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 Minneapolis, parks are critical to our quality of life, and in 2020 we saw proof of it as never before. As the global pandemic closed in, and as social unrest erupted in the wake of George Floyd’s murder, our parks offered inspiring places where we could gather, meet with our neighbors, and try to make sense of the moment.

Parks have always provided this common ground, offering one of the few places in our public lives where we mix and meet up with people from so many different life experiences, cultures, and socio-economic backgrounds. But as proud as we are of our parks, repeatedly recognized as the very best in the nation, we must also acknowledge that the parks have never been a level playing field. From the founding of our park system more than 140 years ago, to redlining real estate practices that kept people of color from buying property in greener parts of the city, many of our park system’s greatest assets have been built near and for communities of wealth and privilege, creating systemic disparities that demand to be set right.

The RiverFirst Initiative is one of the ways that our community is reckoning with that past and reimagining a more equitable future, by bringing much needed parks, amenities, and new connections like the Great Northern Greenway River Link to the north side of Minneapolis along the Mississippi riverfront. As you’ll see from the donors whose names are listed in this annual report, it’s a vision for a more connected and inclusive park system that’s captivated many new supporters. In fact, in December, generous contributors like you helped the Minneapolis Parks Foundation secure the full $18.1 million toward our first phase RiverFirst goal, the largest capital campaign ever undertaken for Minneapolis parks.

To some, parks may seem an unlikely way to foster social justice and equity, but at the Minneapolis Parks Foundation, we know they’re a natural fit. As our work with the national Reimagining the Civic Commons project continues to confirm, civic assets are platforms for building trust, fostering civic engagement, and dismantling systemic racism. Investing in beautiful parks and vibrant public spaces like Water Works and the Great Northern Greenway Overlook at 26th Ave N is one of the ways we announce our values as a community, and our aspirations for the future.

It’s a mission we continue to celebrate this season with the launch of our new People for Parks Fund, created from our 2020 consolidation with People for Parks. Through this grant program, our goal is to advance under-supported projects and programs in Minneapolis parks, connecting community-driven ideas to philanthropic funding.

Though 2020 was a challenging year, your generosity and support made it possible for the Minneapolis Parks Foundation to stay focused on the future. Thank you. We look forward to the day—not too far from now—when we can gather again safely and in celebration of what we’ve accomplished together.

As ever, we can’t wait to see you in the parks.

Tom Evers
Executive Director

Dorothy Bridges
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mplsparksfoundation.org 3

Spring 2021
Throughout a year of change, adaptation, and transformation one thing in 2020 remained the same: Parks have the power to connect us, heal us, and make us whole.

Staying Connected

While masking and social distancing made for an unprecedented year in the parks, new platforms helped the Minneapolis Parks Foundation and its supporters stay connected. Here’s a look.

The Next Generation of Parks Pivots

After starting 2020 with a buzz-worthy Parks & Pollinators talk in February at the Walker Art Center featuring the University of Minnesota’s Dr. Marla Spivak, our Next Generation of Parks event series made a successful move online. Audiences packed the Zoom room in December for a presentation by Adam Regn Arvidson, the Minneapolis Park Board’s Director of Strategic Planning and author of Wild and Rare: Tracking Endangered Species in the Upper Midwest. Even more attendees flocked to our virtual “Winter Birding 101” in February 2021, featuring wildlife photographers Dudley Edmondson, author of The Black & Brown Faces in America’s Wild Places, and Monica Bryand, co-founder of St. Paul-based Urban Bird Collective.

Virtual “Sunrise”

“We are definitely looking forward to being face to face with our supporters again, but the past year also proved to us that virtual events and digital encounters are a great way to engage long-time donors and people who want to know more about our parks,” says Christine Moir, Minneapolis Parks Foundation’s Development Manager. In fact, more than 150 guests took part in our first virtual “Sunrise on the Mississippi,” which featured a mix of live presentations and video stories about our RiverFirst projects. This sixth annual fundraising event also raised more than $88,000 to help us transform lives through parks.
DIY Walk & Talks
The Parks Foundation’s small-group, curated Walk & Talk series also moved online with a downloadable tour of the Winchell Trail and a digital story map of the RiverFirst Initiative, showing self-guiding guests multiple park-related points of interest along the Mississippi. One silver lining: the do-it-yourself format made it possible to engage more than 800 guests—20 times as many parks supporters as the Parks Foundation has been able to serve through the popular in-person program.

