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Credits & Acknowledgements

Redevelopment Oversight Committee

The Redevelopment Oversight Committee (ROC), authorized by the City of Minneapolis in 2000, serves to administer the long-range planning of the Bassett Creek Valley redevelopment area. The ROC was established as part of the approval process for the 2000 Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan. The plan, approved by the City of Minneapolis Committee of the Whole as outlined in their Committee Report, March 24, 2000, includes a description of the ROC and its responsibilities. The following is an excerpt from the 2000 Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan outlining the roles and functions of the Redevelopment Oversight Committee.

The roles of the ROC includes the following:

- **Review of development applications.** It is expected that the Harrison and Bryn Mawr Neighborhoods would use the ROC as an advisory committee in the neighborhood development review process. Applications for development approvals would thus be reviewed first in the ROC, with a recommendation forwarded to the appropriate neighborhood board. Both the neighborhood organization and the ROC recommendations would be forwarded to the City Planning Commission to inform their action on the proposal.
- **Act as an advisory committee in the prioritization and staging of activities.** Work closely with other actors in the development of necessary work plans and budgets for plan implementation.
- **Act as an advisory committee in the formulation of a redevelopment plan and redevelopment plan modifications for the area.** The completion of a redevelopment plan at the appropriate time is anticipated as an important element of the implementation of the Master Plan. At such time as the City Council authorizes the completion of a redevelopment plan, the Redevelopment Oversight Committee would serve in the role of community advisory committee.
- **Review MCDA land disposition actions.** Where the MCDA is involved with acquisition and disposition of commercial properties, the committee would operate with review authority similar to the North Washington Steering Committee with respect to disposition of MCDA land acquired as part of implementing the approved redevelopment plan.
- **Recommend modifications to the Master Plan as needed.** These may include a refinement to the development guidelines of the plan, or may entail revisions to the recommended land uses. In particular, this function would be called upon if, upon further analysis or testing in the marketplace, one or more plan elements prove to be infeasible. In such an instance it is recommended that the issue be referred back to the Redevelopment Oversight Committee. The Redevelopment Oversight Committee, with assistance from appropriate City staff, would develop a proposed plan amendment and forward it for approval to the Planning Commission and City Council.
- **The establishment of an effective organizational structure is an extremely important next step in facilitating plan implementation.** It is recommended that a committee comprised of the voting and nonvoting members of the Master Plan Committee, with the support of Planning and MCDA staff, be convened to develop a recommendation for the composition and responsibilities of implementation entities, including a community based Redevelopment Oversight Committee.

Redevelopment Oversight Committee Members

Present members of the ROC, and their representative organizations, include:

- **Maura Brown**
Harrison Neighborhood Association
- **Pat Carney**
Valley Business
- **Rick Collins**
Ryan Companies
- **Denny Daniels**
Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association
- **Vida Ditter**
Representative for District 7 Council Member
- **Steve Faber**
Representative for District 5 Council Member
- **Michael Fingerlin**
Harrison Neighborhood Association (Alternate)
- **Dick Heglund**
Friends of Bassett Creek
- **Aron Khoury**
Harrison Neighborhood Association
- **Jerry Krause**
Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association
- **Greg Lecker**
Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association
- **Genevieve McJilton**
Ryan Companies
- **Don Ostenson**
Harrison Neighborhood Association
- **Mark Reiling**
Valley Business
- **Beth Rice**
Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association
- **Julie Sabo**
Representative for the Mayor
- **Dave Stack**
Friends of Bassett Creek (Alternate)
- **Chuck Sullivan**
Valley Business
- **Kathy Wetzel-Mastel**
Harrison Neighborhood Association
- **Brian Willette**
Representative for District 7 Council Member

Minneapolis City Council Members

R.T. Rybak, Mayor

Lisa Goodman, Ward 7

Don Samuels, Ward 5 (2006-present)

Natalie Johnson Lee, Ward 5 (2001-2005)

Minneapolis City Staff

Tom Leighton, Community Planning and Economic Development

Darrell Washington, Community Planning and Economic Development

Consultant Team



Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc.

Lead Consultant; Urban Planning and Design, Plan Authorship



SRF Consulting Group, Inc.

Traffic, Infrastructure and Stormwater Analysis



Braun Intertec

Environmental Services

Biko Associations, Inc.

Project Communications



Maxfield Research, Inc.

Market Research

In 2000 the Minneapolis City Council established the Redevelopment Oversight Committee (ROC) to guide future redevelopment of a 230-acre, largely industrial area known as Bassett Creek Valley. The ROC consists of residents, Valley business people, City Councilmember and mayoral representatives and through an extensive interview and selection process to find a master development partner, Ryan Companies.

With a foundation of grassroots community dedication and an 18-month strategic planning process, transformation of Bassett Creek Valley is ready to shift from plan to action. This urban frontier at the doorstep of downtown will redefine the description of Minneapolis much like Denver Commons has done for Denver and Coal Harbour for Vancouver. The rebirth of Bassett Creek Valley will be the celebrated legacy of this generation of Minneapolis leadership.

The boundaries for the Bassett Creek Valley project area were established by the Minneapolis City Council in 1998. The project area is a 230-acre, largely industrial area bound on the west by Cedar Lake Road, on the east by I-94, on the north by the Heritage Park redevelopment area and on the south by I-394. Bassett Creek Valley is largely known because Glenwood Avenue provides a primary transportation route into downtown Minneapolis. It is recognized for International Market Square, a historic factory rehabilitated into successful designer showrooms and condominiums. The Valley is also known for Bryn Mawr Meadows, a regional ball field destination with breathtaking views of downtown Minneapolis. Although there is a relatively small amount of existing housing within the Valley itself, the area is surrounded by vibrant and diverse residential neighborhoods including Bryn Mawr, Harrison and the newly established Heritage Park.

The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan advocates redevelopment of this outmoded industrial landscape into more than three thousand housing units, 2.5 million square feet of commercial

space and the establishment of nearly 40 acres of new open space. Importantly, it also suggests the restoration of long-neglected Bassett Creek as the symbolic knitting thread of the Valley's urban fabric. All told, the plan represents an increase in the Valley's real estate value from roughly 50 million dollars today to well over 1 billion dollars after redevelopment.

Of equal importance, the master plan frames these investments within the context of important community-wide values. Strategies for family-friendly neighborhoods, affordable housing, living-wage jobs, transit alternatives, neighborhood services and the creation of vital public spaces are central to the plan. It is this infusion of values that makes the plan a reflection of the Bryn Mawr and Harrison neighborhoods and a statement of how Minneapolis envisions its future.

Bassett Creek Valley will be a new urban village of vibrant mixed-use districts and quiet residential streets. It will offer an array of household alternatives at varying prices. New parks and open spaces will create recreational and social opportunities for all ages and interests and interconnect the Valley with an impressive collection of trails and walkways.



Left: The skyline offers an attractive backdrop from many vantage points within the project area.

