

Chapter 9

Critical Area Plan - MNRRA

9.0 Introduction

This plan is an amended version of the City of Fridley's original *Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Plan* that was approved by the Environmental Quality Board September 18, 1980. The amendments to the original Critical Area Plan include references to changes in legislation and inclusion of Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) goals and policies.

9.1 Critical Areas Act

In 1973, the Minnesota Legislature passed the Critical Areas Act establishing a Critical Areas Program. This program was intended for the wise use and proper management of land areas having more than just a local interest. It required local, regional and State governments, Regional Development Commissions, and State agencies to coordinate efforts through the State Environmental Quality Board to determine the most appropriate use of "critical" lands.

In November of 1976, Executive Order No. 130 was published in the State Register. This order designated the Mississippi River Corridor through the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area as one of the State's critical areas (see **Figure 9.1**). This action provided municipalities along the corridor with a process to properly plan and manage their adjacent segment of the Mississippi River. The designation was extended in 1979 through Executive Order 79-19, and made permanent by the Metropolitan Council in 1979. Executive Order 79-19 stated the following purposes for designating this part of the river as a critical area:

- To protect and preserve a unique and valuable state and regional resource for the benefit of the health, safety and welfare of the citizens for the state, region and nation;
- To prevent and mitigate irreversible damage to this state, regional and national resource;
- To preserve and enhance its natural, aesthetic, cultural, and historical value for the public use;
- To protect and preserve the river as an essential element in the national, state and regional transportation, sewer and water and recreational systems; and
- To protect and preserve the biological and ecological functions of the corridor.

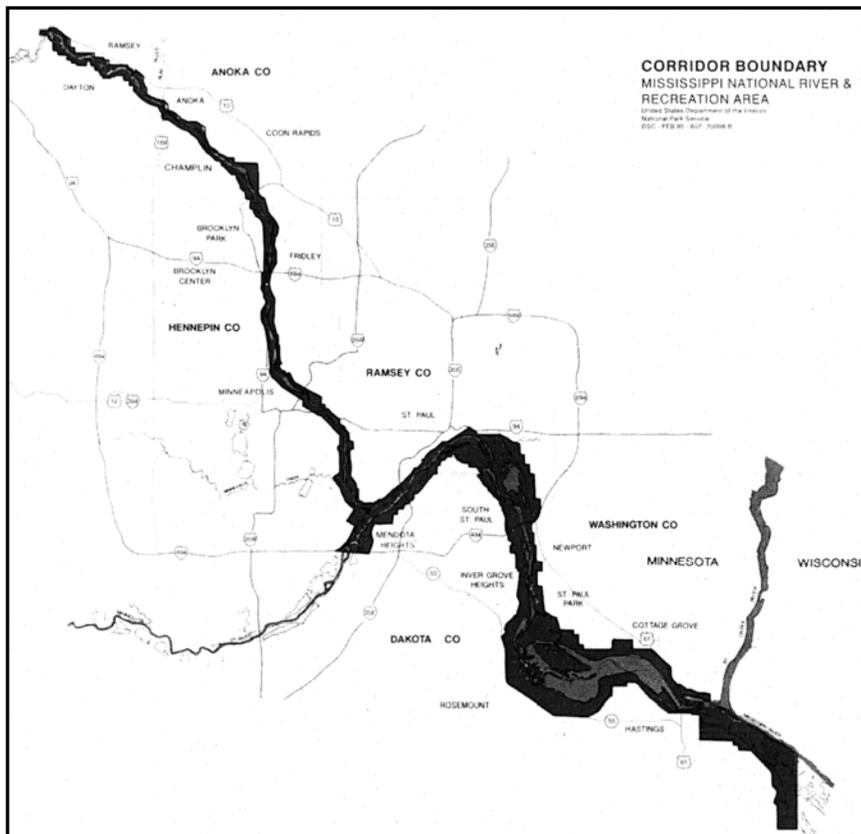
All Critical Area Plans and Ordinances and their amendments must be reviewed and approved by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) prior to enactment, following review by the Metropolitan Council. Once Critical Area Plans and Ordinances are approved by the DNR, municipalities have the authority to approve site plans and development projects that meet the intent of the plan and fall within the regulations in the ordinance.

9.2 Mississippi National River and Recreation Area Program

On November 18, 1988, Public Law 100-696 established the Mississippi National River Recreation Area (MNRRA) as a unit of the national park system. Congress established MNRRA to serve the following purposes:

- To protect, preserve and enhance the significant values of the Mississippi River corridor through the Twin Cities metropolitan area.
- To encourage coordination of federal, state, and local programs.
- To provide a management framework to assist the state and local units of government in the development and implementation of integrated resource management programs and to ensure orderly public and private development in the area.

Figure 9.1 Mississippi National River Recreation Area



Source: Comprehensive Management Plan

A partnership between local, regional and state agencies was developed to implement the goals and policies established through MNRRA. The purpose of the partnership is to assist local units of government in providing adequate controls to ensure orderly and environmentally friendly development and preservation of lands within the Critical Area Corridor. Through this partnership and with the Mississippi River Coordinating Commission (made up of a broad base of representation including citizens, elected officials, government agencies, interest groups and business), a Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) was developed as a guide for local and regional governments to use in developing local plans. The CMP defines two tiers of involvement. Achieving Tier I status means that the plan meets the requirements of the state legislation to protect critical areas. Tier II goes beyond what is required by state statutes and begins to address issues relating to image, heritage, education, recreation, orderly economic development and other subject areas as described in MNRRA legislation. Although Tier II is a voluntary stage in the plan, it is required in order to be eligible for federal funds to assist in implementation of Tier II strategies.

The City of Fridley has drafted this plan in accordance with the Critical Areas Act and the MNRRA Comprehensive Management Plan.

