

“Nature offers us such advantages as no other city could rival, and such as if properly developed would exhibit the highest attainment of art.”

—H. W. S. CLEVELAND,
landscape architect for the Twin Cities park systems, speaking in an 1888 lecture.

AS THE SETTING FOR ASLA’s 2006 Annual Meeting, Minnesota’s lakes, prairies, cities, and rivers tell a fascinating story of civic planning and environmental stewardship. More than a century ago, with the inspiration of H.W. S. Cleveland, Minneapolis and St. Paul planned and built one of the most connected urban park systems in the world. More recently, in projects ranging from city plazas and transit malls to parks and sculpture gardens, Minnesota has supported some of the nation’s most innovative landscape architecture.

Partly because of the contributions of generations of landscape architects to park planning and urban design, the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, along with



the entire state of Minnesota, consistently land at the top of “quality of life” rankings for education, health care, charitable giving, and even library book circulation. Despite their differences and rivalry, Minneapolis and St. Paul are both river cities on opposite sides of the Mississippi.

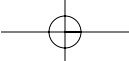
Today, the Twin Cities are part of a metropolitan region that stretches well into western Wisconsin and 50 miles in all directions. The regional economy competes on a global basis and with other regions such as Denver, Seattle, and Kansas City. Parks and open spaces designed by landscape architects remain one of the most important quality of life assets. More than deep-freeze winters and certain overscaled shopping malls, an ongoing legacy of civic investments

STEVEN DAHLMAN, PHOTO; AUTHOR'S COLLECTION, POSTCARDS



Beacon of A

Minneapolis, host city for the 2006 ASLA Annual Meeting & Exp

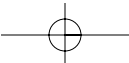


Once a great milling city with extraordinary parks and river drives, as seen in the postcards, *opposite*, Minneapolis is today one of the leading arts centers in the Midwest. A recent civic landmark, the immense Spoonbridge and Cherry Fountain by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, *here*, lies at the center of the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden.



Arts and Landscape

ing & Expo and the 43rd IFLA World Congress, October 6–9, 2006. By FRANK EDGERTON MARTIN





Long the city's retail core, Nicollet Avenue was transformed into one of the first transit malls by Lawrence Halprin in the mid-1960s. Today, its rebuilt design is most vibrant during lunch hour and Thursday farmers' markets.

In projects ranging from city plazas and transit malls to parks and sculpture gardens, Minnesota has supported some of the nation's most innovative landscape architecture.

in universities, parks, museums, orchestras, and health care says who we really are.

Despite the forces of corporate mergers and globalization, the Twin Cities remain both culturally and economically rooted in the Upper Midwest. For generations, the Twin Cities' cultural and economic "sphere of influence" has reached from western Wisconsin through the Dakotas and into Montana. This immense and continuing inland empire focuses on the Twin Cities rail hub and the Ninth Federal Reserve District now headquartered at the historic meeting point of Hennepin Avenue and the Mississippi River. The Twin Cities sphere also happens to roughly reflect the reach of the Minnesota Twins baseball radio network.

The rich agricultural landscapes within this sprawling region directly shaped the economy and urban structure of the Twin Cities. Today, the vestiges of the connection between city and rural landscape are everywhere. For example, at the northern edge of the Minneapolis Warehouse District along Washington Avenue, immense masonry buildings once housed agricultural implement makers such as John Deere and International Harvester. Now undergoing conversion to condominiums, these buildings date from 1880 to 1915, a time when Minneapolis served as a farm equip-

ment shipping point for farms throughout the state, the Dakotas, and the wheat fields of Montana and western Canada.

In return, grains, including wheat, millet, and oats, were shipped back to Minneapolis for processing at the immense conglomeration of mills in the St. Anthony Falls Milling District, a riverfront industry that continued on a large scale into the 1950s. On the east bank of the falls, the Pillsbury Company grew to world renown. Built in 1881, the six-story Pillsbury "A" Mill was until quite recently still used for packaging flour. Its thick limestone walls and high-ceilinged structure are ideal for new living spaces now in construction. Across the river on the west bank, the Washburn-Crosby Company complex grew into today's General Mills. One of the best ways to learn about the city's milling history is to visit the Mill City Museum and take the Mississippi Mile walk through Mill Ruins Park and across the Stone Arch Bridge, a graceful curving structure listed as a National Historic Engineering Landmark. (See Linda Mack's description of this area and several St. Paul parks in the adjoining article, page 130.)

Much of the wealth generated during the milling boom years between 1880 and 1930 stayed in the community through charitable foundations. Because of the immense park system, the

“Mill City” was able to repackage itself as “The City of Lakes” sometime in the 1930s.

The best way to understand Minneapolis’s landscape legacy is to walk through the retail corridor of the Nicollet Mall and along Hennepin Avenue, the city’s “Great White Way” of theaters and other entertainment. At the citywide scale, ASLA is organizing tours of the Twin Cities park system and visits to such landmarks as the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, about half an hour west of the city. The following are some tours visitors can take on their own.

Greenway Walk: From Nicollet Mall to the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden

Thanks to too much surface parking, years of public works projects that omitted street trees, and the city’s network of second-level skyways connecting buildings, downtown is not the most friendly place to walk, especially in the winter or in blazing summer sun. Visitors will quickly note how few street-level stores there are on many downtown streets. The reason is that all of the retail life and pedestrians are inside, moving through the skyways where almost all of downtown’s small stores and cafés can be found.

Yet, there is one street that still has many stores: the Nicollet Mall. It is possible to walk in a parklike setting all the way from Minoru Yamasaki’s arching Northwestern Life building at the base of Nicollet Mall to the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden and the Walker Art Center on downtown’s western edge. From here, you can drive or bike the Grand Rounds park system that, as envisioned by Cleveland, connects the streams and lakes to the entire city.

During the 1960s, downtown Minneapolis also saw pioneering design. Then largely unknown outside the West Coast, Lawrence Halprin, FASLA, designed the curving Nicollet Mall at the heart of Minneapolis’s retail core. It was promoted as the first transit mall in the world to integrate transportation with the art of landscape architecture. “So we have begun a search for a new form,” Halprin said in a speech on the mall’s dedication in 1967, “a street form, which will bring dignity back into the city.” The mall was an instant success, boosting retail sales by 10 percent in the first year of operation.

