Falls Park
WHERE WE GATHER
21-0006 Falls Park Design Competition
Our Team

Our team consists of three like-minded firms who seek to provide the City of Sioux Falls and its community with the best of their disciplines. Our team's process is based on a collaborative approach that removes silos between landscape architecture, engineering, public engagement, urban planning and ecology in order to deliver implementable, and catalytic projects that benefit communities both equitably and holistically.

Asakura Robinson

Asakura Robinson is a planning, urban design, urban ecology and landscape architecture firm which strengthens environments and empowers communities through innovation, engagement, stewardship, and an integrated design and planning process. Three key values inform all of our work: interaction, diversity and innovation. We value the ability of the public to participate in our projects, creating places that encourage social interaction. We value our diverse workplace and communities and seek to optimize existing community-based and ecological resources. Finally, we value creativity in our processes, materials, technology, collaborations, approach, and design palette.

106 Group

106 Group specializes in leading technical and complex cultural resource compliance projects. For nearly 30 years, they have completed thousands of archaeological, cultural, and architectural history projects for federal, state, local, and tribal governments. Working with or on behalf of government agencies, private entities, communities, and American Indian Tribes, they deliver innovative solutions to complex cultural resources compliance projects.

SEH

SEH, based in Sioux Falls, works to simplify the world’s complex challenges by improving mobility, designing better places, engineering clean water and renewing infrastructure. SEH’s civil engineers work to manage, maintain, renew and replace infrastructure assets, designing better streets, safer sidewalks, more sustainable utilities, and trails and parks.

Acknowledgements

During the process of developing the Falls Park design proposal, we talked with numerous passionate and dedicated community leaders. We appreciate the time spent with us and sharing your vision for Falls Park. A enthusiastic ‘thank you’ to:

- The citizens of Sioux Falls who spoke to us about the current use and their future desires of Falls Park at the June 4th East Bank Block Party,
- Joe Kirby with the Sioux Falls Downtown Neighborhood Association,
- Nancy Halverson with the Levitt at the Falls,
- Travis Enterman with the Friends of the Big Sioux River and Northern Prairies Land Trust, and
- Mitchell Founder with the Sioux Empire Paddlers.

Land Acknowledgement: Developing an appropriate, and meaningful land acknowledgement statement takes time and deep reflection. Our team will work with indigenous groups to develop a process that reflects the significance of the falls to indigenous communities over the years. This may take the form of a statement or a set of actions that will be integrated into the design and development of Falls Park.
Falls Park is where we gather.

It is a place that brings all people together to experience an extraordinary moment at the falls.
Mission

Falls Park is where we gather. It is a place that brings all people together to experience an extraordinary moment at the Falls. The park design builds upon the layered past of the site and region, and the existing conditions of the site.

For thousands of years, Dakota and other Indigenous peoples have used this place for seasonal gathering. Over centuries of European colonization and American settlement, Falls Park has accumulated more layers of historical significance. The city has worked to preserve remnants of its industrial past along the Big Sioux River, and identify different aspects of the site’s historic story. Residents and visitors come here to connect with the natural world and the city’s history. They come here to gather, to play, and to explore. As we re-imagine this park, we also re-imagine how people will experience its complex history and ecological value as well as its meaning for people and communities over time. Falls Park honors the past as a historic gathering space.

During our design process, five main design values emerged that guide our approach:

LISTEN!, REPAIR!, ACTIVATE!, DISCOVER!, and SHARE!

With these values in mind, three big design moves emerged:

1. The creation of landscape ROOMS that act as gathering places where we connect, learn, gather, and explore the park and the Falls.
2. The development of strong CONNECTORS that knit rooms together, as well as facilitate easy access to the park from the city.
3. The establishment of FRAMES that provide guidelines for contextual economic development and create a plan for successful implementation and maintenance of the park through strategic partnerships.

Through this organizational framework the future of Falls Park is a connected, open hub of activity for residents of Sioux Falls and visitors alike. The plan is a peek into the final design and the pages that follow walk through our process and proposal for the design of Falls Park.

Key Design Considerations

1. Respect the Falls - Frame the Experience
2. Keep Existing Major Park Elements Intact
3. Reduce Intensive Site Maintenance
4. Increase Carbon Sequestration
5. Protect Water Quality within the Park
6. Increase Safety
7. Center of Gravity for Park at the Falls
8. Increase Diversity of Experience for Locals
9. Increase Opportunities for Safe Water Play
10. Park as Neighborhood Link
11. Increase Economic Potential of Park
12. Increase Sense of Hide and Reveal
13. Programming for Seasonal Variation
14. Heighten the Arrival Sequence
15. Reveal former Hydrology
16. Promote Local Arts
17. Share Cultural Heritage Stories
18. Promote Stewardship and Education
Existing Opportunities & Design Values

While Falls Park is an outstanding park in many ways, it must continue to evolve to be more resilient to environmental change, to meet the changing needs and reflect the community’s vision in a rapidly growing City, and to be better connected to the communities it serves.