9.3 The Mississippi River: A Part of Fridley's Future

Early in the process of the Comprehensive Plan update, public input was gathered through public meetings and surveys. One of the desired changes was to have more connections to the Mississippi River. The Mississippi River was identified as a key asset of the Community during the 2007 Neighborhood Planning meetings. The following statement was derived from the 2020 comprehensive planning process and continues to be representative of public comment in the 2007 update process:

Reference the Mississippi River

“The Mississippi River is a hidden resource that has played a key role in the historical development of the community. Where appropriate, future redevelopment and improvement projects should reference the community's river heritage by providing both direct and indirect linkages.”

9.4 An Inventory of the Corridor

Existing Land Use

The portion of the Mississippi River Critical Area located in Fridley is defined as the area to the west of East River Road (County Road 1). From the northern city limits to I-694, the land is classified as an Urban Developed District. From I-694 to the southern city limits, the land is classified as an Urban Diversified District (see **Figure 9.2**).

In the Urban Developed District, the lands are maintained as residential areas. The expansion and development of existing and new industrial, commercial and other non-residential or non-recreational uses are limited in order to preserve the aesthetic, environmental and ecological character of the river.

In an Urban Diversified District, the lands and waters are to be used and developed to maintain the present diversity of commercial, industrial, residential, and public uses of lands, including the existing transportation use of the river; to protect historical sites and areas, natural scenic and environmental resources; and to expand public access to and enjoyment of the river. New commercial, industrial, residential, and other uses may be permitted if they are compatible with these goals.

Transportation Facilities

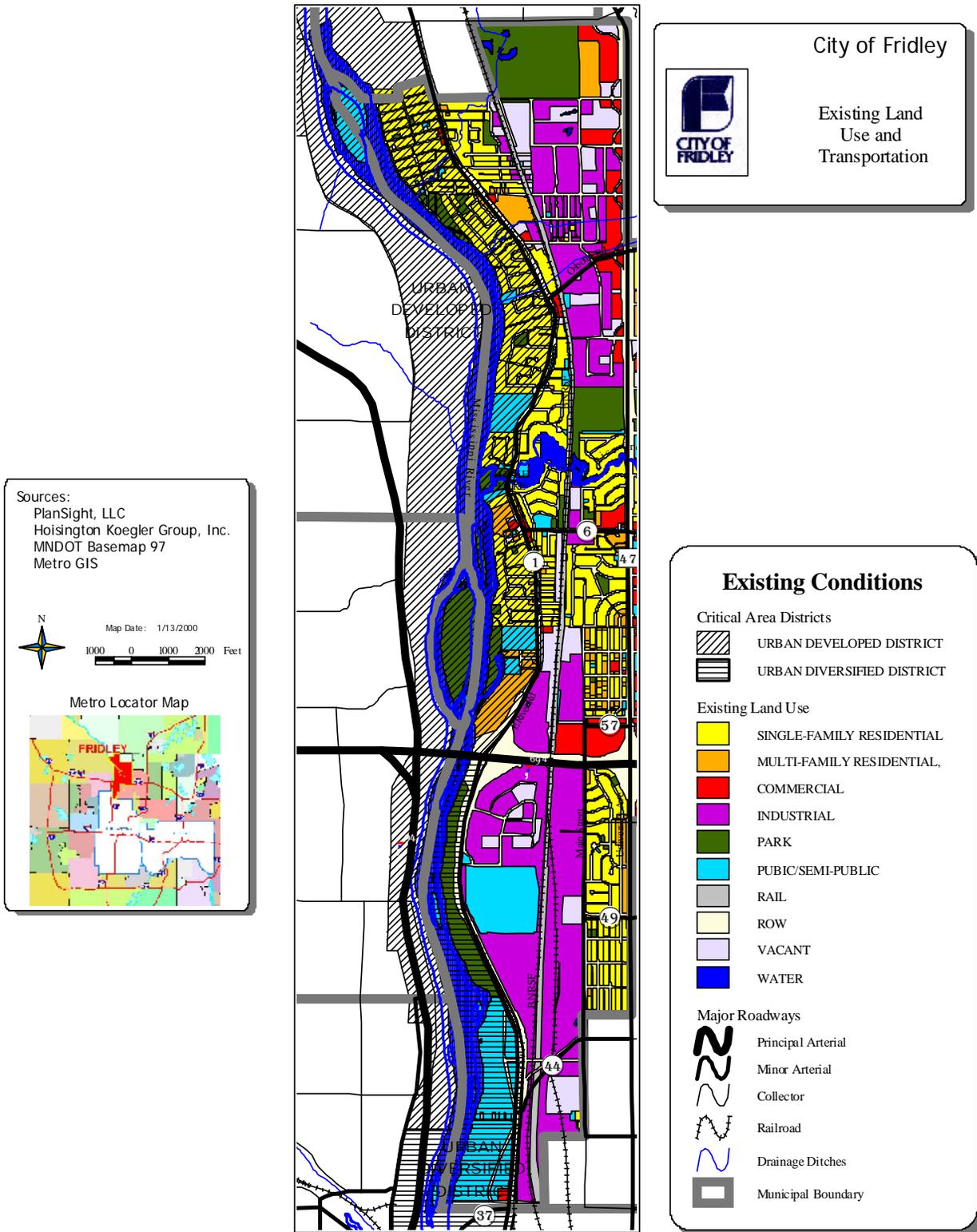
There are three main transportation facilities located within or near the Fridley critical area. They are Interstate 694, East River Road or County Road 1, and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad (see **Figure 9.3**). The City's reach of the river is void of barge traffic having no barge slips and fleeting locations. Water traffic consists of small, recreational watercraft (canoes, motorboats, rubber rafts, pontoons).

Interstate I-694 crosses the Mississippi River and serves as the dividing point between the Urban Developed and Urban Diversified districts. This crossing consists of two bridges, one carrying eastbound traffic and the other carrying westbound traffic. I-694 has been designated by the Metropolitan Council as a principal arterial carrying traffic to and from metropolitan sub-regions.

Another transportation facility within the study area is East River Road (Anoka County Road 1), which is designated as a minor arterial. This facility carries traffic in a north-south direction along the river and serves as the eastern boundary for Fridley's critical area.

