



The Falls Initiative

Growth & Healing
through Indigenous
Leadership

#NPC22 #FALLSMPLS

@THEFALLSMPLS @DAYASPIN @KJERSTIDUVAL

WWW.THEFALLS.ORG | WWW.STUDIOCIVIC.ORG



Native American Leadership



**Carrie Day
Aspinwall**

*Native Partnership
Council Facilitator*

*Proprietor, CDA
Enterprises*

*Minnesota Chippewa
Tribe, Leech Lake Band
of Ojibwe, Minneapolis
Urban Band Member*

The Story of the Falls Initiative



**Mark
Andrew**

*President, Friends of
the Falls*

*Former Hennepin
County Commissioner*

Restorative Planning Strategies



**Kjersti
Duval**

*Project Director, the
Falls Initiative*

*Founder, Studio Civic,
a public interest
practice within Duval
Companies*

*Former Minneapolis
Planning Director*



The Story of the Falls Initiative



*Mark Andrew, President
Friends of the Falls*



www.thefalls.org



ABOUT ▾ PROCESS ▾ ENGAGEMENT ▾ TEAM ▾ NEWS ▾ PROCUREMENT 🔍

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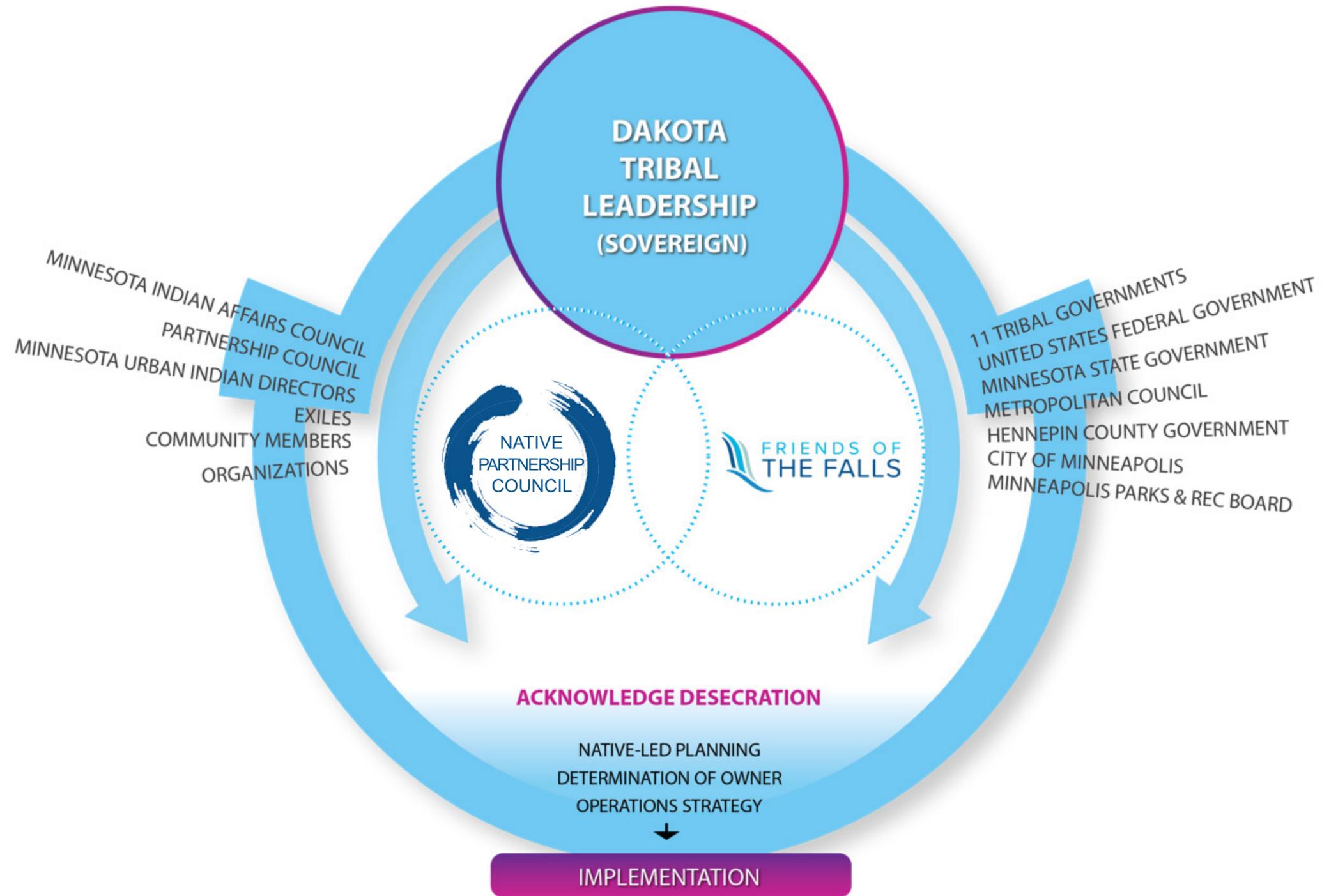
The Falls Initiative

OUR COMMUNITY'S RETURN TO THE RIVER

Join the conversation to shape the future of the Upper Lock.







“On behalf of the City of Minneapolis, I want to tell all of you -- the Native Partnership Council, all of the tribes that are represented here, [President] Shelley Buck, all of the Chairpeople that are with us, and the leaders and elders of our Native community: We are not just with you, we are backing you and what you want to see for this area... We view it as being of critical importance for, yes, in some cases, trying to right the wrong... Pushing for, yes, a land back movement... It is an honor to partner with you.”