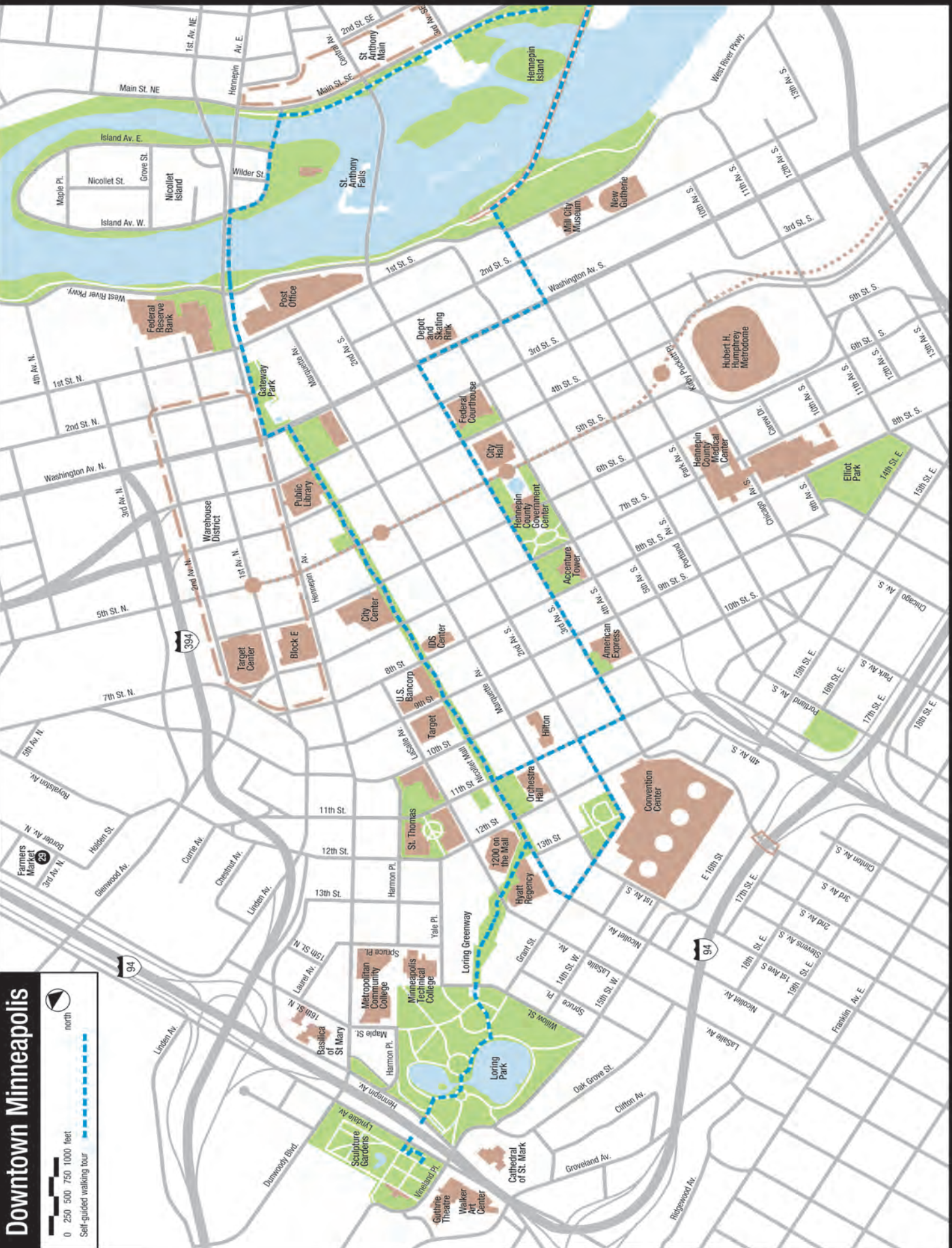
Running from Washington Avenue to 15th Street near the Convention Center, Nicollet Mall has proven to be a major maintenance challenge. When the mall was built in the 1960s, it included a curving bus lane and passenger shelters that played baroque music. On winter mornings, heated sidewalks melted snow for a steamy effect that worked magically with the music and the rhythm of the lamps and trees that Halprin “scored” as if they were an urban dance.

Unfortunately, Halprin’s circular brick intersections, elegant slate paving, and custom light fixtures did not stand up well to Minnesota’s winters, especially each year’s numerous freeze–thaw cycles and road salt. In the early 1990s, landscape architects and planners from URS Corporation devised a nearly complete rebuilding of the mall with what was thought to be more durable granite materials and a shallower curve in the bus lane to accommodate more outdoor cafés. The cafés did emerge, but the granite paver installation proved problematic because the mortar bed



The grassy drumlins at Martha Schwartz’s Federal Courts Plaza, top, remain a somewhat hostile environment for both vegetation and human visitors. On downtown’s western edge, Loring Park, middle, is the site of festivals and the historic entry from downtown to the Grand Rounds park system. A monument to civic optimism, Peavey Plaza, above, is one of the finest modernist urban plazas in the country.

CHRIS FAUST, TOP; © 2003 CHRIS GREGERSON, MIDDLE; CHARLENE K. ROISE, BOTTOM



Downtown Minneapolis

0 250 500 750 1000 feet
Self-guided walking tour

installation did not stand up to freeze–thaw cycles. The weight of passing buses also moved and disrupted the paving. Landscape architects from Minneapolis-based Dahlgren, Shardlow & Uban Incorporated devised a new grout solution that, at least for the past three winters, has survived to stabilize the pavers. The paving in front of the new library at 4th Street will be the first large mall segment to test the new system. If you turn south on 4th Street and walk two blocks down to Third Avenue, you will encounter the forested drumlinlike berms designed by Martha Schwartz, ASLA, for the Federal Courts Building (*Landscape Architecture*, August 1999).

Along the mall, you will notice a number of notable public artworks by local artists including Stanton Sears's boatlike stone bench at 7th Street and Brad Goldberg's black granite boulders and rough-cut stone piers flanking the entrance of the nearby U.S. Bank building. Most of these artworks were part of the URS redesign. The kitschy Mary Tyler Moore sculpture at 7th Street is a bit more commercial in origin, a donation from a cable television network.

Between 7th and 8th streets, step into the IDS Center's Crystal Court. Built in 1971 and designed by Philip Johnson, the IDS Center was America's first true mixed-use modern skyscraper and remains far more successful than many later attempts at mixed-use towers. From all four directions, the skyway system converges here, bringing a constant flow of shoppers and downtown workers. Water cascades from the glassy roof into a circular granite fountain set amidst a bosque of olive trees and benches recently added by Minneapolis-based Hammel, Green, and Abrahamson (HGA).