Repair, restore, and rehabilitate our connection to the land.

The updated design of Falls Park presents the opportunity to repair, restore, and rehabilitate the Falls’ natural systems, including its hydrology, ecology, and connections to the surrounding landscape. The design process will be led with an emphasis on guidance from traditional, Indigenous ecological knowledge and a commitment to zero net environmental impact as part of the construction process.

Opportunity to enhance the way stormwater is treated in the park to steward a healthier watershed, and act as a model of sustainable water practices.

Opportunity to reduce the mown turf grass and to restore plant communities in the Big Sioux watershed, and create functional ecosystems that heal the land and provide a sense of place.

Activate the interior and edges of the park with engaging intergenerational and seasonal programming that makes the park an exciting destination.

Parks are best activated by stacking a range of recreational and social activities at multiple scales. This “something for everybody” approach brings a diversity of park visitors to enjoy all the park has to offer. An activated Falls Park can support neighborhood scale revitalization and development, gaining momentum as the neighborhood continues to grow as connections between the park and adjacent parks and riverfront open spaces expand.

Opportunity to activate the edges of the park by creating park oriented design guidelines that seamlessly connect the park to the downtown and other adjacent neighborhoods.

Opportunity to activate the whole park by creating spaces at different scales, creating landscape ‘rooms’ that are unique, distinct, and support programming.

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Discover and reveal the unique qualities of Falls Park.

History, ecology, and geology converge together at Falls Park. Visitors arriving at the park should feel a sense of excitement and adventure. What will they learn, see, and experience? Exciting arrival gateway experiences when entering the park, well defined circulation, and a consistent visual language throughout the park will help them discover these opportunities.

Opportunity to develop a trail hierarchy to help with wayfinding, provide cues for trail use, and to upgrade circulation through the park.

Opportunity to develop multiple gateways into the park, and to reconfigure the streetscapes that bisect the park to attract active pedestrian and cyclist use.

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Listen to our community and reflect the vision of all voices.

The design process for Falls Park will center on a commitment to equity, participatory community based design, and active listening. We will ensure that all voices, especially in underrepresented BIPOC communities, will be heard as valued insights into the design. Tactile, in-person engagement activities will immerse stakeholders into the design and foster creative responses to design challenges.

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Defining Design Moves

Our five design values manifest spatially in Falls Park through three big moves. (1) A variety of programmed Rooms turn one large park into multiple smaller, unique experiences. (2) Connectors provide means of fluid movement for people and stormwater through and across the park. (3) Frames provide guidelines and partnerships for park implementation and growth.

Rooms
Rooms are gathering places where we connect, learn, gather, and explore the Falls. Each room has unique programming and landscaping to promote a diversity of experience.

Connectors
Connectors knit rooms together, as well as facilitating easy access to the park from the city. The park should also act as a passage for the city, not just a destination on the edge.

Frames
Frames provide guidelines for contextual economic development and create a plan for successful implementation and maintenance of the park through strategic partnerships.

Final Design
The future of Falls Park is a connected, open hub of activity for residents and visitors alike.
Vision
The updated design of Falls Park is a comprehensive framework for the redevelopment of Falls Park into a community-driven gathering place for residents and visitors alike. Connection to the environment is key here, with environmental education, outdoor activities like snowshoeing, mountain biking, and cross-country skiing, and environmental restoration all emphasized. Overall, Falls Park is a place where all people gather to connect to one another, the environment, the city and landscape history, and the beauty of the falls.

Innovation and Creativity
An activated Falls Park can catalyze neighborhood-scale revitalization and development, gaining momentum as the population continues to grow and connections between the park and adjacent parks and riverfront open spaces expand. In addition to the updated park design, we propose “Park-Oriented Development Guidelines” to catalyze surrounding economic development in a way that enhances the park, and the “Third Street Greenway” as a key piece of mobility infrastructure to link neighborhoods and open space to the park and downtown.

Feasibility and Practicality
Inspired designs need actionable plans. This plan presents a 4-phased process for park implementation and emphasizes a few big moves to catalyze the site as an integral part of mobility for Sioux Falls. We also propose strategic partnerships for implementation and maintenance.

