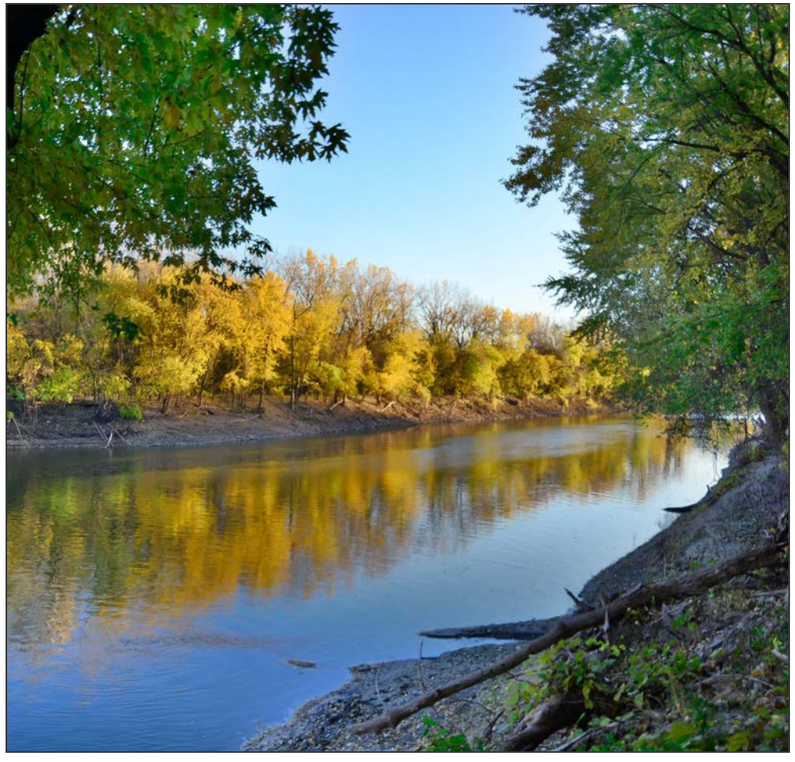
SHAKOPEE RIVERFRONT CULTURAL TRAIL

Visitor Experience Plan

FINAL PLAN

May 28, 2021



106GROUP

Connecting People + Place + Time

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CONFLUENCE

ALL IMAGES BY 106 GROUP UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.

COVER IMAGES, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:

MINNESOTA RIVER, COURTESY CITY OF SHAKOPEE

DAKOTA FLORAL DESIGN BY MARLENA MYLES, COURTESY OF MARLENA MYLES

STATUE OF DAKOTA LEADER SAKPEDAN (CHIEF SHAKOPEE III OR LITTLE SIX), CITY OF SHAKOPEE

WORKERS AT THE SCHROEDER BRICKYARD, SHAKOPEE HERITAGE SOCIETY

Scott County Cultural Consortium

ThreeRivers PARK DISTRICT

Scott

SHAKOPEE

SHAKOPEE MDEWAKANTON SIOUX COMMUNITY

SCOTT COUNTY history.org at the Stans Museum

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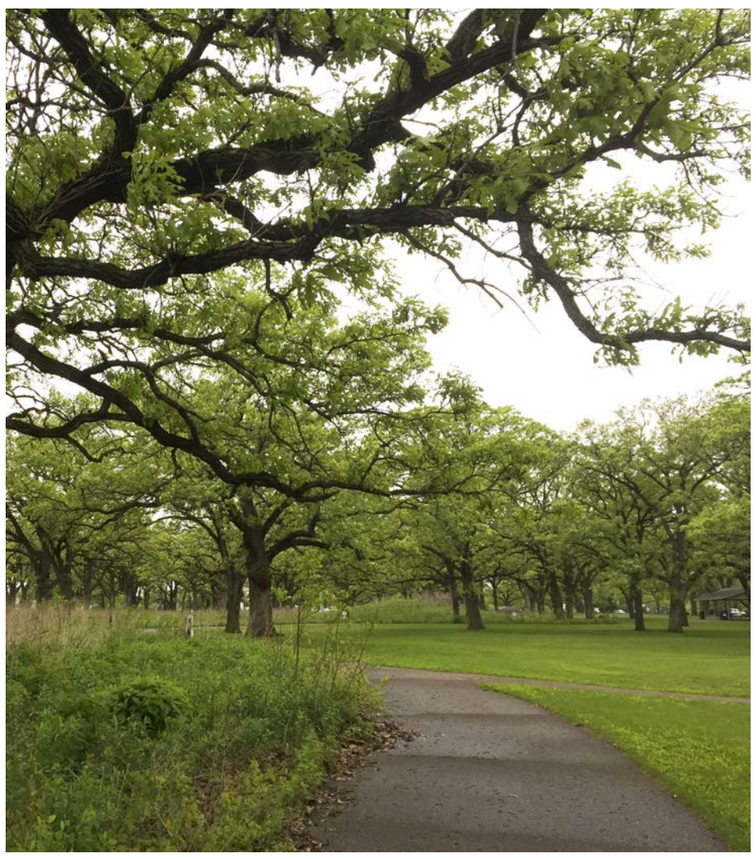
INTRODUCTION

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Permanent Residence, Sioux by Seth Eastman, 1846-1848



CONFLUENCE

BACKGROUND

The partner organizations of the Scott County Cultural Consortium (SCCC) are collaborating to develop the Shakopee Riverfront Cultural Trail (SRCT or Trail), a recreational and interpretive trail along the Minnesota River in downtown Shakopee. The SRCT will comprise a 2.5-mile section of the existing multi-use Minnesota Valley State Trail, from the Holmes Street Bridge through The Landing: Minnesota River Heritage Park. It will provide an amenity for local residents as well as an attraction to bring tourists to Shakopee and encourage them to extend their stay. Interpretation along the Trail will reveal the area's rich American Indian, European American, and natural history.

The Shakopee riverfront has particular significance for Dakota people. For thousands of years before European settlement, their ancestors lived and traveled along the Minnesota River. Where the city of Shakopee now sits, Mdewakanton Dakota people lived on both sides of the river in the summer village of Tiŋta Otuŋwe. The land along the Trail includes sacred Dakota burial mounds. The city takes its name from Sakpe (Chief Shakopee II), a Dakota leader whose son Sakpedaŋ (Chief Shakopee III or Little Six) led the people of Tiŋta Otuŋwe.

The SCCC partners want Dakota voices to speak clearly along the riverfront about their history, their living culture, and their ongoing relationship to this place. They also want people from all backgrounds to feel welcome here. As they experience the Trail, visitors will encounter stories that connect them to the people of the past, while building connections with each other.

Members of the Consortium include the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC), the Scott County Historical Society (SCHS), the City of Shakopee (the City), Scott County, and the Three Rivers Park District (TRPD). To realize their vision for the riverfront, the SCCC partners are collaborating with the 106 Group and Confluence to create a Visitor Experience Plan (VEP or Plan) for the SRCT. The VEP will guide development and implementation of visitor-centered interpretive themes and experiential strategies for the Trail.

This VEP builds on ideas proposed in the 2019 City of Shakopee Parks, Trails, and Recreation Master Plan (2019 Master Plan) produced by Confluence. The sections in Chapter 4 on The Riverfront and Memorial Park + The Landing (pages 170-209) are relevant to this project.

THIS VEP AND THE 2019 MASTER PLAN SHOULD BE CONSULTED TOGETHER AS THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR THE SRCT.

PLANNING PROCESS

A Visitor Experience Plan provides an experiential road map for what visitors will do, learn, sense, and feel at a cultural heritage site. It strategizes how to connect visitors' expectations, needs, and desires to the resources and stories that define a place. A VEP centers interpretation, but it does not focus solely on interpretive content. A successful process plans holistically, incorporating messaging, design, and other elements of the visitor experience.

A VEP also defines the site's purpose in the community. A successful planning process is collaborative and committed to broad stakeholder and community engagement.

This Plan results from robust collaboration and engagement. Between October and December 2020, project team members participated in a site visit and three online workshops, completed online surveys, and co-created multiple shared documents. The workshops were documented in the Kickoff Workshop Report (11/23/2020) and the Partner Planning Workshop Report (12/18/2020).

Development of the VEP has been guided by consultation with the SMSC Cultural Resources Director, Culture and History Preservation Workgroup, Dakota Iapi Tipi, and Hoċokata Ti staff. Since December 2020, project team members also have carried out extensive stakeholder engagement and begun the process of broader community engagement. Thus far, they have communicated with more than a dozen stakeholder and community groups.

The 106 Group and Confluence submitted a Draft VEP on 3/5/2021 and a Revised Draft VEP on 4/23/2021. This Final VEP incorporates feedback from the SCCC partners on both of those documents.

NEXT STEPS

The SCCC partners will conduct community engagement with Scott County residents during summer and early fall 2021 to raise awareness of the SRCT project and gather feedback on the Visitor Experience Plan. If the outcomes of community engagement require adjustments to the Final VEP, 106 Group will make necessary revisions.

Schedule

106 Group will complete final updates to the Final VEP by October 1, 2021.

FOUNDATIONS

PROJECT FOUNDATIONS

At the start of any planning project, it is essential to set firm foundations. The SCCC partners did this by working together to answer a set of foundational questions.

WHY ARE WE CREATING THIS EXPERIENCE?

Defines the project goals

WHO IS THIS EXPERIENCE FOR?

Identifies the audience and community

WHERE DO WE STAND?

Summarizes the existing conditions

WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE ABOUT?

Articulates the interpretive messaging

GOALS

WHY ARE WE CREATING THIS EXPERIENCE?

The process of building the project foundations began with setting two goals for the SRCT: an operational goal, and a visitor experience goal.

The operational goal articulates WHAT THE SCCC WANTS TO ACCOMPLISH **through development of the SRCT.**

The visitor experience goal summarizes WHAT THE SCCC WANTS TRAIL VISITORS TO EXPERIENCE **and** WHAT THEY SHOULD TAKE AWAY **from their time on the Trail.**

CONFLUENCE

Rendering of redesigned Huber Park from the 2019 Master Plan

SRCT OPERATIONAL GOAL

The SRCT will bring people together to (re)discover the Minnesota River's historical, cultural, and ecological significance, in order to build cross-cultural understanding among those who live in and visit the Shakopee area. The SRCT will become an iconic regional destination that demonstrates the value of incorporating place-based history and cultural heritage into local planning and development.

SRCT VISITOR EXPERIENCE GOAL

As they connect with the river along the SRCT, visitors also will feel connected to the people who have made the river corridor home for thousands of years. Their experience of the riverfront's natural beauty and understanding of its rich cultural heritage will foster respect and reverence. It will inspire them to care for this place, as well as other meaningful places in their own communities.

AUDIENCE AND COMMUNITY

WHO IS THIS EXPERIENCE FOR?

To answer this question, the project team identified who the Trail experience seeks to engage (audiences), as well as who will be affected by the project and who is invested in its success (stakeholders and communities).

STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITIES

The SCCC brings together five partners, representing city, county, and tribal governments as well as a regional park district and a nonprofit cultural heritage organization. Each of these organizations has its own set of internal stakeholders invested in the SRCT project, including government departments, governing and advisory boards, and other decision makers.

While planning the Trail, the SCCC also is consulting and informing a range of external stakeholders and community groups. They include Minnesota state agencies, area businesses, and local heritage organizations and interest groups. SCCC partners have communicated or will communicate with all of the following during the SRCT planning process:

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Minnesota Office of the State Archaeologist
- Minnesota Indian Affairs Council
- Shakopee Chamber and Visitors Bureau
- Shakopee Heritage Society
- Shakopee Diversity Alliance
- Area veterans groups

Beyond these organized groups, all Shakopee and Scott County residents and members of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, as well as Mdewakanton Dakota people living elsewhere, are affected by and have a vested interest in the SRCT. This Plan also acknowledges other communities to consider while laying plans and making decisions: the Minnesota River, the land, the plants and animals, the ancestors, and the future generations who are connected to this place.

AUDIENCES

Given its length and variety of environments, the SRCT will engage many different audiences. The Trail experience should accomodate and welcome them all.