One of the highlights of Nicollet Mall is Peavey Plaza, a water-filled oasis between 11th and 12th streets donated by the Peavey Milling Company in the early 1970s and designed by M. Paul Friedberg, FASLA. Peavey was built as part of the new home for the Minnesota Orchestra, a playful and acoustically superb facility designed by Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates of New York, who also designed the rather Egyptian-looking WCCO television station to the east.

Unfortunately, the Minneapolis Department of Public Works is Peavey's designated caretaker. In the September 2004 issue of *Landscape Architecture*, historian Charlene K. Roise published a stinging indictment of the city's maintenance of Peavey Plaza that has broader implications for the gradual loss of modern landscape masterpieces across the country. Roise argued that, given Minnesota's harsh climate, Peavey's wonderful character-defining features, including Friedberg's trademark sloping berms, square pavers, and honey locusts, are fast disappearing. She bemoans the encroachments at all scales: "The berms have been replaced with hard-edged terraces of concrete block and railroad ties holding garden shrubs better suited for a suburban lawn."

Minnesota's ASLA chapter is currently completing a Historic American Landscape Survey report and a management plan. But direct action is needed to transfer maintenance to a more competent public or private agency. With luck, private corporate sponsorship can ensure long-term care for Peavey's fountains, plantings, lighting, and hard surfaces.

Continuing west on the Nicollet Mall between 13th and Grant streets, landscape architects will also be able to see where HGA



The dashed blue line in the downtown landscape tour map, *opposite*, illustrates a good way to combine the Nicollet Mall/Greenway walk with the Federal Reserve and the Mississippi River. The recently discovered watercolor on linen drawing by H. W. S. Cleveland, *top*, shows his original concept for Central Park (now Loring) as influenced by Parisian and English precedents. More than a century later, Diana Balmori designed the Loring Park Garden of the Seasons, *above*, near where Cleveland originally called for a parterre at the park's center.



One of downtown's largest works of landscape architecture is the Minneapolis Federal Reserve campus, which includes an inlaid map of downtown Minneapolis landmarks and bronze sculptures showing historic change on the riverfront.

It is possible to walk in a parklike setting from Nicollet Mall to the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden and the Walker Art Center on downtown's western edge.

recently renovated this block-long segment with stamped colored concrete—another inappropriate update that is neither compatible with Halprin's original nor the quality stone in the later redesign by URS. Most of this small segment near the convention center is durable for the climate and relatively low maintenance. But such incremental changes are all too frequent in the aging high-profile landscape projects around the Twin Cities.

Yet another example of such neglect can be found just next door on Loring Greenway, also designed by Friedberg as a diagonal walking path and bikeway that cuts across the street grid to link the mall and Loring Park. Slowly, Friedberg's adventure playgrounds and wood trellises are being replaced with modern playground equipment. Built in the late 1970s, the greenway created an open-space amenity for one of downtown's first residential zones to be built since 1920. Today, more than 30,000 people live downtown, with major grocery stores and more loft conversions on the way.

At the end of the greenway, visitors arrive at Loring Park, designed by Cleveland as the city's Central Park. Loring continues

to be an active place with winter skating and tennis, and the recent design for the Loring Park Garden of the Seasons by Diana Balmori, ASLA, is one of the few formal garden spaces downtown. Located just north of the footbridge at the center of Loring Park, this circular garden is ringed with birch trees and benches, and is one of the best spots from which to experience Loring Park's stream of visitors throughout the day. Through the summer and fall, the garden blooms with perennials and some annuals that contrast with surrounding evergreens and shrubs.

Visitors can reach the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden from Loring Park by crossing the Irene Hixon Whitney Footbridge designed by Minnesotan Siah Armajani. A joint project of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and Walker Art Center, the Sculpture Garden was built in two phases, the first of which includes a formal collection of outdoor courts and a conservatory designed by Peter Rothschild, FASLA, of New York's Quennell and Rothschild, and Edward Larabee Barnes. The centerpiece of the 1988 first phase is the immense Spoonbridge and Cherry Fountain by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen. On sunny

COURTESY HOK

days, the water flying outward from the cherry stem glistens beautifully against the sky as a perpetual rainbow.

The Spoonbridge and Cherry Fountain is surrounded by water and reeds, an indication of the peaty soils and high water table on the site. Once the bed of the Mississippi River, this area was long known as the Armory Gardens in memory of the nineteenth-century brick armory that sank into the ground here. Wisely, the city realized that parkland was the best use. To the north of the fountain, a 1990s expansion designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates is a pastoral extension of the Quennell and Rothschild original design, and includes an elegant metallic trellis.

**City Walk: History Fake and Real
In the Hennepin Theatre District**

Long the entertainment core, Hennepin Avenue stretches from 36th Street and Lakewood Cemetery through downtown and across the Mississippi River. You can start the downtown trek one block north of Nicollet Mall at 10th Street and walk east toward the Mississippi River. With three recently renovated historic theaters, the Orpheum, Pantages, and State, the Hennepin Theatre District has a growing critical mass of venues to draw visitors year-round. In its heyday, this stretch of Hennepin Avenue once boasted more than 30 working vaudeville, burlesque, and legitimate theaters. Yet, by the 1950s, the remaining houses were converted to movie theaters and Hennepin continued to decline until the city and the Hennepin Theatre Trust worked to restore the theaters and improve the streetscape.

Between 10th and 5th streets, HGA designed a streetscape alive with trees, historic double acorn globe street lamps, and a revival of marquee and retail signage along buildings. Completed in 2004, the streetscape suffers from occasional litter and paving details that seem to attract cigarette butts; it was designed with off-the-shelf rather than custom features and materials for hard urban use. Overall, the street is vastly improved. It now serves, as the Theatre Trust intended, as a “lobby” for all of the theaters. Street-lamp banners, newspaper boxes, kiosks, and light boxes promoting upcoming shows bring color to the street both day and night.

While the theaters convey a genuine history in their continuity of purpose and architectural details, “Block E,” the controversial wedding-cake “lifestyle center” between 6th and 7th streets, does not. Since the urban renewal efforts of the 1960s that decimated the historic downtown in the Gateway district between 4th Street and the Mississippi, Minneapolis has achieved a rather poor record of historic preservation. Well into the 1980s, historic downtown buildings such as Printers Row, the original home of many newspapers, were lost to development corporations seeking to collect parcels for future building sites. These sites can often sit as surface parking lots for years until the right conditions come along for a new office tower or housing project.