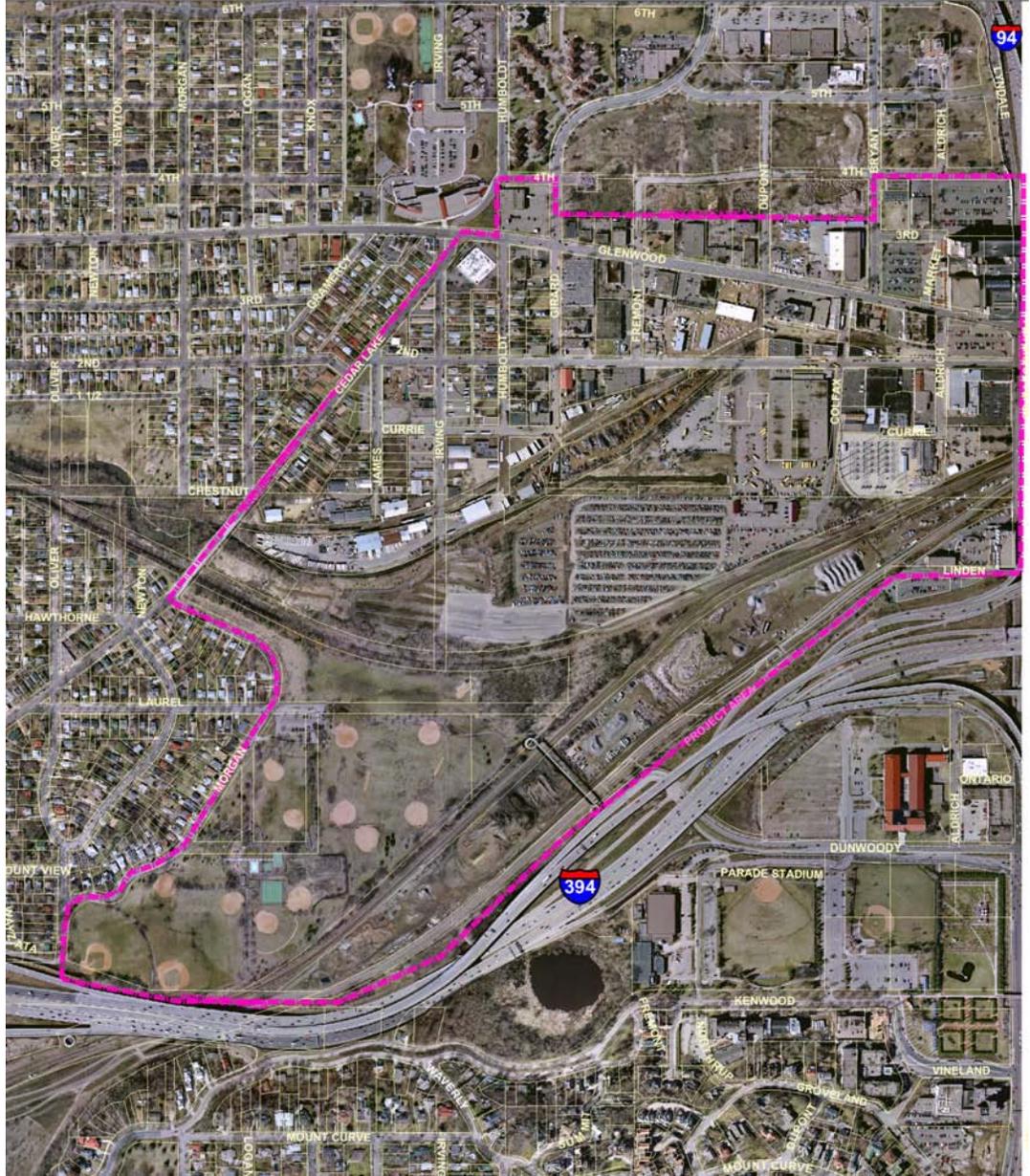


Figure 1.1 Bassett Creek Valley Project Area

Bassett Creek Valley will become a national model for urban neighborhood connectivity. The Valley will be a literal crossroads of regional transit options including trail, rail, bus and auto. Combining this transit menu with the Valley’s “doorstep” proximity to downtown jobs, services, education, arts and sports offers synergy vital to successful 21st Century neighborhoods.

CREATING THE PLAN

The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan is intended to establish the foundation and design the “road map” for redevelopment and restoration of the Valley. It outlines a land use vision, suggests design guidelines and tests redevelopment alternatives against realities of infrastructure capacities, market conditions and financial analysis.

This plan has been created in a way that is different than most redevelopment plans in Minneapolis. First, the plan is being created for a sub-area of two neighborhoods with equal collaboration from both. Second, a private developer is partnering with the neighborhoods to create and fund the master plan.

Harrison and Bryn Mawr Neighborhoods have distinct needs and neighborhood issues to address, but they share a common interest in the future of Bassett Creek Valley. Their shared neighborhood boundary extends through the Valley and while each neighborhood has its individual neighborhood master plan, they have come together to envision a future for Bassett Creek Valley.

This plan represents what grassroots neighborhood planning should be. In 2000, the City Council formed the Redevelopment Oversight Committee (ROC) made up of representatives from both neighborhood associations and businesses located in the Valley. Creation of the ROC was recommended by the precursor to this plan, the 2000 Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. The ROC’s role is to solidify a master plan for the Valley and provide redevelopment

advocacy and on-going oversight of redevelopment efforts in the Valley. It is envisioned that the ROC will continue to be active, overseeing development in the Bassett Creek Valley, according to their brief from the City Council.

In 2003, the ROC solicited real estate developers to be an active partner and financial contributor to the planning process. The chosen developer would become a bonafide member of the ROC. In exchange for its participation and expertise, the developer would become intimately familiar with the Valley and associated neighborhood wishes for an area with arguably the greatest redevelopment potential in Minneapolis and the ROC would be an advocate to the City for the developer’s designation as Bassett Creek Valley’s master developer. The ROC chose Ryan Companies, a widely respected developer with extensive redevelopment experience in Minneapolis and elsewhere.

In 2004 the ROC, with representation from the Harrison and Bryn Mawr Neighborhoods and newly added Ryan Companies, solicited an urban planning consultant to prepare a redevelopment plan that builds from the vision and framework established in the 2000 plan. Hoisington Koegler Group (HKGi), a Minneapolis urban planning and design firm, along with SRF Consulting Group, Braun



Left: Industrial use in the project area.

Intertec and Maxfield Research, was selected for the project and has authored this plan document.

With the ROC, Ryan Companies, the HKGi team and invaluable participation by City staff and elected officials, the planning process proceeded over an 18-month period with over thirty meetings of the ROC, four public workshops and numerous review meetings with City of Minneapolis staff and elected officials. The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan is a plan of the community and for the community.

SCOPE OF THE MASTER PLAN

The master plan for Bassett Creek Valley is a comprehensive framework for guiding public and private investments for a 230-acre area. The master plan boundary has been strategically located in order to touch the primary forces that will influence reinvestment in the Valley. This comprehensive scope of the master plan is a key to future success of the Valley. Study of a smaller area risks missing opportunities or lacking consideration of constraints.

Implementing the plan is not a single step but a series of actions and smaller projects that will span more than two decades within the context of the master plan. This master plan answers the question of “what is planned next door?” for areas of the Valley that are tackled first, and, in some instances, “next door” is not expected to change for a long, long time.

RELATIONSHIP TO CITY POLICIES

The City of Minneapolis has approved numerous master plans for many parts of the City and the 2000 Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan is just one of them. Those master plans are used to inform subsequent planning efforts such as comprehensive planning, zoning changes and dedicating staff time to redevelopment efforts. This Master Plan provides greater detail

and completes many of the tasks necessary in a Redevelopment Plan - a needed step in moving forward with implementation.

The Implementation Chapter below outlines specific policy actions requested of the City in regard to future redevelopment. Among them are a comprehensive plan amendment, rezoning, designation of Bassett Creek Valley as a growth center and redevelopment district, and pursuit of special legislation for the use of tax increment financing.

Strong involvement by City staff throughout the planning process has led to some policy activities already beginning. Staff from the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) is pursuing rezoning efforts and redevelopment district designation. Other policy questions raised by the plan are much more complex and will need dedicated effort and time on the part of the ROC, the development community, City staff and elected officials.

Of greatest policy importance are the City’s actions to find alternatives for the impound facility and Linden Yards public works facilities, freeing their current land for redevelopment. It has become apparent through the planning process that redevelopment of these areas is pivotal to the systemic success



of neighborhood transformation. We believe that redevelopment can actually assist with creative solutions for these public facilities and improve service capacity of the City.

2000 BASSETT CREEK VALLEY MASTER PLAN

The precursor to this master plan is the 2000 Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan. The plan provides an excellent foundation for the updated and added level of analysis, planning, design and direction provided in this master plan. The 2000 plan was prepared in the context of a public process to establish a general vision, a land use framework and general implementation steps toward efforts to redevelop the Valley. Some of the formulating text about guiding principles and analysis of the Valley found in this plan is transferred from the 2000 plan.

