



# **(re) Building Connections to the Water and Each Other**





***We have always been drawn to these waters. Thousands of years ago, people gathered and traded at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. Later, newcomers settled here and named it for the water – Winnipeg, after the Cree word “win-nipi” meaning “muddy water.”***

We long to be close to the water for its mysteries, its stories and its ability to bring community together. But riverbanks in Winnipeg have become increasingly inaccessible. Much of the city's development, combined with annual flooding, has made it difficult, unsafe and in some places impossible for people to get close to the rivers.

Now we have a chance to return. Together, we can restore what's been lost and reimagine what's possible. We can build lasting connections between land and water, between past and present, between communities and between each other.



***Creating these connections will ensure everyone, no matter how they want to experience the water, is invited and welcomed to use our rivers and riverbanks safely and in good ways.***





## TWO TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS

We invite you to invest in a catalyst for connection and change with two transformative projects:

- Developing the Alexander Docks into a city block of new downtown park space along the Red River
- Reconnecting Niizhoziibean to The Forks by revitalizing The Forks Historic Rail Bridge over the Assiniboine River

Creating these connections will ensure everyone, no matter how they want to experience the water, is invited and welcomed to use our rivers and riverbanks safely and in good ways. The Forks will steward these developments to provide programming opportunities and ensure safety.





# Building Connections and Bridging Communities

*These projects will rebuild our connections to the rivers that have always defined us, and are the last pieces needed to complete the connection of The Forks to the Exchange District, South Point Douglas, St. Boniface, Norwood and Osborne Village to create an unbroken trailway all the way north to Kildonan Park. They will provide new approaches to the water and new opportunities for people to use the water.*



## ALEXANDER DOCKS - \$10.8 MILLION

The Alexander Docks site is a natural access point from the Exchange District to the water that has been fenced off for over a decade for safety reasons.

Redeveloping the site will transform this large, underused and often forgotten area into a beautiful, accessible and lively riverside park and public space.

The design for the Alexander Docks site was informed by the community's deep affection for our rivers and how people see themselves as connecting to the water year-round. It draws inspiration from the steady rhythm of the Red River, mimicking its curves and quiet strength. It will bring the community together and invite everyone to use the space as they'd like.

Enhancing the natural slope of the riverbank will be landscaping and plantings that lead to the river's edge, and tiers of seating where hundreds of people can pause to enjoy the view of the river and feel connected to others doing the same.

The site is along an active trail route that forms part of the North Winnipeg Parkway extending from The Forks to Kildonan Park. Restoring this part of the Parkway Trail is an opportunity to complete that connection and invite cyclists and walkers to move through the site freely and safely.

The river's edge will become re-animated, with large fixed and floating docks available to accommodate up to 200 people. The docks will take fluctuating water levels into account to ensure everyone can use the space to fish, river watch and dock their boats, kayaks and canoes. It will also be a water bus stop, providing an easy way to experience the water, from the water.

Importantly, the new Alexander Docks park will hold space for remembrance and story. A special area will be set aside to honour Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people who are missing and who have been murdered.



The community already maintains a memorial on this site for Tina Fontaine whose body was found near the dock in 2014 – a tragic loss that became a powerful turning point, prompting the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The revitalized site will feature a Spirit Tree Circle that provides a dedicated space for remembrance, ceremony and collective strength. This area integrates a sculptural wall, providing a future opportunity for a memorial in honour of MMIWG2S+, to be developed in collaboration with community.

While the space may be contemplative, it is also about envisioning a stronger future together, supported by landscaping that prioritizes safety, equity, connection and reconciliation.







# Reconnecting by revitalizing The Forks Historic Rail Bridge

## HISTORIC RAIL BRIDGE—\$7.3 MILLION

At the south end of The Forks site is another lost community connection point—The Forks Historic Rail Bridge.

Finished in 1914, what is now The Forks Historic Rail bridge was part of a railway line abandoned many years ago. When The Forks was established in 1987, it acquired the bridge, which became part of a pedestrian loop connecting The Forks to St. Boniface and creating a link to the Taché Promenade.

The bridge has been a well-used route for pedestrians and cyclists to visit The Forks and travel safely between the south-east and south-west parts of the city. Before it closed, more than 350,000 people crossed it annually.

The bridge is also the only public access to Niizhoziibeau from The Forks. Niizhoziibeau is a significant Indigenous historical site and cultural gathering place that has been developed with the participation of local Indigenous communities and community philanthropists to include public art installations, contemplation areas, and Winnipeg's only wiigwaam.

But the bridge isn't just something to cross. It provides an amazing view of the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. No one crosses the bridge without stopping to watch the water flow, the ice melt, the birds float with the current and sometimes, a muskrat or beaver swim by.

But now, the bridge is closed to ensure the safety of walkers, cyclists and people boating or skating on the river below.

The bridge's centre span was designed to allow boats to pass below it by being lifted with a concrete counterweight. The counterweight's deterioration, coupled with the poor condition of the wooden bridge deck and structural supports, led to the bridge's closure in 2023. It hasn't been used since, cutting off access to active transportation routes and connections to neighbourhoods, downtown, The Forks and Niizhoziibeau.

Rehabilitating the bridge will restore it to community as a much loved and used active transportation route. It will also reconnect The Forks to Niizhoziibeau, where all people can come to learn, gather and honour Indigenous heritage.

# Your Investment in Connecting our River City

The water is still the heart of our city. When we're able to access it safely, it can connect us through its timeless beauty and offer boundless opportunities to explore Winnipeg in unique ways.

Building Connections is an \$18.1 million project that will change our relationship to the water and each other. Like The Forks, it can only succeed as a partnership between all levels of government and the community.

The community campaign goal is \$9 million.

The opportunity to connect to the water is one of the things that makes The Forks such a special place to gather. For years, The Forks has created

that connection by ensuring the site is safe and accessible and there's always something for people to see and do.

Now there's an opportunity for you to extend the feeling of The Forks and create even more opportunities to connect—for your friends and family, and for community.

Please consider an investment.

For more information, please contact:

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*The*  
**FORKS**  
FOUNDATION

*We are all equal near the water.*

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