The city also abhors untidiness, as epitomized by Hennepin Avenue’s Block E, once the site of various bars including the somewhat colorful Moby Dick’s, whose slogan was, quite memorably, “For a Whale of a Drink.” Thus, a generation ago, the intemperate block was flattened for a city-owned parking lot. After years of desperately seeking a new entertainment project, the city heavily subsidized what was initially called “The Minneapolis Lifestyle Centre” by its Chicago developers. Today, this monument to false



Now 18 years old, the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, middle, and the Cowles Conservatory, top and above, have aged gracefully, with allées of lindens and maple woodlands maturing rapidly.

© 2001 CHRIS GREGERSON, TOP; COURTESY WALKER ART CENTER, MIDDLE AND BOTTOM

historic facades has the same Hard Rock Café and other chains found in similar downtown projects around the country. Time will tell if this bit of contrived urban dazzle endures.

Across 6th Street, more solid history returns with the high-Victorian Hennepin Center for the Arts, a former Masonic temple that houses several arts organizations and performance spaces. At 4th Street, Hennepin suddenly changes from nineteenth-century commercial district to Radiant City with the new central library on the southern edge and the Federal Reserve anchoring the former “Bridge Square,” where the city’s first bridge linked the east and west banks.

One of downtown’s largest works of landscape architecture, the Minneapolis Federal Reserve campus, was born of compromise. In exchange for the loss of historic masonry buildings that formed the last piece of historic Bridge Square, the Federal Reserve and HOK created a new design with riverfront promenades, a plaza facing Hennepin, a sculpture garden to the north, and multiple pedestrian connections to the river (some of which were closed after September 11, 2001). Despite a 21-foot drop-off from the front door to the river’s edge, the Fed is one of the few places in downtown Minneapolis where the Mississippi is actually visible from surface streets (*Landscape Architecture*, March 2002).

The Federal Reserve site spreads along the Mississippi banks in three distinct spaces, each designed to satisfy circulation, security, and historic district requirements. On the southern and downtown end, the Hennepin Avenue plaza marks the site of the former Great Northern Railroad Station and Bridge Square. HOK designed a gentle row of 25-foot Kasota stone light towers that announce the plaza as one travels west across the newly rebuilt Hennepin Avenue Bridge. For visitors, one of the best public art surprises is a group of five bronze castings by a local foundry, Gruppo, that illuminates in three dimensions various stages in the growth of the now largely lost Bridge Square.

Parkway Tour

Most Minneapolis convention visitors never leave downtown to experience the Twin Cities parks. For landscape architects, this tour is an essential part of understanding the immersion of the Twin Cities in nature. You can start this tour at the Walker Art Center and the Sculpture Garden. By car, it’s possible to travel

Lakes and Mississippi River Landscapes

By Linda Mack

JOKES ABOUT St. Paulites who’ve never been to Minneapolis aside, the Twin Cities are more siblings than twins. They share geography, climate, civic consciousness, and the Mississippi River but project their own distinct characters. St. Paul, the historic head of navigation, features narrow streets, a close-packed downtown, and three sterling squares framed by historic buildings: Rice Park, Mears Park, and Irvine Park. Minneapolis, home to St. Anthony Falls, the Mississippi’s only waterfall, boasts wide streets, a predictable grid, and Horace W. S. Cleveland’s famous parkways tracing the lakes and river.

A visit to the following four landmark landscapes will give a taste of each city and how it meets the Mississippi.

Rice Park, St. Paul

Whether for a summer stroll or a bracing review of the Winter Carnival ice sculptures, Rice Park offers a delightful bit of urbanity. City fathers Henry Rice and John Irvine donated the block to the city in 1849, the same year St. Paul became



the capital. It’s been downtown’s heart ever since.

A quartet of superb buildings frames the intimate space: the elegant 1910 St. Paul Hotel, the white marble 1916 St. Paul Library, the 1902 Landmark Center, and the crystalline 1984 Ordway Music Theatre, designed by native son Benjamin Thompson. In 1965 Hammel, Green, and Abrahamson upgraded the park and added a fountain; a recent renovation made the fountain accessible. Crisscross paths make walking easy. Don’t be surprised if you almost bump into a life-size bronze of F. Scott Fitzgerald, another native son.

Harriet Island, St. Paul

Another civic gift to the city, Harriet Island is no longer an island but is once again an inviting haven across the Mississippi from downtown St. Paul. A \$14.5 million public-private effort in

2000 revived what had become a weedy wasteland. Landscape architects Wallace Roberts & Todd of Philadelphia and SRF of Minneapolis pushed parking to the edges, created a large oval called the Great Lawn for public events, and added a decorative floodgate and a riverfront promenade.

The best spot is the Grand Stairway, broad steps leading right down to the murky moving waters. From there the panorama moves from the soaring High Bridge upriver past the downtown skyline across the river to the gingerbread University of Minnesota Centennial Showboat and Padelford excursion boats berthed just downriver. It’s enough to make you want to join the lucky folks who live in the houseboats in the city marina.

Stone Arch Bridge, Minneapolis

St. Paul railroad man James J. Hill built the Stone

the roughly 50-mile Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway in about two hours. (Tourist note: Bikes can be rented in Uptown by Lake Street and Lake Calhoun. It's even possible to take your bike on most city buses and the light-rail line linking downtown Minneapolis with the airport. Ask for other rental locations at your hotel.)

In the 1880s, landscape architect Cleveland moved here from Chicago. At the time, Minneapolis was the fastest-growing city in the nation. Cleveland saw the young region's lakes, wetlands, streams, and rivers as natural corridors that should form the backbone of an interconnected system of parks and parkways. The result is the "Grand Rounds" park system running around Minneapolis's "chain of lakes," the Mississippi River banks, and throughout St. Paul.

A colleague of Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., Cleveland contributed to the design of Brooklyn's Prospect Park and many of Chicago's parkways when he moved to that city. When he moved to the Twin Cities after the Chicago fire, Cleveland was

already elderly. Yet, the last years of his life were his most productive. Cleveland understood the importance of the Twin Cities' lakes and streams both in the city and far beyond then-developed areas; he saw them as a system so powerful that it could one day unite the two competing cities. He even referred to rivals Minneapolis and St. Paul as the "United Cities," with a sense of metropolitan wholeness so lacking today as new suburbs continue to siphon off high-paying jobs and affluent home owners from city and inner-ring suburban neighborhoods.

The city's chain of lakes—Hiawatha, Nokomis, Harriet, Calhoun, Isles, and Cedar—along with Cleveland's visionary parkways linking them to the Mississippi River, really is the city's greatest work of design. The lakes have outlasted many downtown buildings, and their carriageways, parkways, and bike paths continue to adapt to the changing tastes and recreational habits of every generation.

Designated as a National Scenic Byway in 1998, the Grand Rounds is the first scenic byway entirely set in a major urban area.

