

BASSETT CREEK VALLEY MASTER PLAN

*Final Draft for City Council Approval
March 8, 2000*



**Conclusionary Report of the Bassett Creek Valley Master Planning Committee
as appointed by the Minneapolis City Council**

with assistance from the
Minneapolis City Planning Department
Minneapolis Community Development Agency
Hennepin Community Works

and technical expertise from
Dahlgren, Shardlow and Uban, Inc.
Bonestroo, Rosene, Anderlik and Associates, Inc.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Thank you to all of the members of the residential and business community who participated in the public visioning session, public open house, neighborhood focus group meetings, and informational meetings, and to the business and property owners who participated in the interview sessions.

BASSETT CREEK VALLEY MASTER PLAN: AN OVERVIEW

History and Opportunity

The Bassett Creek Valley sits at the doorstep of Downtown Minneapolis with magnificent views of the Downtown Skyline. A part of two quiet neighborhoods, the Bassett Creek Valley is at the threshold of a new beginning with significant potential for restoration of the community. Soon to press itself on the Valley is a north-south boulevard running from Dunwoody Boulevard to the new neighborhoods created in the Near Northside. This new entrance to Minneapolis opens up a great market potential for the Valley, which was previously home to large railroad yards, early industrial development and immigrant housing. The area has also seen the channelization and tunneling of Bassett Creek and the filling of its floodplain. The challenges left in the form of poor soils and environmental contamination are counterbalanced by the redevelopment potential that the area offers.

A Nexus

The Valley's magnificent setting, with Bryn Mawr Meadows Park and Bassett Creek as centerpieces, is proposed to make a connection with the redeveloped open spaces of the Near Northside project. The interconnection of parks, trails and roads to the north, east, west and south brings the neighborhood work place and home together into the integrated system of public open spaces that has made Minneapolis one of the best urban communities in America.

Change Underway

Both public and private sector investments have already created significant changes in

the area with the development of new schools and a community center, and the promise of new housing in the Near Northside project area. The business community has also been energized with the conversion of the old Munsingwear factory into the International Market Square Design Center, which has in turn spurred a variety of artful and creative businesses in the Bassett Creek Valley community. With the Minneapolis Warehouse District bursting at its seams with its success, the Bassett Creek Valley area can expect to be the recipient of artists and businesses looking for new ground for business development. The focus will be on human scale and open space amenities to form opportunities more personal and intimate than can be found elsewhere so close to Downtown Minneapolis.

The Development of a Plan

The Bassett Creek Valley Plan is the collaborative product of representatives of the residential and business communities in the Bassett Creek Valley study area. The citizen-based planning committee presents this vision for the area to create an opportunity for rebirth of a neighborhood, restoration of a natural setting and operation of thriving commerce with self directed vitality and vision.

Principled Design

This plan sets forth primary principles of land use and design, with a strong emphasis on relationships between uses and market driven opportunities, the unification of natural systems, and neighborhood livability. To this end, the plan expresses in general the changes that are sought in the

Basset Creek Valley over a period of time, allowing businesses and property owners to adjust with the changes being brought forth by the new road connections and public improvements. The plan also brings an emphasis back to Glenwood Avenue, as the neighborhood's main street and a location for work/live redevelopment to strengthen the neighborhood core and provide services to the surrounding neighborhood and business community.

A Grand Entrance

Just as one of the grandest views of Downtown Minneapolis is seen from the Bassett Creek Valley, the Bassett Creek Valley will now provide one of grandest entrances to the City of Minneapolis. The new meandering waters of the Bassett Creek

Valley, its open spaces and delightful streets will once again integrate a diverse community into the full fabric of the City.

From Division to Unity

Bassett Creek, and the Bassett Creek Valley, have served as the dividing line between north and south Minneapolis. Now there is a chance for the Valley to serve as the point of unification. The Valley can become a place that brings diverse people together. It can also be a place that integrates living, work and recreation, and it can be a lively link between residential neighborhoods and the heart of downtown. The potential is there. A well-planned redevelopment of Bassett Creek Valley adds significantly to the well known livability and vitality of the City of Minneapolis.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On January 22, 1999, the Minneapolis City Council adopted a resolution directing the completion of a Master Plan for the Bassett Creek Valley. This action was the culmination of a year of pre-planning effort by a community based committee called the Bassett Creek Valley Study, under the organizational leadership of Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA) staff. Braun Intertec was concurrently retained by the MCDA to conduct environmental assessments in the area. Neighborhood residents and businesses, along with the environmental stakeholders, showed keen interest in the findings. At the conclusion of the process, their recommendation to engage in a master planning exercise for the area was supported by City staff and leadership, resulting in the January 22 action.

The Master Plan is intended to be a 20-year vision for the area, proposing future land use and identifying potential areas for redevelopment (see Figure 1). The following objectives were defined for the project as part of the City Council action:

1. Analyze present land use, propose future land use and identify potential areas for redevelopment.
2. Assess existing soil conditions and possible environmental contamination that may impact redevelopment of the area.
3. Define the path of a new north-south boulevard to traverse the area and connect Girard Avenue to the north of Glenwood Avenue to the general area of

the parade stadium to the south of the study area.

4. Explore possibilities for restoring some of the natural character of Bassett Creek and connect the Creek with new wetland amenities that may be part of the Near Northside Plan.
5. Assess the adequacy of the existing trail linkages to and through the area.
6. Explore the market for and desirability of industrial and residential redevelopment and park and open space enhancement.

MASTER PLANNING COMMITTEE

With its January 1999 action, the City Council also established a citizen committee to guide the development of the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan. This committee is known as the Bassett Creek Valley Master Planning Committee (MaP Committee). The Council action specified that the membership of the committee be appointed by the following parties in the given numbers.

- Harrison Neighborhood (4)
- Bryn Mawr Neighborhood (4)
- Bassett Creek Valley Businesses (4)
- Council President Jackie Cherryhomes (2)
- Council Member Lisa Goodman (2)
- Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton (1)
- Friends of Bassett Creek (1)
- Railroad Companies (1)
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (1 nonvoting)

Minneapolis Public Schools (1 nonvoting)
Minneapolis Department of Public Works (1 nonvoting)
Hennepin Community Works (1 nonvoting)
Near Northside project (1 nonvoting)

Committee members were appointed during the months of January and February, 1999. A full list of appointees can be found in the Acknowledgments on Page 4 of this Plan.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

MaP Committee members are charged with representing the voice of their constituencies in the process of developing this plan. They have taken this responsibility very seriously, returning to their appointing entities for guidance when appropriate. However, direct input from the community has also been sought. On March 18, 1999, a public visioning session was held at the Harrison Community Center. It was attended by about approximately 60 people. Questionnaires returned by participants contributed to an understanding of the community's priorities. On November 30, 1999, the Bassett Creek Valley MaP Committee, with the planning consultants, hosted a public open house to display the information gathered to date, and to present some alternative visions for the future of the Bassett Creek Valley. This meeting was attended by roughly 150 participants. Participant reactions to the alternative visions were again gathered in the form of written questionnaires. Summaries of the survey responses from both public meetings can be found in Appendix 1.

CONSULTANT SELECTION

Beginning in February of 1999, the MaP Committee engaged in a selection process

for a planning consultant firm to facilitate the development of the Master Plan. To assist the MaP Committee in gathering and analyzing all of the data that would be necessary in preparing this Master Plan, the City of Minneapolis Planning Department and the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA) issued a Request for Proposals from qualified professionals to provide planning, engineering, design, graphic and other technical support. Proposals were submitted by nine planning and engineering consulting firms. In March of 1999, a consultant team lead by the planning firm of Dahlgren, Shardlow and Uban (DSU) was selected as project consultant, and entered into an agreement with the Minneapolis Community Development Agency. The prime subconsultant was the engineering firm of Bonestroo, Rosene, Anderlik and Associates (Bonestroo).

This consultant team was responsible for providing technical assistance to the MaP Committee and the City of Minneapolis, and for collaborating as appropriate with the Near Northside project, Hennepin County, the Minneapolis Park Board, and other participants in the planning process. DSU was primarily responsible for community visioning, land use planning, urban design analysis and graphic representations. Bonestroo's responsibilities included water system analysis, soils analysis, road and utility analysis, and the development of design guidelines and principles. Northern Environmental, on behalf of Bonestroo, provided an environmental and soils analysis for a portion of the study area. Maxfield Research, Inc., under the direction of DSU, prepared a market study to determine the feasibility of residential redevelopment in a portion of the study area.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Information Development

Upon appointment of the MaP Committee and selection of the consultant firm, the first task of the Committee and consultant team was to develop its understanding of the project area. Both hard and soft data were collected during Spring and Summer of 1999. Electronic data were obtained from the City of Minneapolis and other sources that related to property values, housing characteristics, density of development, topography, as-built utilities, property ownership, etc. Aerial and ground-based photographs were taken of the project area. Historical materials were gathered and digested. Important among these was the Phase I assessment of the study area by Braun Intertec, a series of analytical pieces related to the daylighting of Bassett Creek, and documentation of an action by the Harrison Neighborhood Association regarding preferred long-term land use in the study area.

Impressionistic data about the project area and possibilities were gained through a set of walking tours. Participants viewed the present state of major elements of the project area including Bassett Creek itself, the Public Works operations and facilities, and existing residential and commercial development. A second tour took Committee Members into the facilities of three project area businesses. Committee members also took a bus trip to view other creek restoration projects.

Additional stakeholder information was gathered through a series of interviews and focus groups. About 12 interviews were conducted with small groups of business and property owners in the study area. Participants responded to questions about

the character of their business, number of employees, and business plans and needs. Three focus groups were conducted with neighborhood residents, and one focus group was conducted with representatives of the Hmong community. A summary of these interviews and the information gathered can be found in Appendix 2.

Analysis

The project-related information base was further developed in a set of analytical inquiries. These included the following.

Near Northside Water System Technical Framework: This Bonestroo-authored report, dated September, 1999, evaluates the existing surface water system for its ability to contribute to restoration proposals for the creek and wetlands in the Near Northside and Bassett Creek Valley project areas. Because these project areas are closely linked, the report examines the hydrological system as a whole.

The report presents detailed information on the storm water system and flows in the Near Northside area under existing and proposed redevelopment conditions; on flows within the Bassett Creek Valley Master Planning area and within the Bassett Creek tunnel system; and on the potential for using storm water flows and/or creek flows to support proposed wetland restoration in the area. The report also discussed regulatory and policy issues related to storm water management and the proposed wetland projects.

The report concludes that there is sufficient storm water available in the subwatersheds flowing to the Near Northside area to create large ponds as identified in conceptual designs for the area. The report presented three alternatives as being feasible for

conveying a portion of the creek flow through the study area. These alternatives were: water flow through a pipe (a gravity storm drain), water flow through an open creek, or water flow by way of a pump (a lift station/forcemain). Suggested routes and elevations for the “daylighted” creek were identified between Dupont and Fremont Avenues. A full copy of this report is found in Appendix 3.

Soils Analysis Report: In September 1999, an environmental evaluation of a portion of the Bassett Creek Valley area was performed by Northern Environmental on behalf of Bonestroo. The area examined was that bounded by Cedar Lake Road, Glenwood Avenue, Girard Avenue, and Bassett Creek. The purpose of this evaluation was to pull together and evaluate, to the extent possible, the likely site contamination in the area, and its implications for redevelopment of the area into exclusively residential housing. A full copy of this report along with an illustrative sketch that details some of its elements is found in Appendix 4.

The report noted that much of the project area has been in commercial/industrial use for many years. The report examined subareas, describing the general past use (or uses) of each subarea and identifying known or suspected contamination. Based on this limited information, it made informed guesses for each subarea concerning the likelihood that significant contamination would be an obstacle to future residential development, and what an approximate budget might be to clean-up the subarea.

Housing Potential Market Analysis: Maxfield Research, Inc. was retained by DSU to examine and quantify the market potential for residential redevelopment in that portion of the Bassett Creek Valley

study area located south of Glenwood Avenue, east of Cedar Lake Road, north of Bassett Creek and west of Fremont Avenue. A full copy of this report is found in Appendix 5. The report, completed in December 1999, concluded that the area examined exhibits high potential for the development of a variety of new housing types. The report found that the site offers an attractive location close to Downtown, exceptional views of the Downtown skyline from several locations, and the potential to substantially enhance property tax values in the area.

The report found other advantages of the site to include its proximity to Bryn Mawr Meadows, and stated that the proposed north-south boulevard connection to Dunwoody Boulevard was a crucial element to the success of redevelopment. Target markets for the potential housing included downtown workers, people that were drawn to the downtown for entertainment and cultural opportunities but who prefer to live in a neighborhood setting, people attracted to the proximity of cultural and recreational opportunities, and small business owners and artisans looking for live-work spaces.

COMMITTEE MISSION, VISION, AND DESIGN GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES

In June of 1999, the MaP Committee refined its own understanding of its role and ongoing responsibility through the adoption of a Committee mission statement.

The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan Committee’s mission is to develop a master plan for the Valley area and to advocate for its realization.

The Committee then developed an evocative long-range vision for the Bassett Creek Valley area. It is summarized as follows:

Bassett Creek Valley is a village within the city that is inviting, diverse, safe, friendly and sustainable, where people want to live and work and others like to visit.

A more complete visioning scenario, as well as an illustrative land use sketch that captures some of its key elements can be found in Appendix 6.

Based on the visioning elements, the Committee undertook the task of developing a set of overarching design principles and guidelines for the study area which embody the Committee's policy orientation toward land use policy, and articulate other general design recommendations. The "Bassett Creek Valley Design Principles and Guidelines" were developed as part of a lengthy subcommittee process and have served as a foundation and point of orientation upon which other committee policy and action recommendations have been based.

The adopted Design Principles and Guidelines include 10 fundamental statements that are each refined into specific actions to direct the planning and design of future development in the Bassett Creek Valley area. The 10 main statements are listed below, with the entire Design Principles and Guidelines included in Chapter 3 of this plan.

1. Enhance the Area's Natural Features: *Restore natural features, preserve visual perspectives, expand open space, and remediate pollution. Augment the positive attributes of natural features within a landscaped concept that joins areas and 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 the North-South Boulevard/Parkway and Elements of the Greenway to Shape Land Development:** *Frame distinct areas for housing and business development with elements of the greenway system and the north-south boulevard through the Valley.*
- 4. Preserve Current and Create New Views and Sight Lines:** *Develop design standards and regulations that enforce the preservation of scenic vistas of the downtown skyline, landmark views and views of greenways.*
- 5. Make Certain that Residential and Business Areas are Developed on a Human Scale, are Safe, Sustainable and Respectful of the Environment:** *Develop design standards that unify the area and support the feeling of community, specifically by encouraging small-scale, unobtrusive development. All new development, remodeling of existing structures, and landscaping will address community safety.*
- 6. Establish Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Existing Structures and for new Construction that Encourage Creative Design Incorporating Resource and Energy Efficiency:** *Innovative urban design and architecture will reinforce the area's appeal as an attractive and lively destination and address.*
- 7. Create Attractive and Lively Destinations and Commercial**

Addresses in which People Work, Do Business, Shop, Learn and Gather:

Create unique groupings of convenience retail and services for employees, residents and visitors that serve as a focus for community activity.