IDENTIFIED COMMUNITY ISSUES

Bassett Creek Valley is made up of two very aware and highly dedicated neighborhoods and the residents and business communities they contain. They understand the issues their neighborhoods face and have clear ideas for where they want Bassett Creek Valley to go in the future. Over the course of preparing this master plan, a number of community themes and values have become clear.

- **Change in the Valley is critical:** There is widespread recognition that significant change in Bassett Creek Valley and a strategy to foster appropriate change are needed.
- **New open space is needed:** With the proposed addition of several thousand new housing units, additional open space and neighborhood park facilities will be essential. This open space should build from the opportunity to restore Bassett Creek.
- **Changes to Bryn Mawr Meadows need to be planned with the neighborhood:** Modification of the program is a sensitive topic

and discussion of plans needs to be conducted in the context of meaningful neighborhood participation.

- **Affordable housing is essential:** Creation of affordable housing is a primary community goal for Bassett Creek Valley. Financial modeling and the land use plan created with this master plan incorporate consideration for affordable housing.
- **Living wage jobs and job training should be inherent to redevelopment:** The diverse population surrounding Bassett Creek Valley wants opportunities to work close to where they live. Redevelopment of office, retail and industrial uses offer an opportunity to build an objective approach to job training and provisions for living-wage jobs.
- **Good design matters:** The community is very aware of good and poor design examples in redevelopment projects. They want to do what is possible to ensure a high standard of design in Bassett Creek Valley for both private and public space.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE VALLEY'S FUTURE

Taking actions within the context of clear vision has a profound effect on what we do and how we do it. Relating this notion to neighborhood planning is especially important. Without a vision, investments of energy and money happen with only focused interests in mind. Sometimes the outcome is fortunate. Sometimes the outcome becomes a roadblock. Adding the ingredient of vision provides an understanding of what or how each investment is contributing to a greater endeavor. Each investment is then important in its own right as well as a building-block in a broader vision.

The ROC has adopted ten guiding principles in shaping the future of Bassett Creek Valley. The guiding principles provide an important basis of understanding between the plan authors and the community. During the long life of plan implementation, they

will act as the memory of the plan; reminding future community leaders “why.” The ten guiding principles for the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan are:

1. Enhance the Valley’s natural features: Restore natural features, preserve views, expand open space and clean up pollution. Increase the ability for natural features to impact the Valley’s quality of life by sensitively designing them for the enjoyment of people.

2. Create a park-like setting in developed areas: Use landscape techniques to create a park-like character in developed areas and to diffuse the distinction between uses.

3. Use Van White Memorial Boulevard and the Bassett Creek open space corridor to shape land development patterns: These two powerful elements should act as a celebrated framework within which development occurs.

4. Preserve current and create new views and sight lines: Development patterns and design guidelines should be sensitive to the preservation of skyline views, views of landmarks and views of open space.



5. Redevelop the Valley with human scale, safety, sustainability and environmental respect in mind: Redevelopment should support a unique community character centered on comfort and security for residents and visitors.

6. Establish creative and innovative urban design guidelines that guide redevelopment and rehabilitation: Innovative urban design and architecture will reinforce the area’s appeal as an attractive and vibrant neighborhood for residents and visitors.

7. Create attractive and vibrant districts where people live, work, do business and gather: Mixed-use districts will offer the Valley neighborhood variety and energy as well as vital commercial services, housing choices and jobs.

8. Explore proven and innovative planning concepts for best utilization of land: Explore land use scenarios that consider economic viability, environmental clean-up needs and recreational demands.

9. Accommodate multiple modes of transportation: The Valley should contain overlapping networks of transportation systems including streets, sidewalks, trails and transit.

10. Accommodate affordable housing, living-wage jobs and job training: Bassett Creek Valley has a rich history of population and economic diversity that should be respected in the redevelopment process through provisions for affordable housing and living-wage jobs.

Bassett Creek Valley offers one of, if not the most, important redevelopment opportunities in Minneapolis. This is partly due to benefits like proximity to downtown, adjacent redevelopment, transit links and recreational amenities and partly due to sheer need and a historic lack of investment. It all adds up to a challenging opportunity whose time to tackle has come.

The story of Bassett Creek Valley’s potential is not complete without some background knowledge of the Valley’s history and what is there today. This chapter begins with an exploration of the history and existing conditions in the Valley; it describes the starting point for the master plan. The chapter concludes with an analysis of existing conditions in terms of strengths for the Master Plan to build on and challenges for it to address.

HISTORY

Bassett Creek, which flows through the middle of the Valley, extends 12 miles from Medicine Lake in Plymouth to the Mississippi River in Minneapolis. The creek was named for Joel B. Bassett, one of the first settlers in North Minneapolis. Bassett both built his homestead and operated the area’s first steam-powered sawmill on the Mississippi River at about 7th Avenue North near the mouth of the creek.

Early sawmills along the Mississippi River in North Minneapolis led the way for early industrial development and railroad construction in Minneapolis. Nearby industries and the presence of railroad lines through Bassett Creek Valley led to its commercial and industrial development.

Throughout the 20th century, businesses in Bassett Creek Valley have reflected advances in industrial technology. Businesses have transitioned from sawmills and railroads to automotive, petroleum and machining. In addition, generations-old scrap and recycling businesses relocated to the area after being displaced from other neighborhoods within the City. By the 1950s, the Valley was

developed as an industrial park and businesses operated in predominantly one-story warehouse buildings. More recent industrial expansion has occurred in the northwestern portion of the Valley in land that was previously residential while many older industrial buildings today house less intense businesses such as music and design studios.

Historically, residential development occurred to the northwest of Bassett Creek to be close to the jobs provided by the nearby businesses and industries. By 1916, streetcar lines ran through the Valley making it more attractive for residential and commercial development, and linking it to the industry along the Mississippi River and the warehouse district.

Adjacent industrial and railroad properties, combined with poor quality land, made the area attractive to the intense development of inexpensive homes on small lots. Prior to 1900, most of the area’s residents came from Germany, Sweden and Norway. After 1900, the most prominent immigrant groups included persons from Finland, Poland and Russia. Around the turn of the century the African-American community began to move into the area as well.

A challenge to development in the Valley from the very start was the wet, swampy land along the banks of Bassett

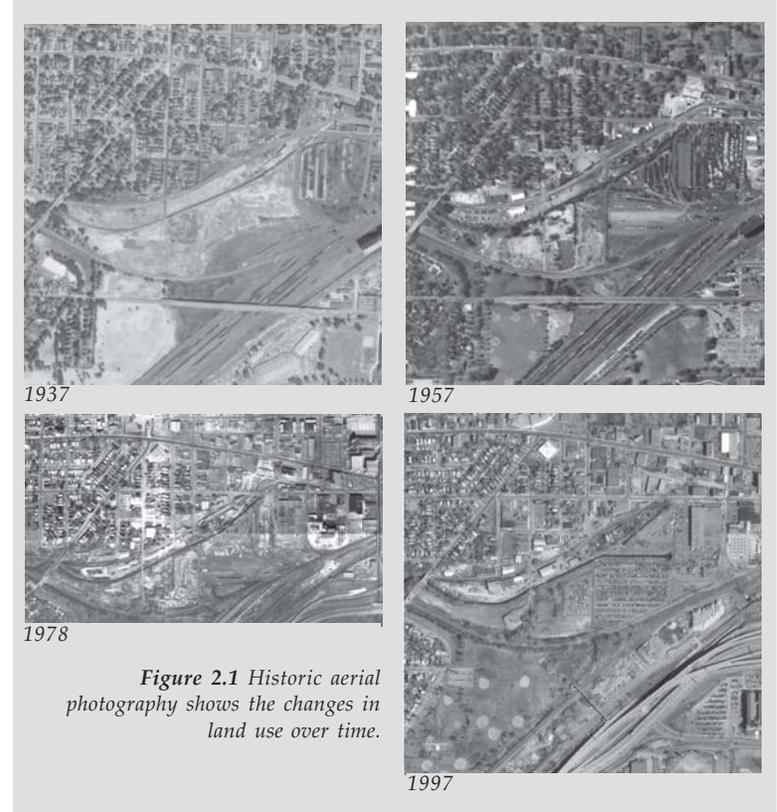


Figure 2.1 Historic aerial photography shows the changes in land use over time.