The byway travels through seven districts, each with its own personality, ranging from the lakes to the Mississippi River bluffs. With separated bike and walking trails designed by Roger Martin, FASLA, and EDAAW



Arch Bridge in 1883 to carry immigrants to the Great Northwest and to bring back the wheat that made Minneapolis the flour-milling capital of the world from 1880 to 1930. Boasting 23 arches along its 2,100-foot length, the granite and limestone bridge is a National Civil Engineering Landmark. After the last train crossed the bridge in 1978, it sat derelict and encased in chain-link fence until it reopened in 1994 as a pedestrian and bicycle bridge. It's now the centerpiece of the riverfront's rebirth.

There's no better place from which to survey both the city's history and its future. You can feel the spray of St. Anthony Falls, which powered the city's growth. You can look down on the excavated ruins of mills that lined the river and the canal that carried their spent water. Buried under 100,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel for decades, these industrial ruins have been uncovered in the past six

years and form one of the nation's few archaeological parks. Planning and landscape firm URS worked with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Minnesota Historical Society to design bike and pedestrian paths and other park amenities that are sensitive to the historical context.

Above the ruins rise renovated mills reborn as the city's ritziest condos; new buildings holding more condos; the Mill City Museum, which is the Minnesota Historical Society's award-winning reuse of the burned-out Washburn-Crosby "A" Mill; and the massive new Guthrie Theater designed by French architect Jean Nouvel. And that's just the downtown side of the river.

Lake of the Isles, Minneapolis

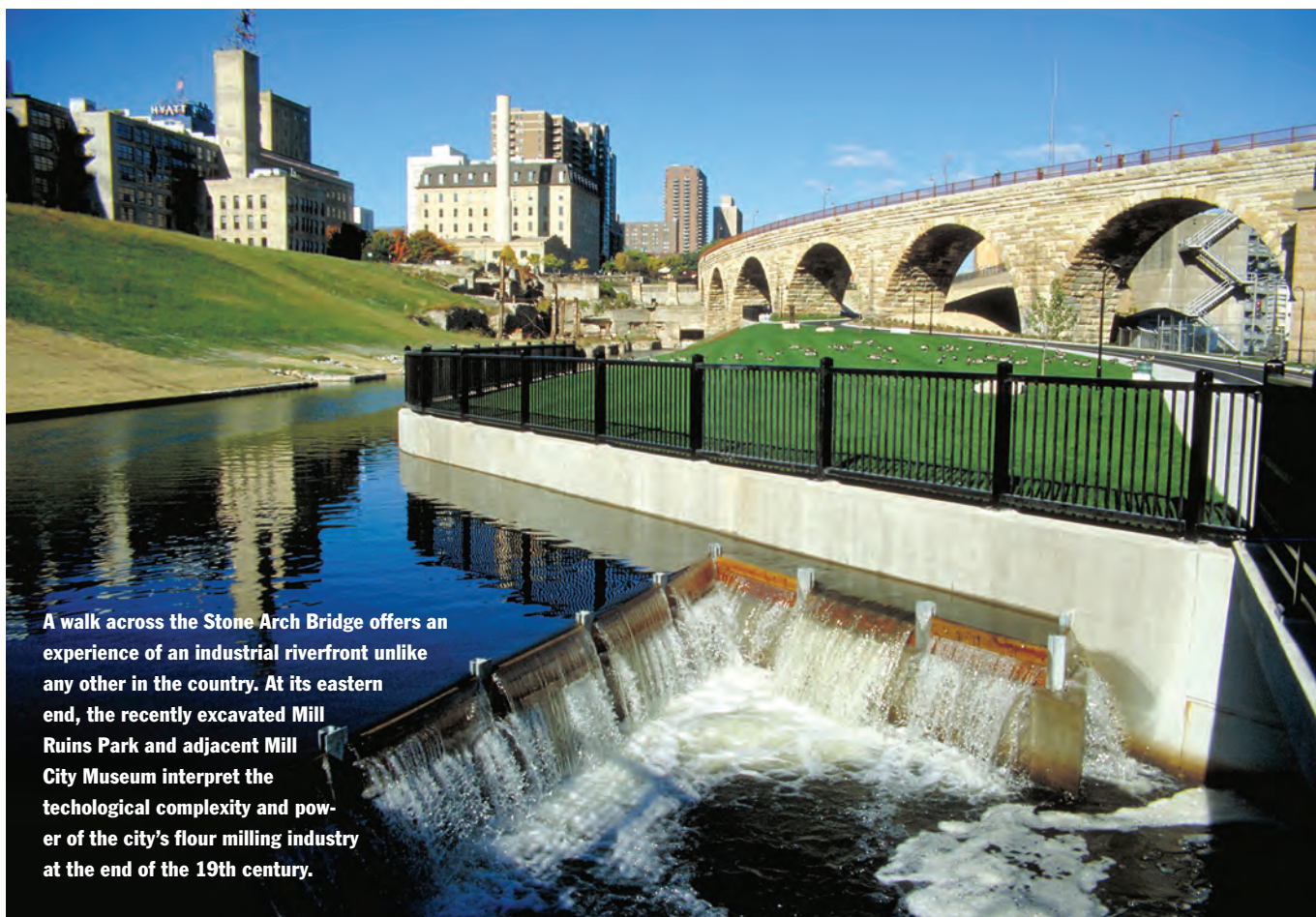
Carved out of a swamp in 1911, Lake of the Isles is the loveliest and most English-inspired of the city lakes that form the core of the Grand Rounds,

the famous network of parkways conceived by Cleveland and implemented by longtime parks superintendent Theodore Wirth. Cleveland's idea was both simple and brilliant: Keep the land around the waterways public, line it with parkways that are both recreational and part of the commuting network, and property values of the lots across the parkways will soar. The formula has worked: The neighborhoods along the parkways are indeed the city's most desirable.

And it's easy to see why. On any given day, runners, bikers, Rollerbladers, walkers, and talkers "do the lake," which means they make the satisfying 2.6-mile circuit on the bike or pedestrian paths. Whether it's hot and steamy or frigid and snowing, they enjoy the curving pathways, the trees, and the water—or ice.

After years of neglect and damaging flooding, Lake of the Isles is in the midst of a \$10 million renovation that unfortunately has been slow to receive full funding. St. Paul landscape firm Sanders Wacker Bergly has developed the plan, which aims to restore eroded shoreline and re-grade the land to prevent flooding. It also suggests water-friendly plants close to the water, an ecologically sound approach that departs from the original English landscape look. The rest of the parkland will be more manicured.