~Mayor Jacob Frey



NATIVE PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL
KI CEREMONY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2021





Native American Leadership

Carrie Day Aspinwall

*Minnesota Chippewa Tribe
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
Life Long Urban Band Member
Indian Name “Amik”*

*CDA Enterprises
Special Projects Consultant*

*Specializing in Community
Engagement, relationship
building across tribal and non-
tribal cultures*

*Organizational capacity
building and development*

Native Partnership Council Facilitator The Falls Initiative

Acknowledges the unique status of the Tribes as partners who are central and integral to shaping and steering the process of engagement and vision

To support our local Dakota Tribal members create the future they envision for this historical site

To include other tribal member, urban and rural in gathering their world views and input into vision

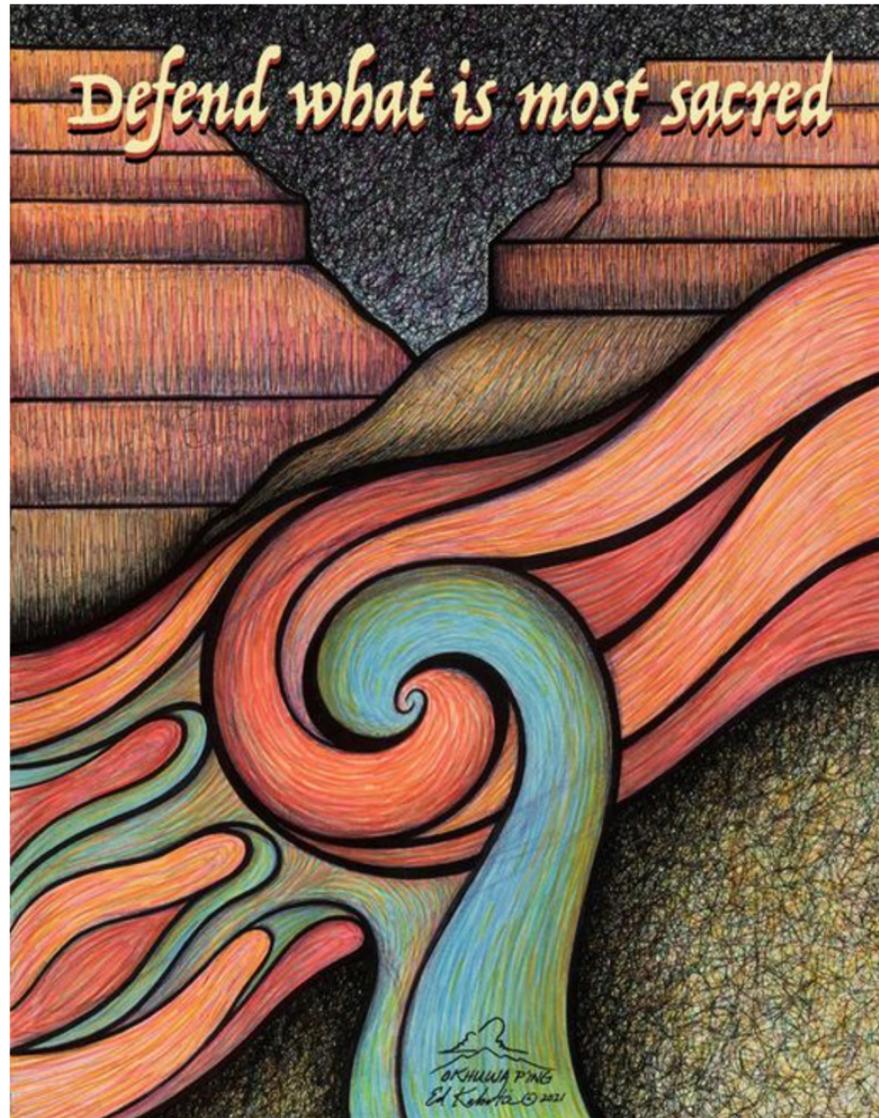




UNDERSTANDING INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEW

An Indigenous worldview is relational. It is holistic, so that the whole is valued more than its parts. People see themselves as deeply connected with everything and everyone around them. To understand one's self requires understanding all

“To speak for those that cannot speak for themselves”



RIGHTS OF NATURE

Rights of nature or **Earth rights** is a legal and jurisprudential theory that describes inherent rights as associated with ecosystems and species, similar to the concept of fundamental human rights.

The rights of nature concept challenges twentieth-century laws as generally grounded in a flawed frame of nature as “resource” to be owned, used, and degraded.

Proponents argue that laws grounded in rights of nature direct humanity to act appropriately and in a way consistent with modern, system-based science, which demonstrates that humans and the natural world are fundamentally interconnected.

Tribal Sovereignty: Uniquely Important

Indian tribes have many rights, but the single most important—and most cherished—is the right of tribal sovereignty, the right to be self-governing.

Values and Traditions

- Native American cultures had a completely different set of values and traditions than Europeans:
 - They considered the land their lifeline and held it in high regard; They often referred to the earth as a motherly figure.
 - They focused on an efficient lifestyle, rarely using more than they needed to avoid wasting resources.
 - Their religious beliefs were tied to nature, and greatly differed from the religious ideas Europe brought.

TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

- Tribal sovereignty includes the right to **govern one's community**, the ability to **preserve one's culture**, and the right to **control one's own economy**. The sovereignty status (tribal sovereignty encompassing Native American military, social, and economic development) of Indian nations still remains today
- Tribal Government to Federal/Local Government relations



CDA



STUDIO CIVIC



FRIENDS OF
THE FALLS

ALWAYS BEGINNING IN A GOOD WAY



“Indigenous Spirituality” refers to the spiritual beliefs and practices that Indigenous peoples identify as being “traditional” or “customary” among Indigenous peoples.

Each convening of the Native Partnership Council opens with ceremony. Here, President Shelley Buck of Prairie Island Indian Community tears a leaf of sage in preparation for smudging. In circle, the Partnership Council is working to define essential underlying values to guide the engagement process.