Residential land uses located in the northwest part of the project area



Commercial uses located on Glenwood Avenue.



Industrial Use

Creek. Beginning in 1880, portions of Bassett Creek's wetland area were filled with refuse and other material to accommodate increased development. Bassett Creek was canalized as early as 1889 in order to fill the area's floodplain for intensifying development. Businesses near the creek were built on deep pilings. Many businesses suffered from frequent and extreme flooding until 1992 when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers constructed a tunnel to drain the Valley and I-94 to the Mississippi River.

The cycle of filling the floodplain with debris to create developable land for the operation of intense machine-based industries has left a legacy of environmental contamination in some portions of the Valley and poor soils and extreme flooding have led to the abandonment of certain areas.

After World War I society became more dependent on automobile transportation and less dependent on rail transportation. This shift had a huge impact on the Valley when Interstate 394 was constructed during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The interstate divided the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood into two parts with, more than one-third of the neighborhood lying to the south of the interstate. As the influence of the railroads decreased so did their physical presence in the Valley. For example, Great Northern Railway's railroad yards were abandoned to be replaced by the City's concrete crushing facility and public works storage yards.

EXISTING LAND USE

Today, land use patterns in the Bassett Creek Valley are similar to historic patterns. There is still a mixture of residential, commercial and industrial land uses, with public land ownership replacing large scale rail operations. Today, the Valley is also home to significant recreational amenities, including Bryn Mawr Meadows and the Cedar Lake Trail. An examination of general

existing land use, shown in Figure 2.2, provides an overview of the existing land uses and patterns.

Residential

Residential land uses are generally located in the northwest portion of the project area on Cedar Lake Road; James Avenue N between Chestnut and 2nd Avenue; and Irving Avenue N and Humboldt Avenue N between Currie Avenue and Glenwood Avenue. While most of the residential dwelling units are single and two-family homes, there are several multi-tenant buildings as well. Most of the residential properties were constructed prior to 1920.

Retail and Other Commercial

Retail and other commercial land uses are located along Glenwood Avenue between Cedar Lake Road and Fremont Avenue N, as well as around the intersection of Glenwood Avenue and Lyndale Avenue. This land use encompasses a variety of uses, including but not limited to, retail stores, restaurants, banks, hotels and daycare facilities. The structures on the west end of Glenwood Avenue were built between 1940 and 1979, while most of the structures along Lyndale Avenue were built prior to 1920.

Industrial and Utility

Industrial and utility land uses make up the majority of the study area. This category allows manufacturing, transportation, construction, communication, utilities or wholesale trade. Industrial development and redevelopment in the study area has been continuous throughout the project area's history resulting in both historic and new building stock

Parks

The 51-acre Bryn Mawr Meadows encompasses much of the project area's southwest. It is one of three regional parks within the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's system of parks. Facilities

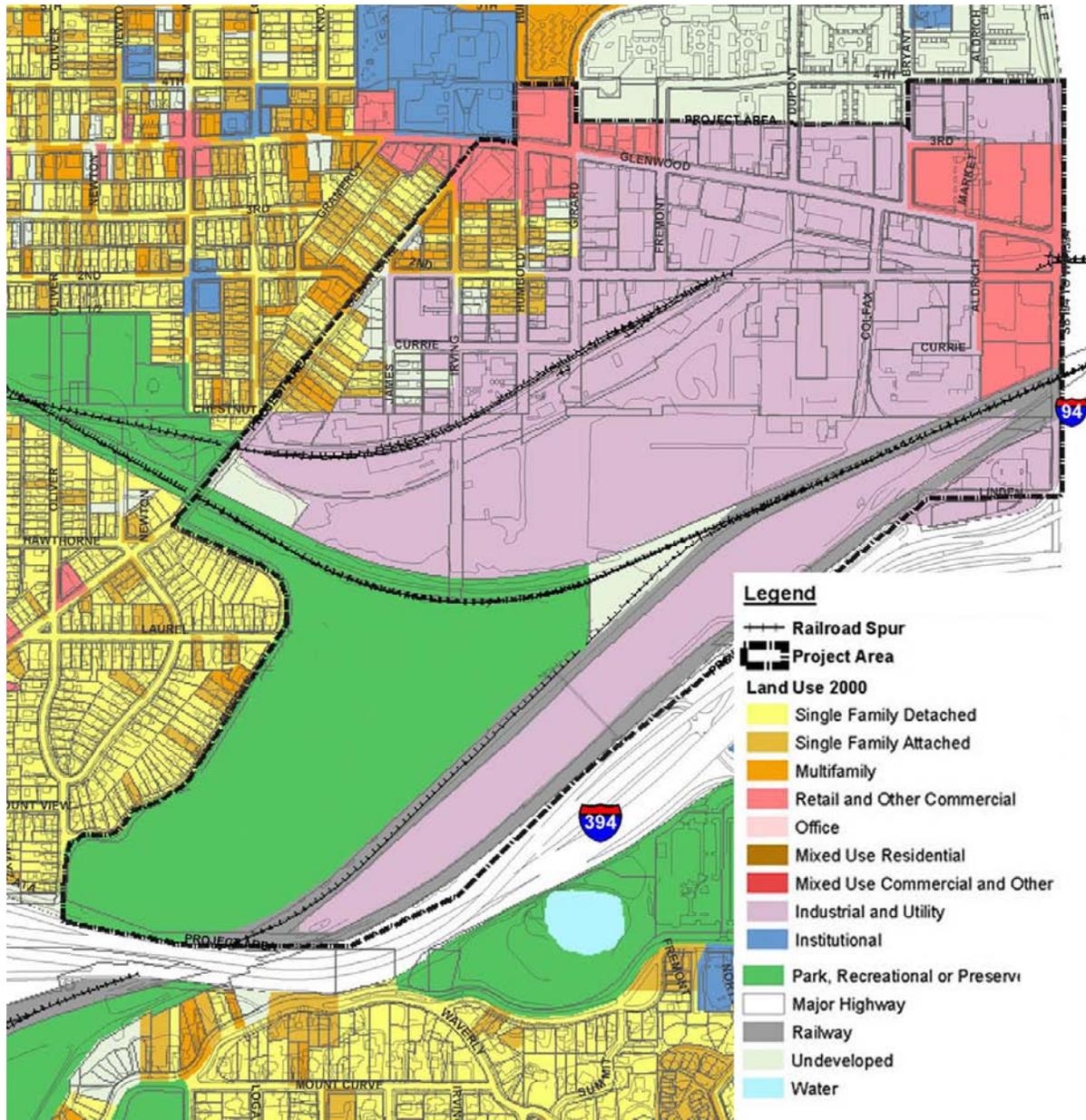


Figure 2.2
Existing Land Use

include: playing fields for baseball and softball; tennis, basketball and volleyball courts; and other recreational amenities.

Undeveloped

There are small pockets of undeveloped land within the project area. This land use category includes land not currently used for any defined purpose which may or may not contain buildings or other structures.