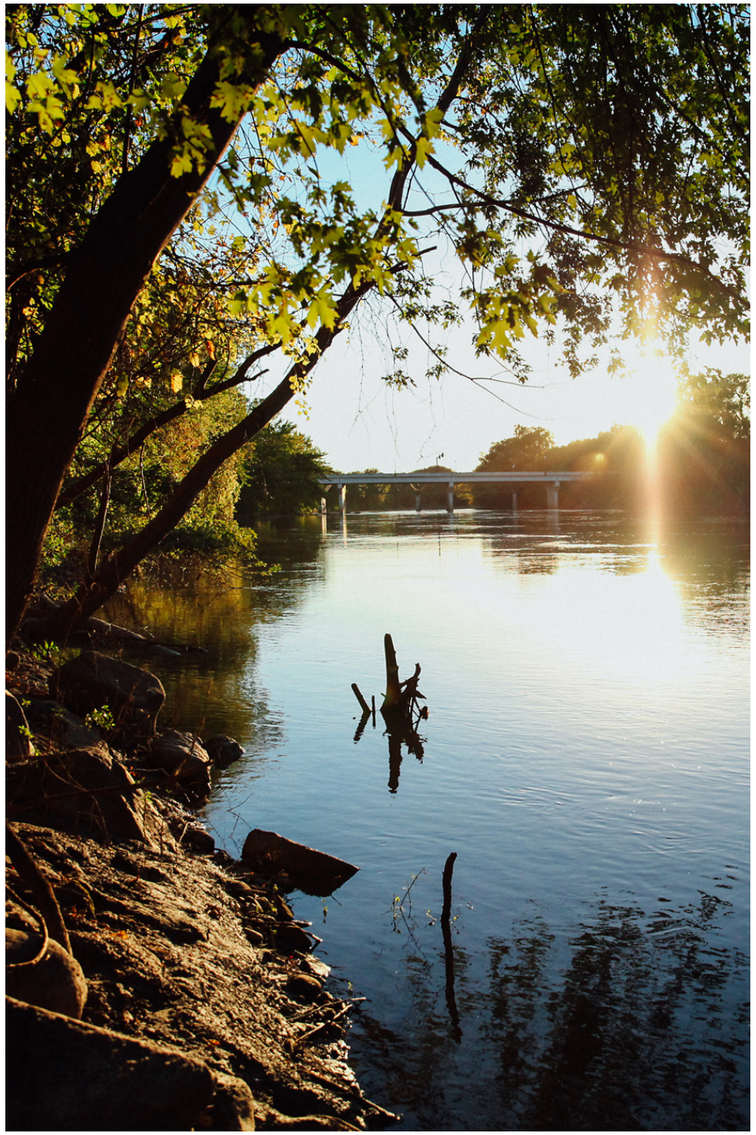
Audiences will represent diverse **DEMOGRAPHICS**, varying by age, cultural background, socioeconomic status, and family situation.

Audiences also will vary by their **RELATIONSHIP TO THIS PLACE**, such as Dakota people within and outside of Minnesota, long-time Shakopee or County residents, and newcomers, including recent immigrants. They might come from elsewhere in Minnesota or outside the state.

Audiences also will differ by **FREQUENCY OF TRAIL USE**, from one-time visitors to repeat visitors. People might visit one location, the entire Trail, or multiple, interconnected regional trails.

The Trail must accomodate many different **TYPES OF USE**, including people walking, running, in wheelchairs, pushing strollers, and on bicycles. There also will be canoeists, kayakers, picnickers, playground visitors, and event attendees.

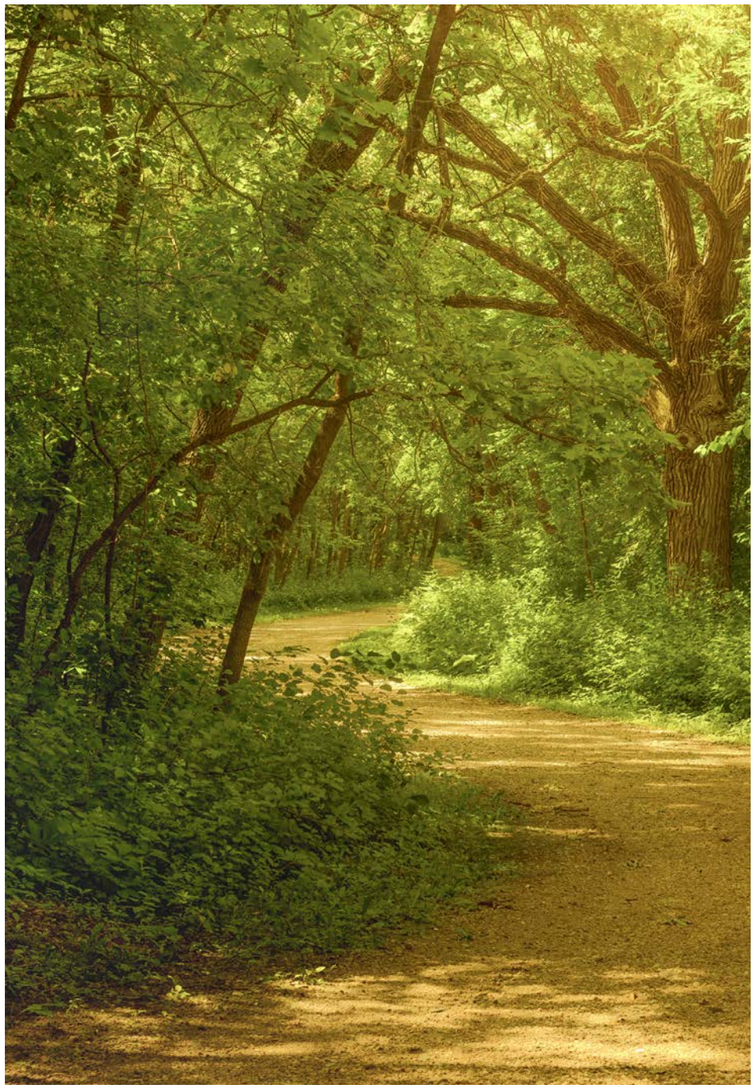
People also might visit the Trail as part of **ORGANIZED GROUPS**, such as youth groups or school field trips. Group visits might also be organized by cultural, civic, or business organizations like Hoċokata Ti, the Shakopee Heritage Society, the Shakopee Diversity Alliance, or the Shakopee Chamber and Visitors Bureau.



CITY OF SHAKOPEE

VISITOR PROFILES

To facilitate planning, we have developed the following visitor profiles. The goal is not to slice potential visitors into narrow, discrete segments or to exclude anyone. Considering the needs of particular audiences, however, can help focus content and design decisions. While these profiles don't encompass all potential visitors, they incorporate the types of audiences that SCCC partners most hope to engage.



BROTHER BROTHER

SHAKOPEE NATURE LOVER

Adult on an evening walk alone or with friends. Frequent repeat visitor.

Drawn to: Quiet, contemplative space. Multiple environments to explore and new things to discover on return visits. Well-lit trail as the shadows lengthen.

METRO-AREA CYCLISTS

Group of active adults from the Minneapolis/Saint Paul metro area, biking from Chaska to Eden Prairie. First-time visitors who might be convinced to return.

Drawn to: Substantive interpretive nodes at trailheads, accompanied by water fountains and bike racks, and close to public restrooms. Access to food and drink to purchase.

MULTI-GENERATIONAL FAMILY

Multi-generational family from Willmar. Seeking a half-day outing with space and interest for the whole family and activities that allow the kids to be independent. Elders may have limited mobility. Occasional repeat visitors.

HERITAGE TOURISTS

A couple visiting from Des Moines for a long weekend. Seeking to connect with their own heritage and curious about other histories. First-time visitors who might convince others to visit via word of mouth.

Drawn to: Ability to dig deep into stories, make connections, and experience the place unmediated. Access to unique local eating and drinking establishments.

SCHOOL GROUP

Group of sixth-grade students and educators from the Minneapolis/Saint Paul metro area, First-time visitors who might forge connections that bring them back.

Drawn to: Content that meets curriculum standards for Social Studies. Spaces to learn, think, interact, and play.

DAKOTA SCHOOL GROUP

Group of sixth-grade Dakota students and educators. Also visiting Hoċokata Ti and Wozupi Tribal Gardens. First-time visitors who might forge connections that bring them back.

Drawn to: Connection to ancestral homeland and history. Content that meets curriculum standards for Social Studies. Spaces to learn, think, interact, and play.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

WHERE DO WE STAND?

The 2019 City of Shakopee Parks, Trails, and Recreation Master Plan provides a comprehensive assessment of existing conditions for the SRCT. See in particular Chapter 4, pages 170-174 (Riverfront overview), 182-187 (Huber Park area), and 198-201 (Memorial Park and The Landing). The most significant change to the physical conditions since the Master Plan was completed is the replacement of the Minnesota Valley State Trail bridge, which reconnects to the state trail at Memorial Park.

THIS VEP AND THE 2019 MASTER PLAN SHOULD BE CONSULTED TOGETHER AS THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR THE SRCT.

BROTHER BROTHER

INTERPRETIVE MESSAGING

WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE ABOUT?

SCCC partners collaborated to develop the conceptual framework for interpretive messaging on the SRCT. This VEP structures the interpretive framework as a "big idea," a set of themes, and a list of topics.

In *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*, Beverly Serrell writes that "A big idea is a sentence—a statement—of what the exhibition is about.... It also implies what the exhibit is not about. A big idea is big because it has fundamental meaningfulness that is important to human nature."

Some interpretive plans speak of a main theme or a main message rather than a big idea. The difference is largely semantics, as all of these are intended to provide one overarching, central, interpretive concept.

The themes are interpretive threads, spun from the big idea, that weave (or in this case flow) throughout the visitor experience. Each theme will be expressed in multiple places, and any place might communicate multiple themes.

BIG IDEA

Many People, Many Paths, One River

THEMES

- The River Made This Place
- Dakota Makoce: A Dakota Place
- Canku Ota: Many Paths
- River Resources
- Restoration and Renewal

THEME

The River Made This Place

- For thousands of years, people have made this place home because the river is here.
- Highlights the interdependence of people and nature.
- The river is a natural force and a cultural anchor; it has been a transportation corridor and a place of crossing, landing, and settlement.

THEME

Dakota Makoce: A Dakota Place

- Highlights the historical and cultural significance of this place for Dakota people.
- Reveals its interconnections with other places along the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers.
- Addresses land loss, removal, and their consequences for Dakota people, as well as Dakota communities' resilience and continuing presence in this place.

THEME

Canku Ota: Many Paths

- Many paths cross here. Many peoples have passed here, visited here, and made this place home.
- Many cultures intersect here: past, present, and future.
- Includes cooperation and exchange as well as conflict and loss.

THEME

River Resources

- People have used the river and its resources to build thriving communities here.
- The river, plants, and animals have provided water, food, medicine, clothing, shelter, and tools.
- The river sustains animal, bird, and plant relatives as well as people.
- River resources have been used for trade, commerce, and industry.

THEME

Restoration and Renewal

- Human activity affects the river environment.
- We are restoring this river environment and human connections to it.
- Encourages stewardship of this place and other natural places we care about.

TOPICS

- DAKOTA HOMELANDS
- DAKOTA LIFE IN TIŊTA OTUŊWE
- EUROPEAN AMERICAN SETTLEMENT
- DAKOTA-SETTLER INTERACTIONS
- IMMIGRATION (HISTORICAL AND RECENT)
- RIVER TRANSPORTATION
- RIVER INDUSTRIES
- RECREATION ON/NEAR THE RIVER OVER TIME
- RIVER ENVIRONMENT: WATER, TREES, PLANTS, AND ANIMALS
- CULTURAL FOODS AND FOOD KNOWLEDGE

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART

Dacotah Village by Seth Eastman, 1849-1855

SCOTT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VISITOR EXPERIENCE FRAMEWORK

PRINCIPLES

These foundational principles should guide development of the Trail experience through all phases of implementation.

- The entire SRCT experience should feel **INVITING** and **WELCOMING** for all visitors.
- The experience will be as **ACCESSIBLE** as possible for all visitors. The Trail and interpretive components will be physically accessible and will make content available for those with visual and hearing impairments. Text will be readable at an eighth-grade reading level.
- **DAKOTA VOICES AND VALUES** should resonate through the experience, in both content and design. Interpretation should incorporate Dakota language and represent the resilience of Dakota people today.
- Much of the land along the SRCT is **SACRED GROUND** for today's Mdewakanton Dakota people, whose ancestors lived along the river in Tiŋta Otuŋwe. The Trail's route passes through or near several cemeteries, sacred springs, and areas of archeaological, cultural, and spiritual significance.
- The experience should foster **RESPECT**; certainly, respect for Dakota burial mounds and the ancestors who are honored there; also respect for all those whose history is tied to the riverfront. The SRCT experience also will foster respect for one another and respect for the river, trees, plants, birds, and animals.
- Fostering respect and a sense of connection will encourage **STEWARDSHIP** of the natural environment. Visitors will appreciate and perhaps participate in **RESTORATION** of the river, the land, and the habitats they support.
- Since most visitors could come back over and over again, we want to provide things to **DISCOVER OVER TIME**.
- The SRCT is a destination for **MOVEMENT**. Most visitors won't want to stop too often. Instead of a proliferation of signs, we need fewer interpretive constructions, located where those on the move are most likely to want to stop and where it is appropriate for them to linger.
- The Trail experience will engage visitors' **EMOTIONS** and all of their **SENSES**.
- The SRCT should offer meaningful experiences for visitors in **ALL SEASONS**.
- The Trail experience should offer something for people of **ALL AGES**, including youth and young adults. While very young children are a part of the family audience and should find things that will engage them, the design style should not be childish.