Activation & Recreation
Thinking about the park as a system of smaller park spaces increases the level of service for all residents and visitors of Sioux Falls. Families can gather to picnic and celebrate in intimate, shaded picnic groves under large trees while nearby, visitors can wander through open, prairie grassland and interpretive trails to visit the falls and river edge. In the winter, these experiences morph into a whole new set of activities.

Connectivity
Visitors arriving to the park should feel a sense of excitement and adventure. Exciting arrival gateway experiences when entering the park and a consistent visual language throughout the park will help them discover these opportunities. Connectivity to the neighborhood and the Sioux Falls Parks System is improved via proposed connections and a new 3rd Street Greenway and the Falls Forest Trail. The downtown core is invariably linked through the development of the Water Walk and Falls Park Market as its northern node.
Rooms are places where we connect, learn, gather, and explore the falls.
Falls Park Proper

The updated design of Falls Park Proper draws both residents and visitors alike to re-imagined gathering spaces, looping prairie trails, and opportunities to rest and view the Falls. Three landscape “rooms” - The Falls Park Forum, Prairie Pothole Trails, and the Picnic Arboretum frame the Falls and provide activated areas of gathering, active recreation, and connection. They are woven together by wide pedestrian paths and key vehicular access points. A carefully sited water-cleansing bioswale captures and absorbs runoff from these impervious surfaces before it reaches the falls. All proposed materials and improvements are inspired by the quartzite geology and are intended to feel as if they are part of the natural landscape, mimicking and harmonizing with the Falls.

Falls Park Forum

The Falls Park Forum enhances the existing Visitor Center and Tower by formalizing a new upper plaza from a series of terraced seat walls embedded into a gently sloping hill. The lower plaza is a flexible festival, performance, and event space, with an adaptable, paved splash pad for safe water access and family fun. The lower plaza ties into a key stormwater pond and slowly guides patrons towards the Main Falls. The Forum is the nexus of park circulation and intended to be a premier venue for concerts, weddings and other civic events.

Seasonal Use: In the summer, families can enjoy the plaza’s splash pad. In winter, the hill provides the perfect lookout to see the snowy, frozen falls. The Falls Park Loop Trail is perfect for moving patrons through a the park’s Winter Wonderland light show. Fire pit rotundas are great for having a winter gathering and staying warm.

Design Values:

- ACTIVATE!
- SHARE!
- REPAIR!
- DISCOVER!

Prairie Pothole Trails

The looping Prairie Pothole Trails demonstrate South Dakota’s Prairie Pothole ecosystem at an urban scale. Prairie potholes were formed across South Dakota by glacial activity, and they fill with snowmelt and rain in the spring, creating temporary marshes that support waterfowl and resting spaces during migration. These year-round walking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing trails wind through human-made potholes that demonstrate how these wetlands work. They will be accompanied by signage that speaks to their ecological significance.

Seasonal Use: In summer, the prairie pothole trails are perfect for a walk or a jog. In winter, they are used for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. In spring, these low-lying depressions will fill with water and lucky visitors may see migratory waterfowl stop by on their way up north.

Design Values:

- SHARE!
- LISTEN!
- ACTIVATE!
- DISCOVER!
Falls Park North

Fall Park North’s main destination is the Stewardship Park, a wooded urban camping, nature skill-building, and outdoor retreat for school field trips, summer camps, and other community groups. The park spaces closer to the North East neighborhood provide amenities for community members, including a dog park, community gardens, and a fruit orchard. The design proposes a new connection to this neighborhood via a forest path from the park to N. Main Avenue. The park is encircled by an undulating bioswale and emergent wetlands, which makes the interior park space feel like a wilderness retreat.

Stewardship Park

Stewardship brings the excitement of camping and environmental education to an urban setting. The existing farmers market pavilion is transformed into the “Ecology Education Pavilion,” and it is surrounded by wooded campsites, bunk houses that may be rented by school groups and families, a generous ropes course, and a mountain bike pump track along the high bank of the encircling bioswale. Many different landscape zones are created to showcase the variety of South Dakota ecology and provide educational opportunities. Stewardship Park takes a public-lands style approach to programming and would represent an established place for Urban Wilderness to thrive and be studied.

Seasonal Use: Stewardship Park can host year-round events, including winter camping, sledding, and candle-lit cross-country ski and snowshoe events along the new, rolling pump track.

Design Values:

- DISCOVER!
- ACTIVATE!
- REPAIR!

Falls Park Tree Farm

The tree nursery serves as a way for the Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation Department to grow its own nursery stock of trees to plant throughout the park system and eventually sell or donate to continue expanding the urban canopy within the city. This could also be managed by a third party.

Design Values:

- DISCOVER!
- ACTIVATE!