8. Explore Proven and Innovate Planning Concepts for best Utilization of Land:

Consider alternative land use, which encourages development of businesses and mixes which may be more economically viable considering existing environmental needs of the neighborhood.

9. Bring Order to the Movement of People Vehicles and Goods:

Delegate routes for specific and various transportation uses; put cars, trucks, bikes, and walkers on appropriate roads/paths.

10. Encourage Diverse Development and Creation of Additional Living-Wage Jobs, as well as Retention and Growth of Businesses in a Manner Consistent with the Design Principles and Guidelines:

Encourage Diversity in building types and uses and a balance of housing values.

The Design Guidelines and Principles were also a point of reference in the creation of the “Urban Design Framework” of this master plan. The Urban Design Framework translates the intent of the adopted Bassett Creek Valley Design Guidelines and Principles into specific physical, functional and aesthetic parameters under which development and redevelopment may occur in the Bassett Creek Valley. The Urban Design Framework is found in Chapter 6 of this Master Plan.

Land Use and Design Framework

In November 1999, the MaP Committee’s philosophical framework had been established, and the relevant information and analysis had been developed. At this point, the Committee took responsibility for making other key decisions and recommendations. Explained in more detail throughout this report, the Committee was responsible for reaching consensus and providing direction to the City on the matters listed below.

- General location and design of the proposed north-south boulevard that would connect points north and south of the study area
- General location and design of the water features
- Proposed future land use
- Policy guidance and design parameters for future development
- Plan implementation strategies

Unanimous agreement was not reached on all plan recommendations. The committee attempted to reach consensus whenever possible, and in other cases made it’s recommendations based on the outcome of majority votes. Most notably, some Bassett Creek Valley business owners felt strongly that land currently in commercial/industrial use should not be taken out of industrial use in the future. These committee members have indicated that they will compose a minority report to the City to articulate their viewpoints.

MASTER PLAN AS CITY POLICY

The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan is proposed as a long-range plan for the redevelopment and enhancement of the Bassett Creek Valley Area. This Master

Plan is advisory and serves as a declaration of intent. While by itself it does not commit the City to financial action, upon its adoption, all of its goals, objectives and principles will become guidelines that inform City policy.

The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan identifies public and private improvement projects and proposes changes in land use and development patterns that would be implemented over the long term, an approximately 20-year period. The plan is designed as a long-range guide not only for enhancing community aesthetics and physical character, but also for decisions about future public and private investments. The implementation of the Master Plan will be dependent in some instances on property owner or private developer actions, and in other instances on further evidence of feasibility or the availability of and willingness to spend public funds. The final chapter of this report outlines implementation strategies to be pursued by the appropriate responsible parties.

RELATED PLANNING ACTIVITIES

The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan exists in the context of a number of important related planning and redevelopment activities. Immediately adjacent to the BCV area to the north is the Near Northside project area, where the redevelopment of 73 acres will be taking place over the next several years. Immediately to the south is the Parade area, which has been the subject of scrutiny related to the future location of a new Guthrie Theater complex. Hennepin County, in essentially the same study area as this master plan, completed its detailed examination of potential interim uses for contaminated properties. In addition, evaluations of park facilities and Public

Works operations are city-wide exercises that have important implications for Bassett Creek Valley planning.

Near Northside Redevelopment

The planned redevelopment of the Near Northside project area as a mixed income residential community is a result of the settlement of the Hollman vs. Cisneros lawsuit of 1992. A concept plan for redevelopment of the 73-acre site was a core element of the *Action Plan for the Redevelopment of the Sumner Field, Glenwood, Lyndale and Olson Public Housing Developments and Adjacent Land in Minneapolis* (December 31, 1997). A lead developer team, led by McCormack Baron and Associates, was selected for the project in mid-1999, having responsibility for master planning. A planning and engineering consultant team led by SRF Consulting was hired in September 1997 for design of open space and infrastructure components of the project area. The result of the work of the McCormack Baron and SRF-led teams is a more detailed plan for project implementation bearing the name *Near Northside Redevelopment Implementation Plan*.

The Near Northside Redevelopment Implementation Plan and the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan are being advanced through the City Hall approval process at the same time. This synchronicity is one of the manifestations of the recognition on the part of City leadership and staff that redevelopment in the two study areas is very closely linked. The new north-south boulevard, called for in the Near Northside Action Plan will traverse the Bassett Creek Valley area, connecting north and south Minneapolis. Water features in the Near Northside project area will benefit from the “daylighting” of a partial diversion of

Bassett Creek in the area of its original path. Continuity of new parks and trails in the Near Northside area is possible only through connections to park and trail features in the Bassett Creek Valley area. Revitalization of the commercial elements of Glenwood Avenue in the Bassett Creek Valley area depends upon the buying power of the new community to be developed in the Near Northside area.

Because of this close linkage, considerable effort has been made to keep the development of plans for both areas “in sync.” Information has flowed between the projects through a number of mechanisms. Several City and agency staff have responsibilities in both project areas. Design consultants from both project areas have spent time together on issues of mutual concern. Near Northside consultants have solicited input from the Bassett Creek Valley MaP Committee directly. The result in terms of this master plan is a vision for the Bassett Creek Valley area that is highly supportive of the increasingly refined plans for the redevelopment of the Near Northside project area.

Parade Area Planning

The Parade Area is immediately south of the Bassett Creek Valley study area, but separated from it by the interstate highway, I-394. In the Summer of 1998, it was recognized that all major property owners in the Parade area anticipated major near term changes in their programmatic needs. Because these needs in every case had facilities implications, and the Guthrie Theater was proposing to meet its needs for a stand-alone facility by purchasing a portion of the Parade Stadium site owned by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), a joint planning exercise was

initiated to explore possibilities for addressing the needs of all parties.

The exercise was facilitated by a team of consultants led by the Cunningham Group, an urban design firm hired jointly by the MPRB, the Guthrie Theater, the Walker Art Museum, Dunwoody Institute, and Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association. Designs were explored over the course of several months, with a resulting dominant scenario that illustrated the acquisition of a site in the Parade Stadium area by the Guthrie Theater. Because the MPRB has a policy of no net loss in land area, and because the Parade Stadium site has been well loved over its long history, a hiatus was called in the planning exercise to allow the MPRB time to discern whether there were conditions under which they could sell the Parade Stadium property.

Negotiations with the City of Minneapolis over transferring Bassett Creek Valley land, currently utilized for the City’s Impound Lot and materials storage, to the Park Board in partial exchange for the Parade Stadium site proved to be difficult. As of this writing, a different site along the central riverfront is under consideration for the Guthrie Theater. However, the long-term needs of the remaining Parade area institutions, existing weaknesses in the transportation-related functionality of the Parade area, and the future linkage of the new north-south boulevard to Dunwoody Boulevard, call for further attention to the area at some point in the future.

Hennepin County Interim Use Study

Simultaneous to the development of the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan, Hennepin County, through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, established an “Interim Use Committee” to

identify potential short and medium term uses for polluted sites scattered throughout the Bassett Creek Valley area. Phase I of the Interim Use Study was completed in November 1999 with the designation of criteria and the selection of priority sites for the creation of interim use strategies. Hennepin County staff continues to work with their consultant, the City Tree Project, to develop an implementation plan for planting along Bassett Creek. The plan envisions the creation of a riparian buffer to address leachate seeps along the southern boundary of Bassett Creek. Tree root systems would act as a hydrostatic barrier, preventing contaminants from entering the creek. The MaP Committee and Interim Use Committee have worked closely together during the course of the development of the Bassett Creek Master Plan and the identification of Interim Use priority sites. The completion of the master plan will allow the Interim Use Committee and Hennepin County staff to take further steps in implementing site specific remedies where they will best contribute to the long-term development of the area.

Glenwood Avenue Streetscape Plan

The revitalization of Glenwood Avenue has been a long-standing priority of the Harrison Neighborhood, and was affirmed during the NRP planning process. The neighborhood sees Glenwood Avenue as integral to enhancing the economic vitality and stability of the neighborhood (through increased retail and commercial businesses), and improving the community's image. To address these issues and provide a framework for such improvement, the neighborhood developed the *Glenwood Avenue Streetscape Plan* (May 1999).

The Glenwood Avenue Streetscape Plan was prepared on behalf of the Harrison

Neighborhood Association by SRF Consulting Group, Inc. and Close Landscape Architecture, during 1997-1999. The Glenwood Avenue Streetscape Task Force, a citizen committee comprised of Harrison residents and business owners, worked closely with and provided direction to the consultants throughout the planning process.

Park Board Planning

In 1998, the MPRB adopted the goal of improving the athletic fields at three of the City's regional parks. The fields at these parks would be reconstructed to a higher standard, lighting improved, and other changes made to improve the facilities to a very high level of quality. Bryn Mawr Meadows, a large park in the study area, was identified as one of the three parks to be improved in this fashion. The Park Board proposes to acquire land owned by the City of Minneapolis so that Bryn Mawr Meadows Park could be expanded toward the north, with new playing fields between the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail lines and Bassett Creek. This scenario would make Bassett Creek, between Cedar Lake Road on the west and the new boulevard on the east, part of the new park. Other new park space would be primarily utilized for athletic fields, as illustrated in concept plans by MPRB staff.

Through much of 1999, it appeared quite possible that the Guthrie Theater proposal to acquire the MPRB's Parade Stadium site would provide the MPRB with a funding mechanism for the acquisition of this Bryn Mawr Meadows expansion space. However, the three-way negotiations between the City of Minneapolis, the MPRB, and the Guthrie Theater did not bear fruit in a timely way. Therefore, the MPRB must look to other mechanisms for financing the purchase of this land.

City of Minneapolis Operations and Facilities Planning

The City of Minneapolis owns two large parcels of land in the study area. The Impound Lot, situated on approximately 30 acres of property to the north side of the BNSF rail lines, holds vehicles that have been impounded by the City of Minneapolis for illegal parking or abandonment. Linden Yards, serving as an open air storage yard for the City's Department of Public Works, and providing space for the City's prominent concrete crushing and storage operation, are located on approximately 20 acres immediately south of the BNSF rail lines and north of Interstate 394.

While centrality has contributed to their cost-effectiveness, these open-air operations are quite visible from the freeway, along

what is considered an important gateway to downtown Minneapolis. Concerns about their unsightliness are compounded by the planned new access between north and south Minneapolis along the future north-south boulevard. The new road not only increases the visibility of these City operations but also dramatically increases the market value of portions of the land for alternative uses. Based on these considerations, the City Council in the Spring of 1999 authorized a study of alternatives. Budgetary implications of moving these operations were examined, as well as some of the implications of changing the way the operations are conducted. A report documenting initial findings was submitted to the City Council in August of 1999, but there is widespread agreement that more information is required--and efforts to "fill in the blanks" continue.

CHAPTER 2

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

STUDY AREA BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Bassett Creek Valley study area extends from Glenwood Avenue and the southern edge of Minneapolis Public Housing Authority owned land (roughly Fourth Avenue North) on the north to Interstate 394 on the south, and from Cedar Lake Road and Bryn Mawr Meadows Park on the west to Interstate 94 on the east (see Figure 1).

HISTORY OF THE BASSETT CREEK VALLEY AREA

Bassett 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 Bassett Creek.

The presence of sawmills in North Minneapolis along the river led to the development of other industry, including the construction of the railroads. The Great Northern Railway's railroad yards were located on what is now home to the City's concrete crushing facility and public works storage yards. The nearby industries and rail lines created a setting within the southeastern portion of the Bassett Creek Valley study area that was attractive to commercial and industrial development.

A challenge to development was Bassett Creek and the wet, swampy land along its banks. The creek was historically an open waterway that flowed from the watershed

area that is now in northern and western Hennepin County through a wide wetland corridor on its way to the Mississippi River. Beginning in 1880, portions of the study area were filled with refuse and other material to accommodate increased development.

In order to fill the area's floodplain for intensifying development, Bassett Creek was channelized as early as 1889. Business near the creek had to be built on deep pilings and until the early 1990s many suffered from frequent and extreme flooding. The most recent flood control measure taken was the construction of the tunnel by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1992 to drain the Bassett Creek area and I-94 to the Mississippi River.

Residential development did occur within the Study Area to the northwest of Bassett Creek. Nearby businesses and industries provided jobs that attracted area residents. Also, by 1916, streetcar lines ran through the study area making it attractive for residential and commercial development, and making the area accessible to the industry along the Mississippi River and the warehouse district.

The adjacent industrial and railroad properties, combined with poor quality land, initially made the area attractive to the intense development of inexpensive homes on small lots that first accommodated European immigrants. 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.

The African-American community, which originally settled near St. Anthony between the 1850s and 1870s, began to move into both North Minneapolis and South Minneapolis around the turn of the century.

The boom in residential construction after World War I, and a change in the nature of the City's industrial base created a society that was becoming more dependent on automobile transportation. Interstate 394 was constructed during the late 1980s and early 1990s along the southern edge of the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood.

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In the 20th century, the businesses in the Bassett Creek Valley have reflected all of the advances in industrial technology, from sawmills, to railroads, to the predominance of automotive, petroleum and machining businesses in the area. These businesses have been joined by generations-old scrap and recycling businesses that came to the area after being displaced from other neighborhoods within the City. In the 1950s, the area was developed as an industrial park and businesses operated in predominantly one-story warehouse buildings.

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. Businesses have moved away from or to different sites within the Bassett Creek

Valley Area, as poor soils and extreme flooding have lead to the abandonment of certain areas. Some of the most recent industrial expansion has occurred in the northwestern portion of the study area, in land that previously held residential structures.

Still, many of the industrial buildings, from the one-story warehouse buildings to the historic multi-level brick warehouse building, have been reused and today include less intense businesses such as music and design studios. And, this Plan proposes that in the future, to the extent feasible, the land in the northwestern portion of the study area undergo a process of phytoremediation and be redeveloped with residential uses.

EXISTING LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The Bassett Creek Valley study area currently includes a mix of public and private land, occupied by residential, commercial, and industrial land uses (see Figure 2). Privately owned commercial and residential properties occupy most of the northern third of the study area. The middle portion of the study area is comprised of both privately and publicly owned industries, as well as publicly owned recreational facilities. The southern third of the study area consists of almost entirely publicly owned property, occupied by both industrial and recreational uses.