The BNSF railroad yard and right-of-way lies east of Anoka County Road #1 (East River Road). Although the yard and right-of-way are not located within the critical area, safety factors, noise pollution, and industrial development incentives must be considered when evaluating future critical area developments. Since the facility is one of the largest rail yards in the upper midwest, the rail traffic volume is intense and poses certain safety and noise problems for surrounding neighborhoods. On the other hand, it provides industry in the area with a convenient mode of transportation including the planned public transit Northstar commuter rail system connecting the Twin Cities to St. Cloud.

Figure 9.2 Existing Land Use and Transportation



Transmission Services/Utilities

There are three transmission line crossings in the Fridley critical area. One is located in the Urban Developed District while two are located in the Urban Diversified District.

The transmission line crossing in the Urban Developed District is located on the north side of the I-694 bridge. This power line is owned, operated and maintained by Xcel Energy. Consideration should be given to future placement of power lines as they cross the Mississippi River Corridor and the resulting impact of these lines on the environment within the Urban Developed District.

Two transmission lines exist in the Urban Diversified District. Both are owned, operated, and maintained by Xcel Energy. Their crossings are independent of any adjacent public facility such as a roadway, railway or bridge (see **Figure 9.3**).

Water Intake Facilities

Both the Saint Paul Water Pumping Station and the Minneapolis Waterworks exist in the Fridley critical area. The Saint Paul Pumping Station is located east of 75th Way N.E. in the Urban Developed District. This facility withdraws about 80-million gallons a day. The Minneapolis Water Works is located east of 43rd Avenue in the Urban Diversified District. This facility withdraws about 75-million gallons a day. Both St. Paul and Minneapolis withdrawals increase during summer months when demand is highest (see **Figure 9.3**)

Storm Sewer System

The majority of storm sewers within the City's reach of the river corridor fall along the shoreland in the Urban Developed District. They range in size from a 12" pipe to an 84" pipe. All City storm sewers in this district are located along the designated flood plain and discharge surface runoff directly into the river. Few storm sewer discharge points are located in the Urban Diversified District. The shoreland lying adjacent to the river is relatively undeveloped. BAE Systems (previously known as United Defense) owns the storm sewers that exist in this district (see **Figure 9.3**).

Sanitary Sewer System

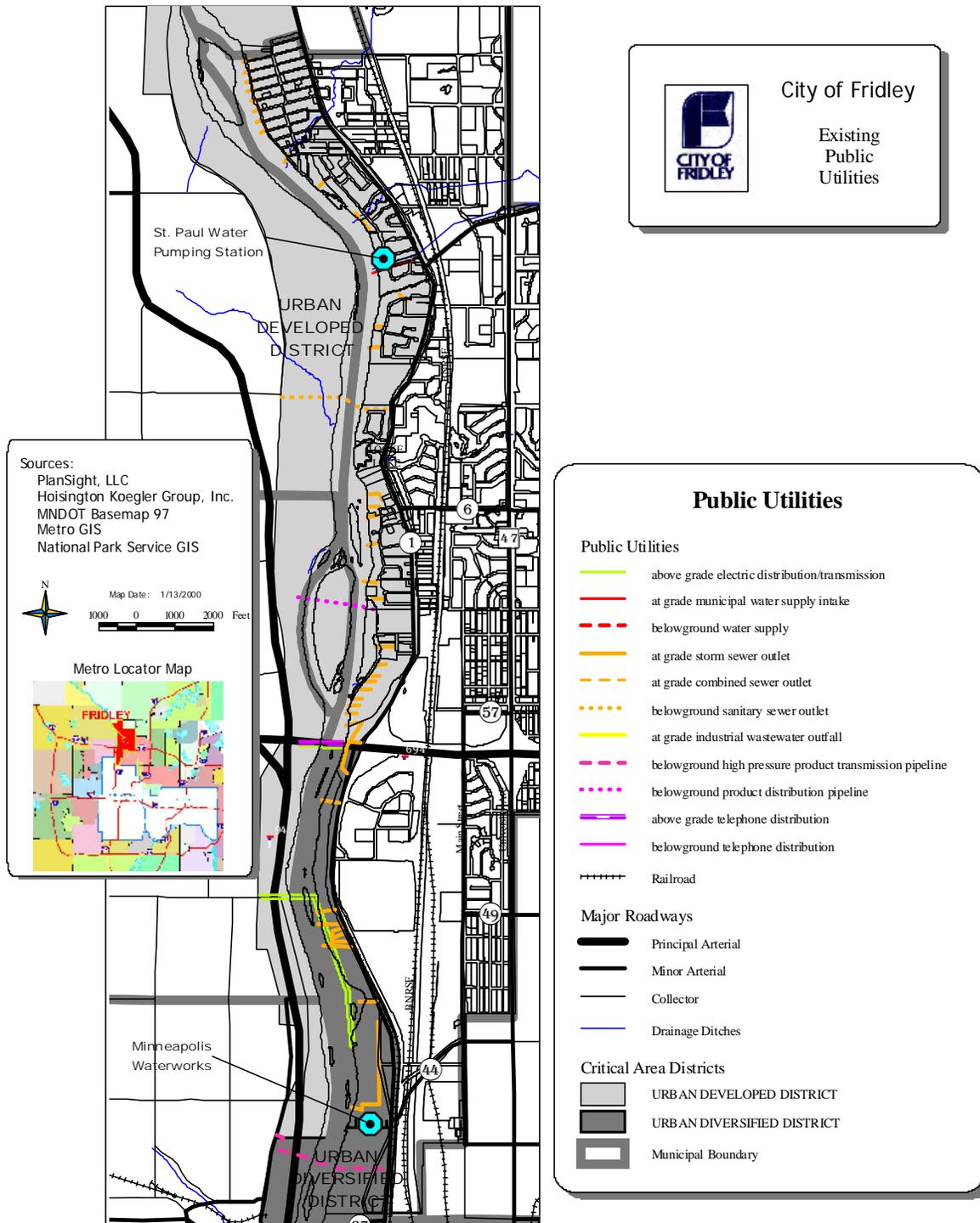
Fridley's reach of the river corridor has no sanitary sewer discharge points. All municipal sewage flows through local and metropolitan sewage disposal systems. A metropolitan interceptor, serving Brooklyn Park, Maple Grove and Osseo, crosses the Mississippi River at river mile 862.2 (see **Figure 9.3**).