Community Gardens + Fruit Orchard

This location already has a community garden, and we propose expanding the garden, providing off-street parking, a solar community tool shed, and to include a fruit and nut orchard south of the garden. This space can be visited by Education Pavilion classes to teach about energy efficiency, organic farming, and Permaculture.

Design Values:

- DISCOVER!
- SHARE!
- ACTIVATE!

Dog Woods Park

This fenced dog park can serve as both a local and city-wide place for residents to allow their dogs to freely roam. It is directly adjacent to a parking lot and is connected to the North East neighborhood via a new proposed forest trail.

Design Values:

- DISCOVER!
- ACTIVATE!
- REPAIR!
Falls Park West

Just south of the railroad, trails weave between sculptures nestled around landscape mounds. 3rd Street Greenway connects to the park via The Link, a gathering space with an adventure playground, rentable rotundas with fire pits, and a water plaza adjacent to the proposed convention center. A green infrastructure focused “water walk” connects The Link south past the Levitt to a relocated Farmers Market just west of the proposed Sioux Steel Development. Falls Market is envisioned as a hub of activity to encourage more activity between the Park and Downtown.

Seney Water Walk

The Water Walk is an abstraction of the former stream alignment than ran along the western edge of Seney Island. This pedestrian boulevard connects the northwest end of Falls Park to Falls Market at the south. A bioswale integrates artful stormwater management into its design running parallel to this paved path, capturing and filtering stormwater running off the path and the Sioux Steel development. The Water Walk introduces unique water features, fountains, and pedestrian respites to formally activate edges of the Levitt performance area and Sioux Steel.

Design Values:

The Link

The link is a hub of activity where 3rd St. Greenway and the Water Walk intersect, and the first large open view of the falls occurs. The Falls Park Loop Trail begins here and the Greenway passes through on its way across the Big Sioux. At the Link, six quartzite rotunda seating areas host small groups of people, and fire pits at the center of these rotundas can be rented for evening use in summer and winter. In the summer, a splash pad provides a safe way for children to interact with water at the park, and the design of the splash pad imitates the geology of the Falls. A series of pedestrian ledges provide direct access to exploring the shallower areas of the upper falls, and a wetland boardwalk borders the edge of the Loop Trail, providing overviews of a riparian wetland.

Seasonal Use: Fire pits at the rotundas create rentable winter gathering spaces for outdoor bonfires at the park. The water plaza is intended to be flooded and used as a regulation size ice rink in the winter months.

Design Values:

Falls Market

A relocated farmers market on the south end of the park provides a fresh food shopping experience with space for more permanent vendors and restaurants. A pedestrian street to the north provides access to food trucks and the Levitt shell, and ample tree groves provide a shaded environment for pedestrians. A market at this location is the ideal bridge between downtown and the park, drawing visitors north from downtown into the park.

Design Values:

Sculpture Park

The Falls Park Sculpture park highlights local artists and may host permanent or rotating structures that correspond with the Sioux Falls sculpture walk. The sculptures will be set amongst a dramatic landscape of rolling mounds and native prairie grasses.

Design Values:
Falls Park East

Falls Park East provides both stunning, open views of the Falls and intimate sensory experiences of the geology, landscape, history, and wildlife of the Big Sioux River. Visitors are drawn through seasonal gardens to a cantilevered deck that demonstrates restored aquatic, riparian habitat. Closer to the river, overlooks provide picturesque views of the waterfalls. Falls Park East is intended to cater to the needs of locals, link to the 3rd St. Greenway and embrace the connection to the existing River Greenway Trail.

Queen Bee Mill Ruins Hall

The interior of the Queen Bee Mill Ruins will be upgraded to be able to host weddings and other outdoor celebrations within the historic stonework.

**Design Values:**

- **ACTIVATE!**
- **SHARE!**

Sensory Overlook

The Sensory Overlook provides a quiet location to contemplate the falls, listen to the sound of bird calls, and feel the breeze coming off the Big Sioux River. Signage will indicate that this is a quiet zone so visitors to this location will not be disturbed.

**Design Values:**

- **ACTIVATE!**

Kayak Launch + Fishing Pier

The Kayak Launch and fishing pier are locations for direct interaction with the Big Sioux River. The kayak launch will be developed in collaboration with the Sioux Empire Paddlers.

**Design Values:**

- **DISCOVER!**

Back Porch

The Back Porch is designed as a park for the locals of Sioux Falls. Taking advantage of the former hydroelectric facility location, this urban park looks out to the south back towards downtown and embraces the edge of the river through a cantilevered deck. New play experiences, seating, swinging, and gathering opportunities make this great spot to host birthdays, hangout with friends, catch the sunset after dinner downtown, or to stretch out on the deck after a long bike ride.