Ownership

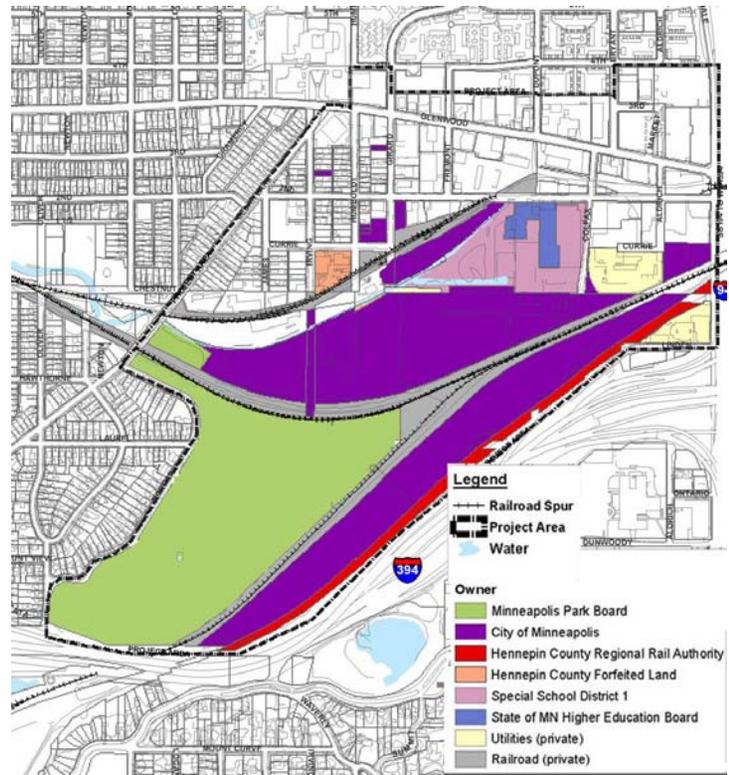
Privately owned residences and businesses make up most of the northern half of the Valley, while the southern half is primarily owned

by public agencies, railroads and utility companies. One of the largest public property owners is the City of Minneapolis which has its 30-acre automobile impound lot on the north side of the railroad right-of-way. South of the railroad right-of-way is Linden Yards, an open-air storage yard for the City's Department of Public Works and a concrete crushing facility and storage area.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board owns the land for Bryn Mawr Meadows. Minneapolis Special School District Number 1 owns a parcel at the southwest intersection of 2nd Avenue N and Colfax Avenue N where it stores and maintains school district buses and other vehicles. Properties are also owned by Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority, Hennepin County, and the State of Minnesota Higher Education Board.



Public Land Ownership in the Valley includes the impound lot owned by the City of Minneapolis (top photo) and Bryn Mawr Meadows (lower photo) owned by the Minneapolis Park Board.



EXISTING ZONING

Reflecting the industrial history of the area, much of the Valley is currently zoned for industrial uses. However, portions are zoned for residential, commercial and office uses. The International Market Square area is part of the Industrial Living Overlay District which is intended to encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of existing industrial structures and provide for limited residential and retail uses. A more complete discussion of zoning at its implications for the implementation of this plan can be found in Chapter 6.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION

Road Network

The project area is bound by two interstate highways, I-94 to the east and I-394 to the south. While these highways give the Valley high visibility, they also act as significant barriers as shown in Figure 2.4. Connections to the Lowry Hill neighborhood directly south of the study area occur outside of the project area, at Penn Avenue to the west and Lyndale Avenue to the east. Glenwood

Avenue, in the Valley's north, is the primary access route under I-94 to Downtown Minneapolis. This route, while fairly direct, is not immediately intuitive to those unfamiliar to the area, particularly when traveling from Downtown to the Valley. Freeway access, while available, is not easy for those unfamiliar with the area.

The road network within the north portion of the Valley is a continuation of the Minneapolis street grid. This allows for easy access to the neighborhood immediately north and west of the project area. The street grid is interrupted south of Bassett Creek; the creek, along with two active rail lines, limits access to the southern portions of the project area. Bryn Mawr Meadows is accessible only from neighborhood streets to its west and Linden Yards currently has no access via public roads.

Transit

Bassett Creek Valley is currently served by Metro Transit Bus #9 along Glenwood Avenue and Cedar Lake Road. This bus route is a local route which has over 90 weekday trips and 40 weekend trips.

Rail

The Soo Line and Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroads operate two active heavy rail lines that run through the project area. These lines provide industrial businesses with rail access but act as significant barriers to access in the southern half of the project area. See Figure 2.4.

Trails

The Cedar Lake Trail is a regional bikeway located along Interstate 394 at the southern edge of the project area. The trail, which is owned and maintained by Hennepin County, is part of a larger bikeway system extending from the western suburbs into downtown Minneapolis. The trail is connected to Bryn Mawr Meadows by a pedestrian bridge which travels over Linden Yards and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail line.

A second regional bikeway, the Luce Line Trail, also travels through the Valley. When complete, the trail will extend from Minneapolis west to Cosmos, Minnesota. Today, the trail enters the Valley from the west at the bridge over Bassett Creek on Cedar Lake Road, follows the road south to Bryn Mawr Meadows, and then travels through the park to connect with the Cedar Lake Trail.

NEARBY DESTINATIONS

The Valley is in close proximity to several regional destinations, (Figure 2.4). The largest of these is Downtown Minneapolis. The Valley is in easy walking distance to the western portion of Downtown and a short car ride from almost any Downtown destination. This proximity to downtown, combined with the Valley's slightly higher elevation than Downtown, results in spectacular views of Downtown Minneapolis from the Valley, particularly along Glenwood Avenue and from the City's impound lot. The Walker Art Center and Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, world class art institutions, are directly south of the Valley. Also south of the Valley is the Dunwoody College of Technology, a private technical college. The Minneapolis Farmers' Market is located immediately to the northeast of the project area and is a unique amenity. The market has about 250 vendors, operates year-round, and is a major attraction on weekends when the weather is good. International Market Square (IMS), located within the project area, houses upscale home furnishing showrooms, designer studios, architectural firms, remodeling resources, and residential housing. IMS frequently hosts special events which draw substantial numbers of visitors. Just to the northwest of the project area, the Harrison Community Center is a neighborhood recreation resource. To the west of the project area, Theodore Wirth Park provides recreational opportunities as do Cedar Lake and Brownie Lake to the southwest.



International Market Square

ENVIRONMENTAL AND GEOTECHNICAL CHALLENGES

Bassett Creek Valley is challenged with both soil contamination and geotechnical issues. Over a century's worth of filling wetlands with debris and other materials to support industrial uses has left portions of the Valley with a one-two punch of soil correction needs. Even though these concerns are significant, they are not insurmountable. They have been addressed in the master plan in various ways including factoring their costs into the redevelopment financial models.

Bassett Creek Valley has been home to a range of industrial uses that have left a legacy of clean-up needs. A great deal of

environmental testing has been done in the Valley to determine the extent of contamination. Figure 2.4 illustrates properties identified with likely environmental clean-up needs and those with unknown but likely potential for contamination.

Because much of the Valley was originally wetland that has been filled over the years, future development of buildings and infrastructure will need extraordinary structural support to mitigate soft soils. As an example, construction of I-394 bridges required pilings deeper than 130 feet. Soft soils also cause vibration during the construction process that can damage surrounding buildings and homes.

RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan exists in the context of several other important planning and redevelopment efforts. Many of these efforts and their outcomes are critical in defining the direction and character Bassett Creek Valley will take in the future. An example is the political decision about whether the Southwest Transitway corridor, proposed between downtown Minneapolis and Eden Prairie, takes a path through Bassett Creek Valley or through Uptown; significant implications exist either way. Following is a review of known planning and redevelopment efforts related to Bassett Creek Valley.