Circulating Widely
While Minneapolis parks recreation centers were closed for most of the year, 50 Little Free Libraries were still open for browsing and borrowing thanks to an additional 3,500 new titles provided by several Parks Foundation donors, including the Kitchigami Regional Library System in Cass County. When Kitchigami’s annual book sale was derailed in 2020 by COVID, they sent their retiring titles to find new (little free) homes in Minneapolis.

Posters for Parks
The Minneapolis Parks Foundation’s merger with People for Parks in 2020 made it possible to amplify the grassroots group’s popular programs, including the fifth annual “Posters for Parks” fundraiser. Co-produced with event founder Dan Woychick of LoveMplsParks, this year’s online art sale helped to sell more than 800 posters to Minneapolis parks lovers from around the country—nearly twice the number purchased at previous sales.

Concert-ed Effort
In September 2020, the Parks Foundation supported an innovative way to enjoy music from the Bach Society: A series of back-to-back mini concerts in Minneapolis Parks. From Hall’s Island to Mill Ruins (and beyond), each free 15-minute performance by a Twin Cities musician provided a moment of unexpected delight.
Consolidating Support

A merger between People for Parks and the Minneapolis Parks Foundation is protecting the legacy and impact of grassroots grants to the park system.

As spring warms up the riverfront, visitors to North Mississippi Regional Park are discovering a brand new nature play area complete with movable tree stumps for leaping over molten lava, and long branches for making lean-tos during monsoon season.

“You know how kids play— one minute, they’re jumping over a crocodile, the next minute they’re playing grocery store,” says MaryLynn Pulscher, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board’s manager for environmental education. “That’s why we’ve incorporated loose parts like tree cookies, big branches, and burlap that they can move around and build into structures or whatever they can imagine.”

While unstructured outdoor play areas like this are a popular trend, North Mississippi’s is the only one in the Minneapolis system that’s also built to be wheelchair accessible, a commitment to inclusion made possible by People for Parks, the grassroots nonprofit group that merged with the Minneapolis Parks Foundation in July 2020. While the $35,000 grant was one of the largest ever made during People for Park’s 42-year history, the group’s legacy will continue for years to come thanks to the new People for Parks Fund, an equity-aligned grant program to support small projects and big ideas throughout the Minneapolis parks system.

“Our mission remains the same, but thanks to the consolidation, we are now able to expand and build upon the work that People for Parks was able to accomplish over its more than 40-year history,” says Minneapolis Parks Foundation Board Member Steve Bailey, chair of the new People for Parks Fund Advisory Committee. “The staff and board members of the Parks Foundation have been great about continuing what People for Parks did best, while giving the fund the capacity to expand...
Many Minneapolis music lovers have fond memories of the late Mary Ann Feldman, the energetic and effusive musicologist who made the Minnesota Orchestra’s program notes sing for more than 30 years. An inspiring public speaker, enthusiastic arts supporter, and doting dog owner, Feldman and her husband Harold were also devoted fans of Minneapolis parks, leaving an endowed estate gift of $400,000 to support the People for the Parks Fund run by the Minneapolis Parks Foundation.

“The Feldmans are members of the Heritage Oak Society, Minneapolis Parks Foundation supporters who have named the organization as a beneficiary of an estate or trust. “It’s quite moving to see how much our parks mean to people, and how a lifetime of great memories often inspires them to want to leave a legacy for others,” says Downham.

To learn more about including the parks in your estate planning, visit the “Leave a Legacy” page on our website, or contact Jennifer Downham at JDownham@MplsParksFoundation.org.
The Big Reveal

The first two projects of the RiverFirst Campaign are about to help Minneapolis experience the Mississippi River in a whole new way.

It’s April 2021 and the lights are up, the pavilion is nearly complete, and the final plantings are about to go in. But for Jean Garbarini, the Damon Farber landscape architect behind Minneapolis’s new Water Works expansion of Mill Ruins Park, the most essential ingredient is still missing.

