

Urban parks and plazas, pedestrian corridors, and the Mississippi River make up downtown Minneapolis' diverse mix of green spaces. This tour map guides you through some of the unique open spaces that can be found within or near the heart of Minneapolis.



1. Minneapolis Sculpture Garden

The original 7.5 acre sculpture garden opened in 1988 as a collaboration between the Walker Art Center and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. In 1992, the garden was expanded to 11 acres making it the largest urban sculpture garden in the country. The garden features over 40 works of art and is open year round until midnight daily.

2. Loring Park

Originally named Central Park, this urban open space was set aside in the 1880s as part of the Minneapolis Park system. Landscape Architect Horace W.S. Cleveland originally designed the park, and recent improvements were designed by Diana Balmori. In 1890 this park was renamed Loring Park, paying tribute to the father of Minneapolis Parks, Charles Loring. The park features Loring Pond, dandelion-like Berger Fountain, a performing arts area, gaming courts, a playground, pathways, and a volunteer-run central garden space, providing a place for city-dwellers to escape and enjoy outdoor activities.

3. Loring Greenway

Loring Greenway was designed as part of a 1970s urban design plan which aimed to increase housing near the city by developing high density housing near downtown Minneapolis. The greenway itself is a twenty-acre pedestrian link designed by M. Paul Friedburg that connects Nicollet Mall to Loring Park and eventually on to the Walker Art Center and the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. This green corridor contains a pedestrian bridge over LaSalle Avenue, a green lawn with pyramidal forms, a children's playground, and sitting areas for relaxing. Today, Loring Greenway is surrounded by dense luxury townhouse units.

Sources: See other side. All photos Metropolitan Design Center, except U. S. Courthouse Plaza, Frank Fitzgerald.



4. Peavy Plaza

Designed by landscape architect M. Paul Friedburg, Peavy Plaza serves as a multi-use plaza in the center of the city. The plaza is used year-round for concerts and festivals, ice skating, and a place for simply relaxing or enjoying lunch outside. With Orchestra Hall as its backdrop, this sunny plaza features fountains, terraces, planter boxes, and pools.



5. Nicollet Mall

Originally constructed in 1967, Nicollet Mall is a major retail center and pedestrian link in downtown Minneapolis. The mall was remodeled in the late 1980s but retained the signature serpentine path. Nicollet Mall features greenery, public art, and the downtown Farmers market on Thursdays throughout the summer.



6. Hennepin County Government Plaza

This downtown building, which spans over 6th Street, features two plazas. The front plaza includes a large pool, and the sunken back plaza has dense tree plantings which drown out noise from city traffic.

7. U. S. Courthouse Plaza

Designed by Martha Schwartz, this half-block plaza uses a minimalist design vocabulary consisting of long and grassy mounds at a 30 degree angle off of the urban grid. The mounds, reminiscent of drumlins created during Minnesota's glacial period, direct circulation and provide green areas above a parking ramp.

8. Marquette Plaza

This newly renovated open space transforms a previous granite plaza into a softer, greener pedestrian environment. The design features a large curved lawn space, that mimics the architecture of the building, surrounded by birch trees and shade plants. The fountain from the original design was retained but relocated to draw pedestrians into the space.



9. Gateway Park

Gateway park was built in 1915 during the City Beautiful movement in Minneapolis as part of an effort to beautify the entry to the city. The park's pavilion was demolished in 1960, but the park itself remained. Today, Gateway Park features the colorful Gateway Fountain and is owned and maintained by Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

10. Minneapolis Federal Reserve

Located along the banks of the Mississippi River, the new Minneapolis Federal Reserve features a plaza along Hennepin Avenue, and a pedestrian link to green space along the Mississippi River. The design includes lawns, walkways, and public art. A river outlook provides views to the river.