CONFLUENCE

NATURE TOURISM SERVICES

Examples of interpretive nodes from heritage sites in Australia

EXPERIENTIAL STAGES

The visitor experience involves more than interacting with interpretive media. In fact, it extends beyond the Trail itself. Planners must consider all stages and dimensions of the experience, from visitors' perspectives. For a geographically distributed trail like the SRCT, some aspects of the experience will happen in multiple places, and it might not follow a predictable, linear pattern.

See the map on the next page for locations of what is described below.

Discovery, Planning, and Arrival

Discovery might happen online, via print marketing, or via word of mouth. **PARTNERSHIPS** with local businesses and regional tourism and hospitality organizations will help people discover the Trail. Discovery also might happen on the Trail itself. A hiker or bicyclist might step or roll onto the SRCT for the first time and realize that there is more to discover than they realized.

Planning a visit might happen well in advance, or it might occur on the spot. Potential visitors will want to find all the information to plan a visit on an SRCT **WEB PAGE,** linked to all the partners' websites.

Arrival on the SRCT will happen at multiple entry points. Rather than a single welcome center, there will be a need for **WELCOME AND ORIENTATION** signage at several places along the Trail, where people are most likely to access it.

On-site Experience

While on site, visitors need clear **NAVIGATION AND WAYFINDING** signage to understand where they are and get where they want to go. Near Dakota burial mounds or other cemetery areas, this Plan recommends placing **ETIQUETTE MARKERS** encouraging visitors to act respectfully while on sacred ground.

To feel comfortable, and to linger along the Trail, they also need **AMENITIES** like parking, restrooms, places to sit, and access to food, water, and other beverages.

The purpose of the SRCT is to provide visitors with an **INTERPRETIVE EXPERIENCE** as well as a recreational opportunity. This Plan recommends several methods for delivering interpretive messaging:

INTERPRETIVE ELEMENTS

Elements can take a variety of forms, e.g., wayside exhibit, custom exhibit panel, wall graphic, tactile component, sculpture, fabric banner, or audio post. An augmented reality app is another planned interpretive element for the SRCT.

INTERPRETIVE NODES

Nodes are larger, multi-part structures that include orientation signage and multiple interpretive elements. Some nodes also will incorporate amenities like seating, shade, and a bike rack. A node provides space for visitors to stop, spend time, engage with interpretive content, and interact with each other.

INTEGRATED INTERPRETATION

Interpretation does not always have to be delivered via text and graphics on a stand-alone sign. Messaging can be conveyed more subtly by integrating interpretive design elements into the built environment: on ground surfaces, benches, railings, light fixtures, and playground features.

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMMING

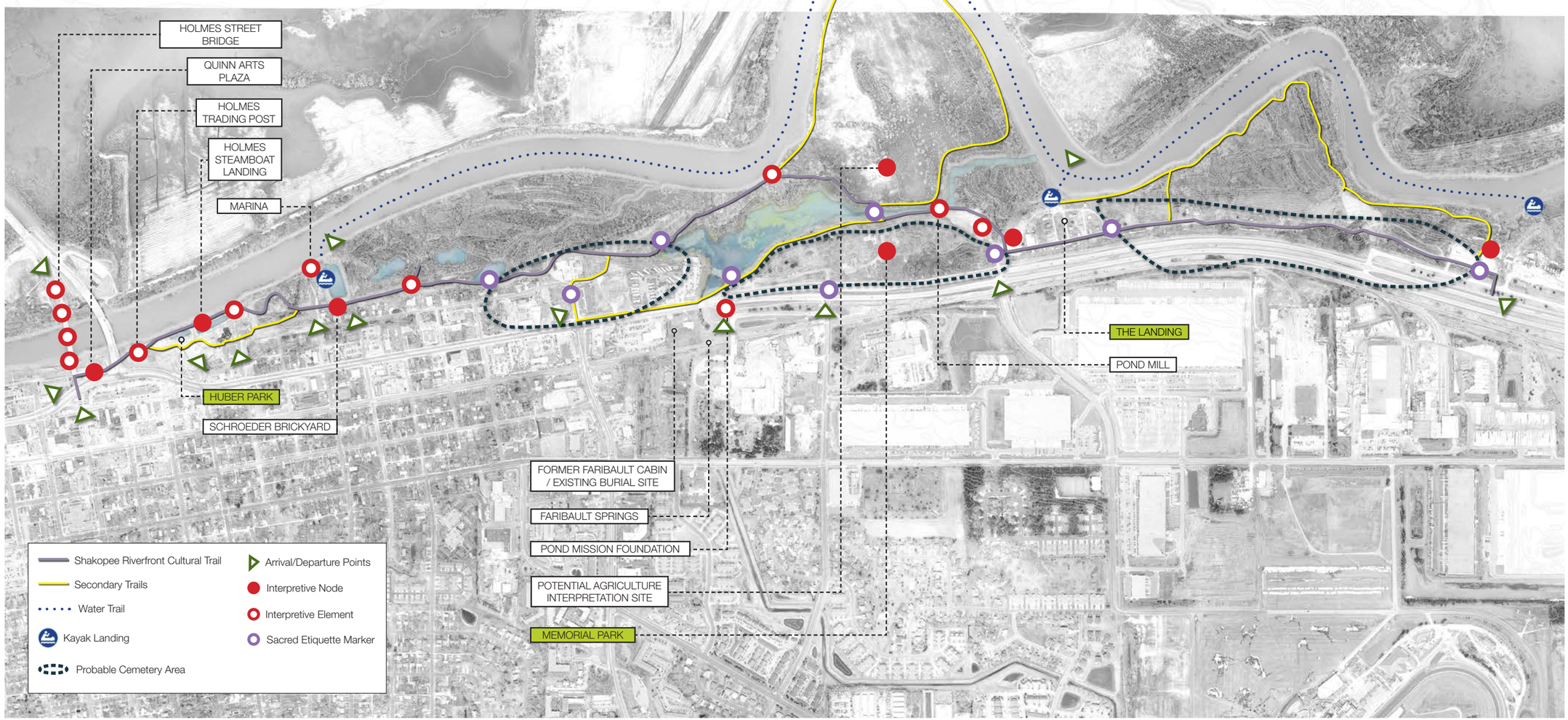
Guided tours, school programs, hands-on activities, art installations, festivals, and other events add layers of meaning to visitors' experience of existing historical and natural resources and build on added interpretive elements.

Departure and Integration

While visitors need welcome and introduction on arrival, during and after departure they need opportunities to integrate their experience. Visitors might want to better understand what they've encountered along the Trail, or they might seek other similar experiences. Trail planners should help visitors put this place in **CONTEXT** and **CONNECT** it with other historical, cultural, and natural places.

Visitors will depart from multiple locations, just as they arrived. Wherever visitors are welcomed to the Trail, they also should find information on how to build on their experience and expand their understanding. Signage should connect them to the **AREA RESOURCES** provided by SCCC partner organizations: the parks, trails, programs, exhibits, research resources, expertise, and cultural connections offered by the Three Rivers Park District, Scott County Historical Society, Scott County Library system, Hoċokata Ti cultural center, and the Shakopee Mdewankanton Sioux Community.

Locations of nodes, elements, and markers are approximate.
Exact locations will be determined during schematic design.



ADAPTED FROM MAP PRODUCED BY CONFLUENCE FOR 2019 MASTER PLAN

DESIGN STYLE

It is too early in the Trail development process to create a full style guide for the SRCT. It is helpful, however, to set some design parameters. Based on the groundwork laid in the Master Plan, informed by input from the SCCC partners, and shaped by current understanding of riverfront history, this Plan suggests the following design style.

Design Characteristics

These design characteristics will be **CONSISTENT** along the length of the SRCT, providing a sense of continuity and cohesion:

- **COLORFUL** and **TEXTURAL**
- Mixture of **CURVED** and **ANGULAR** lines
- **INTEGRATED** with the immediate environment and relevant to the content conveyed. (The one exception might be in Quinn Arts Park, which will be a more creative and unpredictable environment.)
- Use of **HUMAN** figures, to "people" the trail. Figures might appear in historical photographs, in illustrations, as sculptures, or as silhouettes.

Some design characteristics will be **VARIABLE**, depending on which section of the Trail visitors are experiencing. These are the design variables:

- While much of the design style will be **ORGANIC** and **NATURAL**, in some areas it will be more **ARCHITECTURAL** or **INDUSTRIAL**, as appropriate to the immediate environment and to site-specific history.
- The interpretive components in some sections will be **UNDERSTATED**, while in others they will be more **EYE-CATCHING**.
- The design in some areas will have a **CALMING** effect; in others it will be more **ENERGETIC**.
- While the design will be consistently colorful, the color in some areas will be more **MUTED**; in others it will be more **BRIGHT**.

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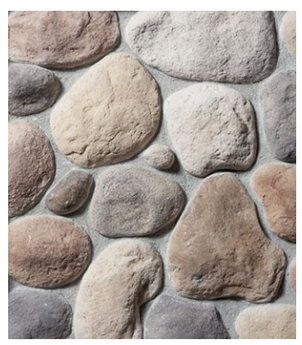

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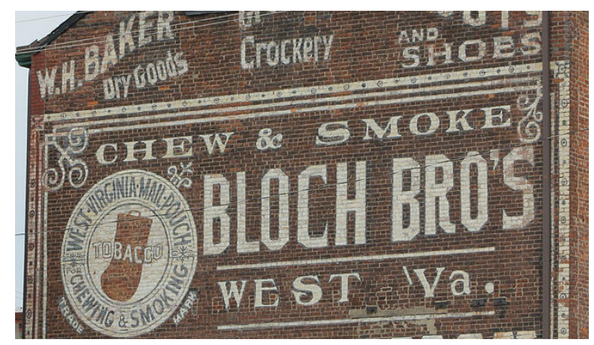

BOBBY COLE

CHARLIEBROUWER.COM

Design Elements

These design elements will be **CONSISTENT** along the length of the SRCT, contributing to the sense of continuity and cohesion:

- River bends and river rocks
- Riverfront animals, birds, and insects
- Dakota floral designs

These design elements will be more **VARIABLE**, depending on site-specific history and natural resources along the Trail:

- Leaves and bark of bur oak or cottonwood trees
- Native prairie plants or corn plants
- Bridge truss, steamboat smokestacks, or brick pattern

COURTESY BROTHER BROTHER

KEVIN JONES WWW.FLICKR.COM

COURTESY MARLENA MYLES

Dakota floral design by Marlena Myles

Possible Forms and Media

It is too early in the planning process to settle on specific forms for interpretive components or select interpretive media. for now, this Plan suggests the following forms and media for engaging visitors with riverfront stories along the SRCT:

- Panels with cut-out elements that reveal the landscape
- Transparent panels with a "ghosted" historical image overlaid on the landscape
- Waysides that blend with the environment and incorporate design elements
- Tactile or sculptural components
- Audio components that allow visitors to hear the Dakota language spoken by Mdewakanton people

The Master Plan suggested, and SCCC partners have embraced, the possibility of developing a digital augmented reality (AR) experience for use along the Trail. An AR app that visitors can access via mobile phone could help bring the past to life. This can provide added value to the Trail experience for some visitors. It is important to realize that such digital media are not equally accessible to all. Wherever possible, people should have alternative ways to access comparable content.

A series of large built structures also can anchor sections of the Trail. Some of these are existing historic resources, like the lime kiln and the Faribault house. Others are being planned, like an artistic sculptural rendering of the Pond mission house in relation to the extant foundation. Others might be constructed, like a miniature bridge, a full-size bark lodge and/or tipi, or a field watchers' platform.

NATURE TOURISM SERVICES

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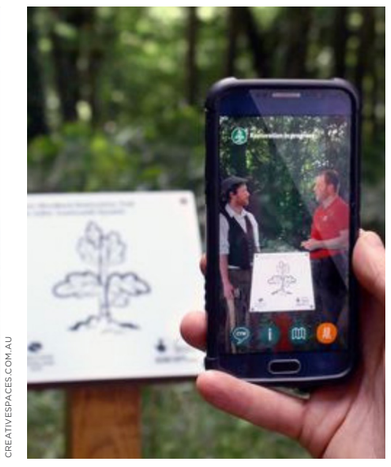

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AMANDA MCNIGHT, SWNEWSMEDIA.COM

MICHAEL VAHRENWALD, GHOSTHOUSEPROJECT.COM

EXPERIENTIAL ZONES

This Plan divides the SRCT into experiential zones, located along the realigned main trail and some secondary trails and loops, as envisioned in the Master Plan. Each zone is defined by a combination of these characteristics:

- Natural features
- Historical and cultural context
- Historical or cultural resources on site
- Envisioned visitor actions and interactions
- Features that might draw one or more target audiences

The zones will vary in design characteristics and elements, while maintaining cohesion in overall design style. Each zone conveys interpretive messaging through some combination of nodes, other interpretive elements, and integrated design.