**Jewell
Arcoren**

*Dakota Lakota,
enrolled member
of the Sisseton
Wahpeton Oyate*



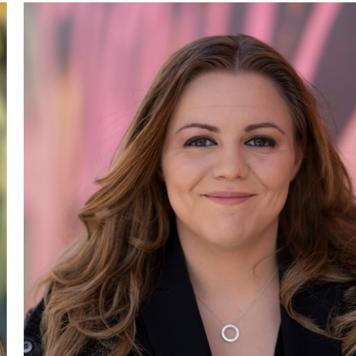
**Juanita
Espinosa**

*Enrolled member of
the Spirit Lak Nation,
Turtle Mountain and
LCO Descendant*



**Maggie
Lorenz**

*Turtle Mountain Band
of Ojibwe, descendant
of Spirit Lake Dakota
Nation*



**Margo Gavle
Prescott**

*Shakopee Mdewakanton
Sioux Community*



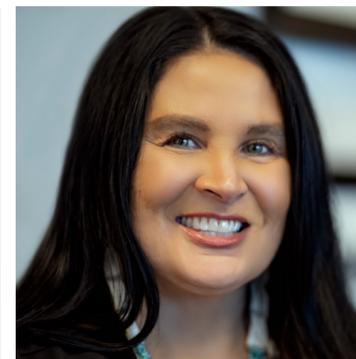
**Janice Bad
Moccasin**

*Member of the Crow
Creek Sioux Tribe*



**Mona
Smith**

*Sisseton-Wahpeton
Dakota*



**Shelley
Buck**

*Vice-President,
Prairie Island Indian
Community*



**Thorne La
Pointe**

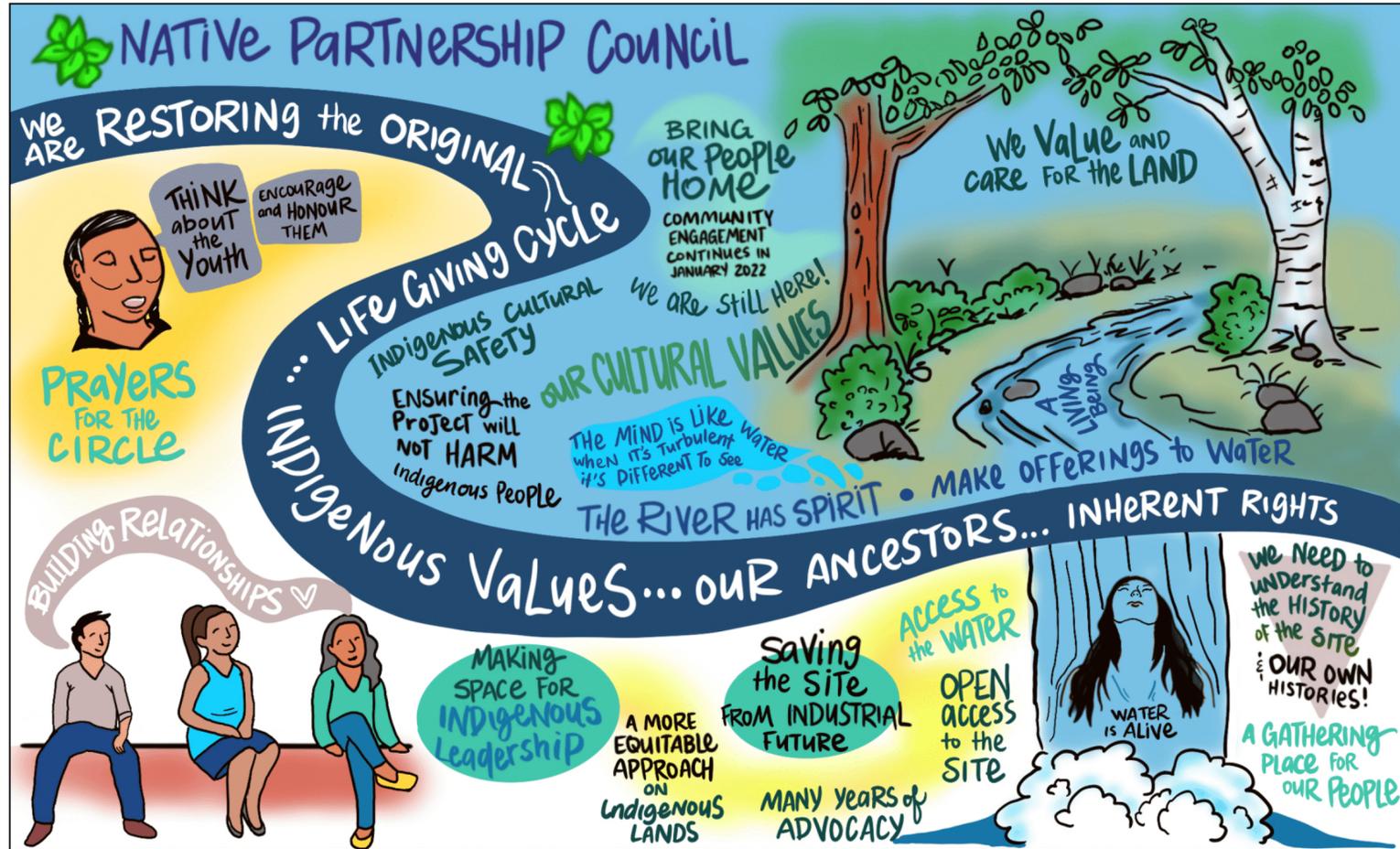
Sicangu Lakota



**Wakinyan
La Pointe**

Sicangu Lakota



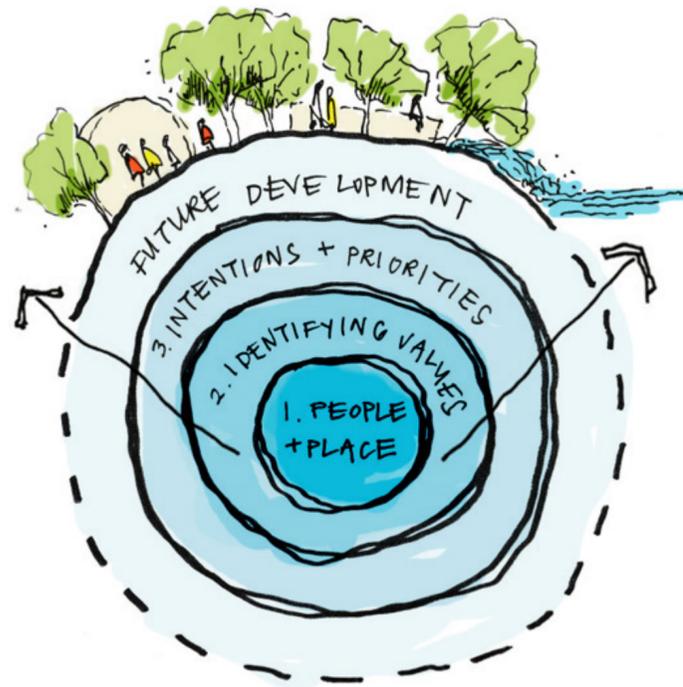


NATIVE PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL ROLES & PRIORITIES

A key component of the Grounding phase was to create and convene the Native Partnership Council to steer the planning process and shape priorities from an Indigenous perspective.

Because the site is located on Dakota homeland, four seats of the Native Partnership Council are reserved for Dakota Tribal leadership or designated representatives. Additional candidates for the Council were identified from the following categories: History Keepers, Spiritual Leadership, Artists, Environmental, Youth/ Young Adult and Exiled Dakota Descendants.