“A park is the life that people bring to it,” she says. “What will really make the space is when people can see it and use it in the ways we hoped, and over time shape the character of the park in ways we can today only imagine.”

That all changed in May, when Minneapolis residents first got the chance to explore and experience Water Works at Mill Ruins Park, the most anticipated parks project of the RiverFirst Initiative, a bold, 20-year blueprint for reconnecting every corner of the city through a continuous riverfront park system. Located just upriver from the Stone Arch Bridge, Water Works is a destination park with a dynamic new pavilion forged from the reactivated ruins of two historic mills. Inside, park goers will soon find Owamni by The Sioux Chef, the first and highly anticipated restaurant from Sean Sherman and Dana Thompson, along with a host of new visitor amenities.

With nearly 3.6 million annual visitors to Mill Ruins Park, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Project Manager Kate Lamers says, “there were a lot of demands on this small area, and we worked hard to integrate them all.” The pavilion includes a quiet room for nursing, an adult changing station, a Wudu washing facility for Muslim worshippers, and family-friendly all gender restrooms. Outside, there’s a play area for children, an interpretive garden of sensory-stimulating plants, multiple ramps and entry points for wheelchair and stroller access, and exceptional new views of the waterfront and St. Anthony Falls from a variety of elevations.
Private contributions secured by the Minneapolis Parks Foundation were critical to bringing all of these features to life, says Lamers. “Without their help, this might have been somewhat of a pass-through site with places to sit and some visitor amenities. But instead, Water Works is a real attraction on the riverfront, a place where people will want to go, and visit, and eat and explore,” she says. “The Minneapolis Parks Foundation made so much more possible.”

**Unveiling the Overlook at 26th Ave N**
The same is true upriver on North Minneapolis’s 26th Avenue where the Great Northern Greenway Overlook is welcoming its first full season of river visitors. Part of a multiphase project dubbed the River Link, made possible by a combination of public bonding from the state of Minnesota and private contributions to the Minneapolis Parks Foundation, the Overlook is a case study for the value of public-private partnerships, says Rep. Fue Lee, who championed the project as chair of the Capital Investment committee in the Minnesota House of Representatives.

“I’m excited we can have partners in philanthropy that show us in the state legislature that there’s support in the community and other resources coming in,” he says, noting that public funding can help attract private dollars to a project, and vice versa, “because we want to invest in projects that have been strongly vetted and that have a lot of enthusiasm from the community.”

The Minneapolis Parks Foundation has also been an ally in advancing equity for North Minneapolis, a community that has, for generations, been cut off from the promise of the parks, says Rep. Lee. “This is long overdue. North Minneapolis has never had the same access to the Mississippi enjoyed by other communities along the river. I have to drive out of Minneapolis with my family to fish or play along the river, even though we have this national treasure right here,” he says.

While the Overlook is just the start of a network of dedicated bike and pedestrian trails eventually linking Farview Park, Ole Olson Park, Theodore Wirth Parkway, and the Mississippi River, its 35-foot beacon signals something important to the surrounding community. “It says the Minneapolis Park Board and important partners like the Parks Foundation are making North Minneapolis a priority,” says Lee.

**More to Explore**
*Water Works and the Overlook both opened in May 2021. For more photos, including a look inside the Water Works Park Pavilion, please visit our website, MplsParksFoundation.org.*
RiverFirst is a greening initiative to finish the vision of early park leaders whose goals were to ensure that Minneapolis waterfront was available to all. The first phase of this transformational public-private partnership includes two park projects—Water Works at Mill Ruins Park and the Overlook at 26th Ave. N. The Minneapolis Parks Foundation is grateful for the generous community support for these park. As we return our attention to the amazing Mississippi River, we find hope for equitable public green spaces, joy for the health and wellness that nature and community offer, and gratitude for those who have come before us.