Linda Mack is the urban landscape columnist for the Minneapolis Star Tribune.



A walk across the Stone Arch Bridge offers an experience of an industrial riverfront unlike any other in the country. At its eastern end, the recently excavated Mill Ruins Park and adjacent Mill City Museum interpret the technological complexity and power of the city's flour milling industry at the end of the 19th century.

in the early 1970s, the Grand Rounds also makes an excellent bike journey. (Read the history of the Grand Rounds in the following article, page 133.) As mentioned earlier, it's possible to rent bikes at Uptown near Lake Calhoun, and also Rollerblades, which, incidentally, were invented here.

Today, one of the best things happening here is that Minnesota is actually becoming somewhat culturally diverse with large influxes of African, Mexican, and Asian immigrants; you can see this diversity in the parks, museums, and libraries. The great questions for the coming decades will be how we will manage urban sprawl, create real transit choices, and achieve new economic opportunities for this latest wave of newcomers in a state where most of us are also relatively recent arrivals. Can our traditions of environmental innovation and civic spirit continue? Mary Tyler Moore, Prince, and Garrison Keillor helped to put us into the national psyche as a generous, creative, and somewhat innocent place. Whether accurate or not, this assumption of a shared culture helps Minnesotans to know who we are, or at least who we could be, as a relatively small state in the middle of the country, almost exactly halfway between the equator and the north pole. LAJ

Frank Edgerton Martin is a landscape historian, campus planner, and regular contributor to Landscape Architecture.

Resources

- *Valued Places: Landscape Architecture in Minnesota—Minnesota's Fa-*

vorite Places and the People Who Shaped Them, published by the Minnesota Chapter of ASLA (MASLA) as a field guide to more than 50 public landscapes around the Twin Cities and the state. This book will be available for sale at the Minnesota ASLA booth at the 2006 convention.

There will also be a Valued Places site map of the two downtowns, produced by MASLA and graphic designer and landscape architect Doug Benson, distributed to all convention attendees.

- "The Consolation of Open Spaces: In an Insecure Age, the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Is a Case Study for Landscape Architects," by Frank Edgerton Martin; *Landscape Architecture*, March 2002.

- "Death of a Thousand Patches: Shoddy Maintenance Nibbles Away at a Minneapolis Gem," by Charlene K. Roise; *Landscape Architecture*, September 2004.

- *The Waterfall That Built a City*, by Lucille Kane; St. Paul, Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1966.

- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, www.minneapolisparks.org. This web site includes useful descriptions of the major parks and maps.

- Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (National Park Service), www.nps.gov/miss. The regional park stretches 72 miles along the Mississippi through rural areas, historic towns, and the Twin Cities.

- Mill City Museum, www.millcitymuseum.org. One of the few museums in the world dedicated to the history of grain milling. Set in the ruins of a former mill, the museum is filled with interactive exhibits and serves as a gateway to the river and Mill Ruins Park.

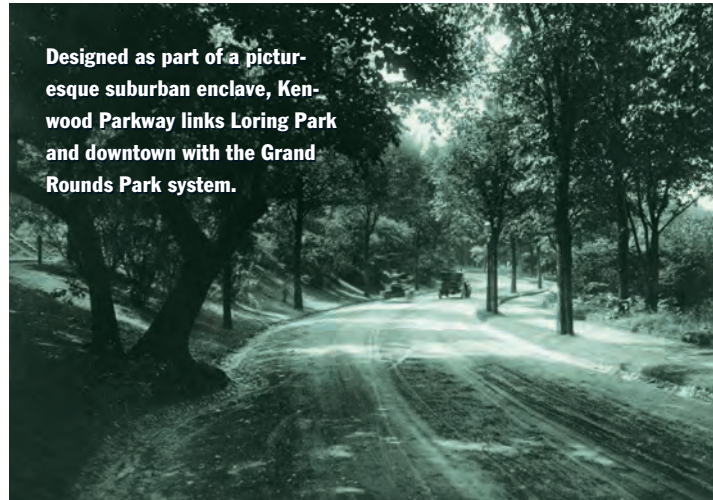
The Minneapolis Grand Rounds and Its Designers

BY LANCE M. NECKAR, ASLA

IN THE POST-CIVIL WAR period, a regional landscape identity coalesced in the Upper Midwest. Railroads collapsed distances. Nature seemed reduced. Preservation and recreational enhancement of native landscapes became an important political theme. Naturalistic landscape aesthetics (and practicality) conjoined with protoecological scientific studies of natural systems, especially grasslands and forests, to produce “modern” progressive landscape design approaches. In the Midwest, cities needed to be made instantly, and models were appropriated from the best examples. Paris provided the preeminent model of urban design. Parks, boulevards, and parkways formed the armature of nature on which this new urbanizing civilization would be built. The first wave of Parisian influence in the Midwest manifested itself after 1865 when early park systems combined highly urbanized spaces with wild landscapes. While Chicago attempted to apply these ideas, its form had been cast rigidly and rapidly on the grid that stretched over a boundless prairie west of Lake Michigan, and implementation in the South Parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted (1822–1904), Calvert Vaux (1824–1895), and Horace William Shaler Cleveland (1814–1900) was piecemeal. St. Paul rejected these ideas as too elitist in the 1870s when Cleveland proposed the connection of a park on Como Lake via a boulevard to the downtown.

Minneapolis, however, told a different story. Here Charles M. Loring, a native of Maine and a local miller and publicist, aroused the city to action in the late 1870s and 1880s. In 1883, Loring and a group of activists concerned with the preservation of the landscape features and land values of the growing city secured passage of a bill in the state legislature that authorized the creation of a Board of Park Commissioners. Cleveland, then still working in Chicago, designed the connected system of parks and parkways that provides a civic hydrology

Designed as part of a picturesque suburban enclave, Kenwood Parkway links Loring Park and downtown with the Grand Rounds Park system.