11. Mill Ruins Park and Mississippi Riverfront

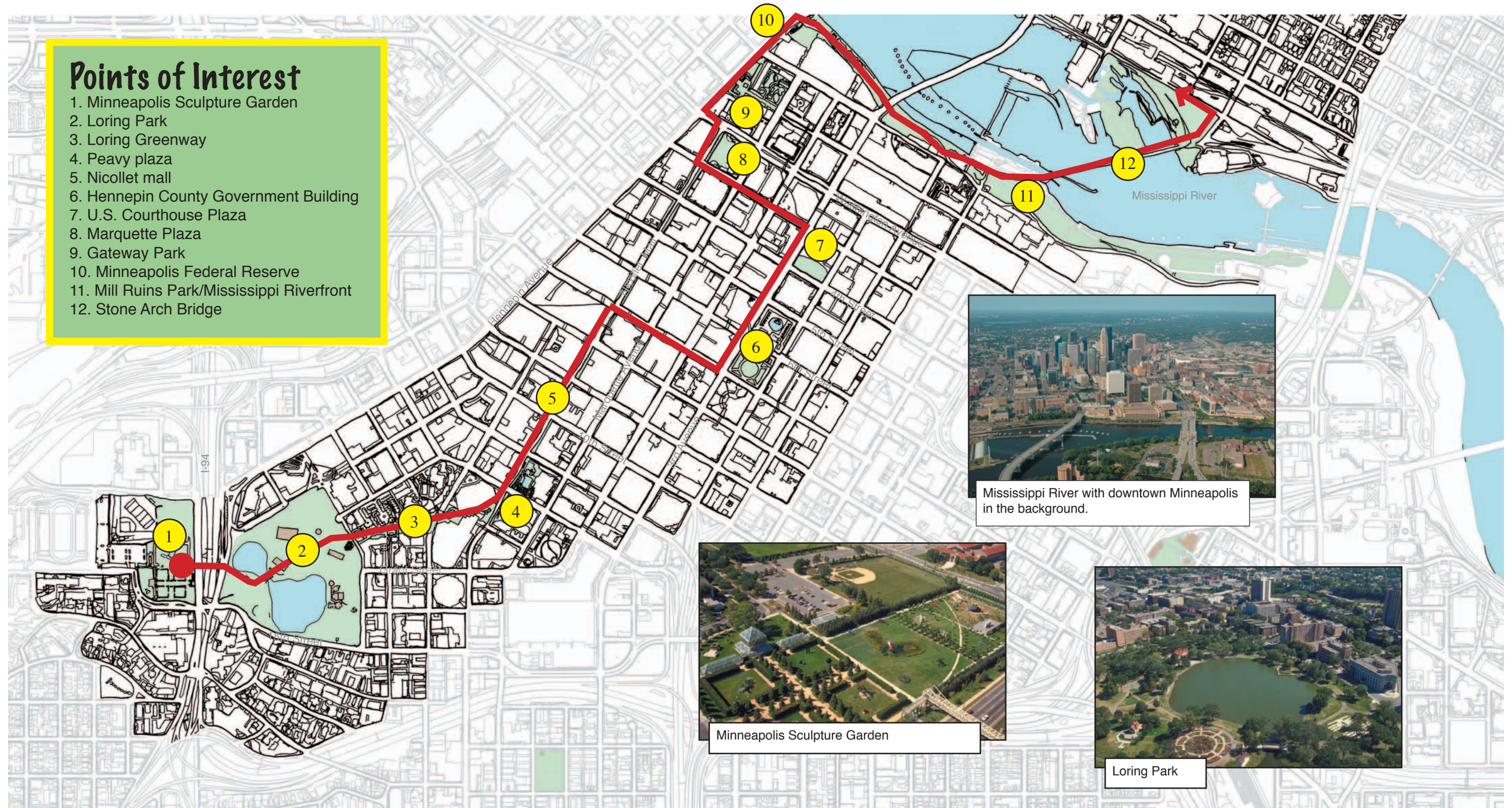
Mill Ruins Park is one of the newest parks in the Twin Cities area. Opening in 2001, this park celebrates the rich industrial heritage of Minneapolis riverfront area by highlighting the ruins of 19th-century mills that were once powered by nearby St. Anthony Falls.

12. Stone Arch Bridge

Built in 1883 by railroad tycoon James J. Hill, the Stone Arch Bridge is the only bridge of its kind over the Mississippi River. It was a working railroad bridge until 1965, and today is part of the Heritage Trail along the Mississippi River. The bridge is a National Historic Engineering Landmark.

Points of Interest

1. Minneapolis Sculpture Garden
2. Loring Park
3. Loring Greenway
4. Peavy plaza
5. Nicollet mall
6. Hennepin County Government Building
7. U.S. Courthouse Plaza
8. Marquette Plaza
9. Gateway Park
10. Minneapolis Federal Reserve
11. Mill Ruins Park/Mississippi Riverfront
12. Stone Arch Bridge



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