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Everyone’s Invited

Centering communities of color in riverfront parks-making is part of the mission of “Reimagining the Civic Commons”

While the Overlook at 26th Ave N has been compared to a beacon and a nest, Paul Bauknight, Minneapolis Parks Foundation’s Project Implementation Director, sees it as a beachhead—a strategic point from which Minneapolis can mobilize more parks and trails for the city’s north side. “It’s so important to our work that we move north along the river, and now our challenge is to get the northside community to fully embrace that the Mississippi is theirs,” he says. “But in doing so, we also have to acknowledge the role that racism has played in why that disconnection exists.”

Building trust between neighbors, city planners, and parks developers is part of the mission of Reimagining the Civic Commons (RCC), the national learning network that’s bringing Minneapolis together with nine cohort cities to explore how smart civic infrastructure helps heal the wounds of urban renewal, redlining, and other discriminatory practices in communities of color. Working with partners from the City and Park Board, Pillsbury United Communities, and the Environmental Justice Coordinating Council, the Parks Foundation has spent the first year of the three-year project meeting with RCC teams, many of which are also undergoing major civic infrastructure shifts like the RiverFirst Initiative.

Minneapolis’s work reorienting toward the Mississippi River will provide an important case study for other RCC members, a project that recently engaged interns David-Earl Russell and Elijah Henderson. As students at St. John’s University and fellows with the Eugene J. McCarthy Center for Public Policy and Civic Engagement, Russell and Henderson spent the summer of 2020 studying how the Overlook could be activated to create value for North Minneapolis while promoting three additional RCC goals—civic engagement, socio-economic mixing, and environmental sustainability.

“There’s a way of thinking that green spaces are only for white people, which is not true,” says Russell, a sociology student who is about to begin a graduate degree in urban planning at the University of Southern California. For Henderson, who grew up in Crystal, “seeing how close north side neighbors are to the Mississippi, yet how far away they feel,” made a big impression on the political science major. “The distance wasn’t that long, but there was so much in the way.”
Thank You, Donors

Your generous support in 2020 is helping to build the trust, equity, and community Minneapolis needs to create the next generation of parks. Your generous contributions to the Minneapolis Parks Foundation helped us deliver more than $1.8 million in 2020 — $25 million since 2003 — for transformative parks and programs for the future. Thank you!

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Peter Eisenberg and Mary Cajacob
Terry Enrico
Peter and Karen Erickson
John Everett and Kim Kepnios
Dennis and Karen Fenster
Robert Foster
Margaret-Ellen Frankel
Jeff Frush
James Gabe
Patti and Gregory Gaurkee
Kathleen Gavrin
Peter and Scotty Gillette
Terri Gold
Kathleen Graham
Darren Grant and Will Casey
Tom and Mary Gross
Katherine Grumstrup
and Michael Bing
Wade Guibransen
Peter Haeg
David Halverson
Jan and Mark Hamerlinck
Donna and Bryce Hamilton
Julaine and David Heit
Martha Hewett and Linda Varvel
Julie Hirsch and Ron Feldman
Bruce Jacobson
Paul Johnson
Thomas and Mary Johnson
Karin Kennedy
Lee Larson
Janette and Hans Law
Ben and Ruth Leadholm
Christine Levens
Libby Lincoln and Brad Fuller
Carrie and Nicholas Lindahl
Martin and Marilyn Lipschultz
Scott and Paula Litman
Lawrence Lockman
Zakqc Lockrem
Judy Longbottom
and Steve Grodahl
Peggy and David Lucas
Sean Lumpkin
Connie Manske
Sandy Marg
Pat and Bob Mattson
Cindy Mertens and
Kenneth Kapsner
Susan and Geoff Michael
Charles and Laura Miller
Dan Miller
George Montague and Nan Dreher
Annalise and Joe Munnich
Philip and Rosemary Murphy
Mary and Scott Neiman
Aly Nelson
Gary and Claire Nelson
Richard and Mary Nelson
Sarah Nettleton
Lauren Nuffort
Katie Nyberg
Kathleen O’Brien and
Jeffrey Loesch
Linnea Olesen
Heather Olson
Vivian Orey
Keenan Pace and Colin Bernatzky
Charles and JoAnne Parsons
Kasey Penk
David Plut and Cheryl Jacobs
Benjamin Pofahl and Ellen Guettler
Monica and James Preisen
Kelly Pflack
Kathryn and Richard Quackenbush
Keith Relyea and Jeannie Kant
Jerry and Louise Ribnick
Brian Rice
Virginia and Samuel Richardson
Charles Roach
Mary and Richard Rogers
George and Karen Rosar
Thomas and Gwynn Rosen
Rosemary Rosengren
Heath Rudduck
James and Dianne Safley
Miriam Sanders
Jean Sazевич
Denise Scharleman
and Robert Cochrane
Elizabeth Schmieg
Peter and Barb Schmitt
Michael Sherman
Abby and Timothy Showalter-Loch
Merav Silverman and Ian Ramsay
John Slack
Brett and Katherine Smith
Leif and Jeanne Solberg
Karen Steiner
Adele Stock and Mark Chowen
Morris Stockburger
Marcia and John Stout
John and Linda Summer
Janet and Craig Swan
Marypat Takacs
Lucy Thompson
Keith Thorkelson
Brian Thy and Danita Carlson
Sophie Tobias
Andrea Trumble Hart
Karen Trouba
Steve Tsai and Margaret Simpson
Theodore Tucker
Anne and Tom Ulseth
Gloria Vallejo
David and Lynn Vander Haar
Julia Wallace
Meg Walters and Per Hong
Elizabeth Walton
Conrad and Kristen Wasmier
Jill Weese and Steven Vincent
Lisa Weisman
Michael Weiss