Pipelines

There are two pipeline crossings in the Fridley critical area. Both pipelines lie beneath the surface of the river. The Minnesota Gas pipeline is within the Urban Developed District while the American Oil pipeline is located in the Urban Diversified District.

A new natural gas pipeline is currently being installed along the southern part of the Critical Area in Fridley. The pipeline will run through Fridley on the east side of East River Road until it gets to a point just north of I-694, where it cuts diagonally underneath East River Road and will be installed on the west side of East River Road the remaining length of Fridley to the south. The pipeline is being installed to carry natural gas to the Xcel Energy Riverside power plant in Minneapolis, which plans to switch from coal to natural gas as a power generation source.

Figure 9.3 Public Utilities



9.5 Natural Features

In the Urban Developed District, the most notable natural resources are the vegetation, tributary streams, and heavily wooded islands. Much of the riverbank in this district is unique because the residential units have preserved the original vegetative condition of the shoreland. The major natural features of the Fridley critical area are located within this district. The Urban Diversified District is characterized by a large expanse of open undeveloped land and parkland with small, scattered stands of elm, ash, cottonwood and oak. BAE Systems (formerly known as United Defense), Minneapolis Water Works, and Anoka County own most of the land within the Urban Diversified District in Fridley. The physical and visual impact of this land on the river is minimal (see **Figure 9.4**).

Slopes

Steep slopes of over 12% are characteristically found along the banks of the Mississippi and along tributary creeks such as Rice Creek, Oak Glenn, Stonybrook, and Springbrook. Building limitations are severe for all soil types in these areas because soils are generally non-cohesive. Removal of vegetation from such slopes will result in severe erosion problems. **Figure 9.5** illustrates slopes of greater than 12% as determined using mapping contours from the United States Geological Survey.

Soils

There are eight soil types within Fridley's reach of the Mississippi River Corridor study area: Anoka, Becker, Hayden, Hubbard, Marsh, Riflemucky Peat, Zimmerman, and Cut and Fill. These soils types are mapped and defined in the Soil Survey for Anoka County, 1977, prepared by the USDA.

The Anoka, Becker, Rifle-mucky, and Marsh are alluvial soils or soils of a high water table. Characteristically, these soils are poorly drained with severe limitation for building because of occasional flooding or high water.

The Hubbard and Zimmerman soils on slopes of 0-6% have slight limitations for residential, commercial, and industrial development served by public sewers. Limitations for development are severe on slopes over 12% because costs for building streets, installing utilities, and developing home sites are high. Steep slopes are difficult to stabilize with vegetation. Increased water runoff from roofs and streets can cause severe erosion. Sedimentation, resulting from soil erosion, will pollute nearby streams and be carried into the Mississippi. Both Hubbard and Zimmerman soils have rapid percolation rates that increase the potential for underground water contamination.

The Hayden soils on slopes of 0-12% have moderate limitations for building foundations. As slopes increase, the cost of grading roads, streets, laying sewer and water mains increases. On slopes over 12% water erosion and siltation becomes a problem. Ground water contamination in these areas is minimal because of a low water table.

The Cut and Fill soils take on the characteristics of the neighboring soil. The Cut and Fill area in Fridley's reach of the river is bordered by Hubbard soils. Soil permeability in a cut and fill area is low. This soil type is not suited to septic tank drainfields. Grading the surface of this soil will destroy the original soil structure. In areas where cut and fill is the primary soil type, the land should be allowed to settle for one year before construction begins. If this precaution is taken, properties with cut and fill soils will satisfactorily support low buildings.

Vegetation and Natural Habitat

Vegetation and habitat types characteristic of this area can be associated with river-bottom forest. Common species include elm, ash, and cottonwood. The most significant vegetation stands are located at Islands of Peace, Manomin County Park, and along Riverview Terrace. A significant natural habitat area is located just outside of the Critical Area Corridor within the Springbrook Nature Center lying east of the railroad tracks at the northern end of Fridley. (See **Figure 9.4**)

Wetlands and Water Features

Wetlands within the Critical Area corridor are identified by the National Wetland Inventory as well as through the 1994 City of Fridley Wetland Inventory completed by Westwood Professional Services and Peterson Environmental Consulting. There are also two watercourses that drain into the Mississippi River and are considered DNR protected watercourses, the creek flowing from the Springbrook Nature Center and Rice Creek (see **Figure 9.6**).

Flood Plain

Portions of Fridley's residential and industrial areas are within the boundaries of the Mississippi River floodplain. The most significant problem area has been in the residential area along Riverview Terrace Road within the Urban Developed District. Flooding in this area has primarily been caused by water from a creek that drains into the Mississippi River. An elevated roadway was constructed in 1969 in order to control the flooding. Additional storm water ponding and overflow improvements were made to further address the problem in 1999. The official floodplain areas in Fridley can be found on FEMA maps located at City Hall.

Grant money was secured to rebuild 79th Avenue and install a large pond along Buffalo Street, which has caused a change in the Flood Way line. But this change has not been made by FEMA yet, since requested this past spring.