The Bassett Creek Valley is home to the residents of over 100 housing units and approximately 55 properties in commercial/industrial use. It is also the location of the City of Minneapolis' Impound Lot, the City's concrete crushing and recycling operation, and the Linden

Yards open air material storage yard for the Department of Public Works. The study area is traversed from west to east by two legs of the BNSF rail line, while a spur line owned by the Canadian Pacific (CP) Railroad Company serves three industrial businesses in the northern portion of the area.

The Bassett Creek Valley is also home to significant natural and recreational amenities. These features include Bassett Creek, which lends its name to the study area, and Bryn Mawr Meadows park. The Cedar Lake Trail parallels the southern leg of the BNSF rail line, providing a bicycle commuter route to downtown Minneapolis, and the future Bassett Creek bicycle trail that will link the study area to Theodore Wirth Park along Bassett Creek.

Glenwood Avenue serves as a mixed-use community corridor that connects residents, employees and visitors of the Bassett Creek Valley area and the adjacent City neighborhoods to downtown Minneapolis.

Residential Properties

There are over one hundred residential dwelling units within the study area, comprised mainly of single and two-family homes, with some multi-tenant buildings as well. Approximately 18 of the residential buildings are located on Cedar Lake Road. The remaining residences are located west of Girard Avenue within a block of Second Avenue North. Approximately two-thirds of the homes on Cedar Lake Road and one-third of the homes in the remainder of the study area are owner-occupied. Although there is some deferred maintenance evident among these residential structures, most of the buildings are structurally sound and occupied.

An issue that the master planning process has sought to address is the impact on the existing housing from its close proximity to industry. Both the operational characteristics of the industry and the conversion of land from residential to commercial use have put stress on the residential community. This has led to decreased housing availability in the area, and contributed to deterioration and blight.

Industrial and Business-Office Commercial Properties

Bassett Creek Valley businesses fall primarily into four industry categories: building materials and construction, manufacturing, recycling, and media and communications (see Figure 3). There are approximately 55 business properties in the study area, which provide jobs to approximately 860 people.

Interviews with business owners reveal that most are doing well. They appreciate the centrality of the location in the metropolitan area, the ease of transportation connections, and low property costs. Some have also benefited from being somewhat out of the view of the public, particularly those that utilize outside storage and/or processing space. Because of the evolution of business development in the area, there is some inefficiency in the use of space, with some businesses having occupied non-contiguous or irregularly shaped parcels.

Many of the businesses suffered from frequent and extreme flooding until flood control tunnel improvements were built in 1992. The soil quality in the area is generally poor, with areas of soil contamination due both to the past industrial uses that have occupied specific sites, and to the presence of the now buried Irving Avenue dump. Soil conditions have, in

some instances, inhibited building expansion, although many businesses have been successful in reinvesting in their facilities and equipment.

Parks, Open Space and Trails

Three significant public open space features are located within the study area. Bryn Mawr Meadows park is one of three regional parks in the MPRB system of parks. The approximately 51-acre park includes playing fields used for baseball and softball, tennis, basketball and volleyball courts, and other recreational amenities. It occupies the majority of the land between the two segments of the BNSF railroad line. The Park Board is interested in expanding Bryn Mawr Meadows park to the north, encompassing Bassett Creek at its northern edge. It will seek to situate the parking areas for the park at its east side, so as to reduce the impact of on-street parking in the Bryn Mawr Meadows neighborhood. Access to new parking areas would be from the new north-south boulevard if a driveway crossing of the northern BNSF rail line can be negotiated. Along with two other regional park facilities the MPRB plans to upgrade all of the fields and facilities of Bryn Mawr Meadows park.

The Cedar Lake Trail is a regional bikeway owned and maintained by Hennepin County. The Trail is part of a larger bikeway system that extends from the western suburbs along the southern boundary of the Bassett Creek Valley area into downtown Minneapolis.

The Park Board is committed to constructing a new bicycle and pedestrian trail linking the Bassett Creek Valley to Theodore Wirth Park and the Cedar Lake Trail along Bassett Creek, thereby providing another link from the area to the City's Grand Round trail system. This future trail will be called the

Bassett Creek Trail and plans call for it ultimately to link up with the Luce Line trail, a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources trail that stretches 63 miles from Plymouth, MN in the western metro area to the town of Cosmos in west-central Minnesota.

Bassett Creek itself has the potential to serve as a local and regional open space amenity. The Creek currently exists as a channelized waterway that functions as a drainage way from a large watershed area in northern and western Hennepin County to the Mississippi River. Bassett Creek was historically an open waterway that flowed through a wide wetland corridor (see Figure 4). Beginning in the late 19th century, however, portions of the Creek were channelized and routed underground in a series of flood control projects that have continued to the early 1990s. The most recent of these projects was the tunnel constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1992 to drain the area of Bassett Creek and I-94 to the Mississippi River.

Current public access to the creek is extremely limited in the study area as it abuts industrial land uses both to the north and south. Scrap Metal Processors and Pioneer Paper occupy the north bank of the existing creek, while the south bank of the creek abuts the City of Minneapolis Impound Lot.

City of Minneapolis Properties

The City of Minneapolis owns two large parcels of land in the study area (see Figures 5 and 6). The City's automobile Impound Lot is located on approximately 30 acres of property on the north side of the BNSF right-of-way. This site holds vehicles that have been impounded by City for parking on marked city streets during snow

emergencies or that have been otherwise ticketed or abandoned.

South of the BNSF right-of-way and north of I-394 is an approximately 20-acre site on which the City conducts two other operations. The eastern portion of this site is a facility for the crushing of concrete rubble, as well as its storage for reuse. On the western portion of the site is Linden Yards, an open-air storage yard for the use of several divisions of the City's Department of Public Works.

Independent of the development of this master plan, the City is engaged in examining the feasibility and cost of relocating some or all of these operations to other sites within the City.

Railroad Properties

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Company and Canadian Pacific Railway both own railroad rights-of-way, and operate active freight train service, through the Bassett Creek Valley (see Figures 5 and 6). The utilization of the BNSF lines differs on the northern and southern legs. The northern leg carries just one train in each direction per day, while 15 or more long trains per day traverse the southern leg. The CP spur line, to the north of the BNSF rail lines, is used by three businesses in the study area, Pioneer Paper, Scrap Metal Processors, and Timberland Lumber Company, for the transport of materials and products.

Other Public and Utility Owned Properties

The Minneapolis Special School District No. 1 owns a large parcel of land at the southwest intersection of 2nd Avenue North and Colfax Avenue North, where it operates its transportation facility. This facility is

used for storage and maintenance of school district buses and other vehicles.

Northern States Power Company (NSP) and Minnegasco, Inc. have office and transmission facilities the southeasternmost portion of the study area, including a large NSP substation.

Surrounding Residential Neighborhoods

In addition to the land uses within the study area, the land uses and activities immediately adjacent to the study area impact and are affected by the development of the Bassett Creek Valley (see Figure 7). To the north, west and southwest of the study area are low- to high-density residential neighborhoods. The Bassett Creek Valley is bisected by the boundaries of two of these neighborhoods. The northern part of the study area is within the boundaries of the Harrison Neighborhood. The southern portion is part of the Bryn Mawr neighborhood.

Harrison Neighborhood: Harrison neighborhood is located immediately west of downtown, at the south end of North Minneapolis, in the 5th Ward. It encompasses the northern portion of the study area, extending to the north and west. Harrison is a culturally diverse neighborhood containing approximately 3,430 residents. As of the 1990 census, the neighborhood's population was 44% African American, 37% Caucasian 17% Asian (Hmong/Lao), and 6% Hispanic. Approximately one-quarter of the residents speak a language other than English at home. The neighborhood's 1,688 housing units are 68% renter occupied and 32% owner occupied, with an increasing number of first-time homeowners. The neighborhood also contains most Bassett Creek Valley businesses.

The Harrison Neighborhood Association has worked since 1983 to respond to the concerns of its residents, leading to the neighborhood's designation as an Enterprise Community in 1995, and its active representation on the MaP Committee as part of the development of the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan.

Bryn Mawr Neighborhood: The Bryn Mawr neighborhood is a predominantly low-density residential community. It encompasses the southern portion of the study area, extending to the west. A part of the Calhoun-Isles planning district, it is in the northwestern corner of the 7th Ward. The northeastern portion of the neighborhood immediately abuts Bassett Creek and the eastern edge of the neighborhood includes Bryn Mawr Meadows Park, Linden Yards and the City's Impound Lot. As fully described in the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood NRP Plan, the development of the neighborhood began in the mid-1800s and has since been characterized by its long-time stability and quiet and natural surroundings.

Approximately 3,000 persons live within the 1350 households in the neighborhood. The neighborhood contains a diversity of building styles and had one of the highest percentages of home-ownership in the City (approximately 80%), according to 1990 city tax records. The physical elements that predominantly characterize the neighborhood have played an important role in the development of the BCV Master Plan to ensure appropriate links between the Neighborhood, Bassett Creek Valley, Downtown, Parade Stadium and other area destinations. These elements include narrow streets, tree-lined boulevards, sidewalks, alleys for services and car access, as well as trails, parks, and gardens.

Bryn Mawr has a broad, diverse base of community organizations, including the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association, which has been active in the development of the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan through its representation on the MaP Committee.

EXISTING ZONING

The Bassett Creek Valley study area currently contains a variety of industrial, commercial and residential zoning districts, although the area is predominantly zoned as either the I-1 Light Industrial District or the I-2 Medium Industrial District. The I-1 district allows for low impact and advanced technology-based uses that produce little or no noise, odor, vibration, glare or other "objectionable" influences and which have little or no adverse affect on surrounding properties. Medium industrial uses include metal working, glass and other uses which do have the potential to produce a greater degree of adverse impact on surrounding properties. Unlike light industrial uses, medium industrial uses may involve the processing of raw materials or processing of primary materials. Neither district is intended for high impact uses, or uses which require outdoor storage of materials.

The study area also contains the C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District and the C-2 Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District. These districts permit general retail, service and office uses, as well as residential uses. Higher intensity institutional uses and automobile related service uses may be allowed in the C-2 District with a conditional use permit.

The study area contains the R2B Two Family Zoning District that allows single and two-family dwelling units along with

certain institutional and public uses. Certain multi-unit residential buildings and commercial uses may be allowed by conditional use permit. (See City of Minneapolis Zoning Map, plates 12, 13 and 18).

COMMUNITY ISSUES

In an effort to discern the land use relationships that existed between the distinct users of land within the study area, the MaP Committee relied on site visits, property owner interviews, and input from neighborhood residents and other interested members of the public. The MaP Committee toured A.H. Bennett Company, Minnesota Bearing and Wilson-Griak, and discussed business functions and needs with the business operators. Under the facilitation of DSU, interviews were conducted with business property owners and informational meetings with held area residents.

From this input, the MaP Committee identified the following issues as being important to the existing (and ultimately future) users of land in the study area. The full summaries of community responses can be found in the Appendix to this report.

Visioning Session

On March 18, 1999, the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County jointly conducted a public visioning workshop to kick-off the Bassett Creek Valley master planning and the Interim Use Study. Members of the community were invited to share their perspectives about the Bassett Creek Valley and how they would like to see it look in the future. A mix of area residents and business owners attended the workshop. A survey designed to gauge the importance of a

prepared list of issues was distributed at the workshop. Following is a summary of survey responses:

Resident Respondents: The issues that were most important to residents included a sustainable, clean and healthy environment, clean up of industrial pollution, improved connections to the City's pedestrian/bicycle trail network, better public access to Bassett Creek, restoration of Bassett Creek, removal of the City's Impound Lot and storage yards, an improved appearance of industrial area, strengthened property values, and slow traffic speed on a new north-south road.

The issues that were least important to residents included the new freeway access offered by the north-south boulevard, truck utilization of the north-south boulevard, the preservation of existing business, and improved athletic facilities.

Business Owner Respondents: The issues most important to business respondents included the preservation of existing businesses, more jobs for local residents, good access to public transportation, a sustainable, clean and healthy environment, and strengthened property values.

The issues that were least important to business respondents included the development of new housing (including single-family, multiple family and low-income), new freeway access at Girard Avenue, and a new gateway into the area from Interstate I-394 and the Parade area.

Harrison Neighborhood Focus Groups

Three focus groups meetings were held for Harrison Neighborhood participants at the homes of neighborhood residents. The general theme that emerged from the meetings was that residents liked the

neighborhood, planned to stay in the neighborhood and wanted the neighborhood to remain stable. The primary issues raised at the meetings included the following:

Housing: Support was expressed for maintaining the existing housing stock and neighborhood character. Concerns were raised over whether any more of the existing housing would be lost, and whether downtown development would continue to move westward toward the neighborhood. Requests were made for affordable housing for elderly neighborhood residents.

Jobs: The jobs available within and near the neighborhood were seen as being good for the neighborhood, and the existing businesses were seen as good neighbors. There was a desire for more medium-wage businesses to locate in the neighborhood. Support for the north-south boulevard was expressed, as it would encourage new business to locate in the area.

Open Space: Support was expressed for maintaining and expanding the existing parks and open space resources, including bicycle and walking trails.

Hmong Community Informational Meeting

One information meeting was held with representatives of the Hmong Community, to disseminate information about the planning process and to hear community concerns. Issues raised included the following:

Community Center and Programs: Participants expressed a need for a local community center to serve as a gathering place for cultural gatherings and as a center for technical assistance. The center could offer classes and programs on English as a second language, job training, home

ownership education, adult GED preparation, citizenship preparation, and art and music lessons. The community also needs a local Hmong Funeral Home that would be designed for observance of Hmong rituals.

Jobs and Job Training: The jobs that are currently available in the community include assembly, packing, tool and die, which typically require one or more years of training. The Hmong residents would like community-based job training programs so that they qualify for these positions. They need to have jobs with higher, livable wages.

Commercial Businesses: The Hmong community is concerned about the success of their local businesses. They are interested in having a large discount retailer in their neighborhood, as well as a local supermarket.

Business Property Owner Interviews

Through its consultants, the MaP Committee solicited the comments of business and property owners regarding their experiences as businesspersons in the Bassett Creek Valley area. Interviews were conducted with representatives of 30 businesses or properties, and additional comments were received from representatives of four properties. The comments reflected a range of issues and concerns, with the following common issues that emerged:

Accessibility/Location: Almost all of the owners stated that the primary benefit of being located in the Bassett Creek Valley area was its proximity to downtown and the convenient access to area freeways. The area was also preferred for its central location in the Twin Cities region. Many owners supported the construction of the

new north-south boulevard, believing it would further increase accessibility to and from the area. A few owners, however, expressed concern that a new north-south boulevard might jeopardize the existing access that they have to neighborhood streets. It was also mentioned that some neighborhood streets, such as Glenwood, would benefit from better westbound access from I-394 and for better truck access onto the area freeways.

Customer Base: Most businesses said that at least half of their customer base was from the Twin Cities area and several noted a large regional and/or outstate clientele. A few businesses stated that they also have a national and/or international customer base, as well. In general, business owners agreed that the centrality of the area to customers and suppliers was its greatest asset.