**1. PEOPLE + PLACE:
UNDERSTANDING
SITE & CONTEXT**

- WHAT IS THERE?
- NARRATIVES OF PLACE
- RELATIONSHIPS EXISTING & HIDDEN

**2. IDENTIFYING VALUES:
PROJECT ALIGNMENT**

- WHAT VALUES SHOULD GUIDE THIS PROJECT?
- WHAT SHOULD THIS PLACE MEAN FOR THE FUTURE?

**3. INTENTIONS + PRIORITIES:
CONCEPT PLANS**

- WHAT RELATIONSHIPS, ACTIVITIES & CONNECTIONS SHOULD HAPPEN HERE?
- WHAT IDEAS CONNECT VALUES TO THIS PLACE?

The River is a Spirit/ Mní Wicóni (Water is Life)

- The River is bigger and older than us, she supports us
- River is a living Spirit
- Water is medicine
- River can live without us, we cannot live without River
- River is living, changing, fluctuating, shifting
- Lock and Dam desecrated the River
- Water is unhealthy today

A Place of Connection

- Sugaring Camps and annual gathering
- River Portage connected people of many Nations
- Many relations nourished by the river
- Anishinabe and Dakota meeting place
- Unique ecologies above and below
- Lock, Dam tried to connect navigation
- Mills supported many cultures over time
- Industrialization extracted from region to this place
- Opportunity to connect generations
- Opportunity to connect cultures to Dakota ways
- Connecting People to the River

A Place of Power

- Owamni Yomni (Falls)
- Wita Wanagi (Spirit Island)
- Birth and Life
- Spiritual Power vs. Industrial Power
- Colonization, control, erasure
- Power of language and naming
- Power in restoring the sacredness of this place

A Place to Restore a Story Disrupted

- Restoring a story disrupted
- Need for healing through access
- Need for truth of the history of the Dakota
- Place for ceremony
- Place to see and learn Dakota ways of knowing
- Restore health and life of water and larger River
- Restore the presence of Wita Wanagi (Spirit Island)
- Language and naming are essential

PRIORITIES

- The Native Partnership Council has designed a traditional process for finding consensus among Native Partnership Council members.
- Acknowledge Core Dakota principles and values.
- Agree on Priorities (Emerging Themes).



Restorative Planning Strategies



***Kjersti Duval, Founder
Studio Civic | Duval Companies***

Iconic projects. Public interest. Critical path.

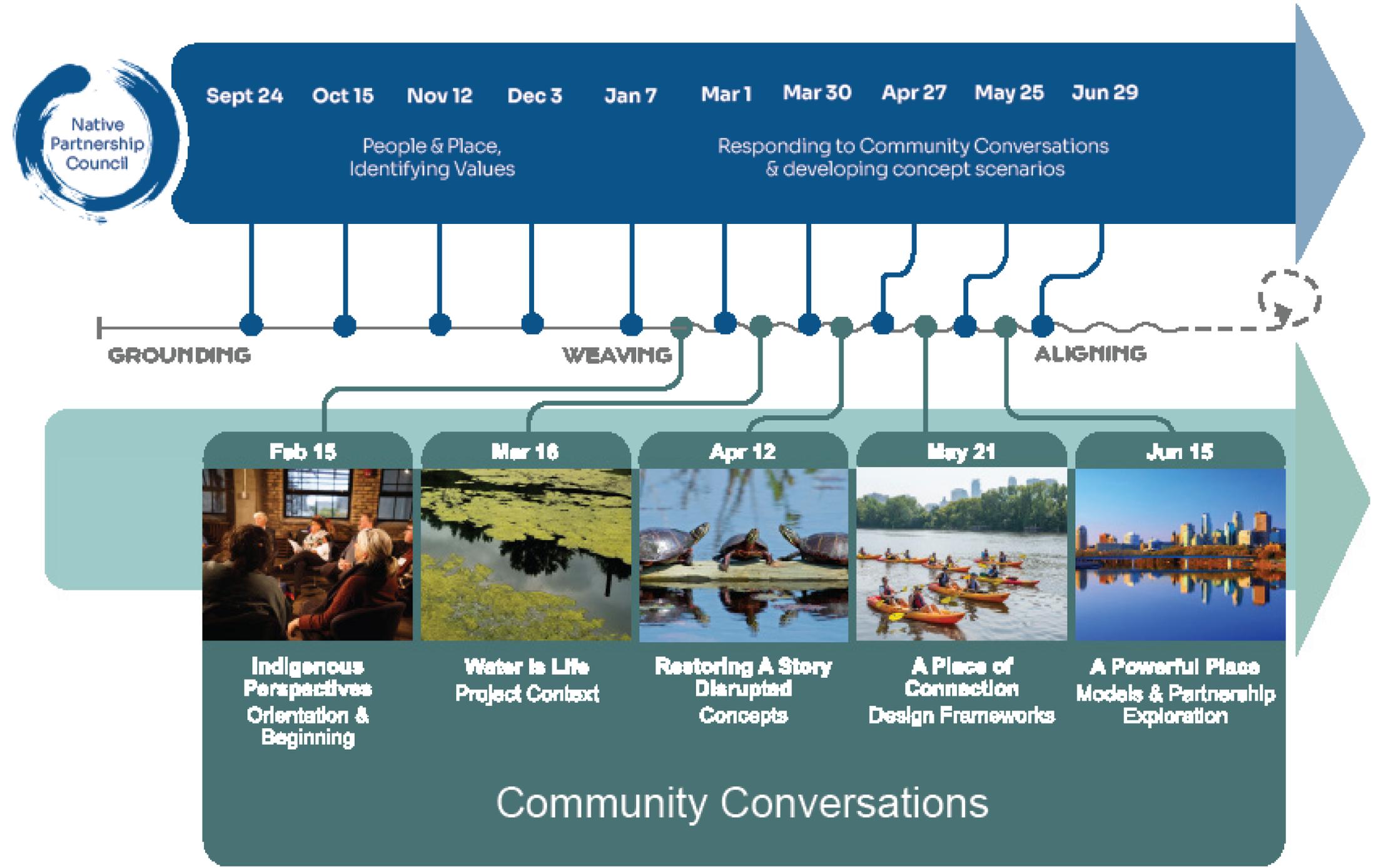
www.studiocivic.org

www.duvalcompanies.com



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Weaving the Native Partnership Council process in with a broad public engagement effort was a key innovation.