Taken all together, these shifting characteristics and environments suggest four experiential moods. The map below shows zone locations, color coded by mood.

Zone Moods

ORANGE = playful, creative, unexpected, stimulating

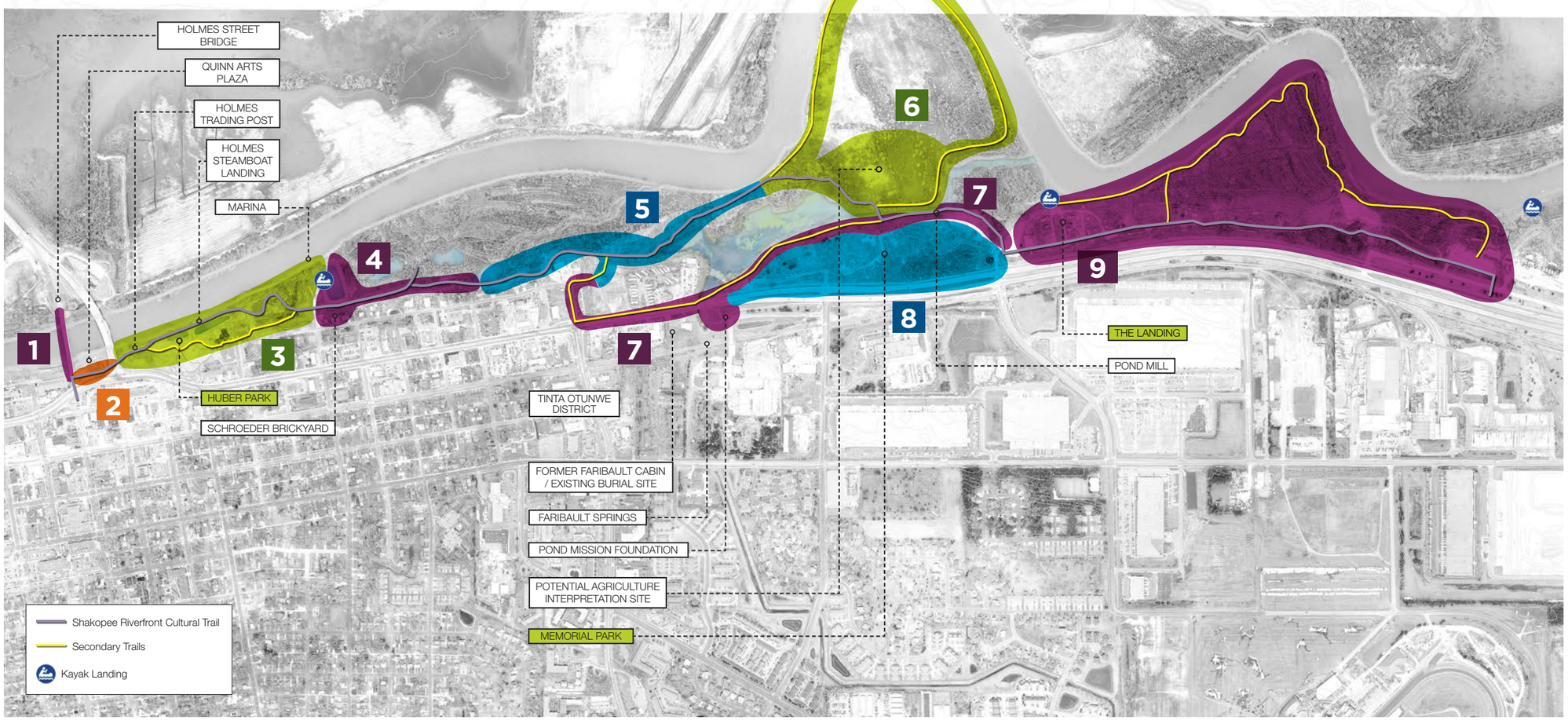
PURPLE = multi-layered, interactive, intriguing, content-rich

GREEN = close to nature, restorative, immersive, sensory-rich

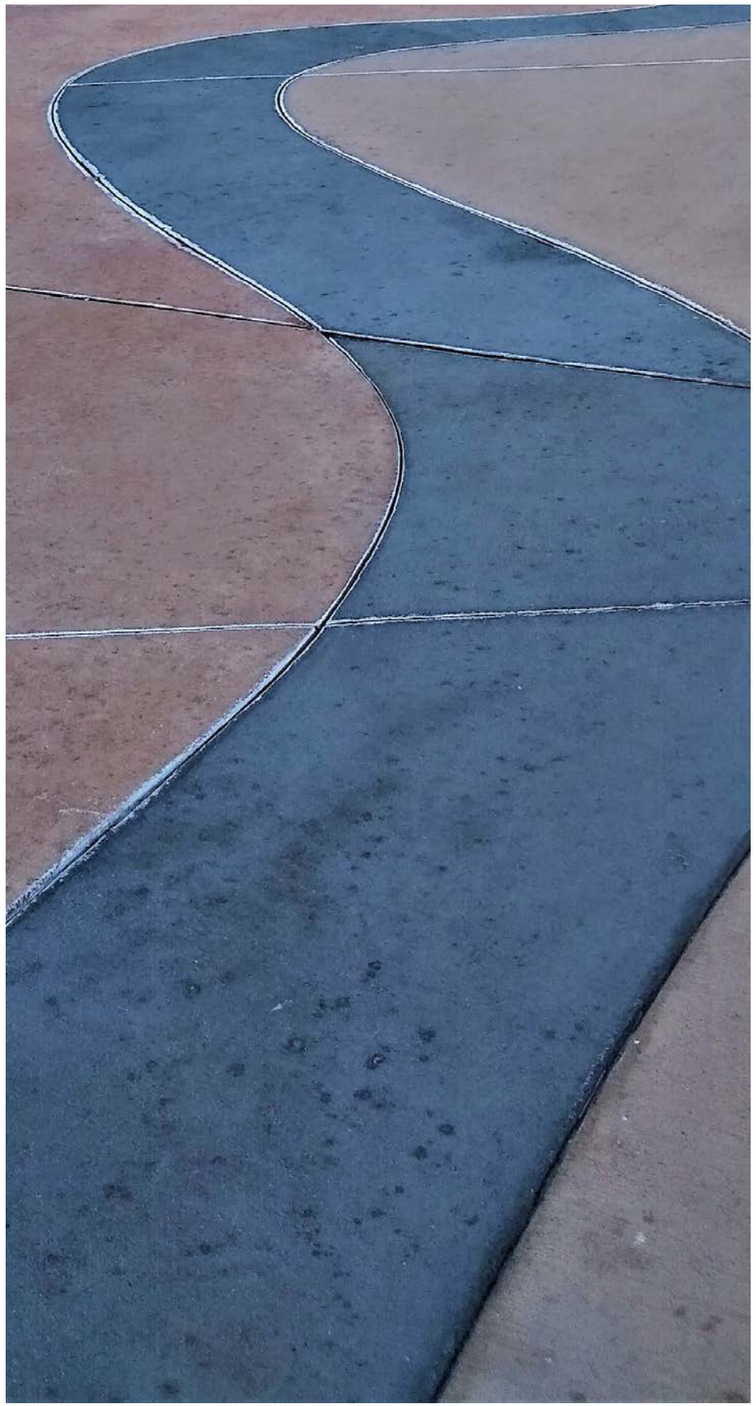
BLUE = contemplative, thought-provoking, restful, healing

These are the nine experiential zones currently envisioned for the SRCT:

1. **CROSSING:** Holmes Street Bridge
2. **EXPRESSING:** Quinn Arts Plaza
3. **CONNECTING:** Huber Park
4. **MAKING:** Schroeder brickyard
5. **DWELLING:** between Schroeder brickyard and northern river flat
6. **CULTIVATING:** northern river flat
7. **TRANSFORMING:** Pond Mill, mission foundation, and Mill Pond channel
8. **REFLECTING:** Memorial Park
9. **EXPLORING:** The Landing: Minnesota River Heritage Park



ADAPTED FROM MAP PRODUCED BY CONFLUENCE FOR 2019 MASTER PLAN



Visitor Experience Narrative

Each zone provides a stand-alone experience for those who visit only one Trail site: a walk across the Holmes Street Bridge; a picnic in Huber Park; a ceremony in Memorial Park; a school trip to The Landing: Minnesota River Heritage Park. This narrative imagines a group of people visiting the SRCT as a whole. While not all visitors will do this, it suggests how people might experience multiple zones, whether all at once or over several visits.

Imagine, then, that two multi-generational families have come to the Shakopee Riverfront on a summer weekend afternoon. One lives in Scott County; the other has come to visit for a few days. The local family recently learned about the Trail from friends. After checking out the SRCT website, they've brought their guests down to the river for the day. The group parks on the west end of the Trail and sets out. Each family has a young teenager with a bike; the teens start pedaling east, savoring their independence on the safe, well-traveled Trail.

The others amble across the pedestrian Holmes Street Bridge: four adults on foot, two elementary school children, and an elder in a wheelchair. As the children run ahead, the adults pause periodically to notice their surroundings. Planters full of flowers and greenery create a park-like environment. Banners welcome them in English, Dakota, and other languages. Exhibit panels installed along the railing draw them in. Whether they scan the headings and graphics or read every word, the exhibits reveal the riverfront's natural beauty, multi-layered history, and cultural significance.

The group also notices interpretive design elements incorporated into the built environment: Dakota floral designs; plants, birds, and animals; and a winding river edged with river rock that runs the length of the bridge. As they travel the rest of the Trail, they see these elements reappearing along the path. The kids make a game of looking for the designs.

Leaving the bridge, the group reaches Quinn Arts Plaza, where the mix of eclectic art pieces and flowering prairie plants create a colorful, energetic environment. While the kids climb an interactive sculpture, the adults follow the winding river design as it continues off the bridge and through the Plaza. It leads them to an orientation map showing that Huber Park is just ahead, with access to restrooms, drinking water, and picnic areas: the perfect place to stop and enjoy the lunch they brought.

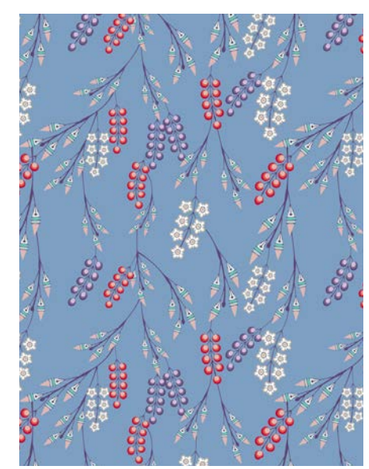
Near the map, exhibit panels feature photos of the bridge's construction and reveal the stories behind the Holmes and Quinn names. In a bulletin case, they see a notice about an upcoming arts festival next month.

The group spends over an hour in Huber Park. To supplement their picnic, they buy beverages and desserts from the concession stand by the repurposed Schroeder Brick House. After eating, the kids hit the playground as the others wander the park, feeling rejuvenated. The park is full of other people playing, resting, eating, and enjoying time together. The elder appreciates how easily the wheelchair can reach everything on the park's accessible paths.

The familiar winding river and rock design leads them past native prairie landscaping, where they notice the same plants that they saw in Quinn Arts Plaza. Here, small markers identify the plants in both Dakota and English. Representations of birds and animals on picnic tables and benches also name them in both languages, and Dakota floral designs appear in different places. The visitors begin to realize that the riverfront is a distinctively Dakota place. They are not Indigenous themselves, and this is a revelation for them.

BOULDERCREEKSTONE.COM

NPS/GORDON DIETZMAN



COURTESY MARLENA MYLES

Dakota floral design by Marlena Myles

The path leads to exhibits about the Holmes trading post and steamboat landing. They marvel that this history happened right here, in this very spot. Learning about cross-cultural interactions in the nineteenth century sparks conversation about the growing diversity of Shakopee's current population.

The group lingers at a river overlook, enjoying the view and feeling connected to the water. Interpretation along the overlook features photographs of earlier residents and visitors recreating along the river during decades past. For the elder, they spark memories of growing up in northern Minnesota, spending summer days swimming in the lakes and fishing the Mississippi River. Before they move on, someone points out that the design of the overlook railing echoes the trusses on the Holmes Street Bridge.