**Design Values:**

- **DISCOVER!**
- **SHARE!**
- **ACTIVATE!**

Sioux Falls Gardens

A series of unique, small scale garden rooms are sited next to the revamped Falls Park Cafe. Explore each garden’s distinctive textures, smells, horticultural appeal, and spatial qualities as you pass through each of these interconnected botanical spaces.

**Seasonal Use:** The Gardens are beautiful all year round, but they should be planted with vegetation that provides winter interest, like dogwood and birch trees, that highlight the beauty of South Dakotan winter landscapes.

**Design Values:**

- **REPAIR!**
- **ACTIVATE!**
Connectors knit rooms together and facilitate easy access to the park from the city.
Interior Circulation

A distinct and intentional path hierarchy within the park boundaries allows for coherent movement to key park destinations and reduces confusion and congestion for pedestrians, cyclists and maintenance vehicles. We are proposing five main pathway types for Falls Park.

1. **Exploration Path - 6’**
   - Exploration paths are grass or mulch trails that lead visitors into the exploratory and contemplative areas of the park.

2. **Standard Walkway - 12’**
   - This is the most common path type within the park. These are accessible and compliant trails with compacted gravel shoulders to accommodate maintenance vehicles.

3. **Falls Loop Trail - 24’**
   - The signature path around the falls provides ample space for pedestrians and includes upgraded finishes, an amenity zone, and interpretive signage opportunities.

4. **River Greenway Trail - 26’**
   - Retrofit of existing Greenway trail within the park boundaries. Includes bi-directional bike lanes, separated pedestrian zone, and small amenity or pull off area.

5. **3rd St. Greenway - 30’**
   - Generous greenspace and amenity areas parallel this multi-modal boulevard through the park and over the Big Sioux River.
Neighborhood Connectivity

Distinct and memorial streetscapes around the park signal to visitors and residents a unique city experience and accentuate and allude to the excitement within Falls Park. The proposed street sections promote multi-modal transportation opportunities and unbroken circulation around the park perimeter. The street sections incorporate current best practices for green stormwater infrastructure, walkability, safety, and accessible parking.

1. Phillips Avenue - 80’ ROW

2. E. Falls Park Dr. v1 - 60’ ROW

3. E. Falls Park Dr. v2 - 60’ ROW

4. E. Falls Park Dr. Bridge - 32’ + Ex. Sidewalk

5. N. Weber Ave. - 80’ ROW

STREET SECTION LEGEND
- Roadway
- Sidewalk
- Bike Lane
- Rain Garden
- Landscape

Scale: 1”=20’

NOTE: Setbacks - Refer to Development Standards
3rd Street Greenway

The 29-mile Big Sioux River Greenway has created a unique amenity encircling the City of Sioux Falls and providing bicycle connections to communities throughout the City to Falls Park and Downtown Sioux Falls. This amenity has proven the local desire for recreational amenities that connect destinations, provide mobility benefits and become catalysts for economic development. With this in mind, we have proposed a new east-west greenway connector which will tie Falls Park to its closest neighborhoods, Whittier and the North End neighborhoods, provide an east-west connection to the loop trails, and connect Falls Park to Terrace Park, the Japanese Gardens, and Leader Park.

The proposed 2.5 mile Third Street Greenway would prioritize bicycle and pedestrian connections on a unique neighborhood street, separating trail traffic completely from automotive traffic, and providing needed community amenities, including connections to parks and schools, opportunities to provide play streets in some areas, providing excellent gateway opportunities to Falls Park and creating new connections to neighborhood commercial streets, allowing the economic opportunities created by Falls Park to filter into adjacent neighborhoods.
Stormwater Management

The stormwater management strategy at Falls Park captures all stormwater and pervious surface runoff via a series of water-cleansing bioswales that filter and infiltrate water back into the ground before it reaches the Big Sioux River, thus preserving the water quality of the river. Visitors to the park can witness this process as they walk along the Seney water walk that runs parallel to a bioswale at the southwest edge of the park. Along the river’s edge, emergent riparian wetlands provide habitat and pollutant removal.
Landscape Types

Landscape and plant types connect us to place, and can be designed to provide important ecosystem services. The landscape strategy for Falls Park is based on regional plant communities providing a rich composition of vegetation. These areas allow natural environmental processes to occur, like water filtration, carbon sequestration, and soil building. In addition, the landscape supports wildlife, including pollinators and migratory species. Strategically placed vegetation in the park helps regulate local climate, and reduce pollutants in the air and water. In general, parks and green spaces are essential to health and quality of life by enhancing physical, mental, and social well-being of the communities they support. These services were all considered with the design of the landscape types for Falls Park, below these landscape areas are outlined in more detail:

**Signature Trees Throughout:**
Cottonwoods, Silver Maples, and Bur Oaks are proposed along the main walkways of the park. The Bur Oaks are sited in more upland areas in the Heritage Arboretum.