INNOVATION & ADAPTATION

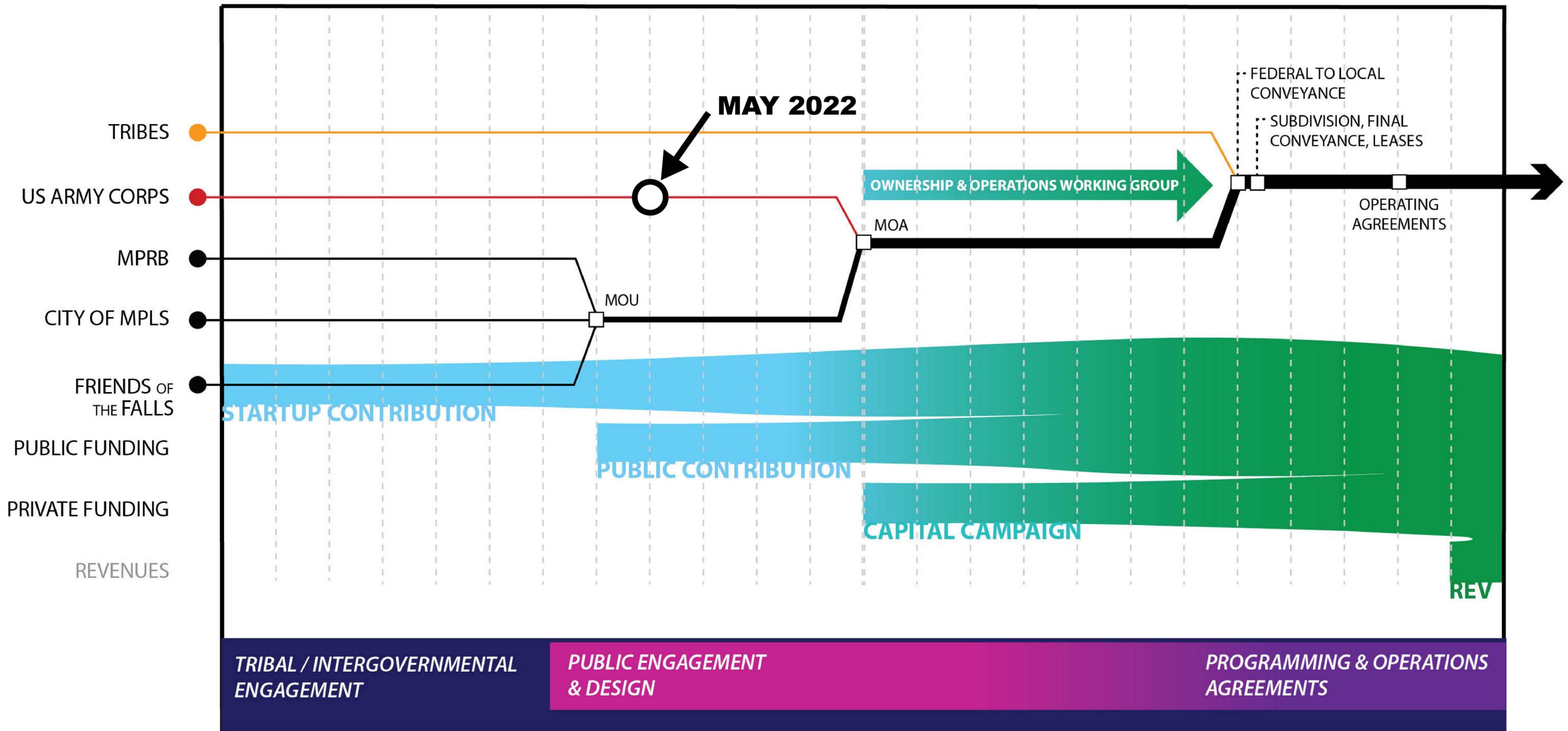
ENGAGEMENT

- Native-led process & decision-making
- Weaving & alignment between indigenous perspectives and broader public engagement
- Shared communications authority
- Centered on creative production, visual media & storytelling

IMPLEMENTATION

- Partnership between Friends of the Falls and the City of Minneapolis has enabled us to more effectively pursue **legislation, appropriations, conveyance**, in a way that benefits both parties. (MOU)
- Placemaking, ownership & operations focused on restoring the story disrupted (evolving)
- Considering a community investment component to our capital raise, and innovation around inclusive economic benefits.