Employee Base: Most businesses said their employees were from Minneapolis and the suburbs, with some employees from the neighborhood. Several businesses stated that they provide a range of benefits to their full-time employees. A few commented that there was a need for nearby day care services. The central of the Bassett Creek Valley area contributed to its accessibility for employees.

Parking: It was generally reported that there was a need for more parking to serve the businesses and industries in the area. Some owners were concerned that existing on-street parking be preserved and that new locations for parking be found. Several suggested that Canadian Pacific Railway property may provide an opportunity site for expanded parking if a deal could be reached with the Railroad.

Business Community: It was noted that most businesses in Bassett Creek Valley have business relationships with other

businesses in the area. The Farmer's Market, International Market Square and Minneapolis Builder's Exchange were specifically mentioned as businesses that had drawn other businesses to the area. Several owners commented that, because of low lease rates, the area was good for incubator businesses and should be promoted as such..

Investment/Expansion: Many property owners stated that they were continually making investments in their businesses, acquiring new equipment or expanding facilities. Many of the business owners stated a desire to expand if there was available adjacent land to purchase or buildings to buy. Some had plans in place to do so, but uncertainty over the future development of the area inhibited them from acting before the planning processes were completed.

Environmental Issues: The most common environmental concerns raised by the Owners were those of soils conditions and pollution. Several owners said that an enhanced Bassett Creek would not benefit them.

Building Construction: Poor soil conditions were a concern because it increases the cost of facility expansion.

Railroad Use: While most business owners did not utilize the railroad spur line, three businesses did state their dependence on rail for distribution of materials.

Land Use Mix: Many businesses felt that the existing business/industrial area should continue to be used for commercial purposes, and that the immediate area was not appropriate for residential development. However, some owners mentioned that part of their existing customer base includes

neighborhood residents, and that there was mutual support between residents and businesses. Certain businesses stated that they would think about adding or enhancing a retail component of their business if there was the demand, such as that which could come from new residents in the area.

Public Open House

On November 30, 1999, the MaP Committee hosted a public open house to introduce the concepts and alternatives being discussed as part of the BCV master planning process. Estimated attendance was about 150 people, predominantly comprised of Harrison and Bryn Mawr Neighborhood residents, but also including neighborhood business representatives and employees. As part of the open house, attendees were asked to respond to a survey regarding their concerns and preferences with regard to the illustrated alternatives. The following summarizes the survey responses, categorized by respondent group:

Harrison Neighborhood Residents: Harrison residents seemed to be in consensus regarding their desires for the future character of Glenwood Avenue. Better commercial opportunities were desired, mixed with additional residential development. There was also agreement on wanting residential redevelopment west of Girard Avenue. There was less consensus regarding the development of additional water features. One faction wanted as much as possible in order to enhance the community's character. Others wanted no further dislocation of businesses. Preservation of jobs, and the relocation of

displaced businesses within the study area, were also desired.

Bryn Mawr Residents: Bryn Mawr respondents were largely united on wanting an easterly bridge alignment, with increased park and open space amenities. They varied in the extent to which they were interested in accommodating the long-term presence of existing industrial businesses. Many expressed an interest in limiting industrial uses to certain areas. Their view of future Glenwood Avenue development was consistent with that of Harrison residents.

Area Business Owners: Three surveys were returned by BCV business owners, all of which indicated a preference for a westerly bridge to allow the largest area for new industry or relocated businesses on its east side. They did not favor creating new water features that could displace additional businesses

Area Property Owners: Four surveys were returned by area property owners (that were not business owners). They were generally supportive of redevelopment in the area. Particular attention was focused on Glenwood Avenue for a future mix of commercial and residential development. The development of walkways, trails, natural wildlife area and recreational parkland had value for this group.

Area Employees: Four surveys were returned from persons employed by Bassett Creek Valley businesses, all of which indicated an interest in an improved Glenwood Avenue.

CHAPTER 3

BASSETT CREEK VALLEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

As described in Chapter 1, the MaP Committee developed a set of overarching design principles and guidelines for the study area to articulate the Committee's orientation toward land use policy. The adopted "Bassett Creek Valley Design Principles and Guidelines" was developed as part of a lengthy subcommittee process and has served as a foundation and point of orientation upon which other committee policy and action recommendations have been based.

The adopted Design Principles and Guidelines include 10 fundamental statements that are each refined into specific actions to direct the planning and design of future development in the Bassett Creek Valley area, as follows:

1. Enhance the Area's Natural Features:

Restore natural features, preserve visual perspectives, expand open space, and remediate pollution. Augment the positive attributes of natural features within a landscaped concept that joins areas and people.

- Make Bassett Creek the featured natural amenity of the greenway.
- Reinforce Views of greenway in the massing and orientation of development.
- Enhance residential and business areas by linking them to the greenway.
- Be sensitive to the negative impact of roads and bridges on natural features and views.
- Augment the appearance of the greenway with parkland, public plazas, lawns and articulated building setbacks.

- Create creek enhancements, such as wetlands.
- Address polluted sites via best-use land planning strategies.

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.*

- Build the proposed north-south boulevard to parkway standards
- Connect areas and places with streets lined with trees.
- Use boulevards and decorative lighting to provide a park-like setting in business areas.
- Establish explicit landscape performance standards for development.
- Soften the visual impact of parking areas with shade trees and other landscaping.

3. Use the North-South Boulevard/Parkway and Elements of the Greenway to Shape Land Development: *Frame distinct areas for housing and business development with elements of the greenway system and the north-south boulevard through the Valley.*

- Articulate the alignment of the north-south boulevard so that it efficiently organizes potential development parcels.
- Use parkway development standards to soften the distinction between housing and business development.

- Define edges of development areas with public open space easements and parkland.
- Articulate the massing of development to respect the views of downtown and the greenway.

4. Preserve Current and Create New Views and Sight Lines: *Develop design standards and regulations that enforce the preservation of scenic vistas of the downtown skyline, landmark views and views of greenways.*

- Undertake the mapping of potential greenway views, visual landmarks, and scenic vistas of the downtown skyline.
- Use the tools of official mapping, dedicated scenic easements, redevelopment standards, and City codes to preserve vistas and views.

5. Make Certain that Residential and Business Areas are Developed on a Human Scale, are Safe, Sustainable and Respectful of the Environment: *Develop design standards that unify the area and support the feeling of community, specifically by encouraging small-scale, unobtrusive development. All new development, remodeling of existing structures, and landscaping will address community safety.*

- Establish building envelope guidelines, which address massing, bulk and height.
- Provide adequate outdoor space for each development.
- Promote density necessary to meet the land use objectives of the neighborhood.

6. Establish Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Existing Structures and

for new Construction that Encourage Creative Design Incorporating Resource and Energy Efficiency: *Innovative urban design and architecture will reinforce the area's appeal as an attractive and lively destination and address.*

- Establish design performance standards that raise the quality of new construction.
- The density of new residential and commercial development should be compatible with the overall objectives of the Harrison neighborhood.
- Avoid jarring and inappropriate scale changes.
- Ensure consistency in the relationship of buildings to streets.
- Develop design standards for buffers between business and residential uses.

7. Create Attractive and Lively Destinations and Commercial Addresses in which People Work, Do Business, Shop, Learn and Gather: *Create unique groupings of convenience retail and services for employees, residents and visitors that serve as a focus for community activity.*

- Enhance economic development and business activity by improving the physical attractiveness of areas designated for business development.
- Encourage corner or cluster development of retail convenience and service uses.
- Encourage active linkages with institutions and organizations that provide skill development and training.
- Encourage the placement of street or plaza-facing retail development.
- Find a focal point for the development of retail convenience and service shops in the Harrison Neighborhood.
- Incorporate materials and detail characteristics of the neighborhood.

8. Explore Proven and Innovate Planning Concepts for best Utilization of Land: *Consider alternative land use, which encourages development of businesses and mixes which may be more economically viable considering existing environmental needs of the neighborhood.*

- Create a buffer between residential land use and industrial land use.
- Review development to encourage changes of land use with industry east of the buffer, mixed retail and service on the north-south buffer, and residential west of the buffer in the Harrison neighborhood.
- Create an industrial park, with appropriate transportation structures, into which existing area business and other compatible businesses can locate.
- Design the industrial park in ways that give priority to existing Valley businesses that are compatible with the overall land use objectives for the area.

9. Bring Order to the Movement of People Vehicles and Goods: *Delegate routes for specific and various transportation uses; put cars, trucks, bikes, and walkers on appropriate roads/paths.*

- Establish and maintain a particularly effective public transit system
- Connect the area by trails to western suburbs, the Near Northside area and downtown Minneapolis.
- Limit access for recreation parking to the north-south boulevard.
- Classify the north-south boulevard as a collector thoroughfare.
- Discourage traffic, generated by business and recreational activity in the Valley from passing through the Harrison and Bryn Mawr neighborhoods.

- The City should reestablish Cedar Lake Road as a residential collector street.
- Adapt access and parking needs so that the automobile does not dominate the landscape in areas for housing or business.
- Make sure businesses are effectively serviced by appropriate transportation infrastructure.

10. Encourage Diverse Development and Creation of Additional Living-Wage Jobs, as well as Retention and Growth of Businesses in a Manner Consistent with the Design Principles and Guidelines: *Encourage Diversity in building types and uses and a balance of housing values.*

- Give priority to the restoration of existing structures that contribute to the aesthetic character of the area.
- Provide for a mixture of high quality housing options, including housing above retail.
- Balance the development of rental housing with neighborhood needs.
- Encourage mixed-use development in locations of retail convenience and service activities.
- Balance the need for parkland and residential areas with the development of business that will create living-wage jobs.
- Execution of and adherence to the Bassett Creek Valley Design Principles will contribute to business development and job growth in the area.
- Include in all plans and designs technology that serves the needs of businesses and residents, and enhances the area's livability.

The statements above bear on land use decisions as well as the desired design of future area features and facilities. For this

reason they heavily informed the content of the next three chapters. Chapter 4 and 5 relate to the footprint of future road and water features, and chapter 6 contains the

“Urban Design Framework”, a collection of more detailed design guidelines for future development in the Bassett Creek Valley.

CHAPTER 4

REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES FOR THE ALIGNMENT OF BASSETT CREEK AND THE NORTH-SOUTH BOULEVARD

A primary task of the MaP Committee in the master planning process was to propose a recommended general alignment for the new north-south boulevard, as well as a recommended general “footprint” for future water features in the area. This chapter summarizes the analysis related to these issues, and the rationale for the committee’s recommendations.

NORTH-SOUTH BOULEVARD

The proposal for a new north-south boulevard connecting the Near Northside redevelopment area to Dunwoody Boulevard came out of the focus-group-based design process for the redevelopment of the Near Northside project area. It was supported by the Minneapolis City Council as part of their approval of the *Action Plan for the Redevelopment of the Sumner Field, Glenwood, Lyndale and Olson Public Housing Developments and Adjacent Land in Minneapolis* (December 31, 1997). The character and purpose of the road was further developed as part of the *Development Framework for the Near Northside*, which was approved by the Minneapolis City Council in September of 1998. The Framework envisions the boulevard as a new front door to the northside created along an extension of the

existing park and institutional corridors that converge on the Bassett Creek Valley. The framework specifically called for the following (among other points not listed here):

- A park amenity of sufficient width – a minimum of one block is recommended – to create the presence and character of a continuous greenway, with usable spaces and potential water features, yet narrow enough to provide for surveillance, comfortable walking loops and close adjacency to new and existing residential or commercial businesses.
- A road connection that provides for sites and uses that extend the character and content of the southern end of the corridor, with its predominance of cultural, educational and recreational uses, punctuated by residential and commercial uses.
- Trails and open space links between the Near Northside study area and the Cedar Lake Trail and Bassett Creek

As described in the following Table 1, the MaP Committee discussed north-south boulevard alignments that would have extended Dupont Avenue, Fremont Avenue and Girard Avenue through the study area (see Figure 8).

Table 1 Boulevard Alignment Alternatives

Roadway Segment	North Segment		Center Segment		South Segment	
	West	East	West	East	West	East
Land Use Relationship	Road serves as effective buffer between residential and industrial land uses. Supports Girard Avenue commercial node.	If creek is daylighted along Dupont, road would border creek/trail alignment. Shared open space may result in less acquisition of commercial land	Land on east available for public works or commercial/ industrial development. Divides available open space.	Less segment-ation of land for park land use. Bridge is less expensive and less obtrusive on view of downtown from residential areas.	Preserves entire Dunwoody Institute parking lot.	May be necessary in order to provide adequate stacking space on I-94 exit ramp.
Waterway/ Greenway Relationship	<p>Westerly Alignment: Having a creek/greenway in the same corridor as the road would require a pump/force main or pipe. The roadway alignment could be separate for a daylighted creek corridor.</p> <p>Easterly Alignment: The road may be constructed with a daylighted creek (using the gravity option) as part of a greenway corridor.</p>					
Bridge Expanse and Impacts	<p>Narrow Expanse: The road would cross railroad tracks where the tracks converge at their closest point. Impacts: Less right-of-way required, lower construction costs, and more developable area and open space.</p> <p>Wide Expanse: The road would cross railroad tracks at more than one point where the tracks are separated. Impacts: More right-of-way required, greater construction costs, less developable area/open space.</p>					
Truck Traffic and Impacts	<p>Access: Truck traffic could exit I-394 with direct ramp access onto the boulevard. Impacts: There would truck traffic in conjunction with residential, bicycle and pedestrian traffic on the boulevard.</p> <p>Access: Existing I-394 with truck traffic directed into industrial area rather than onto the boulevard. Impacts: Truck traffic would be separated from residential, bicycle and pedestrian traffic on the boulevard.</p>					

CREEK/WATER FEATURES

Discussions regarding the enhancement of waterway features were given renewed importance in response to Near Northside redevelopment plans which indicated a benefit from the northward diversion of surface water flow from Bassett Creek. Enhancement of the creek as a community amenity also had support from most MaP Committee members and the constituencies they represented.

The technical issues and feasibility analysis involved with the daylighting of or other design options for an enhanced flow of Bassett Creek to the Near Northside Area

are discussed in great detail in the Surface Water Analysis prepared by Bonestroo & Associates (please see Appendix 3). The report presents three alternatives as being feasible for conveying a portion of the creek flow through the study area and on to the proposed surface water elements of the Near Northside project area. These are: 1) water flow through a pipe (a gravity storm drain), 2) water flow through an open creek, or 3) water flow by way of a pump (a lift station/forcemain).