The group pauses at a shaded kiosk to consult another SRCT orientation map. In the adjacent bulletin case, a flyer advertises an upcoming SMSC cultural event in Memorial Park that's open to the public. It's the same weekend as the arts festival. Curious to learn more about Dakota culture, the local family plans to attend both events. Their guests decide to return for another visit so they can join them. Not wanting to burden their friends, they'll stay at a local hotel. Their kids have always wanted to visit Valleyfair; they'll make a long weekend of it.

As they discuss this, the teenagers show up, hungry and thirsty. They fill their water bottles from a fountain and lock their bikes at a bike rack. Someone notices that the racks are shaped like steamboat smokestacks, like those they saw in photographs on one of the exhibits. The teens take their lunches and head for the picnic lawn. One of the local adults decides to scope out the marina. An aspiring kayaker, she's heard she can rent boats to paddle the river.

The others continue down the Trail. They reach a group of exhibits about the Schroeder brickyard. One adult and the kids linger there. They're drawn to a large 3D tactile map of the brickyard complex. The historic lime kiln, life-size sculptures of shovels and buckets, and photos of brick workers bring the past to life. Even children worked here! They study the process diagrams explaining how bricks and lime were made.

BDEX.CO.UK

The other adult and the elder continue on, lured by the tree-lined, wheelchair-accessible path. After the sunny bustle of Huber Park, they appreciate the peaceful green shade. Stopping at a trailside exhibit, they discover that this whole area, on both sides of the river, was once the site of a thriving Mdewakanton Dakota summer village. Pressing an audio button lets them hear place names and other words spoken in the Dakota language. They learn that members of the nearby Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community are descendants of those who lived here. A graphic invites them to visit the Hoċokata Ti cultural center to learn more. They bookmark the website URL on their cell phones to follow up later.

Eventually the group reunites back in Huber Park. As they return to the parking lot, the teenagers tell the others about their bike ride. Riding past Memorial Park, full-size recreations of a tipi and a bark lodge compelled them to stop. Pleased to tell the adults something they don't know, the teens explain what they learned about these Dakota dwellings from the exhibits in the park. They also spied a sort of tall house skeleton on the hill across the road. They want to know who built it and why.

Biking across the bridge from Memorial Park into the northern river flat, they found an unexpected hub of activity: corn fields and other gardens, full of people gardening; a farmers' market; groups of kids playing games. Somebody gave them some fresh-picked beans and let them each pick a handful of raspberries. Their parents remember seeing something on the Trail website about the gardens and the structures; they'll look it up when they get home.

The teens also biked all the way through The Landing, where they saw more gardens and farm animals they'd like to go back to visit sometime. They also saw houses made of wood, brick, and stone, which reminded them of the tipi and bark lodge and made them wonder what it would be like to live in all these different kinds of houses. They stopped at a kiosk to check the Trail map and picked up a flyer advertising The Landing's overnight camping program, where you can spend the night in a log cabin. They want the families to do this together later that summer. It looks like the out-of-towners need to plan another visit to Shakopee.

Zone Worksheets

From the narrative above, we can imagine how the members of two families might experience the SRCT as a whole. For a closer look at each experiential zone, this Plan concludes with a series of zone worksheets. Each worksheet provides a purpose statement, location, and description of the zone's historical and cultural context. Each worksheet also outlines the zone's experiential mood, envisioned visitor (inter)actions, interpretive nodes and elements, and interpretive topics, and suggests what would draw the audiences described in the visitor profiles.

CONFLUENCE

Rendering of redesigned Memorial Park

DREAM OF WILD HEALTH

EXPERIENTIAL ZONE WORKSHEETS

1: CROSSING (HOLMES STREET BRIDGE)

PURPOSE:

Transitions visitors into/out of the SRCT with an overview of the riverfront's historical, cultural, and natural heritage.

Location:

Along the Holmes Street Bridge

Context:

Crosses the Minnesota River on a pedestrian bridge, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.* Connects the SRCT with the Big Woods Regional Trail. Provides views over the river and perspective on the city and its relationship to the river. Interpretive components are interspersed with benches and greenery along the bridge. Offers an overview of topics in riverfront history that visitors also encounter elsewhere on the Trail.

*Development of the bridge should be planned in close consultation with Scott County, which owns the bridge, and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, and needs to preserve its integrity as a National Register-listed property.

Experiential Mood:

Multi-layered, complex, revelatory, content-rich

Visitor (Inter)Actions:

Imagine, Learn, Marvel, Gather, Rest

Target Audience Draws:

- Shakopee nature lover: Content about river ecology and wildlife; interconnection between humans and nature; varied content for return visits
- Metro-area cyclists: Benches to rest, rehydrate, and chat; content to engage with or return to another day
- Multi-generational family: Benches for elders to rest and space for kids to run; varied content interests adults; events and festivals to attend
- Heritage tourists and school groups: Overview of major topics in local history; Dakota, European American, and natural histories intertwined

INTERPRETATION:

Multiple interpretive elements (TBD)

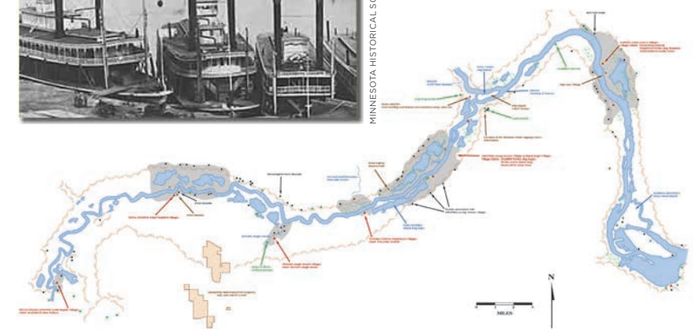
Topics:

- Dakota Homelands
- European American settlement
- River transportation
- River industries
- Recreation on/near the river
- River environment

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

For thousands of years, people have lived and traveled along the river.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



DAKOTA PRESENCE IN THE RIVER VALLEY, COURTESY SMSC

Mapping of villages, burial sites, and other sacred places reveals how the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers have been at the heart of Dakota life in this region.

CENTURIONSTONEMN.COM

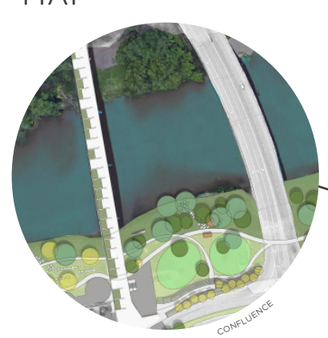
MCGHIEVER

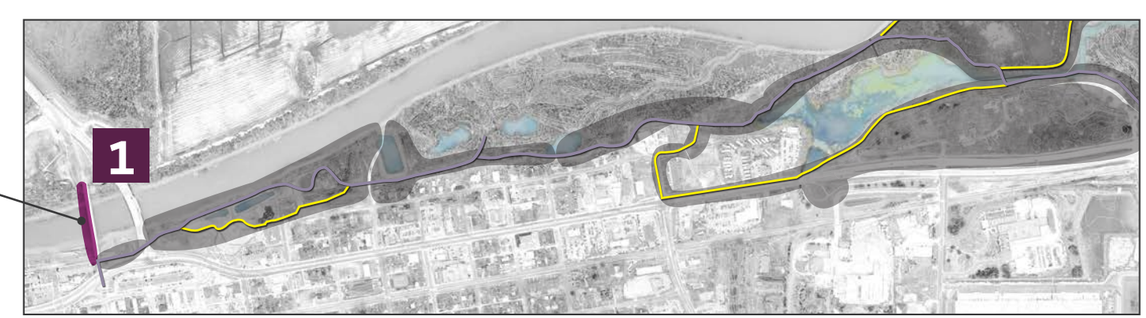
The design style for this zone incorporates both organic and architectural elements, and its components are eye-catching. Its mood is energetic and its palette is bright.

MARLENA MYLES

Dakota floral design by Marlena Myles

MAP





2: EXPRESSING (QUINN ARTS PLAZA)

PURPOSE:

Immerses visitors in artistic interpretations of the riverfront's history, diverse cultures, and natural environment.

Location:

Quinn Arts Plaza

Context:

An art park featuring unique pieces created by local artists in a landscaped setting along the river. Provides a space for festivals, events, and other community gatherings.

Experiential Mood:

Playful, creative, unexpected, stimulating

Visitor (Inter)Actions:

Gather, Play, Rest, Create, Imagine, Marvel, Communicate

Target Audience Draws:

- Shakopee nature lover: Beautiful, calm place to walk; easy access from residential developments to the west; community pride
- Metro-area cyclists: Benches to rest, rehydrate, and chat; large-scale art to make it worth a stop, now or on a future visit
- Multi-generational family: Benches for elders to rest and space for kids to run; art to inspire everyone; festivals, events, and gatherings encourage return visits
- Heritage tourists: The story of Thomas A. Holmes, who, with the help of William "Bill" Quinn, established the city that is now Shakopee; works by local and regional artists for art lovers to enjoy
- School group: Bright colors and interesting shapes; art generates curiosity and can be incorporated into group activity
- Dakota school group: Existing tunnel art and new installations by Native artists

INTERPRETATION:

1 interpretive node + multiple art works

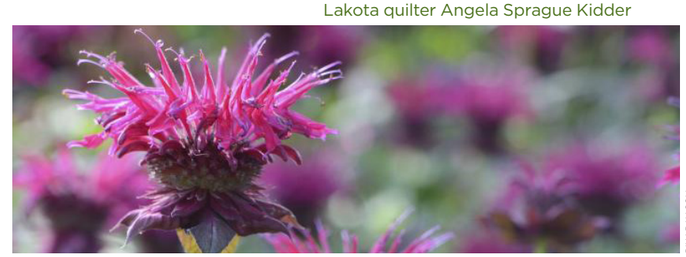
Topics:

- TBD

SCULPTURESITE.COM

BILLINGSGAZETTE.COM

Lakota quilter Angela Sprague Kidder



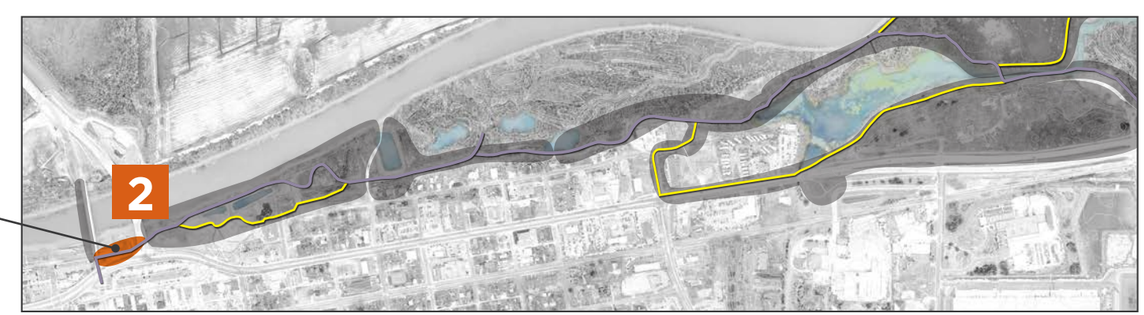
PIXABAY.COM

ELITETOBE.IT

As an arts plaza, the design style for this zone is less predictable and might push beyond the characteristics or elements found in other zones. At the same time, it remains informed by and tied to the riverfront. This could become a site for active, participatory creation.

MAP

CONFLUENCE



3: CONNECTING (HUBER PARK)

PURPOSE:

Connects visitors with the river and with the stories of those who have lived, worked, traveled, and played along it. Provides space to strengthen family and community bonds and renew a relationship with the natural world.

Location:

Huber Park

Context:

This restored and updated park will reconnect people with the river via overlooks, riverbank trails, and a kayak and canoe launch. The historic setting includes the locations of the Holmes landing and trading post and an amphitheater. Planned additions include a renovated playground and a new conflict/war memorial.

Experiential Mood:

Multi-layered, complex, revelatory, content-rich

Visitor (Inter)Actions:

Gather, Play, Rest, Restore, Remember, Imagine, Learn

Target Audience Draws:

- Shakopee nature lover: River views and water access; a dog park; interpretive node focuses attention on the river as the central character in the human history here
- Metro-area cyclists: Interpretive node near shaded area and refreshments
- Multi-generational family: Opportunities to sit and rest, have a picnic, kayak, or canoe; a destination playground for the kids; festivals and events to attend
- Heritage tourists and school groups: Interpretive elements reveal the layers of history and diverse cultural heritage attached to this site

INTERPRETATION:

1 interpretive node + 3 other interpretive elements + plant IDs

Topics:

- Dakota Homelands
- European American settlement
- Dakota-settler interactions
- River transportation
- River industries
- Recreation on/near the river
- River environment

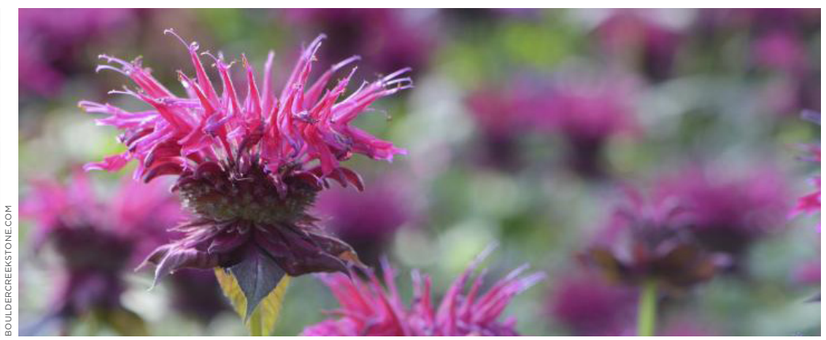
SCOTT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SCOTT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This zone is rich in historic sites, stories, and documentation of life on and along the river.

