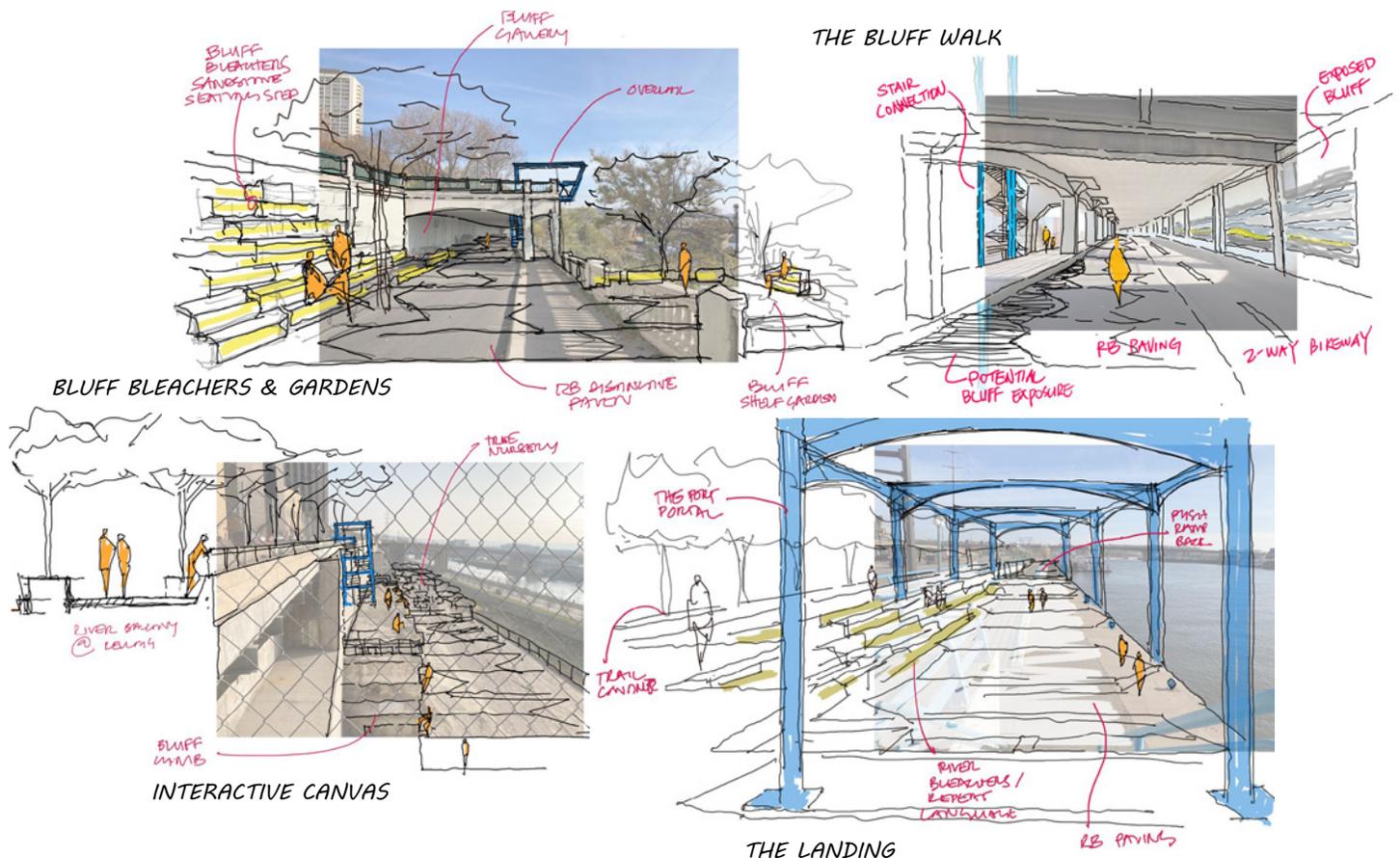
"The site visit was both critical and clarifying," shared Field Operations Senior Principal Lisa Switkin. "Getting to walk, see, and further understand the site—and hear from so many people about ways [the Balcony] can strengthen and align with other ambitions and initiatives in Saint Paul—was fundamental to our understanding of the place."



Field Operations with Brett Hussong, City Project Manager



Lisa Switkin, Senior Principal Field Operations and Kareem Smith, WSCO Member and West Side Resident. Photos courtesy 106 Group.



RIVER BALCONY FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Spatial Studies by Field Operations after first site visit



Connecting People to Place to Project

This newsletter often touches on the theme of “holding the center,” and with very good reason. The Great River Passage Conservancy has an incredible responsibility to many people, places, and projects at once as we aim to bring the river back from the edge of public life to the center.