PHASE 1: COALITION BUILDING >> GROUNDWORK FOR LEGISLATION



PHASE 2: INFORM & CONNECT >> GROWING PUBLIC AWARENESS



PHASE 3: GROUNDING >> PLANS & PARTNERSHIPS



PHASE 4: ENGAGE >> PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



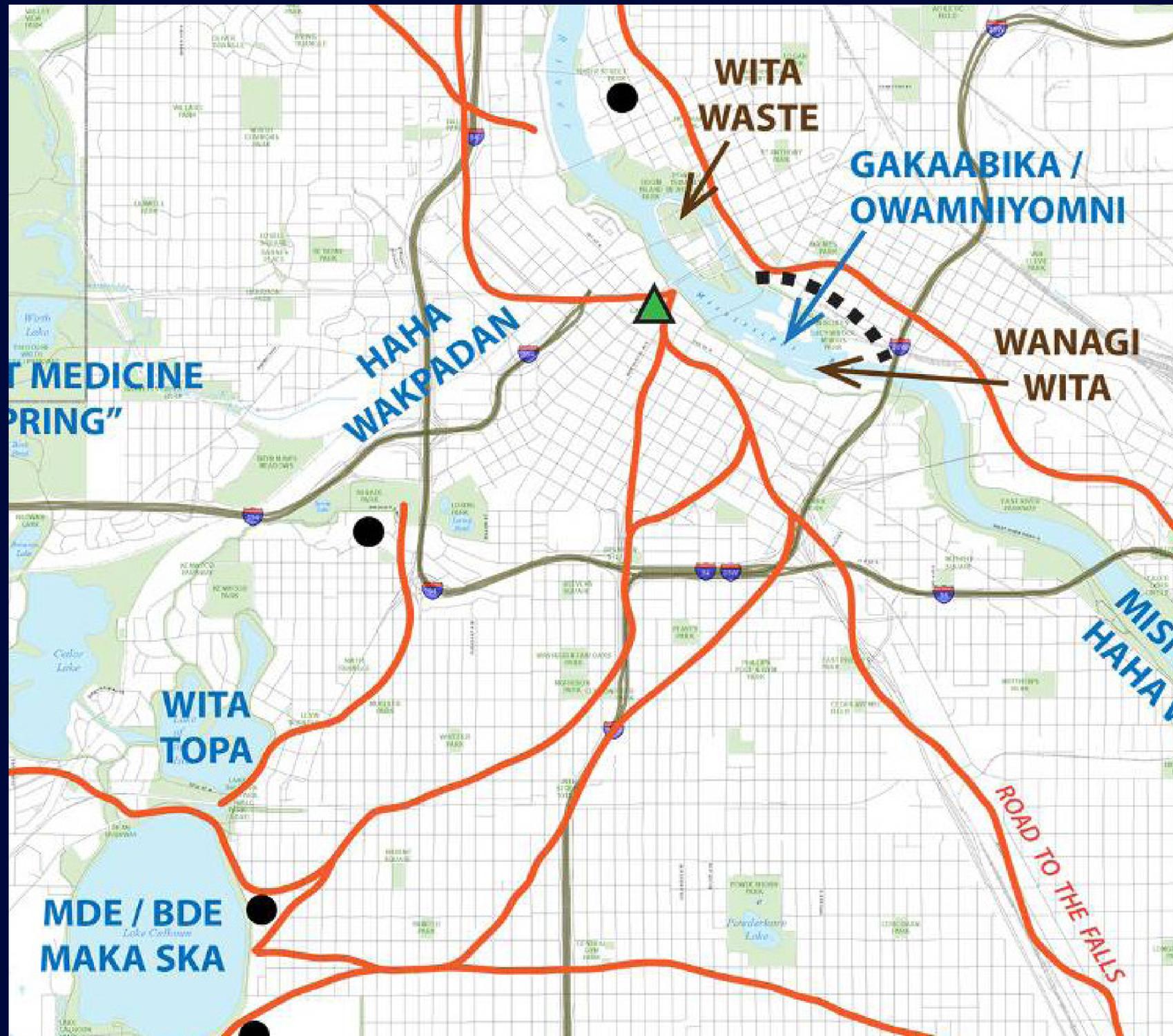
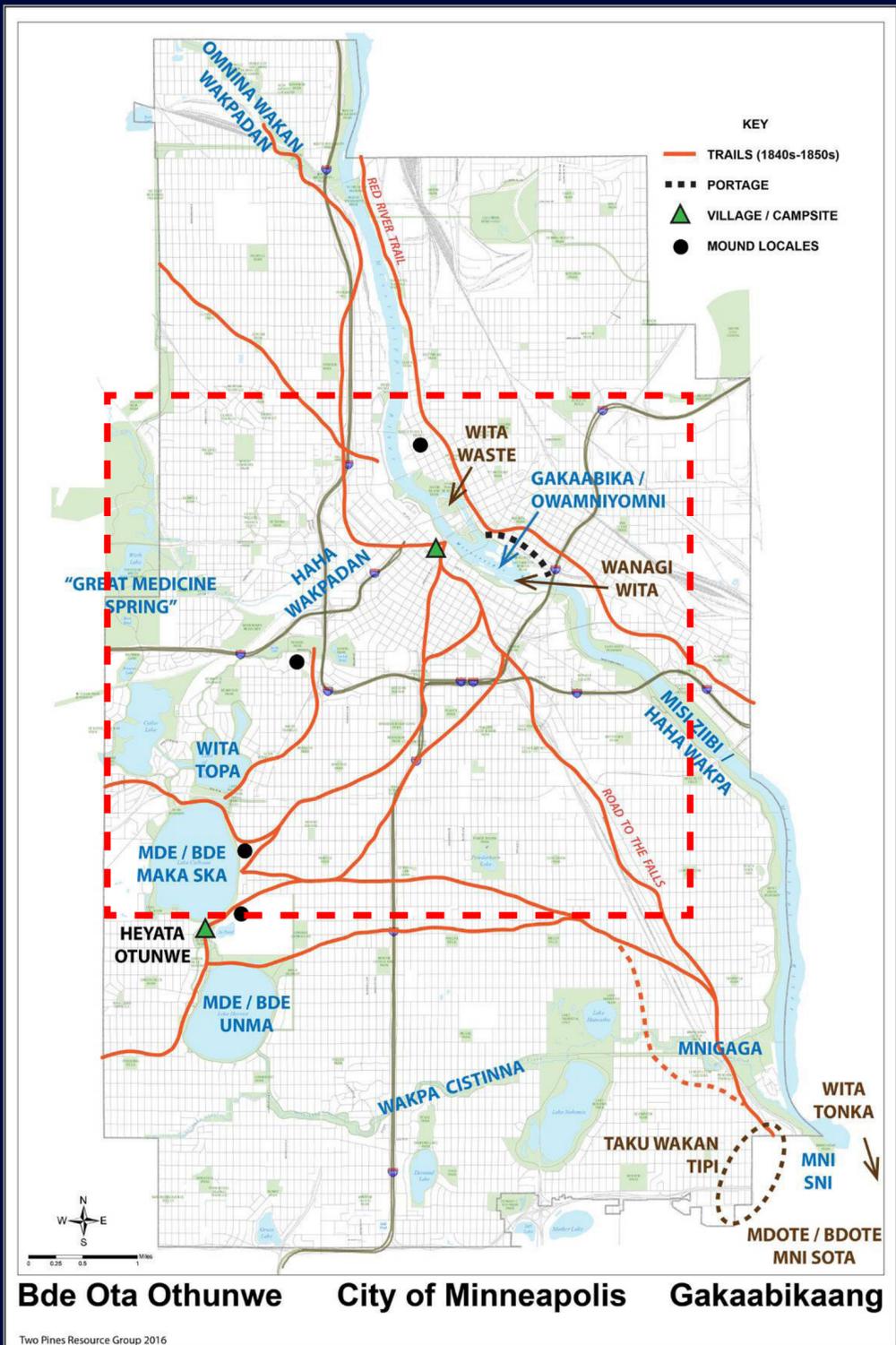
PHASE 5: ALIGN >> ALIGNMENT & PROGRAMMING