**Falls Park Tree Farm:**
The site hosts a tree nursery to be a regenerative source of plant material for the immediate park, and for other City parks and greenbelts.

**Natural Areas:**
Existing natural areas will be preserved and managed to reduce non-native, invasive plant species where possible.

**Maintenance:**
The existing maintenance of Falls Park depends on mowing and the irrigation of large areas of the park. Our planting strategy, once established, will reduce the reliance of mowing except in a few key areas, and will require less irrigation. In addition, designed plant communities using regionally native species will allow the landscape to evolve over time and develop resilience to changing climatic conditions.

**Riparian Vegetation:**
Early successional and fast growing plants are proposed along the edges of the Big Sioux River. These areas then transition into later successional riparian forest moving up the bank away from the river.

**Fruit Tree Grove & Community Garden:**
The existing community garden will be enhanced with additional plots and with a grove of fruit trees.

**Wetlands:**
Pocket wetlands are proposed throughout the design to clean water, and to sequester carbon.

**Prairie Potholes:**
Shallow depressions in the larger prairie area are proposed to mimic potholes, ephemeral wet areas that support wildlife and unique plant species. These areas link into the stormwater strategy for the site.
Frames provide guidelines for contextual economic development and create a plan for successful implementation and maintenance of the park.
Park-Oriented Development

As the Park develops and land values continue to increase due to proximity to the park and its amenities, land uses should be shifted toward those that both provide and derive value from the park, activating the park edge with active, park-oriented businesses and taking advantage of development community interest. In order to actively shape development, we propose to develop a Park Oriented Development overlay district to shape the uses, forms, and public realm amenities of development in close proximity to the park, ultimately creating a unique neighborhood, the Falls Park District adjacent to the Park.

Building Orientation and Setbacks

Setbacks

1A 5’ min, 25’ max amenity zone setback. (see public realm requirements)

1B Outdoor seating and residential entrances and patios may encroach into the setback.

Stepbacks

2A 15’ min, 30’ max @ 30’ of building height for required amenity deck.

2B Building corners must follow ground floor setback to 8 stories.

2C Corners follow the ground floor setback to 8 stories, continuing until the required amenity deck stepback is reached.

Ground Floor

3A 66% min ground floor transparency on both residential and commercial uses

3B Ground floor are required entrances every 100’ min, must be oriented towards the park

3C Curb cuts, waste storage and collection, and parking are prohibited uses on park-facing frontages

3D Residential uses must provide patios (allowed in setback) with a 10’ min, 15’ max depth

Building Features

4A Residential units located 3 stories and above must have balconies with 10’ min depth on the park frontage

4B Every 100’ of building length, building materials or setback must occur. At least one ground-floor public plaza must be provided per block
Public Realm

Curb Zone

1A The Curb Zone provides an interface between parked vehicles and the street amenity zone. This zone should generally be a minimum of 18” wide and can extend to 36” at bioretention planters.

Ground Floor

2A The Amenity Zone is a buffer between the active pedestrian walking area and the vehicle travel area. Street trees, green stormwater infrastructure, planting strips, street furniture, bollards, signs, fire hydrants and bicycle racks should be placed in this zone to keep them from becoming obstacles to pedestrians and to provide a barrier between the pedestrian zone and the street. This zone should have a minimum width of seven feet.

2B Street trees should be planted in this zone along sidewalks within 4 feet of the curb at a maximum spacing of 30 ft on center.

2C At least one bench should be provided on every block and must be located within 6 feet of the curb.

2D Bioretention planters or other vegetated stormwater management practices should be integrated into the right-of-way to manage street and sidewalk stormwater. They should be 4-6’ wide and a minimum of 15’ in length. Street trees may be planted within the planters. Provide regular access paths between the curb and pedestrian through-zone, at least 5 feet wide.

Pedestrian Zone

3A This zone is intended for pedestrian travel only and should be entirely clear of obstacles. It should be a minimum of six feet wide.