While the work of holding the center can be complex, we know of one sure way to do it: by bringing a broad range of people and perspectives together. In that spirit, on October 28 we held the **East Side River District’s convening**, with nine key partners sharing presentations on their dynamic projects.

All told, there are 23 projects planned or underway in the District, and \$490 million of planned investment as we all continue to come together and reveal, heal, connect, and protect the river and land in this beautiful and complex area.

We are following up that event with our **River Programming convening** on December 9. This virtual gathering is an opportunity to further connect people, place, and project—or in this case, program. Key river partners such as Wilderness Inquiry, Mississippi Park Connection, and National Park Service will be on hand to spread the word about their programs designed to get more people along, on, and in the river.

With programming partners like these, we are well positioned to weave their dynamic activities into our three key projects, further centering the river as a place for education, recreation, and preservation.

DONOR PROFILE

Looking back—and forward—Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation President and CEO **Dr. Eric Jolly** reflects on three years as Conservancy board chair.

Dr. Eric J. Jolly's love for our great river has both personal and professional roots. He looks forward, every year, to kayaking during the pelican migration, and equally appreciates the quieter moments "spending time on the banks of the river watching the world go by." As former CEO of the Science Museum of Minnesota, a commitment to river-based research led him to connect with the Conservancy and Executive Director Mary deLaittre.

"Mary's enthusiasm was infectious, and it was clear to me that the passion I have for the river was captured in so many ways by the vision she had for turning our 17 miles of river into a nexus for business, commerce, recreation, stewardship, health and well-being. To join the Conservancy board and help that compelling vision get started was a wonderful gift and opportunity to me."

Reflecting on the Conservancy's wide-ranging, ambitious work during his time as board chair, Dr. Jolly highlights the importance of linkage, of bridging gaps and bringing edges to the center. "It's the way the pieces come together," he says, "and understanding there are some missing pieces we can add to the mix." He cites the River Balcony as a prime example. "By increasing access and amplifying the quality of experiences, [that project] will add to the vitality of the river by giving people multiple ways to engage with it.

"The potential we've not fully realized yet, that's what I love about this. It's the most fun part of the creation of an idea, going from a dream to having all the ingredients necessary. I'm so proud of the partnerships the Conservancy has built—they're a testament to the fact this is a shared vision."

"We have the support for it, with funding coming from foundations, individuals, the City of St. Paul, and more. It's incredible to see all these diverse



interests coming together to say, 'Now we will tell our story.' This really is the beginning of what I think will be the future of St. Paul as the River Capital. No one else along the entire length of the Mississippi has more riverfront, more front-row seating, than St. Paul. It's a front row seat to a world that others may have just a snippet of, but we can bring it all together."

As he transitions from his role as board chair, Dr. Jolly is eager to see what comes next for the Conservancy. "The transition, for me, is giving others an opportunity to lead and shape this vision," he says. "That shared leadership and broadening of voices will be critical in making this endeavor successful. I'm happy to have been on this board in a leadership role, and happy now to observe the board's work through the others who will lead it—and I'll be here supporting them."

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—DR. ERIC JOLLY

Telling a Shared River Story

In collaboration with our partners and stakeholders, the Great River Passage Conservancy has put together a **river narrative toolkit**—an all-inclusive guide to talking about Saint Paul as a River Capital. As civic, nonprofit and government organizations look to attract businesses, visitors, residents, investments and programming to our great city, we wanted to provide consistent messages to talk about the Mississippi River as a unique and attractive asset.

The toolkit includes messaging, social media handles and hashtags, naming conventions, and photos and video for partners and stakeholders to use freely in their 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 the investments, activity and energy it attracts.

To explore the toolkit, visit: <https://greatriverpassage.org/toolkit>





GREAT RIVER PASSAGE CONSERVANCY

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Great River Passage Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent of the law.

About the Great River Passage Conservancy

The **Great River Passage Conservancy** was founded in late 2018 to rally philanthropic support for the Great River Passage Initiative's river-focused projects designed to build economic vitality along Saint Paul's stretch of the Mississippi River. All on Dakota homeland, these three projects—the River Learning Center and National Park Service Headquarters, River Balcony, and East Side River District—respond to the enduring qualities of the Mississippi River that link it to Saint Paul and the wider region's historical, cultural, environmental, and economic well-being.

With Saint Paul's 17 miles of river, 26 miles of river edge, and 3,500 acres of publicly owned land, we have a unique opportunity to become the River Capital and unite our region's two greatest assets: its people and one of the three great rivers of the world, the Mississippi. By advancing major projects along the Mississippi River that allow all people to experience the river in new and equitable ways, the Great River Passage Conservancy fosters environmental stewardship, community health, and economic development.

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