



MISSISSIPPI RIVER CORRIDOR CRITICAL AREA PROTECTING OUR RIVER THROUGH SCIENCE-BASED RULES



Are you a metro river city planner, local decisionmaker or engaged community member working on your city's Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area ordinance?

THIS GUIDE IS FOR YOU.



MRCCA: OUR LOCAL NATIONAL PARK

The Mississippi River is a natural, cultural and historic wonder that defines our place in the world, in our country, in our state and in our neighborhoods.

The 72-mile river corridor through the Twin Cities, known as the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) is a National Park with special designations aimed at protecting the river's resources.

Local cities are responsible for managing land use and development within the corridor in accordance with those policies.

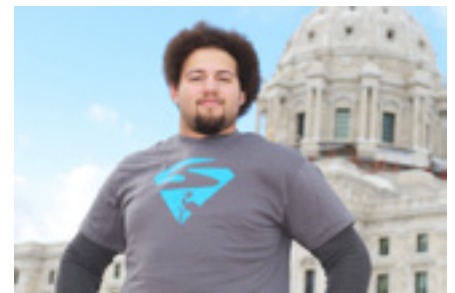


A CHANCE TO WRITE THE RULES FOR YOUR CITY

In 2016, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources adopted science-based state rules for MRCCA at the direction of the Legislature.

Starting in 2020, each of the 25 Critical Area cities and townships is updating its river-adjacent zoning ordinances to be consistent with the state rules.

This new river corridor ordinance will be an important tool that city officials can use to leverage development that is good for the river and prevent or reshape development that would harm the river.



FRIENDS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER IS HERE FOR YOU

We are proud to serve as a resource in this process. Since 1993, we've engaged thousands of people to protect the river through technical assistance, advocacy and stewardship.

We're available to help you evaluate the DNR's model ordinance and consider protective standards unique to your community.

CONTACT US

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MISSISSIPPI RIVER CORRIDOR CRITICAL AREA

PROTECTING OUR RIVER THROUGH SCIENCE-BASED RULES

THE CITY PROCESS

- 1) DNR notifies cities that they need to pass ordinances within one year
Notifications scheduled from January 2020-January 2022
- 2) City planning staff drafts ordinance with DNR assistance
- 3) City holds public hearing and invites community comment
- 4) DNR reviews draft ordinance for approval or changes
- 5) City Council adopts ordinance
- 6) Ordinance becomes city law

OPTIONAL PROVISIONS

The DNR's model ordinance is an excellent starting point for writing your new MRCCA ordinance. Here are some suggested additional provisions your community might want to consider to provide greater protection of your unique resources. More detailed information is available at fmr.org/river-rules or by contacting us.