BOULDERCREEKSTONE.COM



PIXABAY.COM

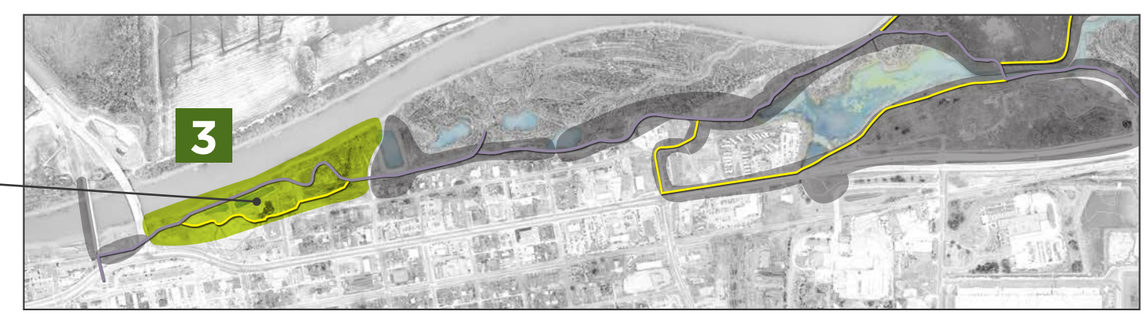
MARLENA MYLES

The design style for this zone is organic and moderately bright, with a mixture of calming and energetic elements. Interpretive components will be understated to integrate with the environment.

Dakota floral design by Marlena Myles

MAP

CONFLUENCE



4: MAKING (SCHROEDER BRICKYARD)

PURPOSE:

Reveals how people used the river and its resources to build local industries in the nineteenth century.

Location:

The Schroeder brickyard

Context:

The Schroeder brickyard, clay pits, and limestone quarry once filled this location; it still features the ruins of a lime kiln and remnants of a brick kiln. The history of local brickmaking and lime production opens a window onto other industries built from river resources, like brewing, milling, and ice cutting. The historic Schroeder Brick House will be repurposed into a community meeting and event center, which also provides programming opportunities. Plans include a concession stand for purchasing food and drink.

Experiential Mood:

Multi-layered, complex, revelatory, content-rich

Visitor (Inter)Actions:

Imagine, Learn, Marvel, Gather, Play, Rest, Create

Target Audience Draws:

- Shakopee nature lover: Access to Huber Park and the river to the north and east; to the west, the Trail leads into the trees
- Metro-area cyclists: Bike racks, drinking water, and a lawn to lounge on at the marina; lunch and libations from a coffee shop at the Schroeder brick house or a food truck or beverage stand nearby
- Multi-generational family, heritage tourists, and school groups: Interpretive node tells a compelling story; tactile component engages the senses; programming activities invite visitors to make something from local resources

INTERPRETATION:

1 interpretive node with distributed elements

Topics:

- European American settlement
- Immigration
- River transportation
- River industries
- River environment

SHAKOPEE HERITAGE SOCIETY

SCOTT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Brickmaking was one of Shakopee's most important industries.

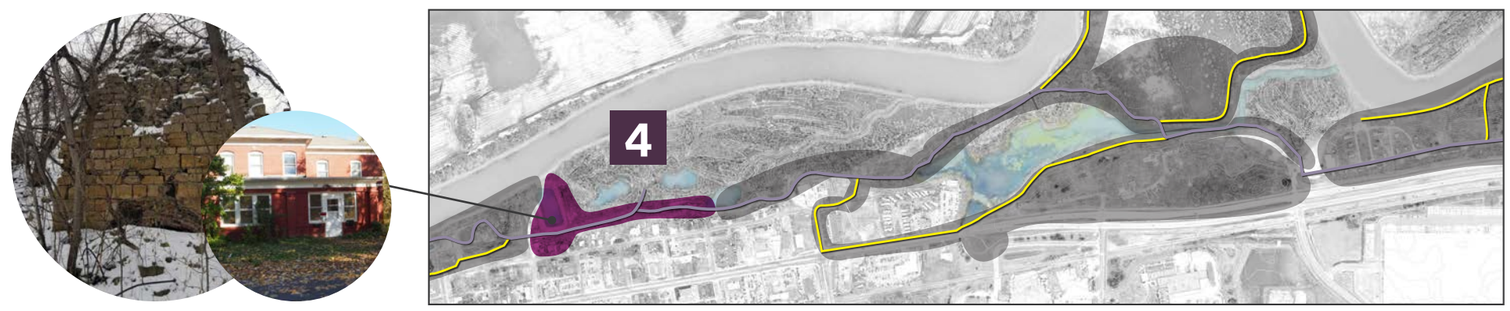
CENTURIONSTONEMN.COM

AMANDA MCNIGHT, SWNEWSMEDIA.COM

WAYNE LITMER

Given its history, this zone incorporates more architectural and industrial characteristics. It has an energetic mood and its components are eye-catching and bright.

MAP



5: DWELLING (BETWEEN SCHROEDER BRICKYARD AND NORTHERN RIVER FLAT)

PURPOSE:

Illuminates life in the Dakota communities that thrived along both sides of the river before European American settlement and into the nineteenth century.

Location:

From the east end of the Schroeder brickyard to the northern river flat

Context:

For generations, Dakota people lived on both sides of the river in the summer village of Tiŋta Otuŋwe; they harvested wild rice nearby. This village was part of an interconnected network of water-centered places where Dakota people lived, fished, riced, canoed, played, raised families, and honored their ancestors.

Experiential Mood:

Contemplative, thought-provoking, restful, healing

Visitor (Inter)Actions:

Imagine, Remember, Reflect, Restore, Learn, Marvel

Target Audience Draws:

- Shakopee nature lover, metro-area cyclists, and multi-generational family: Restored oak savanna landscape along a quiet, shaded stretch of trail; a change in surroundings and shift in mood from the more open, populated areas to the west
- Heritage tourists: Interpretation brings to life the large, vibrant, multi-generational community of Tiŋta Otuŋwe and connects them to the families who lived here
- Dakota school group: Homecoming and connection to their ancestors and plant relatives

INTERPRETATION:

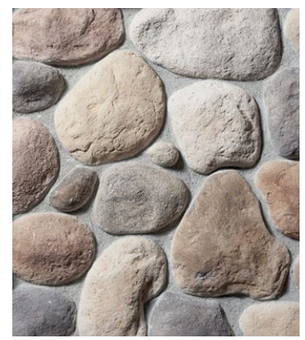
2 interpretive elements

Topics:

- Dakota Homelands
- Dakota life in Tiŋta Otuŋwe
- River transportation
- Recreation on/near the river
- River environment

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This place is part of the Dakota Homelands. It is still sacred ground for today's Mdewakanton people. Image: Permanent Residence, Sioux by Seth Eastman, 1846-1848



GAGNONCLAYPRODUCTS.COM

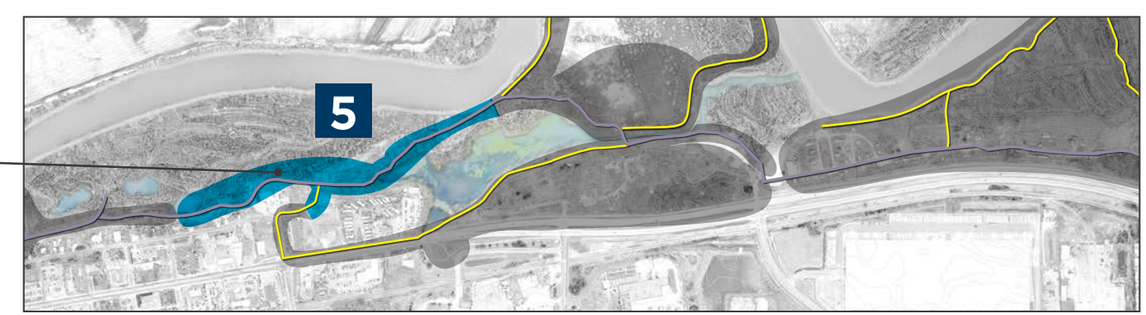
The design style in this zone is organic, understated, muted, and calming.

K. CHAYKA, MINNESOTAWILDFLOWERS.INFO

MARLENA MYLES

Dakota floral design by Marlena Myles

MAP



6: CULTIVATING (NORTHERN RIVER FLAT)

PURPOSE:

Demonstrates how natural resources and agriculture sustained Dakota life here and fosters the restoration of Indigenous food practices.

Location:

Northern river flat trail loop and agricultural restoration and interpretive area

Context:

Passes through floodplain forest and an area once farmed by Dakota people; a planned site for the restoration and interpretation of cultural food practices.

Experiential Mood:

Close to nature, regenerative, immersive, sensory-rich

Visitor (Inter)Actions:

Restore, Imagine, Remember, Learn, Marvel, Gather, Create, Communicate

Target Audience Draws:

- Shakopee nature lover and Metro-area cyclists: A quiet, secluded trail; a shift in vegetation and proximity to the river; interesting activity happening in the agricultural area and perhaps a chat with someone on garden duty
- Multi-generational family: An extended trail loop for those who want to strike out over some distance or need a break from the group; bike racks and a water fountain; agricultural programs offer hands-on activities for the kids
- Heritage tourists: Interpretive node reveals the depth of knowledge and skill in Dakota communities and explores their interconnection with the natural world
- School groups: Opportunity to learn about and participate in traditional agricultural practices; inspiration to be good stewards of the environment; veggies to eat
- Dakota school group: Connection to ancestral knowledge, plant relatives, and cultural foods

INTERPRETATION:

1 interpretive node

Topics:

- Dakota Homelands
- Dakota life in Tiŋta Otuŋwe
- River environment
- Cultural foods and food knowledge

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This place, once the site of well-maintained agricultural fields, could produce beloved traditional foods once again. Image: Dakota women and children guarding corn fields in 1862

CENTURIONSTONEMN.COM

THREERIVERSPARKS.ORG

The design style for this zone is organic and moderately bright, with more eye-catching and energetic elements in the agricultural interpretive area.

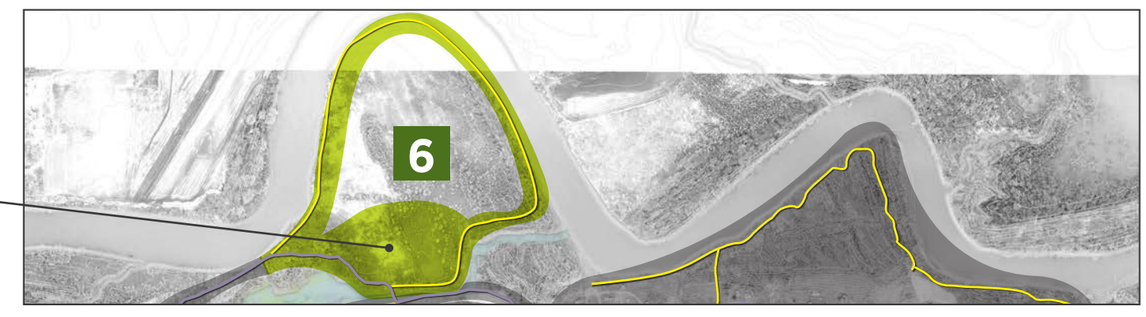
MARLENA MYLES

Dakota floral design by Marlena Myles

GECKOGROUP.COM

MAP

DREAM OF WILD HEALTH CIVILEATS.COM



7: TRANSFORMING (POND MILL AND MISSION + CITY STREETS)

PURPOSE:

Exposes the layers and complexities of local history as human actions and interactions have transformed the riverfront over time.

Location:

Along south shore of mill pond and channel, trail spur up to Pond mission foundation, and section that runs along city streets

Context:

Where the western end takes visitors onto city streets, interpretation can provoke reflection on the contrast between nature trails and urban development and on how humans interact with the environment. The eastern section runs between the mill pond and Memorial Park. In between, a spur leads up to the historically significant former locations of the Faribault trading post and original Pond mission house.