Figure 9.4 Natural Features

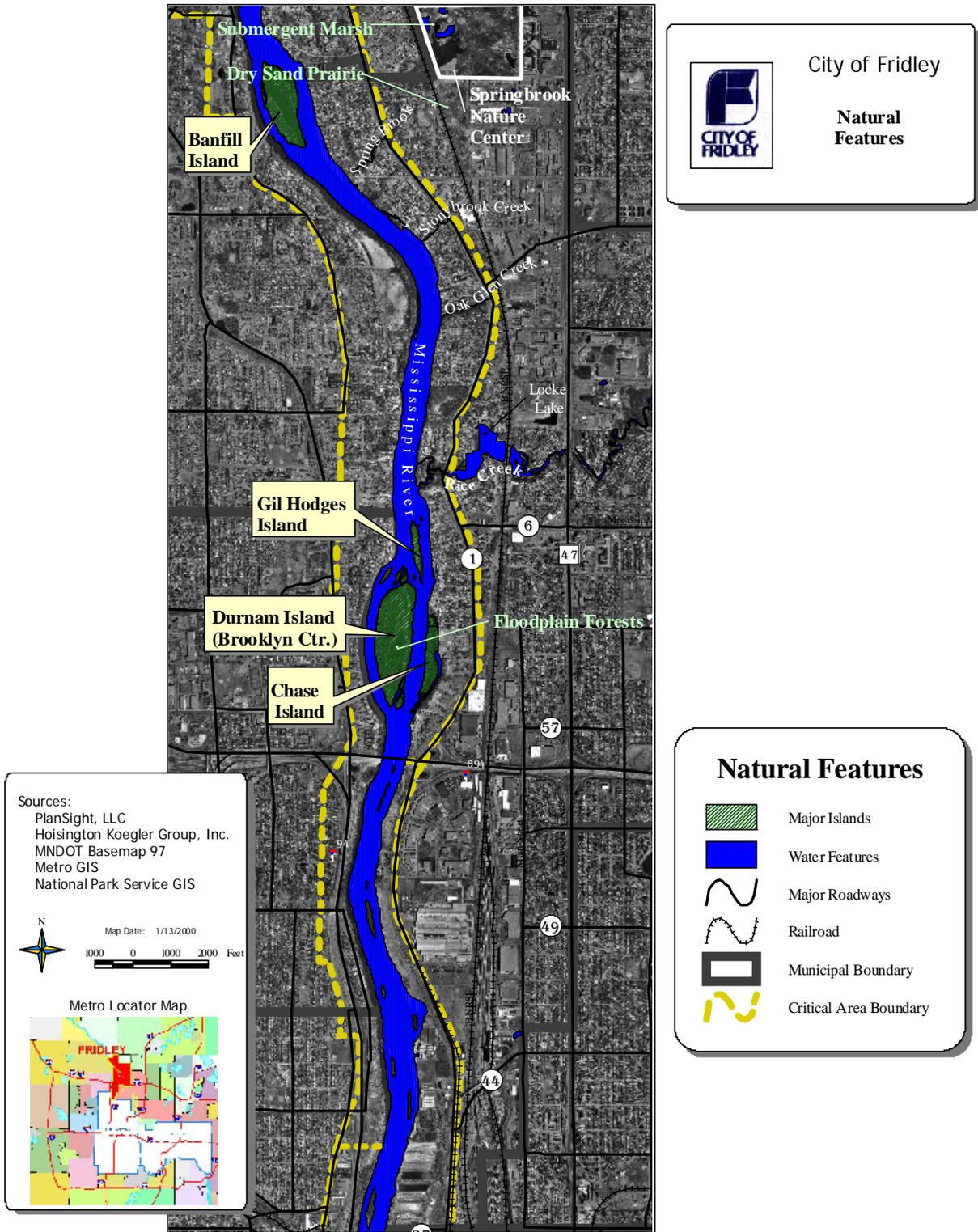


Figure 9.5 Slopes

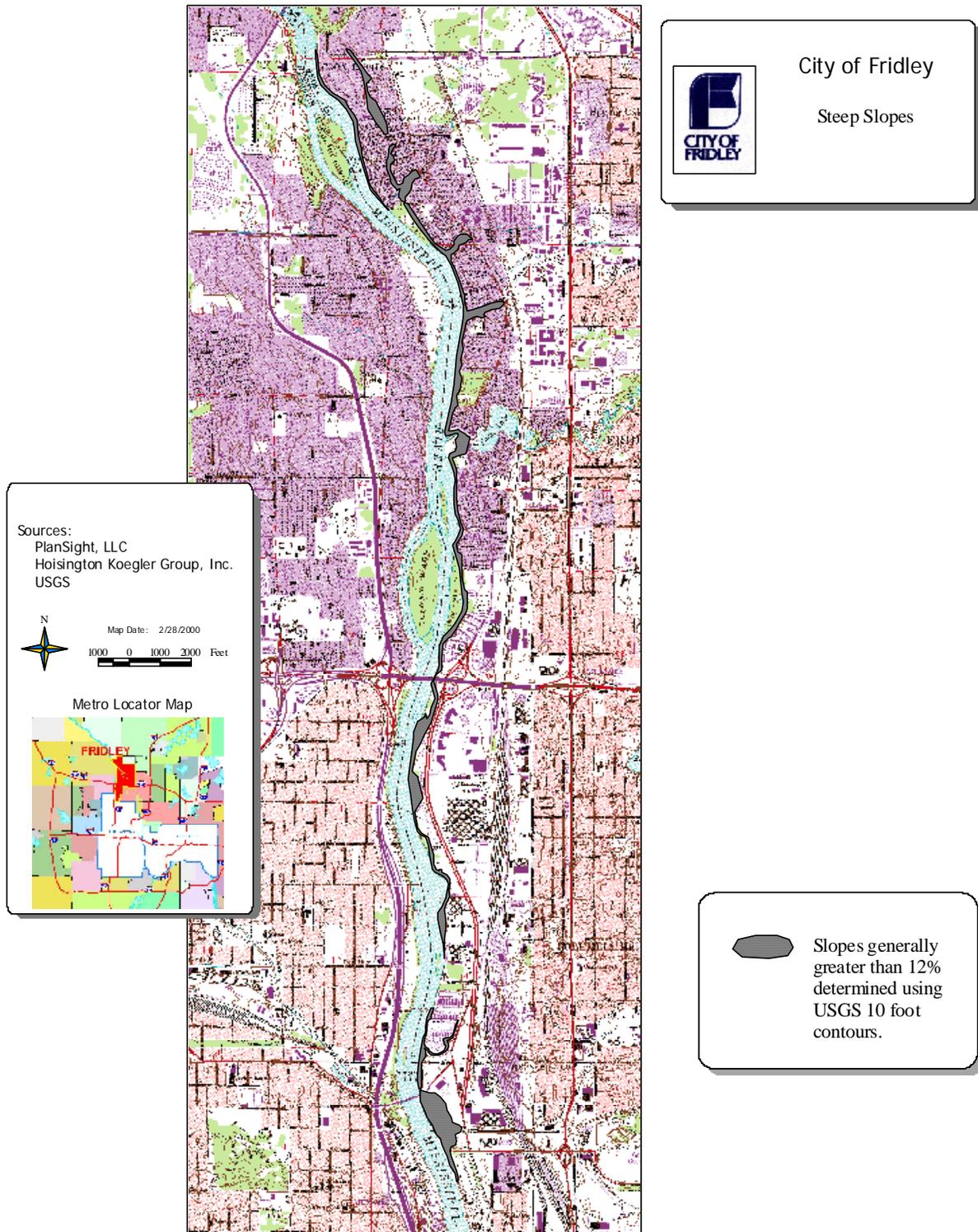
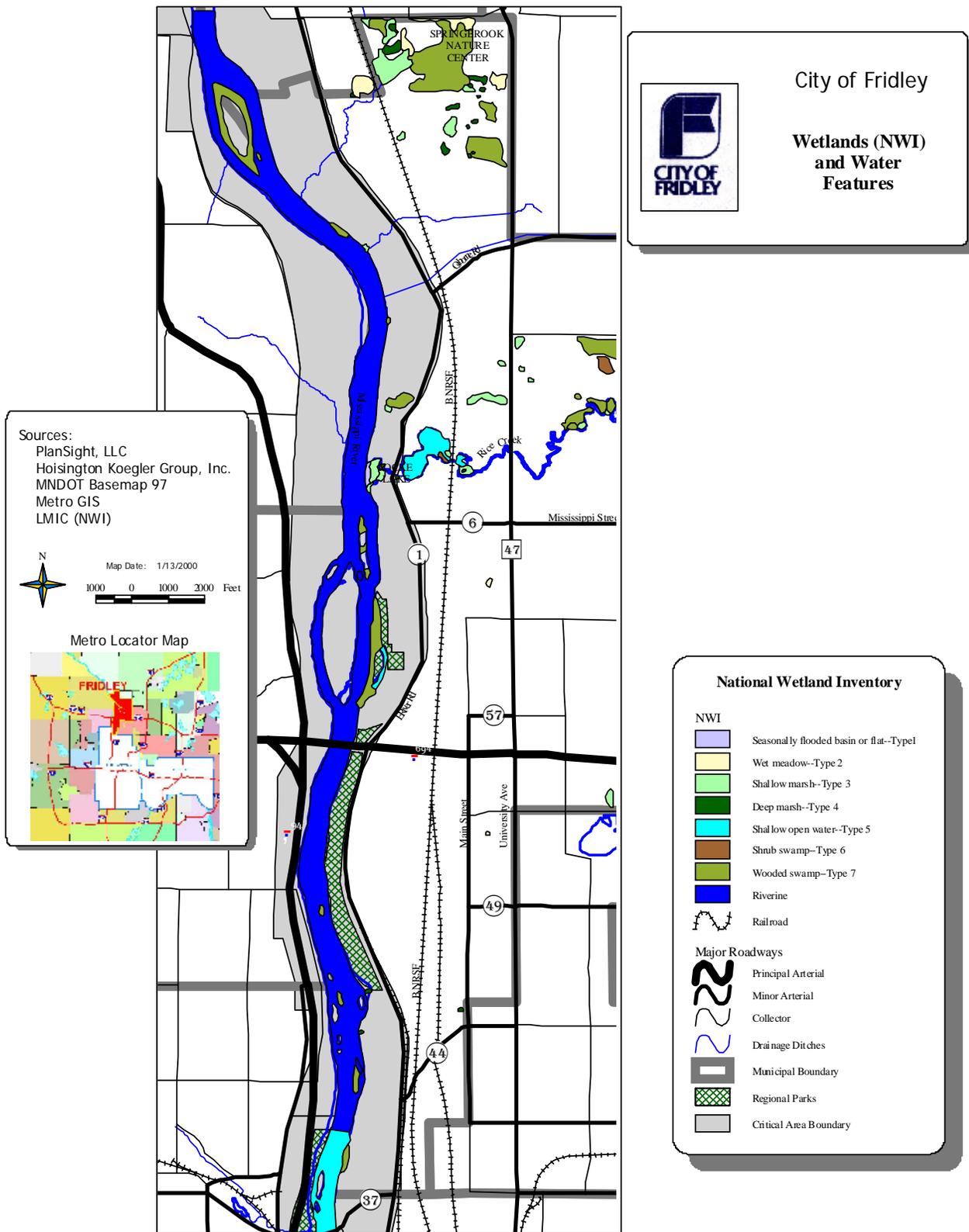


Figure 9.6 Wetlands and Water Features



9.6 River Recreation

The Mississippi River is one of Minnesota's major recreation resources; it provides areas for boating, canoeing, kayaking, and fishing and is a pleasant setting for other recreational activities such as picnicking, biking and hiking. The following is an inventory of existing and potential recreation resources along the Mississippi River in Fridley.

Parks

Ten parks are found within the reach of the river corridor. Of these, two are regional special-use parks (Islands of Peace Park and Riverfront Park), one is a county park (Manomin), four are neighborhood parks (Craig Park, Riverview Heights, River's Edge Way and Logan Park), and three are mini-parks (Springbrook, Glencoe, and Ed Wilmes Park).

Trails

Several trails have been developed, completing a vision identified in the 1980 Critical Area Plan to complete a continuous trail corridor along or within the Critical Areas linking Minneapolis and Coon Rapids. The Rice Creek regional trail connects to the Critical Area providing regional access to the river.