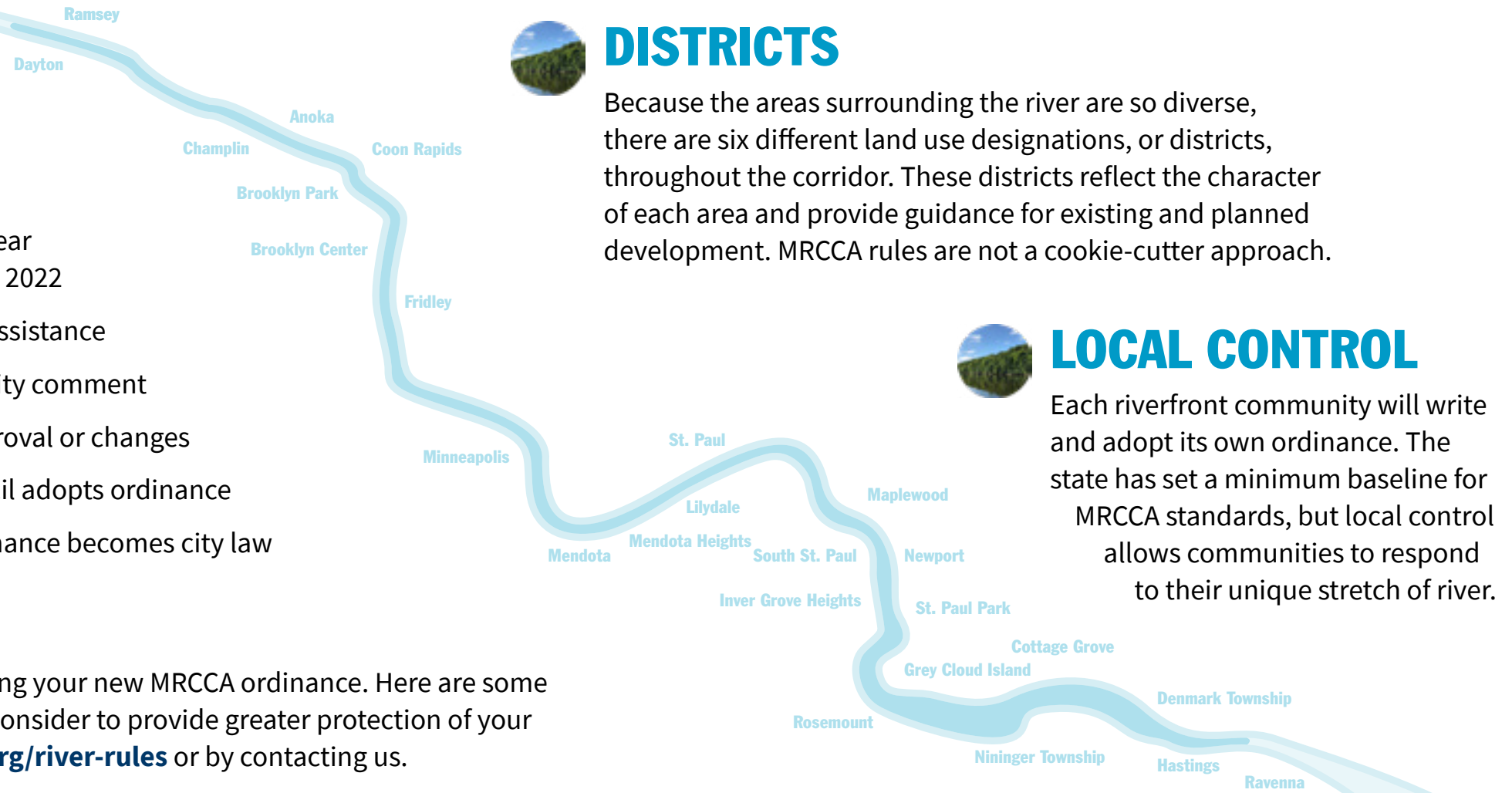
DISTRICTS

Because the areas surrounding the river are so diverse, there are six different land use designations, or districts, throughout the corridor. These districts reflect the character of each area and provide guidance for existing and planned development. MRCCA rules are not a cookie-cutter approach.



LOCAL CONTROL

Each riverfront community will write and adopt its own ordinance. The state has set a minimum baseline for MRCCA standards, but local control allows communities to respond to their unique stretch of river.



PROTECT BLUFFS AND SHORELINES

- Increase bluff and shoreline setbacks in sensitive areas
- Identify restoration priorities and use with the vegetation management permitting process
- Prohibit decks and patios within shoreline and bluff impact zones

ENSURE PUBLIC ACCESS AND OPEN SPACE ARE INCLUDED WITH NEW DEVELOPMENT

- Reduce acreage threshold for requiring open space dedication
- Require open space dedication regardless of Primary Conservation Area size
- Increase setbacks where public access/trails are needed
- Encourage the inclusion of parks, trails and open space in new development

PROVIDE CONSISTENT AND THOROUGH REVIEW OF DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS

- Provide detailed parameters for variances, Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) and mitigation
- Require both variances and CUPs to include written findings (Findings of Fact) that the decision is consistent with Critical Area goals

ENSURE PUBLIC AGENCIES AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAN WEIGH IN ON CORRIDOR PROJECTS

- Increase the requirement for your community to notify the DNR about new projects from 10 to 30 days in advance of decisions
- Include requirement that DNR be notified at time of submittal for master plans and Planned Unit Developments

PRESERVE AND ENHANCE SCENIC VIEWS AND VISTAS

- Lower structure height limits
- Set a maximum height allowance for Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) or prohibit CUPs for height
- Prohibit variances for bluff and shoreline setbacks
- Allow exceptions only for structure height or setback, not both at once
- Regulate fences within shoreline impact zones

**FIND A FIELD GUIDE
TO THE MODEL ORDINANCE, MAPS,
TERMINOLOGY GUIDES AND MORE AT
FMR.ORG/RIVER-RULES**