Heritage Park Redevelopment

Heritage Park is a 130-acre mixed income residential neighborhood with over 900 housing units focused around a restored stretch of Bassett Creek at the northern edge of the Valley. The project's first phase began north of Olson Memorial Highway in 2001 and has been moving closer to the Valley ever since. Recently, development immediately adjacent to the Valley has been underway and will be occupied in 2006. The project has garnered a great deal of attention and its success will have a significant impact on the

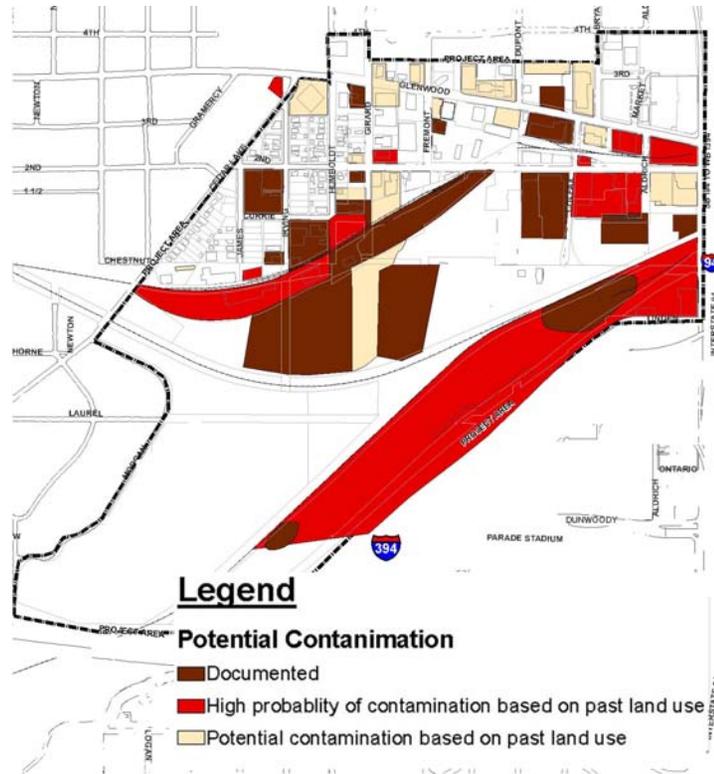


Figure 2.4 Potential Contamination

speed and form of redevelopment in Bassett Creek Valley. An important aspect of this master plan is to make a greenway connection between Heritage Park and proposed open spaces in the Valley.

Van White Memorial Boulevard

A north-south boulevard through Bassett Creek Valley has been discussed for many years to link two portions of the city that have never enjoyed adequate connections. Van White Memorial Boulevard is currently in the engineering stages with construction expected in 2007 to 2009. The boulevard will stretch between Dunwoody Boulevard and Highway 55 and generally follow the existing Fremont Avenue alignment. The southern stretch of the boulevard will bridge over Bassett Creek, the Cedar Lake Trail, and rail lines including potential transit. This plan views Van White Memorial Boulevard as the primary linchpin project that will enable significant redevelopment of the Valley.

Southwest Transitway

The Southwest Transitway is proposed as either a bus rapid transit (BRT) or light rail transit (LRT) line extending from downtown Minneapolis to Eden Prairie. Currently the project is in the early planning stages with review of alignment alternatives and preferred mode (BRT vs. LRT). Alternatives for alignment include extending through the Uptown district of Minneapolis or through Bassett Creek Valley. The alternative through the Valley would place a transit station at the line's intersection with Van White Memorial Boulevard. The decision about alignment will have a significant impact on redevelopment in the Valley, especially related to the pace of redevelopment, potential densities and market conditions.

Hennepin County is also exploring potential locations for a light rail switching yard. One of the sites being explored is the Linden Yards area of the Valley in which this plan proposes significant

development. Linden Yards is currently being used for Minneapolis public works operations, but its proximity and visual prominence as a gateway into downtown Minneapolis suggests a higher and better use. The financial redevelopment modeling done as part of this master plan suggests that taking Linden Yards out of the redevelopment equation would significantly challenge redevelopment opportunities throughout Bassett Creek Valley.

Luce Line Trail

The Luce Line Trail is a popular trail from Cosmos, Minnesota to Minneapolis. The trail currently extends through Bassett Creek Valley to connect to the Cedar Lake Trail, but the Minnesota DNR and the City of Minneapolis are working to realign this connection via a planned trail along Van White Memorial Boulevard. This master plan offers alternatives for this extension.

Bassett Creek Restoration

In 2005, Hennepin County began an effort to evaluate strategies to "daylight" creeks that have been unnaturally channelized or placed in underground pipes. A preliminary report dated April 2005 suggests that Bassett Creek from Cedar Lake Road to 2nd Avenue North is a candidate for restoration, as also indicated in this master plan. A follow-up feasibility study is currently being prepared that will identify priority restoration areas and approaches toward restoration activities and the City and ROC are in the process of hiring a firm to complete an implementation plan for restoring Bassett Creek as it flows through the Valley.

Glenwood Avenue Streetscape Plan

The revitalization of Glenwood Avenue has been a long-standing priority of the Harrison Neighborhood and is affirmed in its neighborhood master plan. The neighborhood sees Glenwood Avenue as vital to Harrison's economic vitality and neighborhood image. To address these issues and provide a framework for such improvement, the neighborhood developed the Glenwood



Heritage Park Master Plan



Bassett Creek



Bryn Mawr Meadows



Minneapolis Public Works



Outdoor Farmer's Market

Avenue Streetscape Plan in 1999. This plan helped inform streetscape design guidelines as part of this master plan. Decorative streetlights will be installed along Glenwood Avenue in 2006.

Bryn Mawr Meadows

In 1998, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) adopted the goal of improving athletic fields at three of the city's regional parks, including Bryn Mawr Meadows. MPRB has done some exploration of the impact of Van White Boulevard opening access to the east side of the park. It has also explored alternatives that might be available from the Guthrie/Walker changes. However, no formal plans have been presented for public review or comment. Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan advocates that park usage and configuration remain essentially unchanged, with no fencing, lighting and parking on the east side of Bryn Mawr Meadows. This Master Plan suggests some opportunities for shared parking and alternative access.

City-Owned Facilities and Public Works Operations

The City of Minneapolis owns two large parcels of land in the study area, commonly referred to as the Impound Lot and Linden Yards. The City's impound lot is situated on approximately 30 acres of land between the north leg of the BNSF railroad line and Bassett Creek. Linden Yards, an outdoor storage and materials transfer area (that includes space for a concrete crushing operation), is on a 25-acre parcel located between the south leg of the BNSF rail line and Interstate 394.

A 2001 report completed by the City of Minneapolis analyzed these operations. It identified potential changes to the operations that might reduce their space requirements. It also evaluated the requirements, challenges and rudimentary costs associated with finding new locations for them. The report finds that the impound lot is the most difficult of these facilities to relocate or reconfigure. This master plan suggests redevelopment of the

Impound Lot and Linden Yards property.

Farmers' Market

There have been discussions about the possibility of relocating the Minneapolis Farmers' Market from its current location just east of I-94 from Bassett Creek Valley to an alternative location somewhere within the Valley. Management of the Farmers' Market has indicated that they are happy with its current location and that it is not interested in moving at this time. This master plan does not specifically identify alternative Farmers' Market locations although it does review alternative market layouts that can be used as a resource if discussions about moving the market continue.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Existing conditions in the Valley present enormous opportunities, as well as several challenges. This master plan looks to capitalize on the Valley's inherent opportunities and address the challenges that exist today. A summary of opportunities and challenges follows:

Opportunities

- **Orientation toward Downtown.** The area's orientation to Downtown will be a draw for consumers interested in housing and businesses interested in retail or office space that is near, but not in, Downtown. Also, because of its location and elevation, Bassett Creek Valley offers excellent views of Downtown Minneapolis, maybe some of the best in the City of Minneapolis.
- **Glenwood Avenue** has the potential to be a strong commercial corridor at the north end of the Valley and a gateway to Downtown. Planning efforts for revitalization of the street have already begun with the Glenwood Avenue Streetscape Plan.
- **Nearby destinations** such as the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, Farmers' Market and

International Market Square enhance the area as a good location to live and work.