David and Sara Wellington
James Weydt
William and Rebecca White
Chris and Kelly Wilhoit
David and Holly Willis
Richard Wilson and Kolean Pitner
Kim Olson and Norman Abramson
Glenn and Teri Woythaler
Joyce Yu
Mark Zembrzyki and Juleann Long
Laurie Zermer
Penny and Mark Ziessman
Harvey Zuckman and Phil Oxman
Dave and Sue Zwickey
## 2020 Financial Statements

### Income/Expense Statement – Unrestricted 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>492,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RiverFirst Program Support</td>
<td>203,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Grants</td>
<td>150,396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising Events</td>
<td>88,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment &amp; Other Income</td>
<td>70,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,005,477</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Expenses</td>
<td>625,632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Mission-Support Services</td>
<td>162,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, HR, Board, Operations</td>
<td>172,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expense</strong></td>
<td><strong>$959,879</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Change in Net Assets | **$45,598** |

### Balance Sheet 12/31/2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>12/31/2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash &amp; Cash-Equivalents</td>
<td>1,904,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Current Assets</td>
<td>12,093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property &amp; Equipment</td>
<td>17,661</td>
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<tr>
<td>RiverFirst Campaign Fund</td>
<td>591,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,525,333</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable</td>
<td>11,043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Liabilities</td>
<td>30,928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RiverFirst Campaign Fund</td>
<td>591,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>$633,037</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net Assets</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undesignated</td>
<td>399,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Reserve</td>
<td>410,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RiverFirst</td>
<td>350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment</td>
<td>25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Unrestricted</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,184,450</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporarily Restricted (Programs)</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Net Assets</td>
<td><strong>$1,892,496</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sources of Income

- Individuals: 38%
- Foundations: 20%
- Government: 14%
- Corporations: 12%
- Events: 9%
- Investments: 7%

### Expenses

- Program: 65%
- Development: 18%
- Finance, HR, Board, Operations: 17%

### Investments in Minneapolis Parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$140,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$496,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$3,001,341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$4,748,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>$6,377,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

mplsparksfoundation.org 15
Close to Home

Minnesota’s March 2020 “stay-at-home order … turned Minneapolis’ lakes and parks into an essential resource for people looking for respite,” the Minneapolis StarTribune reported. With parks abruptly packed with visitors, 22 miles of temporarily barricaded parkways made some extra elbow room for hikers, bikers, and walkers. And opportunities emerged to rediscover the spaces and places that make Minneapolis so special.

Your support helps us invest in this vital resource for all. Give today at MplsParksFoundation.org/Donate.

Connect With Us Online!

Facebook: @MplsParksFoundation
Instagram: @MplsParksFoundation
Twitter: @MplsParksFndtn

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