

B.F. Nelson Park Development

A community-led effort to provide an amenity, a community space, and an historical and educational site for the neighborhood; an additional access to the Mississippi River; and a connection to parks, trails and other key river sites.



The Challenge: A Contaminated Vacant Lot

B.F. Nelson, a 14-acre brownfield former industrial site on the Mississippi River, was excess 1970s freeway property later acquired by the Minneapolis Park Board for permanent open space. The 1993 master plan for the site recommends passive open space with connecting trails, opportunities for relaxation and contemplation of the river, fishing and picnicking, historical displays and other interpretive activities. Despite 30 years of diligent and tireless neighborhood advocacy, the site still has not been developed as a park.

Project Features:

After assessment, a remediation action plan based on the master plan was adopted in 2004. In 2006, a \$200,000 EPA cleanup grant, with match from Hennepin County, supported the site cleanup — making park development on the B.F. Nelson site a real possibility for the first time. Much has been learned about the site that was unknown when the 1993 master plan was developed, and these new opportunities should be included in development of the park:

- **Riverfront connections**, thinking of the B.F. Nelson site as an integral part of Boom Island Park and connected to Nicollet Island, and extending the St. Anthony Heritage Trail through the site.
- **Natural landscaping**, using native plantings to enhance the riverfront natural area;
- **Heritage**, interpretation of the rich history of the site and the neighborhood; and
- **Art**, especially the sculpture and other visual arts for which Northeast Minneapolis is known.

Partners:

St. Anthony West Neighborhood Organization (STAWNO), neighborhood artists, Groundwork Minneapolis, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Hennepin County.

Next steps:

Further development of park plans, trail construction, and fundraising.