Experiential Mood:

Multi-layered, complex, revelatory, content-rich

Visitor (Inter)Actions:

Imagine, Learn, Marvel, Question

Target Audience Draws:

- Shakopee nature lover and metro-area cyclists: Eastern section is adjacent to a restored oak savanna landscape; views of the mill pond, channel, and ducks
- Multi-generational family, heritage tourists, and school groups: Many layers of history; an encounter with an artistic representation of the past; overview of local history provided by the Pathways of Shakopee History signs
- Dakota school group: Connection to their ancestors at the sacred springs, Wakanhdi Topa Wiwi

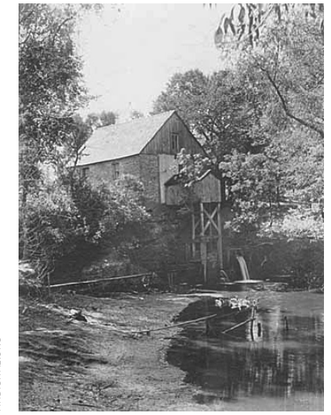
INTERPRETATION:

2 interpretive elements

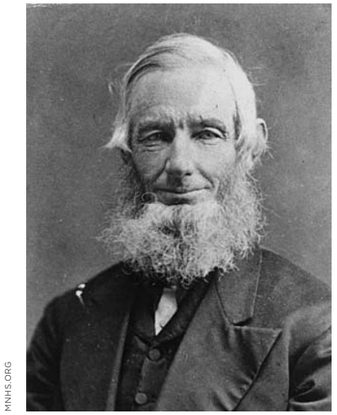
Topics:

- Dakota Homelands
- Dakota life in Tiŋta Otuŋwe
- European American settlement
- Dakota-settler interactions
- Immigration
- River industries
- River environment

MNDIGITAL.ORG



MNHS.ORG



MNHS.ORG

The Faribault trading post and original Pond mission once stood here, and the Pond mill remains in place. Gideon Pond and his brother Samuel, pictured here in 1890, were missionaries among the Dakota people.

BOULDERCREEKSTONE.COM

This zone incorporates some eye-catching, architectural elements and its mood is energetic and moderately bright.

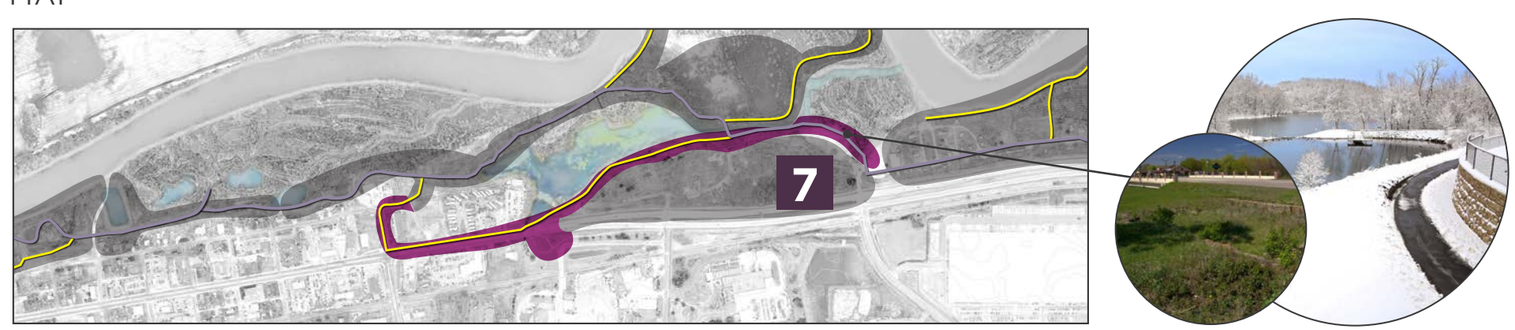
MARLENA MYLES

Dakota floral design by Marlena Myles

MICHAEL VAHRENWALD, GHOSTHOUSEPROJECT.COM

Ghost House by Kant Smith

MAP



SARAH DEPPE, CONFLUENCE

8: REFLECTING (MEMORIAL PARK)

PURPOSE:

Honors Dakota people's long and abiding relationship to this place and encourages respect for the ancestors who rest here as well as stewardship of the natural world.

Location:

Memorial Park

Context:

This park provides a deliberate space for reflection within a restored native landscape and celebrates Dakota people's presence and resilience.

Experiential Mood:

Contemplative, thought-provoking, restful, healing

Visitor (Inter)Actions:

Gather, Rest, Play, Restore, Remember, Reflect, Question, Communicate

Target Audience Draws:

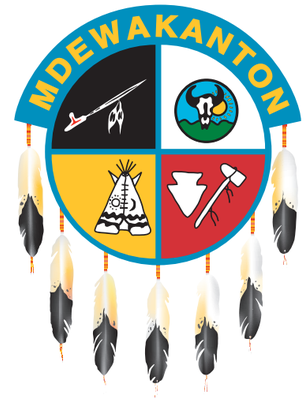
- Shakopee nature lover: Restored oak savanna, green lawn, and flowers
- Metro-area cyclists: A place to stop and rest; bike racks and drinking water
- Multi-generational family: Nature playground for the kids; benches for the elders; a lawn and gardens for all to enjoy
- Heritage tourists and school groups: Trailhead, speaking circle, and cultural programs; life-size tipi and/or bark lodge structure; interpretive node helps them understand what this place means to Dakota people
- Dakota school group: A respectful, healing space to reflect on what this place means for them; a safe place to grapple with historical loss and present-day challenges; connection to their ancestors and plant relatives

INTERPRETATION:

1 interpretive node + one interpretive element + plant IDs

Topics:

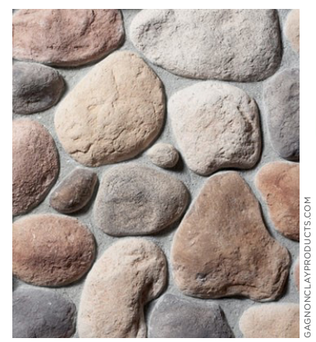
- Dakota Homelands
- Dakota life in Tiŋta Otuŋwe
- Dakota-settler interactions
- River environment
- Cultural foods and food knowledge



COURTESY SMSC

CITY OF SHAKOPEE

This place reflects Dakota people's past, present, and future. Sakpedan (Chief Shakopee III or Little Six) led the people of Tinta Otunwe; his statue now stands in downtown Shakopee, the city named for his father. Sakpedan's people are still here, in the nearby SMSC.



GAGNONCLAYPRODUCTS.COM

K. CHAYKA, MINNESOTAWILDFLOWERS.INFO

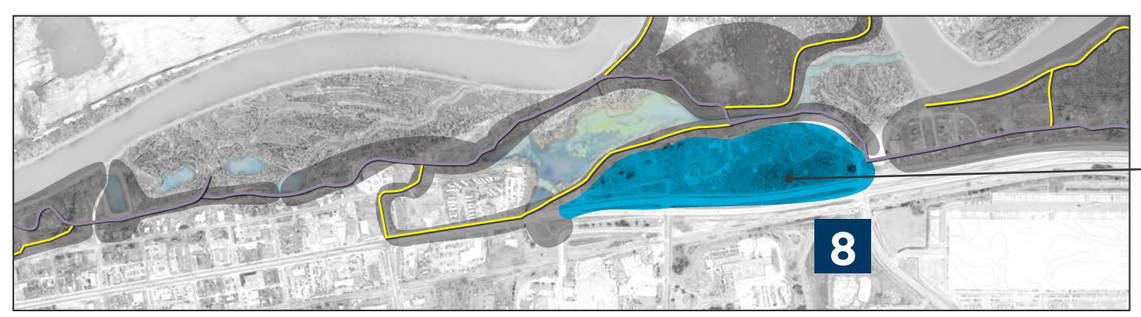
The design style in this zone is organic, understated, calming, and muted, with pops of floral color from native plants.

MARLENA MYLES

Dakota floral design by Marlena Myles

PIXABAY.COM

MAP



9: EXPLORING (THE LANDING: MINNESOTA RIVER HERITAGE PARK)

PURPOSE:

Engages visitors with the tangible past and helps them connect the themes and stories encountered along the trail.

Location:

The Landing: Minnesota River Heritage Park

Context:

This historic site offers self-guided exploration or living history interpretation and features historic buildings from early settlement through the 1800s.

Experiential Mood:

- Multi-layered, complex, revelatory, content-rich

Visitor (Inter)Actions:

- Gather, Play, Rest, Imagine, Learn, Marvel, Participate, Question, Communicate

Target Audience Draws:

- Shakopee nature-lover: A place to come to over and over again; trails through the trees; a view of the river; bird-watching; a familiar part of the community
- Metro-area cyclists: Parking makes this a potential entry point/trailhead; bike racks and water fountain make it easy to stop for a wander, a rest, or a food break; opportunity to ride a penny-farthing high wheel bicycle
- Multi-generational family and school groups: Living history interpreters and farm animals; space to run, play, rest, wander, or picnic
- Heritage tourists: Historic buildings provide a path through time; living history interpreters and programs help them connect the stories encountered along the trail
- Dakota school group: Culturally significant sites along the far eastern end of the trail

INTERPRETATION:

2 interpretive nodes

Topics:

- Dakota Homelands
- Dakota life in Tiŋta Otuŋwe
- European American settlement
- Dakota-settler interactions
- Immigration
- River transportation
- River industries
- Recreation on/near the river
- River environment
- Cultural foods and food knowledge

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

There are many layers of local history to discover at The Landing: Minnesota River Heritage Park, including the historic Faribault cabin and stories of the Red River ox cart trail that passed here along the Minnesota River.

BOULDERCREEKSTONE.COM

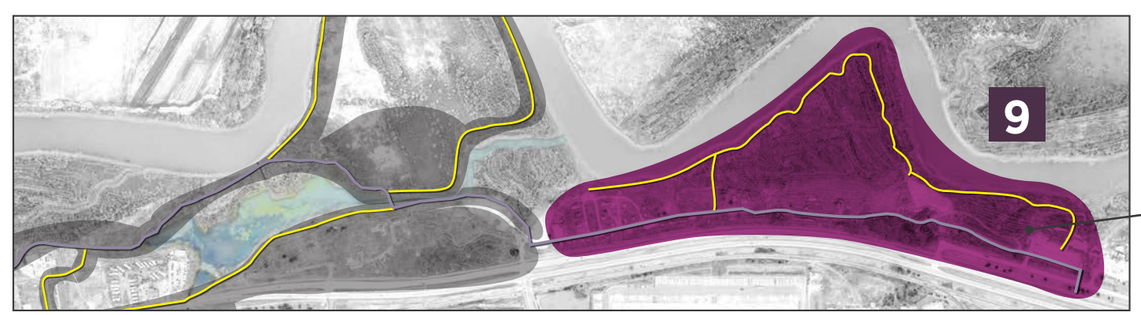
K. CHAYKA, MINNESOTAWILDFLOWERS.INFO

The design style in this zone mixes natural and architectural characteristics and provides space for both calming rest and active play. This zone also offers interactive experiences for all ages.

MARLENA MYLES

Dakota floral design by Marlena Myles

MAP



NEXT STEPS

PLANNING

The partners of the SCCC have accomplished much toward development of the SRCT. Together, the 2019 Master Plan and this Visitor Experience Plan provide a vision, foundations, and a framework for creating an exceptional visitor experience along the Shakopee riverfront. The process of creating the Master Plan led to the formation of the Consortium itself and the successful application for a Legacy Grant from the State of Minnesota. The planning process for the VEP has strengthened the partnership and demonstrated the value of cross-organizational collaboration. To produce this document, the project team has engaged in extensive stakeholder engagement and begun the process of broader community engagement.

For the long-term success of the SRCT, the project requires additional planning, anchored in communication and collaboration among the SCCC partners. Moving forward, the SCCC partners should commit to addressing the following needs and issues.

FORMALIZATION OF PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES

The SCCC partners should utilize Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement documents to clarify roles and formalize responsibilities going forward. This will be especially essential during the implementation stage. Such agreements should include delegation of responsibilities for Trail maintenance.

COMPLEXITY OF LAND OWNERSHIP

Land owners along or adjacent to the Trail include:

- Four SCCC partners: City of Shakopee, Scott County, SMSC, and TRPD
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Union Pacific Railroad
- Other national corporations, local businesses, and individual homeowners

RELATED REGIONAL PLANNING PROJECTS

The SCCC partners should stay aware of and in communication with other regional research and interpretive planning projects that relate to the Minnesota and Mississippi river valleys. These include:

- Scott County/TRPD: Big Woods Regional Trail
- Dakota County: Minnesota River Greenway
- City of Saint Paul: Indian Mounds
- Lower Phalen Creek Project: Wakáŋ Tipi Center
- SMSC and other Minnesota Dakota communities: Mapping historical Dakota presence in the river valleys

ZONE 1 CONSIDERATIONS

- The Holmes Street Bridge is owned by the Scott County Highway Department.
- It is part of the Big Woods Regional Trail, which is jointly operated by Scott County and TRPD, and will be undergoing its own planning and development process in the near future.
- The Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office will need to be consulted regarding any possible changes to this National Register-listed property.