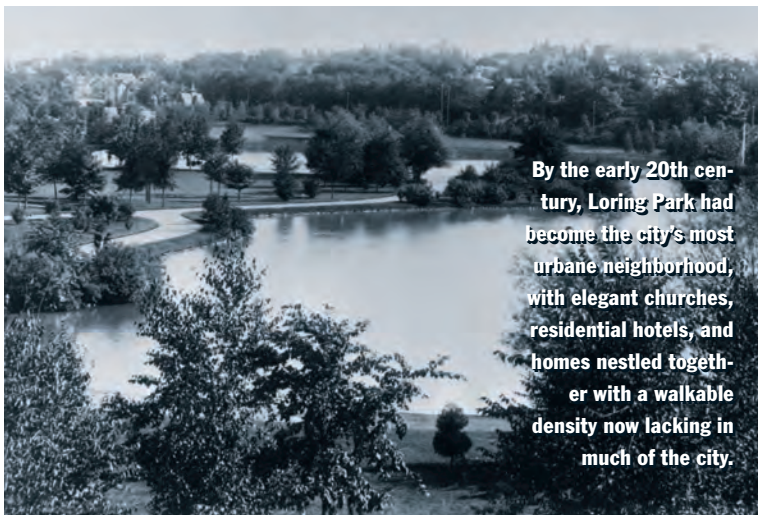


of poetic beauty and recreational function in the city of waters. Originally draped around the city's lakes, into its neighborhoods, and along the west banks of the Mississippi River, the park system in our time now lines the river on both banks in Minneapolis and also in St. Paul. Cleveland conceived of this idea as an application of his organic principle, by which he understood all art to be developed from natural systems and forms, an idea set forth in 1873 in his book, *Landscape Architecture as Applied to the Wants of the West*. The spirit of his Twin Cities endeavor is specifically captured in his 1888 address to the Minneapolis Society of Fine Art on the “Aesthetic Development of the United Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis.” Written in the wake of his successful design for the park system in Minneapolis and in the fullness of new work in St. Paul, including the extension of Summit Avenue to the Mississippi River, “Aesthetic Development” summarized his vision of the physical unity of the Twin Cities.

I would have the city itself such a work of art as may be the fitting abode of a race of men and women whose lives are devoted to a nobler end than money-getting and whose efforts shall be inspired and sustained by the grandeur and beauty of the scenes in which their lives are passed. Nature offers us such advantages as no other city could rival and such as if properly developed would exhibit the highest attainment of art in appropriating the natural elements on which all art is founded.... I refer especially here to the riverbanks and the region in the vicinity of Minnehaha Falls.

For Cleveland, the preservation of the banks of the Mississippi for use by the public concretized the cities' commitment to a civic realm associated with higher values of culture, the values of New England's literature, politics, and science. By 1891, with the creation of Minnehaha State Park and the Minnehaha Parkway in Minneapolis, the park system protected the principal waters of the city with a public cordon. Dubbed the Grand Rounds by William Watts Folwell, then chairman of the Parks Commission, it became the first complete American emerald necklace. This civic watershed fused Cleveland's organic approach to landscape architecture with a model for city making, and this idea was a core concept of the emergence of landscape architecture as a profession in the Midwest.

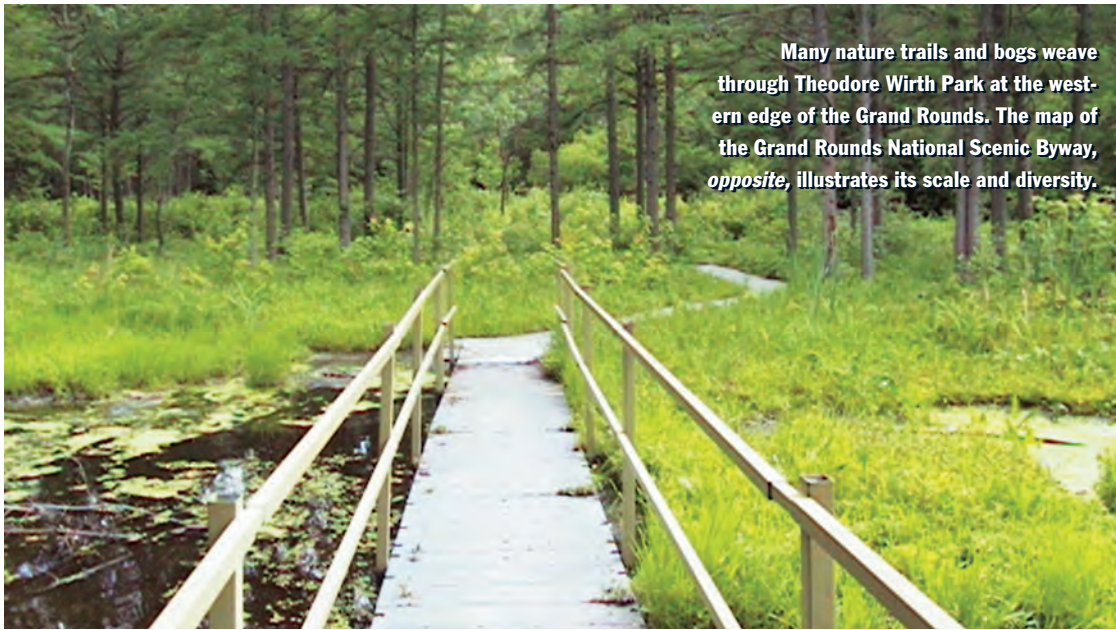
One of the most important practical lessons of this early period was the value of early planning and design followed by rapid and decisive implementation. Cleveland had



By the early 20th century, Loring Park had become the city's most urbane neighborhood, with elegant churches, residential hotels, and homes nestled together with a walkable density now lacking in much of the city.

anticipated the need for speed of land acquisition and fast-tracked construction of the parks and parkways. In 1886 when he himself moved from Chicago to Minneapolis, he brought William Morse Berry along. Berry, who had had considerable experience with construction from schematic drawings, became the system's first superintendent. In 1899–1900, Warren H. Manning, landscape architect of Boston, prepared a report for the board that recommended stabilization and enlargement of the system. Because of financial constraints, these plans were held in abeyance until the arrival in 1906 of Theodore Wirth from the Hartford, Connecticut, system.

Over the next 25 years, Superintendent Wirth would put in place the other principal elements of the system that we know today. In the years before and after World War I, many of the existing parkways were raised, paved, and drained, but the most ambitious and lasting new works of the Wirth period were more diverse in their character. Wirth championed the development of active recreation venues in the parks and was specifically concerned with water and ice-based sports.



Many nature trails and bogs weave through Theodore Wirth Park at the western edge of the Grand Rounds. The map of the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway, opposite, illustrates its scale and diversity.

The crowning achievements of his superintendency were the design and development of Glenwood Park, later Theodore Wirth Park (1906–1938), and of Victory Memorial Drive (1917–1928).

C. J. Rockwood, a longtime attorney for the board, initiated the interest in the acquisition of the Glenwood tract, and it became Wirth's most important project in the early years of his superintendency. Wirth Park became the city's largest and most diverse in its recreational venues. It included an active recreational strategy, including the city's ski jump and other skiing facilities, a golf course, elements of naturalistic landscape, and a nature garden. While the city's lakes had functioned from the beginning of the parks for skating and, later, hockey, Wirth Park became the ski center, including a chalet constructed in 1922–1923. In the early days, the park also had extensive picnic facilities, a sheep herd, and the Loring Cascade. In 1911, Eloise Butler, a retired botany teacher, created a "Natural Botanical Garden," later renamed the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden, in the park. This kind of activity mirrored other contemporary activities to preserve plant species and natural tracts

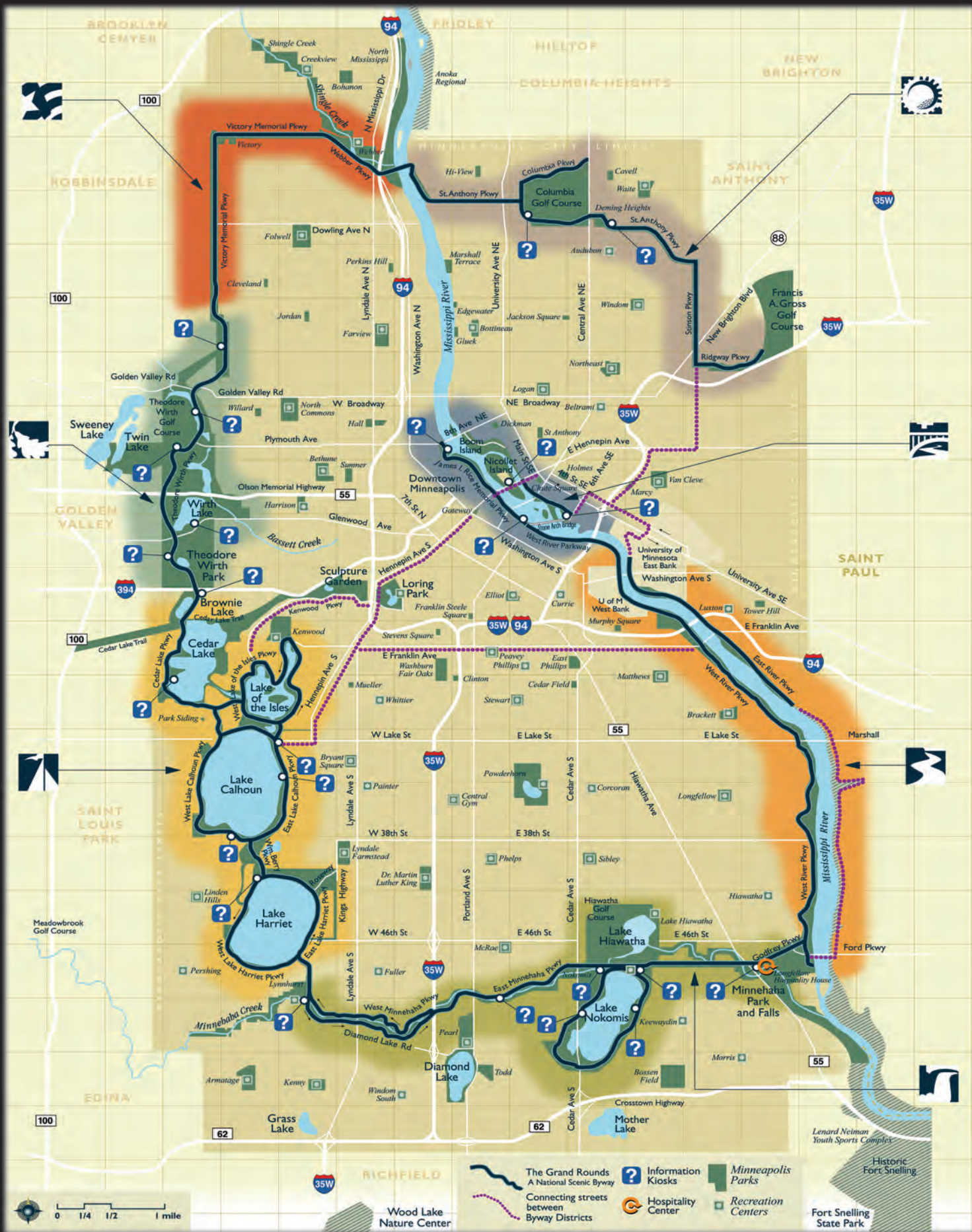
elsewhere in the Midwest, especially in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Notably associated with landscape architects Ossian Simonds (1857–1931) and Jens Jensen (1860–1951), and to a lesser extent with Frank Waugh (1869–1943) and Manning (1860–1938), here the conservation ecological initiatives movement in the parks rested with Butler and other botanists.

In 1918 Wirth proposed completing the most expansive links in the city's twentieth-century Grand Rounds, the Victory Memorial Parkway. This ambitious L-shaped plan lay at the northwest edge of the city. Wirth conceived of it as a memorial to Hennepin County soldiers who had fallen in the first World War. In 1916, the city had begun to develop the Glenwood Camden Parkway, the nucleus of Victory Memorial, but work stopped during the war. In 1920, the board issued bonds for the expanded plan for the wide elm-lined boulevard, and the work went forward once the bonds were purchased by several financial institutions and Charles Loring, Earle Brown, and the Lakewood Cemetery Association.

The twentieth century saw the expansion of active recreational facilities in neighborhood parks across the city and the establishment of the Lyndale Park Gardens. The board was also host to various cultural and musical events and many venues of the Aquatennial, Minneapolis's ongoing summer festival focusing on water events, parades, and music. The board was also responsible for the construction of the now-demolished Gateway (1917), designed by Hewitt and Brown architects at the intersection of Nicollet and Hennepin avenues in downtown Minneapolis, and the creation of the Wold Chamberlain Airport (1930.) While these notable accomplishments demonstrated the breadth of the board's and

Superintendent Wirth's vision, the original concept of the linked parks and parkways with their public waters is recognized today as the sustaining keystone of the Minneapolis system. In the 1970s Roger Martin, FASLA, redesigned the parkways to add new separated paths for bicyclists and Rollerbladers. In recent years most of the parks have been renovated with new play equipment and shelters. Water sports are still important, and the board has recently acted to create wetlands designed to improve water quality in the lake parks. Today the Grand Rounds has been designated as a National Scenic Byway in recognition of the work of the landscape architects who conceived it and the citizens who made it. [Landscape Architecture](#)

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The Grand Rounds
A National Scenic Byway

Information Kiosks

Hospitality Center

Minneapolis Parks

Recreation Centers

Wood Lake Nature Center

Fort Snelling State Park