- **Heritage Park.** The success of this new development directly north of the Valley will have a significant impact on the speed of redevelopment in the Valley. There is an opportunity for positive momentum from this project to act as a catalyst for development in the Valley.
- **Bryn Mawr Meadows.** This park is a significant recreational amenity and enhances the area as a desirable place to live
- **Bassett Creek.** An enhanced Bassett Creek has the potential to be a major draw as an aesthetic and recreational resource.
- **Historical component.** As one of the first areas of settlement in Minneapolis, there is an opportunity to build on the historical component of the Bassett Creek Valley.
- **Access to park and trail system.** Bassett Creek Valley currently has the Cedar Lake Trail, a bicycle and hiking trail, connecting Downtown Minneapolis with the Cedar Lake area, and linking the Valley to the City's large trail network. In addition, Luce Line Trail, when complete, will link the Valley to Cosmos, Minnesota to the west. These two regional trails, along with the connections to the new Heritage Park, will attract people interested in housing with connections to the City's trails.
- **Orientation and access to Interstate 394.** As the major corridor between Downtown Minneapolis and the western suburbs, Interstate 394 has the potential to be a major draw for new office and retail uses. Access to west bound I-394 also has the potential to attract families who want to live near Downtown and "reverse commute" to the western suburbs.
- **Van White Memorial Boulevard.** This new street through the Valley will provide a much needed north-south connection. It has the opportunity to be a catalyst for redevelopment in the Valley and opens the interior of the Valley to redevelopment opportunities.

- **Southwest Transitway.** A transit stop in the Bassett Creek Valley would be a catalyst for development.
- **Large areas of underutilized land.** The City-owned impound lot and storage and crushing facilities represent a significant acreage of land currently existing as a low intensity use and, as City-owned land, does not produce any tax revenue. This land has the potential to be redeveloped into a more intense and tax-producing development.

Challenges

- **General roadway access.** In general, the Valley does not have easy access to Interstate 94 and Interstate 394. Some exits, like those at Dunwoody Boulevard and Lyndale Avenue from the north, are not too difficult. However, access from the east along Interstate 94 is not immediately intuitive. While close to Downtown Minneapolis, it is not easy to get to the Valley from central Downtown without knowledge of the area. In addition, access to destinations immediately south of I-394 is currently only possible outside of the project area. Access within the project area is also limited by the two rail corridors running east-west through the Valley
- **Relocation of existing uses and businesses.** In order to make land available for redevelopment, displaced uses, particularly the City-owned impound lot and the storage and crushing facilities in Linden Yards, will have to be relocated. In addition, affected commercial businesses will have to be relocated.
- **Environmental and Geotechnical issues.** Environmental clean-up and soil correction needs will make development in the Valley more costly than comparable "green field sites" elsewhere in the region. These concerns even make Bassett Creek Valley more expensive than other urban redevelopment sites that do not have the same extent of soil concerns.

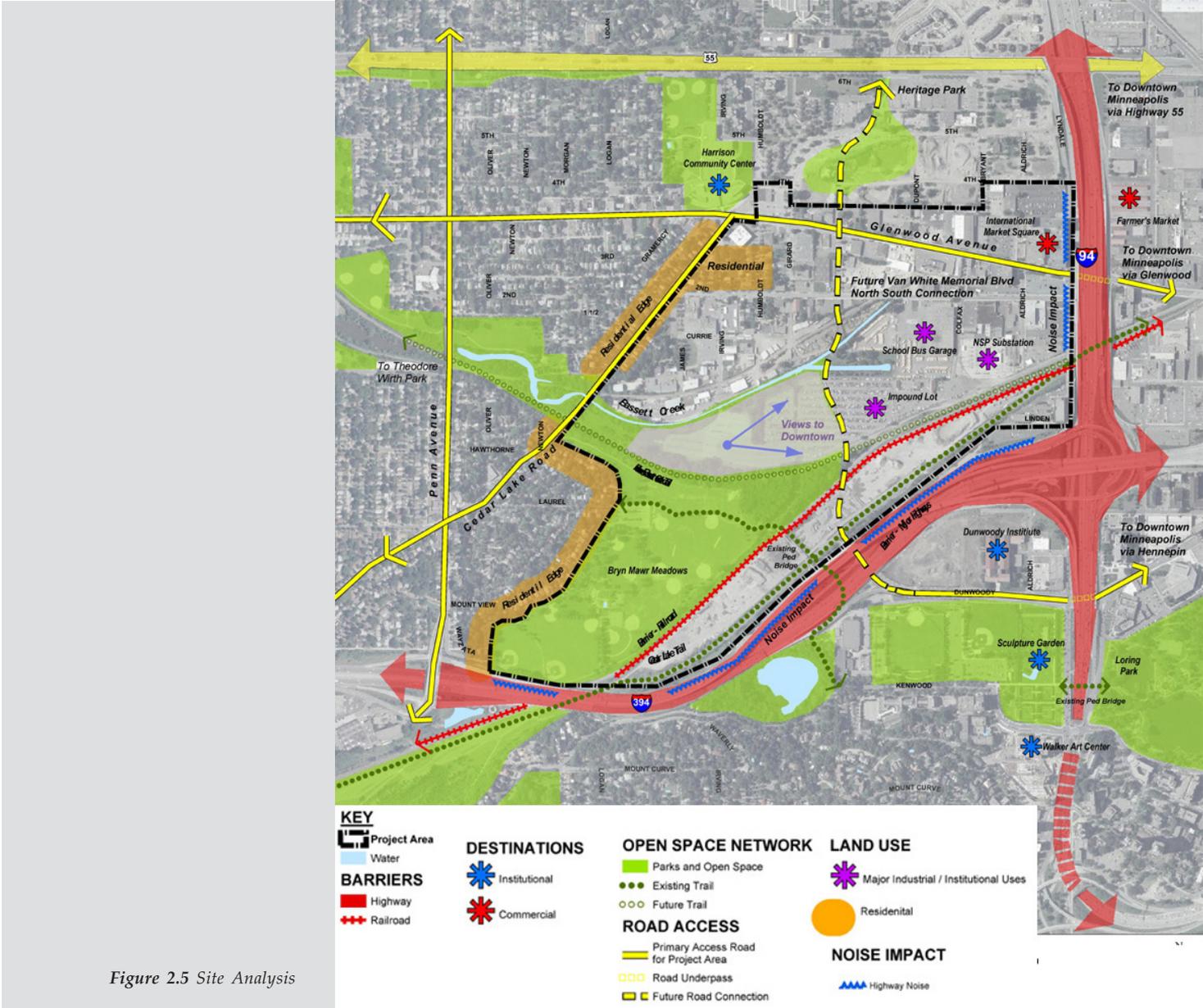
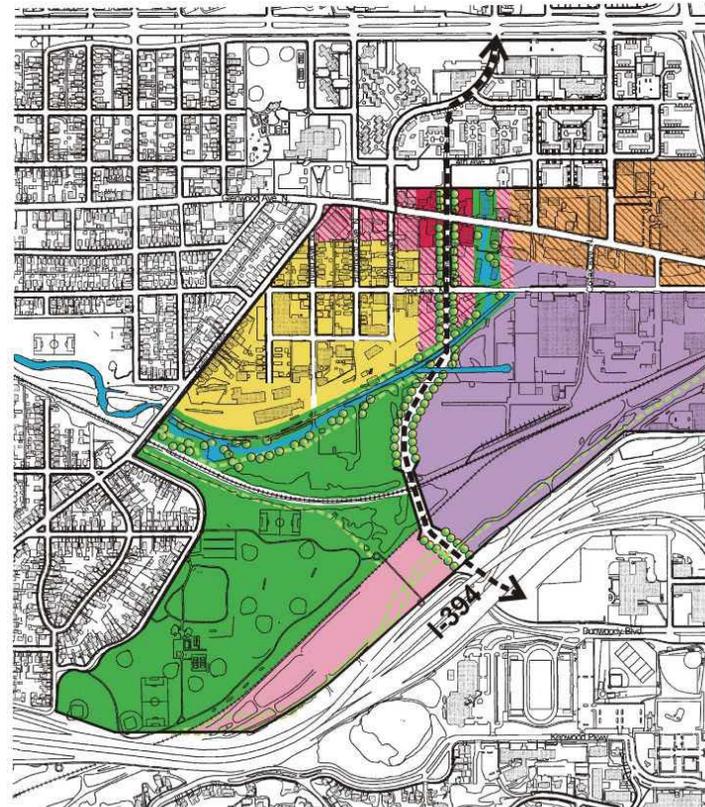


Figure 2.5 Site Analysis

The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan is a plan shaped by the community. The plan has its roots in over seven years of community initiative and guidance that began with the 2000 Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan, has taken legs with this master plan and will continue through the expected 25 years of plan implementation.

The community has been involved at several levels, from political leadership of Minneapolis, to City staff, to a project oversight committee, to the general public. At the center of the planning endeavor is the ROC described in Chapter 1. The ROC has coordinated the involvement of City staff and officials and the meaningful participation of the public. The 25-member ROC has met nearly every other week for the past 18-months and has involved over 600 participants in community forums to build a foundation for and reach consensus on the plan.

Four community workshops were held from September 2004 to February 2006. The first workshop was held in October 2004 to introduce the project and gain preliminary notions of community issues to be addressed with the plan. This workshop established the basis for preparing alternative approaches to redevelopment of the Valley. A second workshop exploring concept alternatives was held in March 2005. This was a phase of the planning process where meaningful community input was critical and, at this workshop, over 200 community members explored a range of redevelopment approaches and the financial implications of each. The results from this workshop formed the basis for a draft master plan. Two subsequent workshops, in July 2005 and February 2006, provided input necessary to refine the Master Plan. Summaries of each of the workshops are in the appendix of this report.



Future Land Use

Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan

- Neighborhood Oriented Commercial
- Mixed Use: Commercial/Industrial/Residential
- Mixed Use: Commercial/Residential
- Mixed Use: Commercial/Industrial
- Residential
- Commercial/Community Attraction
- Park
- Trail
- Streetscape
- RR Spur

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BC
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 January 26, 2000
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Figure 3.1 2000 Land Use plan

EXPLORING CONCEPT ALTERNATIVES

As a basis for alternative concepts, several features of the Valley and other planning were identified as givens, or starting points for the plan. These include:

2000 Bassett Creek Valley Land Use Plan: The land use plan approved with the 2000 master plan (see Figure 3.1) acted as a launching point for exploration of additional alternatives. While the plan was still valid in its own right, forces have come to bear since 2000 that make the exploration of other alternatives necessary. Primarily, those forces of change include the possibility of the Southwest Transitway station and the construction of Van White Memorial Boulevard.

Van White Memorial Boulevard: Final alignment of the future Van White Memorial Boulevard was established shortly before beginning this master planning process. The alignment was used as a given in development of concept alternatives.

Bassett Creek Restoration: The desire to restore Bassett Creek in some form was used as a given in creation of concept alternatives. Concept alternatives explored various approaches to creek restoration.

Bryn Mawr Meadows: There is recognition that Bryn Mawr Meadows will remain as open space and a recreation area. The final land use plan described in Chapter 4 identifies how surrounding development and trail alignments can play a part in accomplishing some of the goals for the park.

Southwest Transitway: Even though the decision about alignment of the Southwest corridor is not yet made, all of the concept alternatives for Bassett Creek Valley accommodate a transit station. If final alignment decisions do not include extension of the corridor through the Valley, land use concepts will still be valid.

As previously mentioned, a community workshop held in March 2005 was the primary vehicle for exploring concept alternatives. In preparation for the workshop, concept exploration began by dividing the Valley into six geographic districts and preparing three concept alternatives for each district. The district concepts explored a range of topics and approaches to redevelopment and open space based on the givens listed above, known community issues, and the vision and guiding principles established for the Valley. Concepts were built around community values in varying ways. For instance, restoration of Bassett Creek was explored in minimalist and more expansive approaches. Various housing densities were explored and housing affordability was wrapped into a financial model conducted for each concept alternative. In addition, the potential for employment opportunities for each land use was analyzed.

In conjunction with the development of concepts, a detailed financial analysis that determined project costs, development value, project revenues and, ultimately, the resulting financial gap or surplus was conducted for each concept. The financial gap or surplus was boiled down to a simple numerical value or score; positive numbers for surplus, negative numbers for a deficit, or zero if it balanced. For example a score of +3 represented a three million dollar surplus; -5 represented a five million dollar gap.

For the public workshop, each concept alternative for each district was made into a puzzle piece which included its financial gap or surplus score written on it and covered by a sticker. The puzzle pieces were cut to fit the geographic districts they represented and adhered to an aerial map of Bassett Creek Valley (see Figure 3.3).

At the workshop, participants were divided into small groups of 10-12. The participants were first asked to choose between the three concepts for each district to build (by group consensus)

their ideal master plan for Bassett Creek Valley. Information on the number of housing units and jobs that each concept had potential for helped to inform decision making. Groups were then asked to document and write comments about their selections. The second half of the exercise required that the groups remove the stickers from its puzzle pieces to reveal financial scores. The scores were then totaled. If the total score added up to zero or above, the group could keep its selections because its puzzle was financially viable. If the score was below zero, the group was required to make different puzzle selections in order to raise their score to zero or above.

The workshop was a resounding success. Dialogue and debate reached a fevered pitch at times and most everyone had a great time. The workshop offered participants a glimpse into the challenges of redevelopment finance and provided them a realistic opportunity to decide which trade-offs they were willing to make and which they were not. Of equal importance, the workshop demonstrated that there was a consensus across the spectrum of participants over several key plan elements including a restored Bassett Creek, a surprising acceptance of housing density and building height, a desire for a significant area of traditional residential neighborhood and the desire for a neighborhood retail node.

The concept alternatives workshop was followed by another public workshop in July 2005 that allowed the public to comment on the plan's strengths and identify elements needing further refinement. They were also asked to review design character elements, such as building scale and design, parking configurations, street design, and open space approaches (see Figure 3.2). A final workshop was held in February 2006 to review and comment on the Draft Master Plan.

The workshops gave the project team and the ROC clear direction about how to proceed with refining alternatives into a draft plan

and conducting more detailed financial analysis, both of which are described in subsequent chapters of this master plan. The workshops were invaluable in understanding issues and having the opportunity to modify the plan in ways that solidify it as a true reflection of the community.



Left: Comments on the land use plan were made by each small group at Open House #3 in July 2005.

Figure 3.2 March 2005 Workshop

For the second community workshop, the Valley was divided into six geographic districts and three concept alternatives were prepared for each district. Each alternative was then made into a puzzle piece which included a financial gap or surplus score. Workshop participants, working in small groups, created their preferred master plan based on the concepts and their financial and employment implications. See Exploring Alternatives on pages 2-3 of this Chapter.





Majority Selections

Score: 3

LEGEND

- LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
2 or 3-story w/ garage parking
12 DU / acre some lots w/ carriage house apartments
- MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
2-3 story w / back-under or garage parking
20 DU / acre
- HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
3-5 story w / underground parking
80 DU / acre
- RETAIL
Single story w / surface parking
- MIXED USE
4 or 5-story with street level retail and office and housing above
underground & structured parking
45 DU / acre
- OFFICE - 3 STORY
3-story office w/ structured parking
- OFFICE - 6 STORY
6-story office w/ structured parking
- LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
1-story w/ surface parking
- CIVIC
1-3 story w / surface parking
- PARK AND OPEN SPACE
- PARKING
Structured and surface
- UTILITY
Existing substation to remain
- STREETScape TYPE 'A'
- STREETScape TYPE 'B'
- GREEN STREET

Represents majority selections of participants of March 29, 2005 community workshop - further adjustments based on community input will be made, resulting in a final plan that is different than the plan above.



The Majority Selection (left) shows the alternative for each district preferred by the most teams at the March 2005 workshop.

Workshop participants assemble the puzzle pieces into their preferred concept (top). One of the completed concepts (bottom).