ZONE 9 CONSIDERATIONS

The Landing: Minnesota River Heritage Park is an already-established, developed heritage site owned by TRPD. SRCT development in Zone 9 will need to align with TRPD planning and complement existing interpretation and programming.

SMSC CONSULTATION AND REVIEW (ZONES 5-8)

These areas contain known cultural resources related to Tiŋta Otuŋwe, including existing mounds and other cemetery areas, as well as natural springs that are sacred for Dakota people. These also are areas where the SMSC is working to restore native plant communities.

Development of these zones will require ongoing, extensive consultation with multiple SMSC advisory groups and knowledge keepers, including:

- Hoċokata Ti staff
- Land and Natural Resources Department
- Cultural Resources Department
- Culture and History Preservation Workgroup
- Dakota Iapi Tipi

It will be essential to build sufficient time into future project stages for these layers of SMSC consultation and review.

Consultation should include:

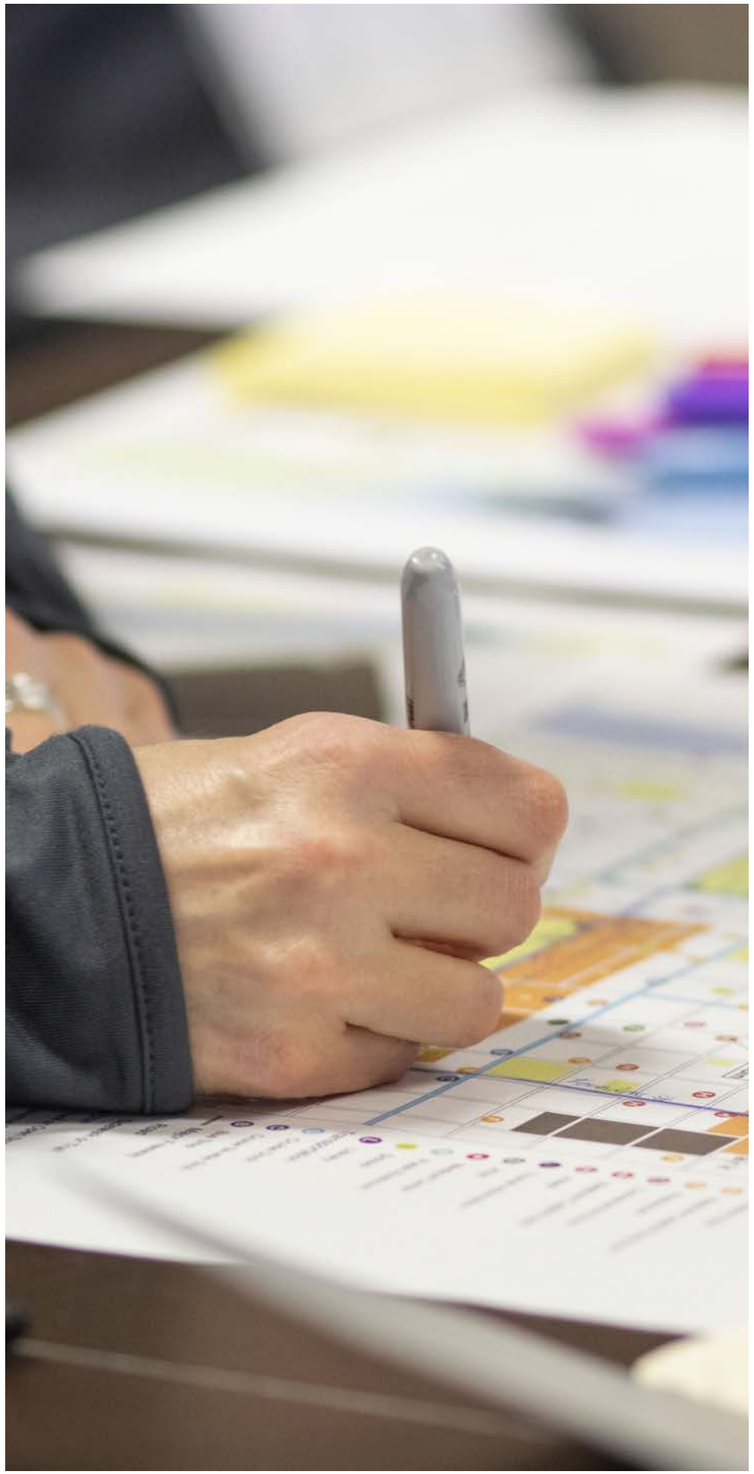
- Placement and form of interpretive structures
- Content of interpretive text and design
- Incorporation of Dakota language

EVALUATION

Formative evaluation of the ideas contained in this document has been ongoing throughout the VEP planning process and will continue after the Final VEP is completed. The SCCC partners will begin to gather public input on components of this Revised Draft VEP during the spring of 2021 as part of a marketing campagn to raise awareness of plans for the Trail. In the summer, the partners will carry out additional community engagement, gathering feedback from diverse residents of the City of Shakopee and Scott County.

Once the first phase of interpretation is implemented, summative evaluation can measure real-world effectiveness of the Trail experience for visitors. This is most useful if there are enough budget and appetite to make changes if any are deemed necessary. Summative evaluation also can demonstrate success to funders and support award nominations or conference presentations.

Standards for graphic styles, colors, and language will shift over time, as will the social context for the SRCT. This Plan recommends conducting additional evaluation approximately every decade, in order to keep the experience fresh and relevant.



IMPLEMENTATION

SUSTAINABILITY

This project, from the ground up, is about restoration: restoring access to the river, restoring stories to the land, and restoring nature for current and future generations. Restoration work requires an active, long-term commitment to making the project sustainable. The project team should factor sustainability into all future stages of work.

Trail maintenance, in particular, will take considerable effort and coordination. Annual flooding, existing overgrowth, and the presence of invasive non-native plants make long-term maintenance of the SRCT challenging. The multiplicity of landowners and invested stakeholders along the Trail makes it especially complicated. Responsibility for maintenance of surfacing, landscaping, and other physical infrastructure should be formalized among the partners and factored into operating budgets going forward.

When implementing construction of interpretive and other structures, the project team also can commit to building sustainably wherever feasible:

- **BUILD GREEN:** Choose materials and processes that foster longevity, minimize energy consumption and toxicity, maximize use of recycled and recyclable content, and factor in the envioronmental impacts of shipping.
- **BUILD FOR THE LONG TERM:** Use proven, resilient materials.
- **BUILD FOR MAINTENANCE:** Choose materials that are resistant to weather, graffiti, and other vandalism. Request a comprehensive maintenance manual from contracted fabricators and consistently consult and apply its recommendations.
- **BUILD FOR FLEXIBILITY:** Modular structures can adapt to changes in site environment or visitor needs over time.
- **BUILD TO PROTECT CULTURAL RESOURCES:** Limit ground-penetrating footings and new paving to already-disturbed areas. Coordinate new construction and improvements closely with SMSC, the Office of the State Archaeologist, and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office.

STEP ONE: DESIGN

The first step toward implementation of the interpretive framework recommended in the 2019 Master Plan and this VEP should be comprehensive design. This Plan recommends completing schematic design and design development for the entire Trail all at once. Physical implementation, that is, pre-production, fabrication, and installation, then can proceed in phases as funding, infrastructure, and other circumstances allow.

Design costs will depend on many factors, including the specific number and type of interpretive elements, the level of stakeholder and community engagement required, and the number of reviewers involved in the process.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

Ideally, fabrication and installation of all interpretive elements would be implemented at the same time. This would create cost efficiencies and provide visitors with the fully-realized SRCT experience all at once. In reality, implementation is likely to happen in phases.

This Plan recommends phasing implementation by zone as follows:

PHASE ONE	Etiquette signs (Zones 5-9)
PHASE TWO	Zone 3: Huber Park Zone 4: Schroeder brickyard Zone 9: The Landing
PHASE THREE	Zone 1: Holmes Street Bridge Zone 2: Quinn Arts Plaza Zone 5: Between Schroeder brickyard and river flat Zone 6: Northern river flat Zone 7: Pond Mill, mission house, and Mill Pond channel Zone 8: Memorial Park
PHASE FOUR	AR app

These recommendations result from analysis of potential visitor impact as well as multiple contextual considerations, including current level of development, existing infrastructure, and complexity of land ownership and authority.

IMPLEMENTATION COSTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

The table on the following pages looks at implementation of interpretive elements by zone. It provides estimated cost ranges for each zone and summarizes contextual factors that could impact implementation.

Please note:

- The table focuses solely on **IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERPRETATION**. It does not include, for instance, the costs of landscaping, essential infrastructure, or visitor amenities.
- **COST RANGES DO NOT INCLUDE DESIGN COSTS**. It is assumed, as recommended above, that design would be completed before any implementation takes place, at a separate cost.

IMPLEMENTATION COSTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Assumes that schematic design and design development already have been completed for the entire SRCT.

Cost ranges (approximate): $ = under 10,000 $$ = 10,000–50,000 $$$ = 50,000–100,000

ZONE	IMPLEMENTATION PHASE (1-4)	FABRICATION COST RANGE	POSSIBLE INTERPRETIVE ELEMENTS	CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS
Zones 5-9	1	$	Etiquette signs	Requires coordination with multiple landowners. Ground conditions and other physical infrastructure will vary across zones.
Zone 1: Holmes Street Bridge	3	$$	Multiple interpretive elements (number and type TBD in consultation with the Scott County Highway Department and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office)	The Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office will need to be consulted regarding any possible changes to this National Register-listed property. The bridge is owned by the Scott County Highway Department and part of the Big Woods Regional Trail, which is managed by Scott County and TRPD. Implementation will need to be closely coordinated with all these entities.
Zone 2: Quinn Arts Plaza	3	$$	1 interpretive node Design elements integrated into built environment (e.g., ground surface, railings, benches, bike racks)	The Plaza also will include multiple art works with form and content TBD with the artists. Recommend commissioning at least some art works that support the interpretive themes in this VEP.
Zone 3: Huber Park	2	$$	1 interpretive node 3 other interpretive elements Plant identification markers Design elements integrated into built environment (e.g. ground surface, railings, benches, bike racks)	Design and implementation should be closely coordinated with planned renovation and restoration in the park.
Zone 4: Schroeder brickyard	2	$$$	1 interpretive node with 6 distributed interpretive elements Design elements integrated into built environment around repurposed Brick House	Requires removal of existing signs and coordination with the DNR. Design and implementation of interpretation in this zone should be closely coordinated with the development of the repurposed Schroeder Brick House.
Zone 5: between Schroeder brickyard and river flat	3	$-$$	2 interpretive elements Design elements incorporated into path surface	Requires extensive SMSC consultation and coordination with multiple landowners.
Zone 6: northern river flat	3	$$	1 interpretive node Design elements integrated into built environment (e.g., ground surface, railings, benches, bike racks)	Requires extensive SMSC consultation. Zone might also include a structural reconstruction of a field watcher's platform, which is not included in the cost range.

IMPLEMENTATION COSTS AND CONSIDERATIONS (CONT.)

Assumes that schematic design and design development already have been completed for the entire SRCT, at separate cost.

Cost ranges (approximate): $ = up to 10,000 $$ = 10,000–50,000 $$$ = 50,000–100,000 $$$$ = over 100,000

ZONE	IMPLEMENTATION PHASE (1-4)	FABRICATION COST RANGE	POSSIBLE INTERPRETIVE ELEMENTS	CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS
Zone 7: Pond Mill, mission foundation, and Mill Pond channel	3	$-$$	2 interpretive elements Design elements integrated into built environment (e.g., ground surface, benches)	Design and implementation should be closely coordinated with any interpretive development by the Shakopee Heritage Society and the planned structural representation of the Pond mission house.
Zone 8: Memorial Park	3	$$	1 interpretive node 1 other interpretive element Plant identification markers Design elements integrated into built environment (e.g., ground surface, benches, bike racks, playground)	Requires extensive SMSC consultation. Design and implementation should be closely coordinated with planned renovation and restoration in the park. Zone might also include a structural reconstruction of a bark lodge and/or tipi, which is not included in the cost range.
Zone 9: The Landing	2	$$	2 interpretive nodes Design elements integrated into built environment (e.g., ground surface, railings, benches, bike racks)	Design and implementation requires close coordination with TRPD and needs to align with existing TRPD goals and plans for the park.
All zones	4	$$$	AR app and first 5 years of hosting & updates	Implement all physical nodes and elements before developing the app.