ONGOING

PHASE 6: RESPOND >> CONCEPT DESIGN

SUMMER & FALL 2022

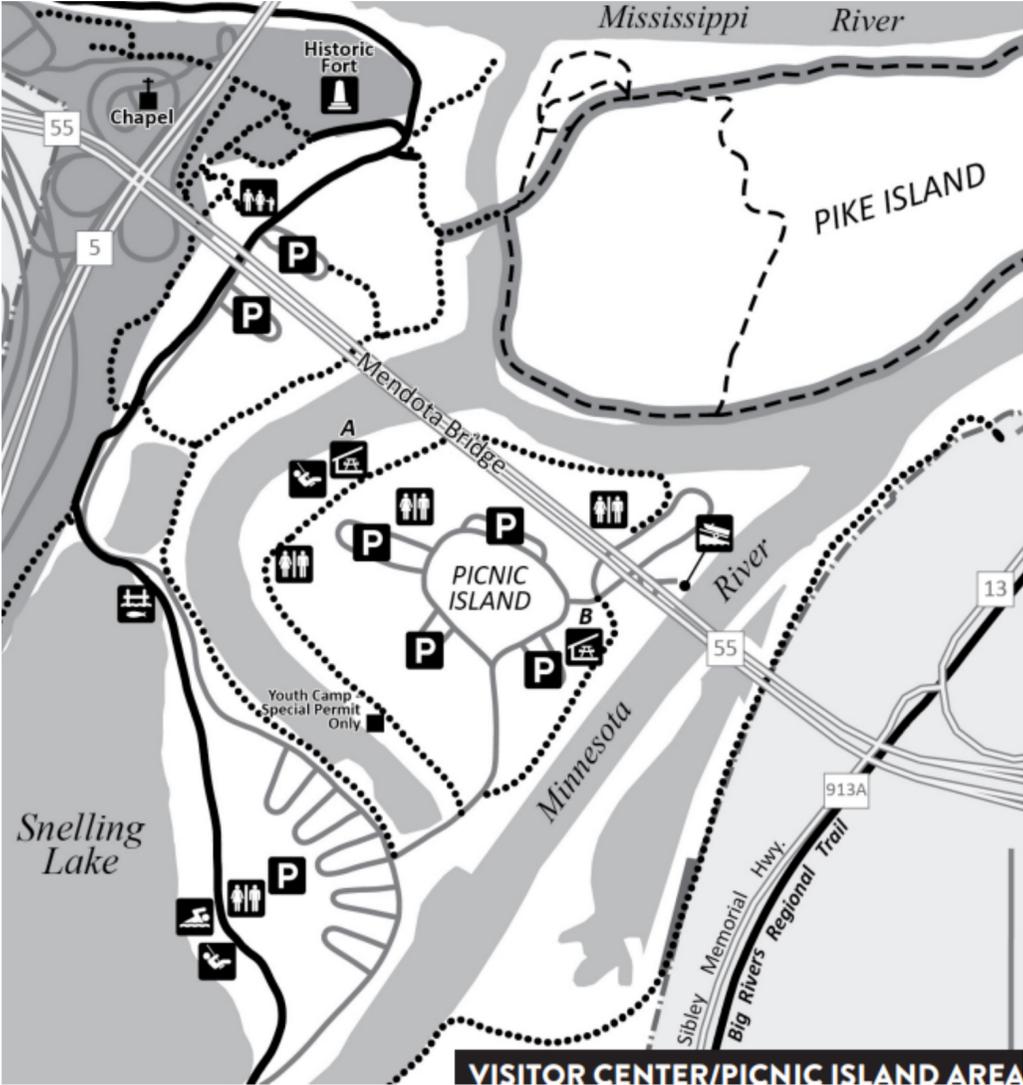




The indigenous landscape is still here.