Scenic Overlooks

Three scenic overlooks were proposed in the 1980 Critical Area Plan located near I-694, Rivers Edge Way, and Kimball Street in the Riverview Heights neighborhood. Of these proposed scenic overlooks, the Kimball Street overlook was actually developed and today provides river-viewing opportunities.

BAE Systems, contributed a large section of land that was added to Anoka County's Riverfront Park for public enjoyment of the Mississippi River. The company also financed the construction of a beautiful overlook in Riverview Park.

Islands

Three major islands lie within Fridley's reach of the river (see **Figure 9.4**). They are Banfill, Gil Hodges, and Chase's Island. Banfill and Gil Hodges Islands remain relatively undisturbed and exist in their natural vegetative states. Chase's Island has been developed as a recreational amenity for the City and surrounding municipalities. Chase's Island is currently maintained by Anoka County as part of the Islands of Peace Park. The University of Minnesota owns the Banfill Island and no plans are anticipated to alter its present natural state.

River Access

The Anoka County Riverfront Park provides a boat launch area. Water depths are very shallow in this area of the river; however, so the boat launch is rarely used. Other access points to the river are more pedestrian oriented and can be found in other parks that are adjacent to the river.

9.7 Water Surface Use

The Mississippi River Corridor in the Metropolitan Area is utilized as an important mode of transportation. The corridor provides the means by which bulk commodities are transported in and out of the Metropolitan region. This transportation would not be possible without a nine-foot navigation channel maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for barge traffic. This navigation channel extends from the southern boundary of the metropolitan area to River Mile 857.6 in Minneapolis, south of Fridley.

Barge Traffic

The City of Fridley's reach of the river corridor does not contain a navigation channel maintained by the Army Corp. of Engineers; therefore, *barge traffic is prohibited*. The mean riverbed elevation is approximately 794-feet above sea level with an estimated depth of 6-8 feet.

Sea Plane Activity

Under the division of Aeronautics Regulations, Aero 13 (seaplane operations), the surface of the Mississippi River adjacent to the western boundary of the City has been designated as a seaplane operations area. Utilizing the river for this purpose would occur strictly on an emergency basis.

Recreational Boating

Due to the shallow river depth and many obstructions along the River bottom, there is very little recreational use of the river in Fridley. The Anoka County Riverfront Park provides a boat launch area, but it is rarely used.

9.8 Cultural Features

The Mississippi River is an important element of the City of Fridley's history. It was the location for much of the original settlement in the community as well as the location of pre-settlement activity. Cultural resources consist of historical buildings, sites, and activities such as early settlements, farmsteads and homesteads, trading posts, campsites, and burial grounds.

The most notable and identifiable cultural feature in the corridor within Fridley is the Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts, located at 6666 East River Road. Originally built in 1847 as an office for the East St. Louis Saw Mill Firm, this building served many purposes over the years including as a tavern, overnight lodging place, homestead of a dairy farm, a summer home and retreat for young people from the city. The home currently sits within Manomin Park owned by Anoka County. In 1977, it was placed on the National Register of Historic Buildings and in 1989 it became home to the North Suburban Center of the Arts.

More information on the History of Fridley and its relationship to the Mississippi River can be found in Chapter Two and in the 1999 *Focus News Publication* "*Fridley's 50th Anniversary*".

Figure 9.7 Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts

9.9 Critical Area Plan/MNRRA

Protecting a Valuable Resource

This plan identifies the key goals, policies and actions needed to help protect, preserve and enhance the quality of the Mississippi River and the Critical Area Corridor through the City of Fridley. The plan provides a general description of each topic area (land use management, site development, resource protection, river corridor image, and visitor interpretation) and then identifies policy for both the Critical Area (Tier I) and MNRRA (Tier II) programs.

More specifically the plan provides the City with guidance to protect the economic, environmental, recreational and aesthetic values of the Mississippi River Critical Area Corridor within Fridley. The plan develops policies that will (1) enhance and preserve the river frontage and lands within the Critical Area corridor, (2) manage the land as a multiple resource, (3) establish standards for the river's water quality, and (4) optimize the river's recreational, educational and scenic potential. As a "chapter" of Fridley's Comprehensive Plan, the Critical Area Plan/MNRRA is in accordance with citywide plans.

9.10 Land Use Management

The land use pattern within the corridor has been set for several years. That portion of the corridor within the "urban developed" district is intended to remain predominantly in a residential character. The Camp Lockslea site is the only site that has an opportunity of changing significantly in land use character within the urban developed district. This site is currently used for a Girl Scout camp and considered as semi-public or "open space." While there are no indications that the property is for sale, demand for move up housing may dictate a future move in that direction. A community wide need expressed at the

Neighborhood Planning meetings was for move up housing opportunities. Due to its pristine location and natural setting, this largely undeveloped site provides a unique and desirable opportunity for high-end housing.

It is the City's intention that if the Girl Scout organization should decide to make this land available for development, its future use would be of a residential nature consistent with the intent of the Urban Developed District. It is not the City's strategy to presently change the land use guiding of this site and "force" Camp Lockslea into developing. Rather, it is the City's intent to ensure the long-term evolution of this site would remain consistent with the goals and policies outlined in this plan and Executive Order 79-19.

The Urban Diversified District consists of mostly open parkland and some public uses. These uses are consistent with the intent of the district and no foreseeable change in land use is expected.

Land Use Policy

It is the policy of the City to:

1. Permit only uses that are compatible with uses designated within the appropriate district (Urban Developed—maintained largely as residential; Urban Diversified—maintained as a diversity of commercial, industrial, residential and public uses).
2. Encourage maintenance of the existing residential uses north of I-694 in the urban developed district. South of I-694 the City should encourage the preservation and maintenance of park and open space land.
3. Promote development that respects the natural environment and is consistent with Critical Area and MNRRA resource protection and site development policies.
4. Where possible, retain historic uses and preserve cultural resources.
5. Require open space provisions and encourage public spaces (such as overlooks, plazas, historic landscapes, or interpretive facilities) where possible in new development or redevelopment projects in the corridor.
6. Prohibit use of on-sight septic systems and private wells within the critical area corridor.
7. Facilitate, support and encourage the conversion of non-conforming uses to conforming uses and prohibit the reconstruction of non-conforming uses that are severely damaged.
8. Prohibit installation of billboards or other advertisement signs that are visible from the river or its opposite shores.
9. Encourage the City of Minneapolis to convert the existing water works facility to permanent open space if and when the City should determine the facility is no longer needed.
10. Support the regional transportation planning process.
11. Ensure new or modified transportation and utility facilities complement the planned land and water uses and do not stimulate incompatible development.