The MaP Committee’s discussion concerning these waterway alignment alternatives is summarized in the following Table 2:

Table 2 Waterway Alignment Alternatives

	Pipe Option	Open Water Option (Gravity)	Open Water Option (Pump/Force Main)
Waterway Location	Any alignment possible	Dupont Avenue	Dupont or other roadway alignment
Waterway Enhancement/Greenway System	N/A	The waterway could be part of an enhanced roadway corridor in conjunction with a greenway.	The waterway could be part of an enhanced roadway corridor or as part of a separate greenway corridor
Stormwater Management	Corridor may include constructed wetlands for stormwater treatment. Size and configuration will determine effectiveness. Use of additional land for ponds reduces developable area.	Corridor may include constructed wetlands for stormwater treatment. Size and configuration will determine effectiveness.	Corridor may include constructed wetlands for stormwater treatment. Size and configuration will determine effectiveness. Use of additional land for ponds reduces developable area.
Land/Cost Impacts	Easiest implementation. Requires minimal impact on existing properties.	May require relocation of existing businesses. Requires creation of pool area at south end. May enhance adjacent land values. Lower cost likely than pumped option. Provides buffer between residential land uses.	If the creek and road are in separate corridors, it may require more land than the Dupont option. Requires creation of pool area at south end. May enhance adjacent land values. Higher costs for creation and maintenance than gravity option. May provide buffer between land uses.

BOULEVARD, CREEK AND LAND USE RELATIONSHIPS

Discussions of the MaP Committee related to roadway and creek alignments were not conducted in isolation because the future

location of one element is an important factor in identifying the best way to site the other. The relationship of one locational decision to the other, and the related land use implications, are summarized in the following Table 3:

Table 3 Boulevard, Creek and Land Use Relationships

	Girard Avenue Boulevard Alignment	Fremont Avenue Boulevard Alignment	Dupont Avenue Boulevard Alignment
Creek Alignment	The creek follows a meandering alignment with storm ponds, is gravity fed through Timberland Lumber area, with ponds flowing north along the west side of Dupont.	The creek runs up the east side of Fremont with ponds in the Timberland Lumber area and creek east of the Glendale Seventh Day Adventist church.	A gravity stream flows along the historic alignment on the west side of Dupont.
Boulevard Bridge Alignment	A westerly bridge location with a long bridge expanse over two railroad tracks connecting to Dunwoody Boulevard.	A middle bridge location with a medium bridge expanse of railroad tracks connecting to Dunwoody.	Easterly bridge location with a short bridge expanse over railroad tracks connecting to Dunwoody.
Boulevard Width	Boulevard width of generally 100–120 ft.	Boulevard width of generally 100-120 ft. plus 200-300 ft. when adjacent to the Creek.	Combined creek and boulevard width of 200-300 ft.
Glenwood Land Use	Business and commercial activity along Glenwood with no residential uses along street.	Residential and business mix both east and west of the Fremont intersection along Glenwood.	A mix of residential and business uses west of Dupont and commercial to the east of Dupont.
Residential Land Use	Residential development is split with homes maintained along Cedar Lake Avenue north of 2 nd Avenue, with industrial uses south of 2 nd Avenue.	All residential use west of Fremont and south to the creek. Residential areas transitioned from industrial with mixed residential and commercial uses along Fremont.	Residential use west of Girard and south to the creek, with businesses east of Girard.
Industrial/Business Land Use	Industry south of 2 nd with relocated development east of Girard in area of Impound Lot.	Business north and south of 2 nd Avenue continuing toward I-394 and east of Fremont.	Industrial use south of 2 nd Street and east of Dupont.
Land Use Along I-394	Business use east and west of Girard with park uses west of the pedestrian overpass.	Entire area has business use both east and west of Fremont.	Park use to the west of Dupont and industrial use to the east.
Trails	Trails integrated east/west and north/south throughout the area.	Trails integrated east/west and north/south throughout the area.	Trails integrated east/west and north/south throughout the area.
New Railroad Spur	CP spur on BNSF line east of bridge.	No new railroad spur.	CP spur on BNSF line under the bridge.

PREFERRED ALIGNMENT

The MaP Committee performed an extensive review of many alternatives for the alignment of both the roadway and the creek. Different scenarios were studied that emphasized residential, commercial, or commercial land uses (see Figure 9). Upon a full and detailed analysis of the boulevard and waterway alignments and options described above, the MaP Committee voted for a north-south boulevard generally following a Fremont Avenue alignment and an open waterway feature in a separate corridor from the roadway (see Figure 10). The committee chose a wide corridor that combined the creek with stormwater wetlands and greenway. The considerations that were most decisive in the formulation of this recommendation were the following:

- The Fremont roadway alignment aligns with anticipated redevelopment patterns in the Near Northside redevelopment project.
- The Fremont and Glenwood intersection seems to make available a better array of potential redevelopment sites for developers interested in future neighborhood-oriented commercial development.
- The Fremont alignment allows for a better spacing of stoplights along Glenwood Avenue from Cedar Lake Road to Fremont.
- The Fremont alignment provides more opportunity for relationship between the boulevard and water features, including a stronger location of and opportunity for a combined pedestrian crossing.
- The Fremont alignment makes use of the wide Fremont to Girard block to make the transition between commercial and residential land uses.
- A western bridge across the BNSF rail lines maximizes the new space potentially available for relocation of existing Bassett Creek Valley businesses.
- Water features are close to the original creek and wetland locations. This makes surface flow to the north possible.
- Location of water features disturbs the least number of existing businesses.
- Further feasibility and design work may yield a water feature that flows north through the area, physically linking the Near Northside “daylighted” Bassett Creek with the existing Bassett Creek. In this instance, the proposed alignment allows for gravity flow, and does not require a pump/forcemain.
- If the water feature does not include a Bassett Creek flow through the area, the proposed alignment still offers continuity between the water features of the Near Northside project, and the existing Bassett Creek.
- The alignment allows for gravity flow, and does not require a pump/forcemain. This alternative is more sustainable, with lower operating inputs and costs.
- The creek alignment is positioned to provide an amenity to commercial properties along the new boulevard.

CHAPTER 5 - RECOMMENDED FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

This chapter is a guide to the recommended long-range land use plan. After discussion of the plan's development, and a description of how to read the plan, it focuses on a relatively small number of pivotal issues key to the development of the plan.

The Bassett Creek Valley land use plan (Figure 10) illustrates proposed future land use patterns. While the proposed use for some areas is the same as the current use, in other areas the plan calls for the use of the land to change over time. It represents a long-range vision that depends on both market-based activity, and certain key public sector actions. In aggregate, it anticipates the following changes to the area:

- A new residential community with three to five hundred new housing units
- Fifty to 100 new low income housing units
- An net increase of jobs
- New commercial activity along Glenwood Avenue
- Harrison neighborhood access to Bassett Creek and Bryn Mawr Meadows park
- Enhancement of Bassett Creek and the area's pedestrian and bicycle trail system

The following dominant themes are evident in the Land Use Plan.

- Commercial and industrial uses are generally located to the east of the north-south boulevard, residential and recreational uses to the west
- A neighborhood oriented commercial node is proposed for Glenwood Avenue where it is intersected by the north-south boulevard

- The eventual relocation of the City's concrete crushing operation as well as the Impound Lot is recommended.
- The expansion of Bryn Mawr Meadows park north to encompass and include Bassett Creek is supported.
- The plan is highly compatible with the Near Northside Redevelopment Master Plan because of water, trail and road linkages, and sympathetic land use visions.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAND USE PLAN

Because of the manner in which the alignment of the north-south boulevard impacts land use decisions, its exact path was an early critical question to be resolved by the Master Plan Committee. The boulevard functions as a "natural" east-west buffer between differing land uses, especially between industrial and residential uses. In accordance with accepted planning principles, the transition is not abrupt at the boulevard, with disparate uses facing each other across the street. The boulevard is the focal point of transition, but the wide block between Fremont and Glenwood is utilized to make the transition between land uses.

The proposed alignment of the north-south boulevard works in conjunction with the BNSF rail lines and the southern extent of existing development to segment the study area into a number of sub-areas (see Figure 11). On this basis, the proposed land use of the Bassett Creek Valley can be summarized as follows:

Sub-Area/Proposed Land Use

- A Mixed Use: Commercial/Residential
- B Neighborhood oriented commercial
- C Mixed Use: Commercial/Industrial/Residential
- D Residential
- E Mixed Use: Commercial/Industrial/Residential
- F Mixed Use: Commercial/Industrial
- G Park
- H Mixed Use: Commercial/Industrial
- I Commercial/Community Attraction
- J Mixed Use: Commercial/Industrial

LAND USE CATEGORIES

The Proposed Land Use categories are described in more detail below. Note that even where areas have the same proposed future use(s), this plan may propose different criteria for future development in the form of design guidelines or policy recommendations.

The following land uses are proposed for the Bassett Creek Valley study area:

Residential

This land use category is intended to provide for low- and medium-density residential uses, complementary to the existing residential uses in and adjacent to the study area. Though not explicitly shown on the land use plan, land use intensity may appropriately be greater near the north-south boulevard at the east side of the future residential area, and Bassett Creek at the south side, to include townhouse structures and multi-unit buildings.

Neighborhood Oriented Commercial

This land use category is intended to provide a convenient shopping environment of small

scale retail sales and retail-oriented service uses that are compatible with, and attract as its main customer base, adjacent residents. This category assumes a commercial storefront facing the street, but accommodates upper-level residential units as well.

Mixed Use: Commercial/Residential

This land use category is intended to accommodate neighborhood level goods and services, as well as free-standing residential uses, upper level residential units, and live-work dwelling units.

Mixed Use: Commercial/Industrial/Residential

This land use category is intended to be complementary to a community corridor, providing commercial sales and services to the residents and employees of the immediate neighborhood, but also to visitors, commuters and motorists. Freestanding uses may be residential, commercial or light industrial in nature, or mixed-use development plans may also be appropriate for individual sites.

Mixed Use: Commercial/Industrial

In general, this category is intended to accommodate the types of commercial business and industry that currently exists in the Bassett Creek Valley, subject to the urban design framework enumerated later in this plan (see Chapter 6), including low-impact manufacturing and processing uses without the production of raw materials.

Commercial/Community Attraction

This land use category is intended to denote the acceptability of either or both of two categories of uses. First, the area could be

used for regional-based business office, retail and commercial services uses that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood but may take advantage of its location near adjacent highways to attract its customer and employee base.

Second, the proximity of this area to existing regional cultural and educational attractions, as well as extensive parkland, makes it appropriate for development that would complement these attractions and better link them to neighborhoods to the north. Such uses could include museums, cultural community centers, theaters, and other similar facilities.

Park

This land use category is intended to include both active and passive public open space features, including the existing Bryn Mawr Meadows Park, the existing Bassett Creek, and the proposed greenway and wetland areas that would flank the new water feature.

MARKET FORCES

The proposed future land uses reflect, at their most basic level, a recognition that the role of the Bassett Creek Valley, and the market value of property in the Valley, is changing and will change further. Some of the market forces that have led to the current mix of land uses in the Bassett Creek Valley are not expected to prevail in the future (see Figure 12). These include low property costs for businesses (based on environmental contamination and the negative visual impact of surrounding uses), as well as the somewhat hidden nature of the area.

The construction of the north-south boulevard, and an expected expansion of

Bryn Mawr Meadows park and enhanced Bassett Creek, will make the area much more visible in the future. The centrality of the Bassett Creek Valley in the City and metropolitan area will continue to be important, but its proximity to Downtown Minneapolis is expected to exert more market influence in the future. The redevelopment of the Near Northside project area will contribute to a changed market perception of the area. Any resulting redevelopment of commercial and residential properties based on these market changes will further contribute to changes in the perception of the area.

LAND USE ATTRIBUTES

The following is a summary of land characteristics that have been determined to be important factors with respect to the market value of Bassett Creek Valley land in different land use categories. A comparison of typical residential and non-residential land use characteristics, property values and wage ranges are found in Appendix 7.

Residential Characteristics (see Figure 13)

- Existing views to the downtown skyline
- Accessibility to Bryn Mawr meadows park and Bassett Creek
- Proximity to educational, cultural and recreational facilities
- Proximity to the downtown
- Quietness of local streets
- Sensitivity to a clean environment
- Adequacy of buffering from commercial and industrial uses
- Noise and odors from commercial and industrial uses
- Shopping and services within a walkable distance
- Close proximity to schools

Commercial Characteristics (see Figure 14)

- Proximity to downtown business district
- Availability of parking
- Mix of office and retail services
- Presence of “main street” on Glenwood avenue
- Access to recreational facilities
- Multi-story capacity (3-4 stories, depending upon topography)
- Soil conditions
- Highway visibility and use of existing I-394 ramps at Dunwoody Boulevard
- Park-like setting

Industrial Characteristics (see Figure 15)

- Access to freeway
- Convenient truck routes
- Soil conditions
- Central location
- Permissibility of outdoor storage
- Availability of local employees
- Proximity to residential uses
- Presence of railroad spur
- Proximity to suppliers

Park Characteristics (see Figure 16)

- Active play fields and passive natural areas
- Connection by road and trails to neighborhoods
- Cleanliness of environment
- Natural functions: creek and water cleaning ponds
- Division of space by existing rail lines

Proposed North-South Boulevard

First among the impacts to the perception of the area and its market value is the north-south boulevard to be constructed through the area. The boulevard will provide a direct connection for vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic between North

Minneapolis communities and the Parade Stadium area, with its cultural, educational and recreational amenities. The new boulevard also offers a new North Minneapolis point of access to I-394. Currently, neighborhoods are connected across I-394 only at Penn Avenue and via a utilitarian Lyndale Avenue at the far eastern edge of the neighborhood.

The new boulevard, to be constructed in the style of a parkway or boulevard, will make the Bassett Creek Valley one of the most prominent gateway areas to the near north community of Minneapolis. The boulevard will reduce the traffic that travels through the Bryn Mawr neighborhood via Cedar Lake Road and Penn Avenue, and it will provide more direct commercial vehicular access to area businesses.

Creek, Park, and Trail improvements

Bassett Creek itself is perhaps the most important potential amenity in the study area. Enhancement and naturalization of the creek, in its approximate historic location is recommended as part of this plan. Park Board plans for Bryn Mawr Meadows park, and upgrading the quality of all of its playing fields and facilities, are highly compatible with the enhancement of the creek. The construction of the Bassett Creek trail, along with future construction of the trail network within the Bassett Creek Valley and Near Northside redevelopment areas, will add to existing trail connections to downtown and the lakes, making the area one of the best connected areas in the City for bicycle travel. These changes in combination add significant value to area properties, and contribute to their redevelopment potential.

Relationship to Downtown

The Bassett Creek Valley area is situated immediately to the west of downtown Minneapolis. Glenwood Avenue links directly to 2nd and 3rd Avenues North in the downtown warehouse district. The Bassett Creek Valley is thus a gateway into Downtown from the west, and a gateway into the community from Downtown. The attractiveness of its proximity to downtown Minneapolis has resulted in some recent commercial redevelopment, and it is expected that this trend will continue. The area may be particularly well-suited for the kind of businesses that have made their homes in the warehouse district, particularly since the increasing cost of space in the warehouse district is causing some businesses to look for alternative space.