Frontage Zone

4A The frontage zone is the area adjacent to the property line. A minimum width of 2 feet should be provided for the frontage zone. The width of this zone may be increased to provide space for privately-owned public spaces or use-based needs, such as outdoor restaurant seating, public art, or merchant displays. It can be as wide as needed as long as it does not infringe on the 6’ pedestrian zone.
Interpretation

Memorable site interpretation forges emotional and intellectual connections between park visitors and the meanings inherent in park resources—it answers the questions, “So what? Why should I care?”

Interpretation at Falls Park centers connections. Connections up and down the river, connecting the past, present, and future, and connecting communities that intersect at this spectacular place. Building on the big idea about connections, preliminary research has revealed three primary topics for interpretation: Environmental History, Heart of the City, and Communities and Cultures. In addition, the themes would be further developed by facilitating community engagement to confirm and expand upon these topics, develop compelling storylines, and link the stories to creative and appropriate interpretive methods.

Heart of the City:
The city began and grew up here, and how we care for this place will influence the city’s future. Within this topic, a variety of stories can be expressed through signage, programming, interactives/activities, integrated design, or other means. Some potential story types are:

- How the Big Sioux River and the Falls shaped the names and development of the area. (Sioux Falls, Minnehaha County, etc.)
- How the city grew up around the Falls, through its industrial history, agriculture, mills.
- Caring for the natural and cultural history of Falls Park will ripple outward to Sioux Falls.

Environmental History:
Geology created this landscape that has supported plant and animal communities over time. Within this topic, a variety of stories can be expressed through signage, programming, interactives, activities, integrated design, or other means. Some potential story types are:

- How geologic actions have formed the landscape.
- How ecosystems have changed over time, including the tallgrass prairie landscape, bison, and plant community’s roles in Dakota culture.
- How the waterways, including the river, floodplain and riparian areas, and waterfalls define the park landscape.

Communities and Culture
People have gathered here for thousands of years and their activities have shaped the river and landscape. Within this topic, a variety of stories can be expressed through signage, programming, interactives, activities, integrated design, or other means. Some potential story types are:

Oneota: 900 CE–1650 CE (about 1,000 years). The term “Oneota” refers to people or groups with a similar cultural complex, not a singular group of people, and is based on Upper Midwestern archaeology. This deep history spans thousands of years and includes several tribes. The Omaha, Ponca, Iowa, Otoe, and Ho-Chunk tribes share this common ancestry. The Dakota are not necessarily included within “Oneota,” but there is some similarity with ancient pottery.

Dakota Land: before 200 CE-present (over millennia). Falls Park sits on Dakota land. Dakota people have been in the area over millennia. This is also true for the tribes within the Oneota culture. We will speak to the history of the Dakota, and do further research into the mounds on the site, their history of treaties, and other archeological artifacts.

Euro-Americans: 1700s. Euro-Americans arrived at different times for different reasons. French voyagers arrived in the Dakotas during the 1700s. In 1832, the first American traveled to the area and camped at the Falls. Fort Dakota was established in the area in 1865, and Sioux Falls was incorporated as a Village in 1876.

Settler History: 1800s. Settlers were primarily Scandinavian, mostly Norwegian and Swedish, and German. What drew these settlers to Sioux Falls? Who was arriving? How did they shape the land? How did the US Army and the railroads change Sioux Falls?

Agricultural and Industrial: 1870s. Agricultural and industrial communities influenced how the city developed. Waterpower was established at the Falls in 1873, and rail transport 1878. Both were instrumental in the creation of Sioux Falls and the surrounding area. With the steady increase in population, agriculture and industry grew in the city and surrounding area.

Downtown business and residents: 1900s. Downtown business and residents experience the park for recreation and relaxation. By 1900, Sioux Falls became the primary regional distribution center for farms in South Dakota, Iowa, and Minnesota. As the largest metropolitan area in the region, Sioux Falls soon became a leader in retail, attracting shoppers throughout the year for products not found elsewhere.
**Partnerships**

Big, visionary projects are only completed as a team effort, relying on multiple partners. In Sioux Falls, there are many passionate and dedicated community leaders that can support a new vision for Falls Park. There also are opportunities to leverage financing for the park by encouraging the development of public private partnerships that support a common goal. This organization strategy can leverage private sector investment and local philanthropy to support the project when public funding is not immediately available. This often allows projects to be completed on a faster timeline without the major burdens experienced through a typical government process. That being said, a robust public outreach plan will be a critical component of any partnership strategy. Thus, even in a public private partnership opportunity, the voices of the community will be heard and the process will be kept as transparent as possible.

There also are many different organizations that are doing extraordinary work around the region and could be important partners when executing a new vision for Falls Park. Below is a list of these organizations, and how they may help with shaping a common vision for Falls Park. This is not an exhaustive list; there are many other state, county and city organizations that could have robust roles during the design of Falls Park.