12. Ensure new development along the riverfront has a relationship to the river, a need for a river location or capability to enhance the river environment.
13. Minimize any adverse impacts associated with water transportation facilities such as boat launches.

9.11 Site Development

Site development policies are intended to provide guidance to local decision makers in reviewing development proposals. Many of the following policies are enforced in greater detail through federal, state and local laws and regulations and will be implemented through revisions to the local zoning ordinance.

Site Development Policy

It is the policy of the City to:

1. Require site plan review and approval for new development and expansion of existing development (except for one single family home on an existing parcel of record or alterations of existing single family homes). Site plans shall be designed to be consistent with the intent of this plan and Executive Order 79-19 and shall consist of detailed information to adequately allow the City the opportunity to assess impacts within the Critical Area Corridor. Site plans shall include at a minimum the following:
 - A detailed description of the project including activities undertaken to ensure consistency with the objectives of this plan and Executive Order 79-19.
 - Maps that specify existing environmental conditions and expected physical changes in the site as the result of the development.
 - Measures which address environmental effects.
 - Standards to ensure that structure, road, screening, landscaping, construction placement, maintenance, and storm water run off are compatible with the character and use of the river corridor in that district.
2. Provide uninterrupted vegetated shorelines along the Mississippi and its tributary streams and ravines (such as Rice Creek, Springbrook, Stonybrook Creek and Oak Glen Creek) to preserve a natural look of the river and the opposite shore and to provide connections to nearby natural areas (such as Springbrook Nature Center).
3. Encourage shoreline area preservation by prohibiting disturbance to the riverbank and restoring natural vegetation along the shoreline where practical.
4. Require structure setbacks according to the Shoreland Overlay District section of the Fridley Zoning Code implemented in 2006.
5. Require architecture and design of new development to be integrated into the landscape and natural features or be screened from views from the river.
6. Develop and maintain bikeways and walkways to connect the river with the Fridley bikeway/walkway system, and nearby parks and open space.

7. Provide easements for future trail corridors and connections in new developments.
8. Maintain existing public access to the river and increase access in redevelopment and new development projects where practical.
9. Minimize site alternations throughout the corridor.
10. Retain existing vegetation and landscaping throughout the corridor.
11. Encourage the clustering of structures and the use of designs that will reduce public facility costs and improve scenic quality.
12. Require park dedication that is generated within the corridor to consist of land within the corridor or if cash is given in lieu of land, the cash should be used towards improving open space, riverfront access, storm water drainage areas or other public service within the River Corridor.
13. In planning and designing the construction or reconstruction of all public transportation facilities which occur within the river corridor, consider provisions for scenic overlooks for motorists, safe pedestrian crossings and facilities along the River Corridor, access to the riverfront in public ownership and reasonable use of the land between the river and the transportation facility.
14. Notify the DNR and other appropriate agencies at least 30 days before taking action on the application when permits are applied for within the Critical Area Corridor that may require discretionary action or a public hearing.

9.12 Resource Protection

Most of the natural and cultural resources along the Mississippi River in Fridley have been altered over the years. Nonetheless, it is important to properly manage and protect remaining natural, historical and cultural resources along the Corridor and where possible restore them. The entire river corridor is a vital system of our environment and heritage. The following policy is intended to guide the City in protection of these resources:

Resource Protection Policy

It is the policy of the City to:

1. Comply with federal, state and local requirements to regulate floodplain and wetland development and to protect endangered, threatened and rare species and their habitats.
2. Adopt and enforce regulations to minimize direct overland runoff and improve the quality of runoff onto adjoining streets and watercourses.
3. Support efforts to limit the discharge of point and non-point pollution sources into the river to protect and enhance water quality.
4. Discourage any further unnecessary alteration of lands located within any floodplain areas as designated by FEMA or along any riverbanks.
5. Prohibit development within the corridor that has an adverse impact on wetlands.

6. Identify and protect areas of significant vegetation, unique vegetative species and wildlife habitats within the corridor and retain existing vegetation and landscaping.
7. Identify and regulate development of lands limited for development in the river corridor. These areas include: wet soils, steep slopes, soils with erosion potential, areas subject to flooding or within FEMA designated floodplains and islands.
8. Protect and manage slopes that are subject to severe erosion while prohibiting new developments on slopes of 12% or greater.
9. Take steps to prevent riverbank erosion by controlling urban runoff and managing vegetation.
10. Encourage residents within the river corridor to replace diseased trees with new plantings and to use other vegetative plantings on the riverbanks and steep slopes to control erosion.
11. Work with the Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to take steps to streamline and coordinate erosion control permit procedures.
12. Coordinate efforts with the Metropolitan Council's plans to reduce non-point sources of pollution.
13. Manage and protect the natural character of all undeveloped islands and wetlands especially where bottomland forests and riverine habitats are present.
14. Protect and restore where possible wildlife habitat and biological diversity especially when designing park and open space areas.
15. Seek efforts to minimize the negative impacts of transportation on residential, recreational and environmentally sensitive areas.
16. Enforce complete compliance with air and noise quality standards and regulations established by state and federal agencies.
17. Work with the Anoka County Historical Society (ACHS), the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Native American groups and any other interested organizations to identify, protect and preserve historic sites, historic buildings and archeological resources within the corridor.
18. Facilitate educational activities that offer information on the natural and built environment within the Critical Area Corridor and its impacts/affects on the Mississippi River.
19. