

Heritage Village Park

Minnesota Legislative Presentation

[H. F. 449](#), [S.F. No. 696](#):

\$2,000,000 is appropriated from the bond proceeds fund to the commissioner of employment and economic development for a grant to the city of Inver Grove Heights to predesign, design, construct, furnish, and equip an inclusive accessible play structure for children and to predesign, design, construct, furnish, and equip accessible restrooms, water fountains, and a fixed-shade structure, at Heritage Village Park in the city of Inver Grove Heights.



The City of Inver Grove Heights' 65-acre Heritage Village Park is located in the far northeastern corner of the city along the Mississippi River near the intersection of Interstate 494 and the 6500 block of Concord Boulevard. The largely undeveloped park property sits just south of the city of South St. Paul and has further connectivity for pedestrians and bikers in the region in that the Dakota County section of the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) traverses through the park and a nearby regional asset on the river, the historic and iconic Rock Island Swing Bridge. The MRT runs from Itasca State Park to the Gulf of Mexico and within Dakota County

connects Hastings to South St. Paul. There are multiple trail heads to other regional trails and links to a variety of city and county regional parks, public riverfront and private boat marinas providing a wide variety of regional watersport recreational opportunities.

The City of Inver Grove Heights is seeking \$2,000,000 in funds for the continued development of Heritage Village Park; a park with regional, ecological and historical significance. The funds would be utilized to provide for a historically-themed inclusive playground, water play, shade structures and parking. When the Heritage Village Park improvements are invested in, this newly developed recreational asset will provide enhanced public access to the Mississippi River; access to regional and national trails; space with ample parking to accommodate festivals, public and private community

celebrations, and interpretive opportunities highlighting the natural, cultural and transportation history of Minnesota.

The city has assembled over 40 different parcels to create this large regional asset. Federal, state, county and city funds have made this possible. The city has constructed an 11-acre off-leash dog park and plans to construct a historically significant picnic pavilion, sheltered railroad-themed bench-lined walkway, and accessible rest room building in 2021/2022. This grant request will make



possible a destination inclusive play area, water play area, and other support facilities. Future phases will include a performance/event area and other group gathering sites.

Attractive opportunities for children with mobility impairments are limited. The wildly popular Madison's Place inclusive playground and splash pad in Woodbury is a testament to the need and demand for destination play areas. These types of structures provide physical, social, and emotional development opportunities for all children. Heritage Village Park's inclusive play area and water play area will be a destination for all families, including families of children with mobility and sensory impairments from all over the state, region, and those attending events.

Lastly, the capital investment by the state into the Heritage Village Park and its public infrastructure will encourage private investment and redevelopment in the surrounding area along Concord Boulevard and the riverfront. The city has assembled land parcels in the area from blighted industrial and housing stock to be transformed into new, mixed use retail and multi-family housing opportunities along the riverfront. The existing privately owned marinas and restaurants in that riverfront corridor are well positioned for adding capacity by making new capital investment to their operations and adding jobs. Continued waterfront development should yield sizeable property tax growth in the coming years for the state, county and city.

For all these reasons, the city of Inver Grove Heights requests consideration of the Heritage Village Park on the Mississippi River for inclusion in the bonding bill as a regional recreational asset.