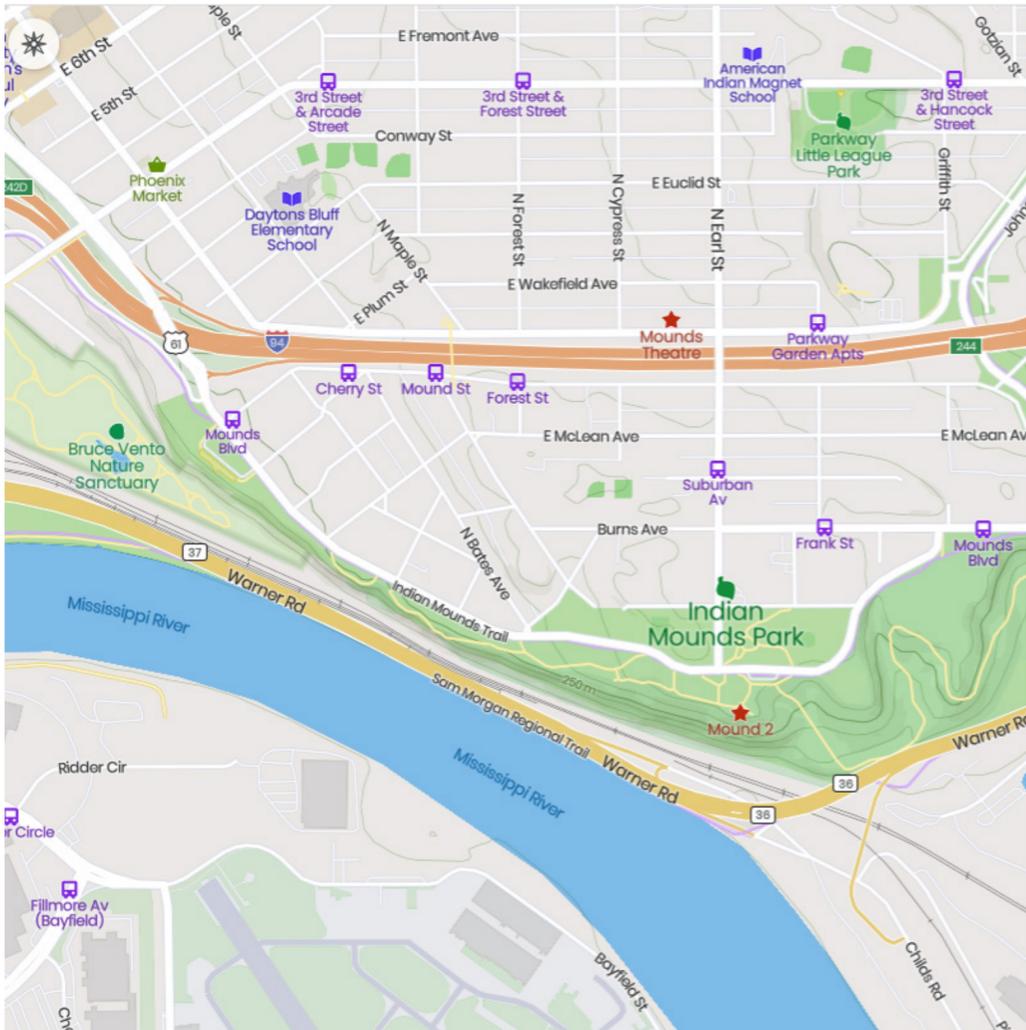
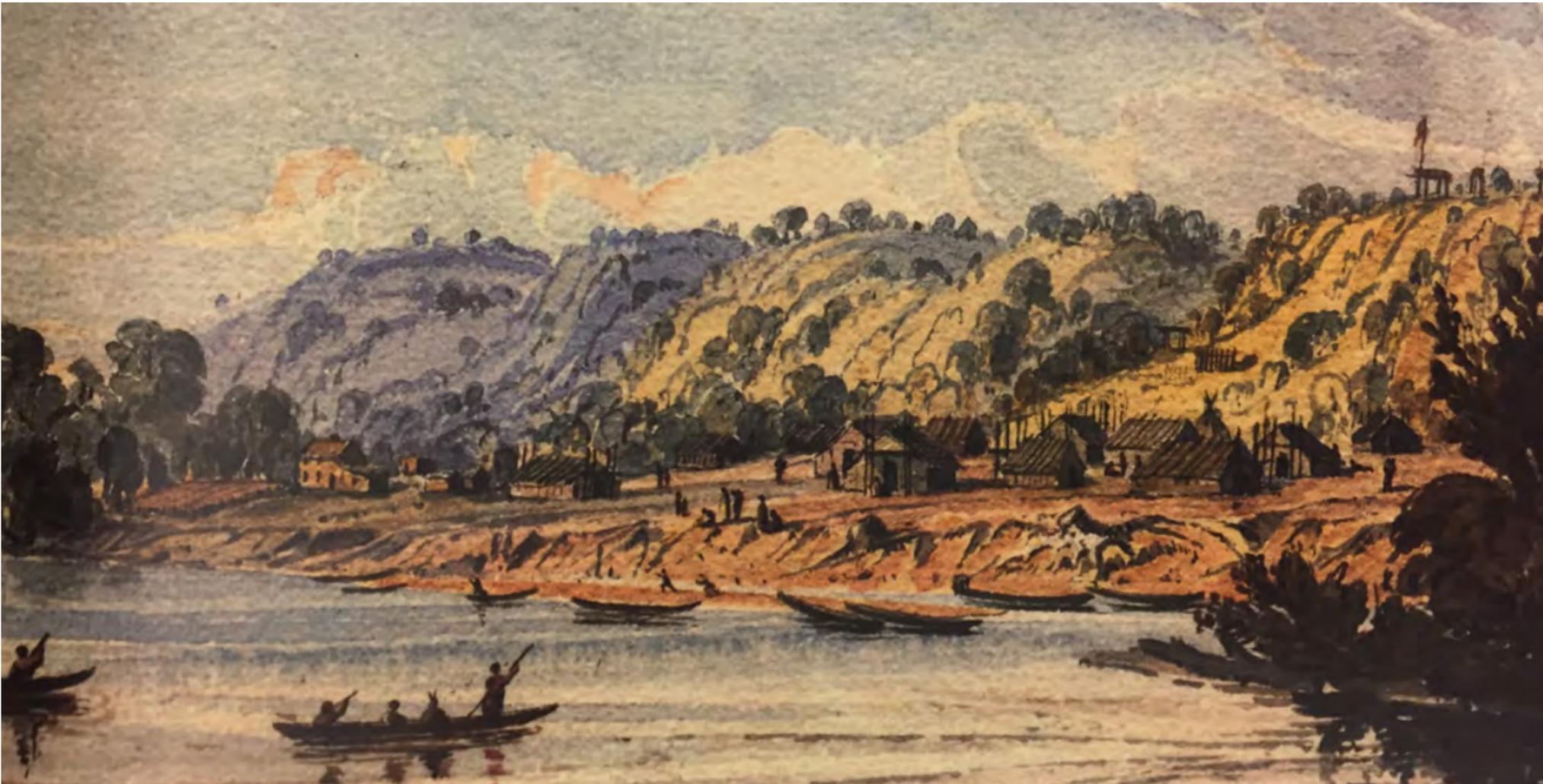
BDOE / FORT SNELLING



Many significant sites and pathways in our communities were, and continue to be, significant to indigenous people too. Their significance persists, and is re-emerging.



WAKAN TIPI / INDIAN MOUNDS PARK



OWAMNIYOMNI / ST. ANTHONY FALLS





- 2015 Lock Closed
- 2016 Friends of Falls (FOF) makes \$5 million contribution to project
- 2017 City and Park Board express preliminary interest in the matter to US Army Corps
City passes a resolution adding Upper Lock to its bonding priority list
- 2018 City of Minneapolis passes a resolution to support the Falls Initiative
US Congress passes legislation to expedite Upper Lock partial disposition (WRDA 2018)
- 2019 Senators Klobuchar and Smith send a letter to USACE encouraging action
Mayor Frey sends a letter to USACE encouraging action
USACE completes implementation guidance for the 2018 legislation
- 2020 US Congress directs conveyance of the Lock to the City or its designee (WRDA 2020)
- 2021 Native Partnership Council is formed and convened
Government to Government Consultation, City & Mni Sota Dakota leadership
FOF obtains a \$2.8 million grant from the State of Minnesota for project (ENRTF Fund)
FOF commits an additional \$2.5 million to the Falls, matching the state grant.
- 2022 FOF MOU with City of Minneapolis and Minneapolis Park Board executed
City passes resolution to accept contributed funds from FOF for cost share

COMING UP:

- Provide an update to the Mni Sota Dakota tribal leadership
- Pursue federal appropriations/direction to USACE - maintenance, ecosystem restoration (EW 2023)
- Expand our knowledge of programming and partnership opportunities in the community
- Consider not only government actors, but nonprofits and other interested parties representing community interests in defining operations strategy





Professional Certificate in Cultural Heritage Tourism



AFFINITY LINKS TO EXPLORE:

<https://www.aianta.org/>

<https://business.gwu.edu/>

FALLS PROJECT LINKS TO EXPLORE:

Friends of the Falls website homepage:

www.thefalls.org

The Falls Initiative Engagement homepage:

www.thefalls.org/engage/

The Falls Initiative Immersive Gallery:

www.thefalls.org/immersive-exhibit

The Falls Initiative Community Engagement Plan:

[Click to view or download the Plan](#)



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Q&A



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