The Bassett Creek Valley area already offers stunning views of the downtown skyline. Future development is expected to take better advantage of this market asset.

Proximity To Near North Side Redeveloped Housing

Imminent residential redevelopment in the Near Northside project area impacts the market perception of the Bassett Creek Valley area. Its mixed income community and attractive single family and medium-density housing types will have a positive effect on the perceived attractiveness of living in north Minneapolis. The new community will also contribute to an improved market for neighborhood goods and services on Glenwood Avenue. Both of these effects make the Bassett Creek Valley a more desirable place to live and work.

FUTURE LAND USE ASSUMPTIONS

The real and anticipated market changes described above have been instrumental in the development of the long-range land use plan. This section highlights a few of the pivotal elements of the land use plan, describing the recommendation in the plan and its rationale.

Rationale for Housing and Residential Land Use Recommendations

Perhaps the most forward-looking of all elements of the land use plan is the recommended future use of the developed land west of the new boulevard. It is also the one that depends most heavily on the anticipated change in the market value of the area. The land use plan calls for future redevelopment of the area as a residential development. This recommendation is highly dependent on the occurrence of several anticipated changes. A clear transition is made between residential and commercial/industrial uses, with existing industrial uses relocated out of the area. The new boulevard is constructed, providing a connection to cultural, educational and recreational amenities to the south. Bassett Creek is enhanced as an amenity to the residential community. Under such conditions, the Maxfield market analysis concludes that the market for residential development in the area is outstanding. The area would be extremely attractive to potential buyers. Up to 500 units of a broad variety of housing types could be developed and sold. Tax capacity could increase five-fold.

The Harrison Neighborhood community would be the primary beneficiary of this development. It would provide a greater mix of household types in the neighborhood. With occupants of the Near Northside

housing, it would provide support for new neighborhood oriented retail and service establishments along Glenwood Avenue. It would likely strengthen property values throughout the rest of the neighborhood, contributing to some ripple-effect renovation of existing housing stock and improving the viability of infill housing development.

Potential negative impact of future residential redevelopment is most likely to be borne by existing businesses in the area. A number of businesses would have to be relocated over time to new sites. It is hoped that a developer would be able to make attractive offers on the land at such time as redevelopment made sense.

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If eminent domain were necessary to make the redevelopment work, the City would be required to follow approved City acquisition policies. The plan and implementation strategies offer additional mitigation of the impact on businesses in two ways. First, the plan is a long-term plan. Residential redevelopment would not be expected before the construction of the new road, the enhancement of Bassett Creek and expansion of Bryn Mawr Meadows, and occupancy of the Near Northside housing units south of Highway 55. Businesses can thus engage in some long-term business planning to soften the impact. Second, the plan recommends giving priority to relocated businesses in the area east of the new boulevard and currently occupied by the City's Impound Lot.

There is not expected to be a loss of living wage jobs as a result of this plan. The improvement in the area's value would be expected to induce an intensification of commercial development in the area, creating more jobs per acre of existing commercial development. And new areas will be opened up for commercial development over time. Hence jobs in aggregate are expected to increase.

While the benefits of new residential development in the area are expected to be significant, it would be a mistake to expand the land available for new residential development by removing the existing housing in the Bassett Creek Valley area. While there are some instances of deferred maintenance, most of the existing residences are structurally sound. Moreover, much of the disinvestment that has occurred can be attributed to decades of uncertainty regarding residential land use, and industrial expansion onto properties that were formerly occupied by houses. Saving existing housing preserves neighborhood character and history. The housing in the Bassett Creek Valley area were developed early relative to much of the housing in North Minneapolis. Retention of the existing housing stock is one of the few tools available for providing a sense of continuity between a potential new residential development and the existing neighborhood community. Finally, among the existing housing stock are some housing units affordable to low income households--an extremely important consideration in this time of low income housing scarcity.

Relocation of City Impound Lot and Concrete Crushing Facilities

The land use plan proposes that the City's Impound Lot and concrete crushing plant ultimately be moved to a more appropriate

site outside of the study area. While these two City facilities do not conflict with the existing industrial zoning of the property, the Impound Lot and concrete crushing operations would impede the development and character of the area conceived by this plan and the Near Northside Redevelopment Master Plan. These open-air uses, like some of the other industrial uses in the study area, benefited from being somewhat out of public view. With the construction of the new north-south boulevard, not only will these uses be visible from Interstate 394, they will be highly visible from the new boulevard. Remaining open-air facilities would dampen the market value of land in Linden Yards parcels along the interstate, as well as the value of new housing in both the Near Northside and Bassett Creek Valley areas. As a consequence, it would be more difficult to cultivate developer investment in the redevelopment of the area.

In 1999, the City conducted a study examining potential alternatives for these City operations. Building upon this study, the City is currently doing further analysis on the feasibility and cost of relocating some or all of these operations to other sites within the City. Findings to date indicate a significant market potential for the Linden Yards area currently used for outdoor storage of Public Works materials and crushed concrete. Costs of moving these operations would likely be offset by increased City tax revenues.

The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan recognizes that the relocation of the City facilities may not happen quickly, and references the gradual relocation of the City's Impound Lot and Concrete Crushing operations over the mid-term in the Implementations Strategies chapter of this plan (see Chapter 7).

Relocation of the Minneapolis Farmer's Market

The Minneapolis Farmer's Market occupies 2.4 acres of land immediately to the east of the Bassett Creek Valley study area, on the east side of Interstate 94. The Market sits on City-owned property, bounded by 6th Avenue on the north, Border Avenue on the east, Glenwood Avenue on the north and Lakeside Avenue on the east. It was originally built in 1937 and consisted of nine open-air display sheds. The number of sheds has since been reduced to only three, but the market continues to provide a valuable resource for over 300 farmers and Twin Cities residents by offering locally grown produce, flowers and other goods. The market is open daily, drawing its biggest public crowds on the weekends. Much of the parking for the Farmer's Market is currently located under the Interstate 94 overpass.

Because the Farmer's Market is a valuable attraction and community resource that draws little from, and contributes little to, the uses which surround it, the MaP Committee recommends that a location in the Bassett Creek Valley be explored for either its expansion or its relocation. The new location could increase the Market's visibility and accessibility to the metropolitan community to the benefit of the farmer's collective that owns and operates it. The Market would be more accessible to Harrison and Bryn Mawr neighborhood residents, motorists driving through the area, and pedestrians or bicyclists via the City's trail networks. This plan specifically recommends that if the Market were to relocate in the Bassett Creek Valley, it locate within sub-areas G, H, I, or J on a site that is immediately adjacent to the new north-south boulevard. Parking for the market could locate under the raised

portions of the north-south boulevard (similar to the parking scenario that currently occurs under I-94) or be accommodated through shared parking with the commercial/industrial business located in sub-area H, I or J.

If the Farmer's Market were to relocate to the study area, the Committee recommends that businesses impacted by plan implementation be given priority for acquisition of the current Farmer's Market site.

CHAPTER 6 - URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

PURPOSE OF URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The urban design framework defines the overall physical, functional and aesthetic vision for development and redevelopment within the Bassett Creek Valley. It is a collection of policies that guides subjective considerations, such as neighborhood character, design details or architectural style.

Its use will preserve, enhance and recreate those elements that reflect the preferred character of the area. It will ensure that each incremental site design, architectural and streetscape project contributes to a positive image for both the Bassett Creek Valley area and the City as a whole.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE ADOPTED BASSETT CREEK VALLEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

The urban design framework in this master plan is based on Bassett Creek Valley Design Principles and Guidelines that were adopted by the Bassett Creek Valley MaP Committee. The committee-adopted design principles and guidelines are fully enumerated in Chapter 3. The urban design framework represents additional and supplementary design objectives and criteria that adhere to the intent of the committee-adopted Design Principles and Guidelines, adding refinements related to particular physical, functional and aesthetic parameters under which development and redevelopment may occur in the Bassett Creek Valley. Supplementary design objectives that are not general, but apply rather to particular master plan areas or

features, will be discussed along with related area or feature specific development policies later in this chapter.

RELATIONSHIP TO DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The urban design framework is different from defined “development standards.” Development standards are minimum requirements that are adopted and enforced by ordinance, regarding permitted uses, building height, façade treatment, setbacks, parking design and calculation requirements, sign regulations and landscaping specifications. Development standards should be carefully written to be legally defensible, and are implemented through the City’s development regulations (Zoning, Subdivision and other appropriate municipal ordinances). Definitive standards developed in response to reasonable goals and objectives can discourage legal challenges and better withstand them as well.

There are limitations to the results that can be achieved through zoning, however. Zoning regulations achieve a degree of continuity for an area and can prevent development that is truly incongruous and incompatible, but zoning will not guarantee beautiful or pleasant development. The urban design framework and, ultimately, development standards should be defined with illustrative prototypes in order to provide the potential developer with a graphic illustration of the standards and intent of the framework. Development standards are defined at the time a redevelopment plan is prepared or zoning is implemented.

GENERAL DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The general design framework is to be applied to the entire Bassett Creek Valley area as appropriate, based on general land use designations. This framework is then supplemented with feature and area specific design objectives that focuses on the specific needs and issues of these elements as discussed above.

Industrial and Commercial

- Where outdoor storage and display is allowed by the zoning code, all storage areas should be fully screened with both wall and landscaping elements.
- Truck traffic should be discouraged during nighttime hours.
- There should be minimal use of hazardous material. Businesses should seek bio-friendly alternatives and recycle all wastes.
- Impacts on surrounding properties due to noise, odor, debris, vibration or similar phenomena should be minimal.
- Commercial buildings should be designed with traditional storefront orientation to the street.

Residential

- New residential development should provide continuity with the neighborhood's existing residential community. Existing housing stock that is structurally sound should be preserved as much as possible.
- New development should include a mix of housing types that reflects the existing vernacular architecture and character of the existing housing stock.
- Apartment buildings and live-work housing stock should be considered for Cedar Lake Road, Glenwood Avenue, and adjacent to the commercial buildings

along the north-south boulevard. Residential units above commercial space should be encouraged, with secure parking and entrances. Parking areas, private spaces, and service and garage doors should be well screened.

- New housing should accommodate households with a wide range of incomes. Low-income housing should be included as part of any residential development, public or private.
- Since higher numbers of new residents contribute to the livability of the neighborhood by diversifying the neighborhood's stock of low-income housing, and supporting commercial activity on Glenwood Avenue, medium density housing typologies are encouraged.

STREET DESIGN ELEMENTS

Streetscape design both reinforces and influences the identity of an area. The streetscape treatment of public spaces and landscape elements of private properties should complement each other to unify all portions of the Bassett Creek Valley area and lessen the impact of more intense land uses on adjacent land uses.

North-South Boulevard

The north-south boulevard is a gateway corridor into the neighborhood. Although it will carry significant automobile traffic, it must be designed to provide a safe and aesthetically pleasing environment for the pedestrian.

- It should be an ample, green street with accommodations for bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Curb cuts for driveways and parking lot entrances are discouraged.

- The development of the new north-south boulevard is a construction project that extends beyond the boundaries of the Bassett Creek Valley study area. While the boulevard may take on a slightly different character in different areas, its design in the Bassett Creek Valley should be compatible with the overall design that is being developed by others.
- The development of the north-south boulevard should be respectful of existing businesses. Attaining an adequate street width in the fully developed area of the Bassett Creek Valley should, wherever reasonably feasible, work in concert with market driven redevelopment of properties fronting on the boulevard.

North-South Boulevard Bridge

The new bridge must pass over the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks, the Cedar Lake bicycle trail, and possibly a new railroad spur.

- The Master Plan Committee recommends a westerly alignment for the bridge. The bridge structure should be minimized in terms of length and expense, while maximizing the potential for industrial redevelopment on its east side.
- Bridge design should provide for pedestrian and bicycle crossing.
- Construction should minimize tree removal to maintain the existing wooded screen to/from Bryn Mawr Meadows.
- Aesthetic treatment of the bridge should fit in with the Park amenities and include ornate railings and lights with decorative concrete fenestration.
- Interpretive signage or artwork should be considered to inform visitors of the Bassett Creek Valley environment.

Glenwood Avenue

Glenwood Avenue provides a gateway into the neighborhood from downtown Minneapolis (the east), and Golden Valley (the west), as well as serving as a gateway to the downtown.

- All streetscape elements should conform to the existing Glenwood Avenue Streetscape Plan. As appropriate, corridor treatment should include sidewalks on both sides of the street, bicycle path/trailway connections, information kiosks, transit plazas, street trees and planters, pedestrian and roadway scale street lighting and banners, trash receptacles, benches, decorative bicycle racks, and other appropriate street furniture.
- Street trees and lights should be placed between the curb and the travel zone of the walkway to create a sense of separation for pedestrians from the street.
- The street should have a more narrow feel (two-lane rather than four, and physically narrowed if possible) to provide a better pedestrian experience. On-street parallel parking should be supplied. This contributes to the well-being of Glenwood Avenue commercial establishments, while providing a buffer between pedestrians and automotive traffic.
- Higher landscape and façade standards should be employed for light industrial uses fronting on Glenwood Avenue to mitigate potential conflicting impacts of light-industrial activity

Other Non-Residential or Mixed-Use Streets

The master plan of the Bassett Creek Valley shows other nonresidential streets south of

Glenwood and east of the north-south boulevard.

- Parallel parking should be permitted on at least one side of streets for short-term parking. On-Street parking provides a buffer between pedestrians and automotive traffic.
- Corridor treatment should include sidewalks on both sides of the street, street trees and planters, pedestrian and roadway scale street lighting and banners, trash receptacles, benches, decorative bicycle racks, and other appropriate street furniture.

Residential Streets

In addition to Cedar Lake Road, the master plan calls for all streets between Cedar Lake Road and the north-south boulevard to be residential streets

- Cedar Lake Road should be designed to residential collector street standards.
- All other local residential streets should be tree-lined and as narrow as public safety considerations will allow, with at least one side of on-street parking available to residents and their guests.

DESIGN OF WATER FEATURES

One of the committee-adopted design principles is the enhancement of the natural character of Bassett Creek. The principles promote the restoration of natural features, preservation of visual perspectives, expansion of open space, remediation of pollution, and the augmentation of positive attributes of natural features within a landscaped concept that joins areas and people.

- In the area south of 2nd Avenue, the Creek should be restored to a more

natural channel, and wetland areas added that function to filter and clean stormwater runoff from surrounding neighborhoods.

- In the area north of 2nd Avenue, the plan should include a wide area of open space and water features that provide a greenway link between the existing creek and proposed water features to the north.
- The water features should function to filter and clean stormwater, and may flow either to the south or north.
- The concept restores the structure and location of the waterway in the last century. Maps and descriptions suggest that the creek in this area filtered through a series of wetland areas that formed a relatively broad, flat corridor.
- The broad corridor endorsed by the MaP Committee will substantially expand open space in the Valley.
- The waterway will include constructed wetlands that are designed to filter and clean stormwater, and thereby remediate pollution from stormwater runoff from adjacent neighborhoods.
- The restoration of the waterway through the lowest area of the Valley will create attractive visual perspectives as the area is approached along Glenwood from the higher areas to the east and west, and from the new north-south boulevard.
- The water features to be restored in the valley will include significant areas where water is visible to those walking, biking, or riding along the greenway and through the Valley.

AREA AND FEATURE SPECIFIC POLICIES AND DESIGN FRAMEWORK

This area- and feature-specific framework applies to specific redevelopment areas

within the Bassett Creek Valley study area, as described below.

AREAS A, B, C AND E: Strengthened Commercial Character of Glenwood Avenue

Glenwood Avenue should be promoted as a mixed-use community corridor that connects residents, employees and visitors of the Bassett Creek Valley area to downtown Minneapolis. Existing and new commercial development will benefit from an expanded market base for neighborhood goods and services that will be provided through the proposed new residential development within the Harrison and Near North neighborhoods.

- All general design framework objectives for commercial, industrial, residential and mixed use buildings, sites, and landscaping shall apply.

AREA B: New Commercial Node

The intersection of Glenwood Avenue and the proposed north-south boulevard is proposed to become a neighborhood-oriented commercial node to provide convenient retail shopping that is compatible with, and attracts as its main customer base, adjacent residents.

- All general design framework objectives for commercial buildings, sites, and landscaping shall apply.

AREA D: Creation of Residential Opportunities

Residential redevelopment in area D should have the following characteristics:

- New housing should be a mix of housing types, including single-family, apartment

buildings, condominiums, townhouses, and artist lofts.

- Density of new housing should be sufficient to generate capital that can contribute to site preparation costs, but buildings should generally not exceed three stories in height, depending upon grade differentials and preservation of sight lines.
- Housing should be constructed so as to be respectful of and continuous with the neighborhood's existing housing. The following contribute to a strong relationship between new and existing housing:
 - ♦ Existing housing in Area D should be preserved where it is practically and economically feasible.
 - ♦ New housing in Area D should exhibit urban streetscape features and architectural characteristics common to houses in the surrounding neighborhood.
 - ♦ Consideration should be given to moving the 2nd Avenue street connection at Cedar Lake Road southward so that it is directly opposite the 2nd Avenue street connection on the other side of Cedar Lake Road.
- Sight lines to the downtown should be preserved.
- Access to Bassett Creek should be preserved for public use. There should be a clear division between private development and public space. A street along the northern side of Bassett Creek should be considered, with all new residential development north of this street.
- New housing should accommodate households with a wide range of incomes. Low-income housing should

be included as part of any residential development, public or private.

AREA F: Continuation of Commercial/Industrial Uses

This area currently contains commercial and light industrial uses, and is proposed to remain as such in this plan.

- All general design framework objectives for commercial buildings, sites, and landscaping shall apply.

AREA G: Bryn Mawr Meadows Park Expansion (Redevelopment of the Impound Lot West of North-South Boulevard)

This plan recommends that Area G be made available to the Park Board for the expansion of Bryn Mawr Meadows Park. The new park land should exhibit the following characteristics

- The new park land should incorporate Bassett Creek and land along the north bank of the creek.
- Bicycle and pedestrian trails should be constructed along Bassett Creek. Should the BNSF approve of a limited at-grade crossing of the rail line for park driveway purposes, bicycle and pedestrian access should be integrated into that crossing.
- Consideration should be given to retaining or reestablishing natural areas including wetlands and woodlands.

In addition to the above design framework, both Area G and the existing Bryn Mawr Meadows park should exhibit the following characteristics as part of any future park programming and development:

- The Park Board should provide adequate parking for the users of both the new

recreational land and for the existing playing fields in Bryn Mawr Park. Access to these parking areas should be from the north-south boulevard. Park traffic should not be routed through the Bryn Mawr neighborhood or residential streets in the Harrison Neighborhood.

- High-intensity lighting and excessive glare should be prohibited in park areas adjacent to residential land uses. There should be no new high light clusters, which impact sight lines and aesthetics.
- There should be no net loss of open space within the current Bryn Mawr Meadows area. This includes multi-use playing fields that are free of fences, such as those used to enclose softball fields, so that there are no barriers to activities such as kite-flying, frisbee tossing, dog-running, etc.
- The visual openness, aesthetics and sight lines within the current Bryn Mawr Meadows Park should not be disturbed if existing playing fields are upgraded or created. Visual openness, aesthetics and sight lines should be maximized within the new park area, as well.

AREA H: Commercial/Industrial Use With Priority For Existing Businesses (Redevelopment of the Impound Lot East of North-South Boulevard)

This plan recommends that Area H be utilized for commercial and industrial development. Development in this area should exhibit the following characteristics.

- Consideration be given to the construction of a new road which allows commercial vehicles to exit the north-south boulevard just north of the bridge over the BNSF rail line. This road should have one or more outlets to the north, such as with Colfax Avenue.

- Buildings should in general not be more than three stories in height to preserve sight lines.
- Priority for land dispensation should be given to businesses relocated by implementation of this plan.
- Priority should be given to businesses providing living wage jobs, businesses employing Minneapolis residents, and businesses that provide good job density.
- All general design framework objectives for commercial and industrial buildings, sites, and landscaping shall apply.

AREA I: Commercial Use/Community Attraction

This plan recommends that Area I be made available for one or both of two types of uses: commercial space that will generate revenues to assist in the redevelopment of the Bassett Creek Valley area and/or community attractions that add to the vitality of the area. Development in the area should respect the following guidelines:

- Buildings must be compatible with design elements (massing, materials, etc.) of housing in Bryn Mawr neighborhood, and the housing to be developed to the north of Bassett Creek in Area D, so that similar building types will face each other, to the north and the south of Bryn Mawr Meadows.
- Consideration should be given to utilizing space under the freeway for parking to maximize the preservation of open landscape around commercial buildings.
- Building heights should be limited so that views of downtown and/or greenspace are not blocked. However, building height should be allowed to exceed the height of the adjacent freeway by a modest amount.

- Buildings should be designed in such a way as to mitigate the impact of reflected freeway noise.
- The Cedar Lake Commuter Bike Trail should be accommodated through this sub-area.
- All general design framework objectives for commercial buildings, sites, and landscaping shall apply.

AREA J: Commercial/Industrial Use

This plan recommends that Area J be made available for commercial/industrial development that exhibit the following characteristics:

- Consideration should be given to utilizing space under the freeway for parking to maximize the preservation of open landscape around commercial buildings.
- Building heights should be limited so that views of downtown are not blocked. However, building height should be allowed to exceed the height of the adjacent freeway by a modest amount.
- The Cedar Lake Commuter Bike Trail should be accommodated through this sub-area.
- All general design framework objectives for commercial buildings, sites, and landscaping shall apply.

GENERAL SITE PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The entire Bassett Creek Valley shall be pedestrian- and transit-friendly and developed to a safe and inviting human scale. Developments should contain unifying site elements, including roadway and walkway connections, landscape treatments and streetscape features.

On-site Landscape

- Street trees should reflect the City species diversity plan
- Outdoor storage areas should be screened and buffered with decorative walls and shade trees with shrubs.
- Loading areas should be screened with decorative walls and evergreen trees.
- Existing and new businesses should be encouraged to use entry and sidewalk pots with seasonal flowers.
- Existing business should be encouraged to re-landscape to reflect the preferred landscaping framework.

Pedestrian-Friendly Site Development

- pedestrian linkages should be provided to and between surrounding land uses.
- Usable outdoor spaces should be made available adjacent to creek open spaces

Parking Lot Design

- Surface parking lots should not be allowed in front of buildings. These lots should be allowed only at the side or rear of buildings. When located at the side, parking lots must be buffered at the property line.
- All parking lot edges shall be buffered with a combination of trees, shrubs and perennial plantings, decorative railings or decorative low brick walls. The height of all buffering materials should buffer the view to the hood level of a car. Buffering details of railings or walls should reflect those used on the detailing of buildings.
- For large commercial parking lots, designated pedestrian areas (e.g. striped pathway) and interior landscape treatment (e.g. landscape islands) should be provided.

Lighting

- Exterior wall lighting should be encouraged to enhance the building design and adjoining landscaping.
- Lighting styles and building fixtures should be of a design and size compatible with the building and adjacent areas.
- Excessive brightness should be avoided.
- The use of ornamental fixtures that complement lighting elements of the streetscape and pedestrian ways is encouraged.
- Light standards should be at a height complimentary to pedestrian activity, typically ranging from 12 to 18 ft.

Open Space and Natural Environment

- All sites should be developed in a manner that is respectful of the natural environment, preserving environmentally sensitive site elements through the use of on-site open space.
- All developments should provide access to adjacent open space and, when adjacent to the creek/greenway, links to the trail.
- The broad complex of open space and water features provides a highly visible greenway that can join areas and people, the existing creek and park, and the proposed water and park features.
- On-site sculptures, plazas, seating areas and other such open spaces are encouraged.
- All site design should accommodate best stormwater management practices. Property owners are encouraged to use wetlands developed in the area to satisfy their requirements for stormwater retention and cleaning.

GENERAL BUILDING DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The architectural character throughout the entire Bassett Creek Valley should reflect a high quality image and reflect a coordinated design scheme of building materials and colors, massing, roof heights, and facade articulation. Architecture should be oriented to a human scale and stimulate building use at the pedestrian/street level. The following framework for building design characteristics is to be applied to all building types, except as noted; the framework is not applicable to single family structures.

Building Scale and Mass

- All new development should be of a human-scale, generally limited to a height of no more than three-four stories, depending on topography.
- From the view of the public right-of-way, building scale should be compatible with adjacent buildings.
- Adjacent buildings should be within one-story height of each other to avoid severe height changes.
- New buildings should be located close to sidewalks to strengthen the street corridor.

Building Facade

- Long, blank walls of buildings should be avoided. Undulated building facades with windows and articulated building entrances should be used at street frontages to enhance the pedestrian experience along building edges.
- Flat roofs should be avoided for non-residential development. Gabled, stepped and peaked roofs should be incorporated into new development.

- Industrial buildings should use clerestory windows and roof skylights to maximize natural light.
- All sides of a building should use the same high-quality façade treatment.
- Massing and orientation of development should respect view corridors of the creek/greenway.
- Massing and orientation of development should respect view corridors of the downtown skyline.
- The front of a building and its main entrance should be oriented to the street.
- True or decorative windows should be included on front building facades.

Building Setback

- All neighborhood-oriented commercial and service uses should be situated close to the front lot line so as to reinforce the street wall, maximize natural surveillance, and facilitate pedestrian access and circulation.
- Commercial and industrial buildings should similarly have a close relationship to the street while allowing space for appropriate landscaping treatment and other buffer elements.

Building Materials

- Exterior wall treatments such as brick, natural stone, decorative concrete block and architectural metal panels shall be encouraged.
- Window frame, material and color should complement architectural style. Windows and doors should be glazed in clear glass. Mirrored windows and glass block should not be allowed.

GENERAL SIGNAGE PRINCIPLES

Signs are an important architectural element for any business. However, since signs influence the overall character and appearance of the streetscape, they should be designed to complement the architecture. Appropriate sign types include the following:

Overhanging Signs: Overhanging signs, when appropriately designed, can add significant charm and character to a building façade and streetscape. They should be encouraged subject to size and projection distance restrictions. Overhanging Signs are appropriate for buildings containing neighborhood oriented commercial or service uses.

Attached Wall Signs, Single Tenant: Single-tenant buildings should allow one identification sign on one façade (or a maximum of two facades if a corner building). Signage should occur within a designated sign area and subject to size and lighting requirements. Attached wall signs are appropriate for all single-tenant non-residential buildings.

Attached Wall Signs, Multi-Tenant: Multiple-tenant building signage should allow each tenant to one identification sign within a designated sign area. Signage should maintain regularity in size, location, color and lighting, but may reflect individuality in terms of lettering styles. Attached Wall Signs are appropriate for multiple tenant buildings that contain neighborhood oriented commercial or service uses. They may also be appropriate

for a multi-level building that include office uses subject to appropriate integration into a building's façade.

Awning Signs: Awning signage complements the building façade and can be easily removed as tastes evolve or new businesses move in. Awnings should always be constructed of high-quality opaque material, with the same awning material and color should be used for separate awnings on the same building, and no illumination. Awning signs are appropriate for neighborhood-oriented commercial or service uses, business-office/commercial uses, or light industrial uses, but should always be integrated into the building faced and street character.

Freestanding Signs, Light Industrial Building or Multi-Tenant Business-Office/Commercial Building: Monument signs and directional signs at driveways and within parking areas are appropriate for light industrial buildings or multi-tenant business-office/commercial buildings subject to maximum size and height requirements and setbacks from property lines.

Sign types that are inappropriate throughout the Bassett Creek Area are pylon signs, and roof signs. These types of signs detract from the appearance of the area, and are not typically needed where buildings are placed close to the street. Franchise logos and identification signs should be allowed only if they are scaled down in size and are integrated into the building façade and street character. Building canopies designed as signs should be prohibited.

CHAPTER 7 - RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan is a long-range plan for the redevelopment and enhancement of the Bassett Creek Valley Area. It outlines a future direction for land use that builds on the development of a new community in the Near Northside project area, proximity to downtown, its linkage to the City's network of parks and trails, and the presence of Bassett Creek itself. The Plan is a declaration of intent. It is advisory and does not itself constitute a regulation. When the Master Plan is formally adopted by the City Council, all of the goals, objectives and principles in the Plan will become guidelines that direct City policy toward development and redevelopment in the area.

The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan is expected to be implemented over a ten to twenty year period. The plan identifies both public and private improvement projects, and is designed as a guide not only for enhancing community aesthetics and physical character, but also for decisions about future public and private investments. The timing of plan implementation will be dependent on the actions of private property owners, investors and developers, and on the availability of public and other funding sources.

Approval of the master plan is a first step toward fostering growth of the area in the proposed direction. While it does not guarantee that all elements of the plan will prove to be do-able, it ratifies the intent of the plan and signals an optimism that, barring adverse surprises, the goals outlined in the plan will be attained.

REDEVELOPMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

This Master Plan document will serve as a road map for future development in the BCV area, but it is not the only outcome of the planning process. The process also brought together a committee of individuals with a high interest in the future well-being of the community. It educated them regarding the nuances of current ownership, use and condition of the land, and the relationship of the area to the surrounding community and the City as a whole. Participation in the planning process strengthened the resolve of committee members to see the plan through to fruition. Committee members are committed to promoting plan implementation within the groups they represent, and partnering with others in the acquisition of necessary funding. The committee process represents organizational development that should be seen as an extremely valuable resource--one to be appropriately utilized during plan implementation.

For this reason it is recommended that the City Council establish a community-based Redevelopment Oversight Committee (ROC) to succeed the current Master Planning Committee. Members to the ROC would be appointed from the same community based groups that are represented on the oversight committee.

The roles of the ROC would include 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.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Land Use Controls

The City of Minneapolis uses land use controls in its review of development proposals, and approval of formal applications for rezoning, conditional use permit, site plan review, variance, etc. The documents which will provide this regulatory framework for BCV area development proposals are the City's comprehensive plan, the BCV Master Plan, the Zoning Code, and the zoning district designation assigned to each individual parcel. This combination of documents and zoning designations is extremely important

in ensuring that future development of the area proceeds in the desired manner.

All of the documents described above will be in place with the approval of this plan. However, the approval of the master plan defines a future for the area that is not entirely consistent with the designation of features in the soon-to-be-approved Minneapolis Plan, nor is it universally consistent with the current zoning of properties.

Amendments to the Minneapolis Plan

The Minneapolis Plan, which will soon be adopted as the comprehensive plan of the City of Minneapolis, describes the policy orientation of the City with respect to land use development. **The following amendments to the Minneapolis Plan are judged to be necessary** to support the future of the Bassett Creek Valley area as outlined in this plan.

- Designation of the area north of Bassett Creek and west of the future north-south boulevard a “Major Housing Site”.
- Designation of the intersection between Glenwood Avenue and the future north-south boulevard a “Neighborhood Commercial Node”
- Designation of the future north-south boulevard a “Greenway”.
- The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan should be added to the Minneapolis Plan’s list of plan documents that have received City Council approval.

The above changes to the Minneapolis Plan are dependent on market forces, and in some cases the cost of remediation of environmental contamination and acquisition of property. Some actions recommended in the master plan may prove to be cost-prohibitive. Further exploration

of these important feasibility questions is recommended before taking action to modify the Minneapolis Plan.

Rezoning

Implementation of the BCV Master Plan will require rezoning of some area properties. Rezoning of some Bassett Creek Valley area properties will be necessary at some point in time to bring the zoning of the area into conformance with the intentions of the master plan. Rezoning of properties can be undertaken by the City if property totaling at least 40 acres is evaluated. Alternatively a developer may apply to have a property rezoned if it is under his or her control.

Rezoning of property does not imply an immediate change. Existing uses are “grandfathered.” That is, the owner may continue the current use as a “legally nonconforming use” for an indefinite period. However, if the non-conforming use is discontinued for a period of one year, or two-thirds of the assessed value of the property is destroyed (for instance by a fire), then a new use must conform to the new zoning classification. Any expansion of a nonconforming use or structure would require the approval of the City Planning Commission.

As with modifications to The Minneapolis Plan, it may be advisable to improve understanding of the feasibility of the implementation of certain plan elements before proceeding with the rezoning of property.

Feasibility Testing

As noted in the preceding sections, **additional feasibility assessment is critical for plan implementation to proceed.**

Information that has been developed to this point suggests that the desired future of the area, as outlined in this plan, is likely to be attainable. However, when dealing with issues of unknown contamination and the relocation of a number of businesses at unknown expense, it is prudent to maintain a sense of caution. Significant private investment in the area is anticipated over the next decade or two, but additional feasibility testing is an essential component in building investor confidence in the anticipated future. Additional assessment would be important in the following information categories.

- Phase II environmental assessments on properties known or suspected to be badly contaminated.
- Geotechnical analysis to determine the “edge” of soils suitable for different foundation types.
- An estimate of the cost of relocating affected businesses.

Some of this work is already underway, and more is in the pipeline. Other information could be developed as part of a redevelopment plan for the area.

Redevelopment/TIF Plan

The completion of a redevelopment plan will be necessary for plan implementation. This plan is drafted by MCDA staff, and authorizes the expenditures of City funds to further the goals of the plan. The creation of a Tax Increment Finance plan allows the tax increment generated from a development within the boundaries of the tax increment district to pay certain acquisition, site preparation, and development costs of area projects.

Public-Private Partnership

Public-Private partnerships are common in development areas where cleanup of contamination is expected to be required. Responsibilities for property acquisition and site preparation may be shared between the public sector and developer. The public sector normally plays a lead role in applications to various funding sources for cleanup funds.

Coalition building with Funding Organizations/Other partners

Cooperation between the City, the community, and other governmental and non-governmental entities has already been extremely important in the Bassett Creek Valley area. It will become increasingly important in plan implementation.

The staff at Hennepin Community Works have already been highly valued partners, and are expected to play an even more critical role in plan implementation. Through Hennepin Community Works staff, the US EPA has already invested \$250,000 in the exploration of contamination and remediation methodology under the banner of the Interim Use Study. Applications to the EPA for the funding of other project elements have been submitted. The US EPA has also directed the attention of Argonne National Laboratory and the Army Corp of Engineers to the project area.

The Trust for Public Land has made known its interest in facilitating property transfers.

Marketing/Business Attraction/Retention

Marketing of the area may be an important element of promoting the implementation of the vision of the area. Marketing can attract and retain businesses and uses that will

establish the area's unique character. It may focus on the types of businesses thought most likely to thrive under the area's emerging market conditions, such as the creative arts and industries, including media, design and arts with fabrication. Residential development of live/work spaces would be consistent with this theme.

IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT AREAS

North-South Boulevard Implementation

This master plan proposes the general path of the new north-south boulevard through the Bassett Creek Valley area, as well as some of its general design characteristics. But responsibility for overseeing feasibility testing and roadway design reside with City staff implementing the Near Northside project.

Improvements to Water Features

The development of a waterway through the BCV area may proceed on its own schedule or in tandem with other features in the Master Plan such as the park and north-south boulevard. The City of Minneapolis, the Park Board, or a private developer may play the leading role with respect to various aspects of these improvements. Implementation activity are suggested here under four headings, but they need not occur in this sequence. These implementation modules may happen in any order, based on funding, the acquisition of key properties, and the timing of the other features of the Master Plan.

Cedar Lake Road Area

- May occur with development of water features in the Near Northside project

area. City acquires the area near Cedar Lake Road needed for the water features.

- City works with the Park Board in creating water features, including the pool that allows water to flow to the Near Northside water features, and associated wetlands for storm water treatment.

Area between Cedar Lake road and the new boulevard

- Most likely occurs with development of the parkland south of the CP spur.
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board acquires the land in this area, and naturalizes the creek from Cedar Lake Road to the north-south boulevard.

Area between the new boulevard and 2nd Avenue

- May occur with development of the north-south boulevard. This component requires the acquisition of property owned by Timberland Lumber Company and Scrap Metal Processors as a part of developing the north-south boulevard.
- Wetland basins are created on these properties to the east and/or west of the boulevard, south of 2nd Avenue.

Area North of Second Avenue

- May occur with development of water features in the Near Northside project area, or with redevelopment of Glenwood Avenue.
- City works with Minnesota Bearing to reconfigure property to allow the development of greenway and water features.

Glenwood Avenue Redevelopment (Areas A, B, C)

The master plan anticipates the development of a neighborhood commercial node at the intersection of Glenwood with the new boulevard. It expects other redevelopment to occur, both commercial and residential, along Glenwood Avenue from Lyndale to Cedar Lake Road. But because a strengthened market for goods and services is dependent upon the proposed intensification of residential development in both the Near Northside Project area and the BCV area, as well as an improved linkage with Loring Park residents and other downtown consumers, redevelopment along Glenwood is expected to proceed slowly for the next few years. When the requisite conditions are in place, market based redevelopment is expected as described.

Redevelopment of Area West of New Boulevard (Area D)

Redevelopment of industrial property to residential use west of the new boulevard is not expected to occur until certain public improvements are in place. In particular, the construction of the north-south boulevard, the expansion of the Bryn Mawr Meadows park, and the improvement of the existing portion of Bassett Creek in the project area create the setting in which residential housing units are marketable. In addition, the construction and occupancy of Near Northside housing north of Glenwood Avenue contributes to the changed market perception of this part of Minneapolis. Under these circumstances, the assumptions underlying the Maxfield market analysis are realized, and the market potential of a housing development in this part of the valley is considered to be outstanding.

When the prerequisite developments have taken place, it is expected that a request for development proposals from developers would generate interest. Developers in turn would expect public sector assistance in applying for contamination cleanup funds, and with property acquisition if necessary. The BCV Master Plan identifies the area east of the new boulevard currently occupied by the City Impound Lot (Area H) as a possible site for relocated businesses, and recommends that large-scale redevelopment of currently industrial property waits until such land is available.

Redevelopment of existing commercial area east of new boulevard (Area F)

Some commercial redevelopment is expected in the existing commercial areas based on market changes. No active public sector involvement is expected.

Expansion of Bryn Mawr Meadows Park (Area G)

The expansion of Bryn Mawr Meadows Park to the north is dependent on the Park Board's purchase of the land from the City of Minneapolis. It is thus also dependent on the identification of an alternative location(s) for the Impound Lot, and the actual relocation of the operation to the identified site(s). Contamination of the land is an important factor in alternative development of the land. Evaluation of its actual contamination, and identification of acceptable remediation strategies, are underway.

New commercial development on other City-owned properties (Areas H, I, and J)

Redevelopment of these areas is dependent on construction of the new boulevard, and the identification of new homes for the City

operations currently situated on these properties. While exploration of alternative locations and operational methods for these important operations is ongoing, a stepped up effort may be required to facilitate transferring these operations to other locations in concert with the development of the new boulevard.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASING

The following general phasing of events is possible, based upon the considerations discussed above. Further findings related to feasibility of plan implementation, the availability of funding for various elements, and the timing of the City's efforts to relocate its BCV operations elsewhere, will have profound effects on implementation of changes.

Near Term Changes (1-5 years)

1. North-south boulevard built between Near Northside and Dunwoody Blvd. Affected businesses relocated on identified properties
2. Implementation of some water features related to providing water to the Near Northside development
3. Establishment of a BCV Redevelopment Oversight Committee
4. Continued feasibility work in area of future residential redevelopment
5. Some long-term remediation strategies established

Medium Term Changes (3 – 10 years)

1. Occupancy in Near Northside development near Glenwood Avenue
2. Relocation of City Impound Lot and Concrete Crushing
3. Expansion of Bryn Mawr Meadows Park

4. Enhancements to Bassett Creek. Construction of other water features.
5. Commercial development of Linden Yards and concrete crushing sites.

Long Term Changes (5 – 20 years)

1. Residential redevelopment west of new boulevard. Necessary relocation of industrial uses.
2. Commercial Development on Glenwood Avenue
3. Other commercial redevelopment

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

There are many potential funding sources for implementation of the master plan. Most likely to play major roles are Tax Increment Finance, Empowerment Zone funds and benefits, and US EPA testing and cleanup funds. However, as noted above, multiple other potential partners have already expressed an interest in playing a role in plan implementation, and others will undoubtedly appear on the landscape. The area also appears to be a strong candidate for other funding sources such as the Livable Communities grants of the Metropolitan Council.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax increment financing (TIF) uses increases in property values and taxes attributed to redevelopment to pay for public redevelopment costs. Tax increment financing may be used to provide public funds for the redevelopment or rehabilitation of blighted or deteriorated areas of the city, the construction of low and moderate income housing, and for the promotion of economic development and employment opportunities in the city. A tax increment financing district is created by City Council

adoption of a plan for redevelopment and tax increment financing. The potential for generation of tax increment seems high both in the Linden Yards/Crushing Facility area, and in the area proposed for residential redevelopment.

Empowerment Zone

In January 1999, the City of Minneapolis was designated as an “Urban Empowerment Zone” by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Minneapolis Empowerment Zone is a comprehensive economic development strategy for the City’s most distressed areas, including parts of the Bassett Creek Valley Study Area and the Near Northside. Top priorities of the economic strategy are job creation, crime reduction, educational enhancements, housing opportunities and coordinated community service.

The area’s Empowerment Zone designation may mean that funds are made available for implementation of certain plan elements. It also confers upon businesses certain important tax incentives that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Tax Exempt Municipal Bonding for mixed uses and for industrial uses
- Increased Section 179 Deduction, allowing businesses to deduct all or part of the cost of certain qualifying property in the year it is placed in service, instead of recovering the cost over years through depreciation.
- Environmental Cleanup Cost Deduction (Brownfield Sites)
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit, rewarding businesses that hire individuals from empowerment zone areas and other hard-to-employ groups.

- Welfare to Work Tax Credit, providing an incentive to businesses to hire welfare recipients.

Hennepin Community Works/Federal Agencies

Hennepin County has set aside \$7 million in its 2003-2004 Capital Improvement Plan to assist with construction of the bridge for the north-south connector.

The US EPA has designated the Bassett Creek Valley area a brownfields pilot area. This has brought considerable benefits to the county, and the county in turn has shown a great degree of interest in the potential for positive change in the Bassett Creek Valley area. To date, the Bassett Creek Valley has been the object of EPA funding through the Hennepin County Interim Use Study, and a pending application for supplemental assessment funding for public and private properties in the area.

While Hennepin County's primary role remains funding assistance for the north-south boulevard bridge, the County continues to build upon its existing EPA assessment grant and will continue to work with regional and national partners to assist with the identification of funding for cleanup and implementation. The Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund is a financial resource available for non-responsible parties: public, private, and non-profit, for the cleanup of contaminated lands. The City Tree Project, with support from the City of Minneapolis, submitted a LCMR grant for implementation of a phytocontainment strategy along Bassett Creek to address leachate seeps impacting the creek from the former Irving Avenue dumpsite (state superfund site).

EPA staff has also focused the attention of other federal entities on the area, using Hennepin County staff as their primary point of contact. Argonne National Laboratories partnered with Hennepin County on the application for a Sustainable Development Challenge Grant, and has expressed an interest in working with area stakeholders on new innovative projects. A work plan is being developed for the utilization of over \$100,000 in technical assistance from the Army Corp of Engineers. City and County staff continue to work with the ACE to refine the work plan and explore opportunities for funding of additional implementation/restoration planning.

Potential partners in implementation

The following entities are potential partners in transforming the Bassett Creek Valley area.

- Hennepin Community Works
- The US Environmental Protection Agency
- Argonne National Laboratory

- Army Corp of Engineers
- Trust for Public Lands
- Northwest Area Foundation
- Minnesota Environmental Initiative

Other potential Funding Sources

The following are also seen as promising sources of funding for plan implementation:

- US DOT/FHWA/TEA-21 funds
- US Soccer Foundation
- Metropolitan Livable Communities Grants
- Department of Trade and Economic Development cleanup funds
- Hennepin County Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Funds
- BWSR or MAC wetland mitigation funds
- Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR) funds
- DNR (RIM, Metro Greenways, etc) funds
- Other Foundation funds