- Levitt Foundation [Programming & Site Coordination]
- The Friends of the Big Sioux River [Stewardship & Volunteerism]
- Good Earth State Park [Interpretation & Programming]
- United Sioux Tribes of South Dakota [Interpretation & Partnership]
- EcoSun Prairie Farms [Restoration, Test Plots & Maintenance]
- YMCA Camp Leif Ericson [Programming & Education]
- Sioux Falls School District [Programming & Education]
- Multi-Cultural Center of Sioux Falls [Programming & Coordination]
- Minnehana Conservation District [Restoration and Maintenance]

**Economic Drivers**

An activated Falls Park can catalyze neighborhood scale revitalization and development, gaining momentum as the neighborhood continues to grow and as connections between the park and adjacent parks and other riverfront open spaces expand. The current redevelopment of the Sioux Steel property into a mixed-use development is the start of this process, and will attract a base of neighbors that will walk or bike to the park on a daily or weekly basis. Balancing community desires with tourist parks access will become a critical part of park design and programming.

Robust city parks provide economic opportunities for landscape restoration, maintenance, and other “green” jobs. The city can also encourage small enterprises, such as rentable facilities, cafes, and other businesses that cater to park needs by leasing land in the park for these uses. Our design proposal offers a series of rentable options to the community and organizations. These opportunities range in size from small birthday parties, to medium sized graduations parties, to large athletic events. These unique rentable areas and experiences are listed below:

- Picnic areas and pavilions in the Heritage Arboretum,
- Fire pit rotundas along the main trail with views of the Falls,
- The Tower,
- The Falls Market,
- The Chef Restaurant (Cafe),
- The Ecology Education Pavilion,
- The mountain bike track, and
- Individual or group campsites.

The rentable options will be balanced with free, public programming and events to maximize the benefit to the adjacent communities. In addition, there are opportunities to create stewardship and volunteerism within the park that brings large groups of people out to plant trees, restore native plant communities, and garden. These activities can create community, connect people to the land and each other, and improve the park environment.
**Phasing Plan**

### Phase 1: Connect + Gather
- Major investment in transformative design elements for Falls Park proper
- New Greenway to connect 3rd street through the Park - includes iconic bridge
- Main Falls Park loop path - includes bridge replacement and trail hierarchy
- New gateways into Falls Park
- Protective green stormwater infrastructure system
- Framework plans to guide future developments and Park phases
- New gateways to Falls Park
- Protective green stormwater infrastructure system
- Framework plans to guide future developments and Park phases
- The landscape rooms Fall Park Forum, Prairie Potholes Trail, Quartzite Sculpture Garden are all fully developed

**$50-60 million**

### Phase 2: Capture Downtown
- Full development of Falls Park West
- Includes relocation of current farmers market to Falls Market
- Innovative and universal access playground
- Multi-functional water plaza
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure system
- Interpretive water features throughout
- Integration with Levitt Shell
- Activate all edges of the Sioux Steel Development

**$20-25 million**

### Phase 3: Local Hangout
- Fully develop Falls Park East
- Turn existing cafe into unique local restaurant with outdoor seating
- Diverse landscape and programming experiences for local residents to enjoy along rerouted Greenway Trail
- Protective Green Stormwater Infrastructure system installed
- Landforms for new vistas and play experiences
- Rails to Trails project to connect North End residents and Tower Park
- The landscape rooms Heritage Arboretum, The Back Porch, Dog Woods Park, Queen Bee Mill Ruins Hall, Sensory Overlook, and Sioux Falls Gardens are all fully developed

**$25-30 million**

### Phase 4: New Destinations
- Full development of Falls Park North
- Includes buyout of select properties to expand trail system and park property
- Redesign of streetscapes along E Falls Park Dr. and N Weber Ave to frame and activate the park edges
- New local and regional destination park and economic driver with Stewardship Adventure Park
- Significant increase in Park Canopy Coverage and Carbon sequestration
- The final additions to the Falls Park Tree Farm are complete

**$25-30 million**
## OPCC (Opinion of Probable Construction Cost)

**DISCLAIMER:** This opinion of probable construction cost is made on the basis of Asakura Robinson’s experience and qualifications and represents Asakura Robinson's best judgment as an experienced and qualified professional generally familiar with the industry. However, since Asakura Robinson has no control over the cost of labor, materials, equipment, or services furnished by others, or over the Contractor’s methods of determining prices, or over competitive bidding or market conditions, Asakura Robinson cannot and does not guarantee that proposals, bids, or actual construction cost will not vary from opinions of probable construction cost as prepared by Asakura Robinson.

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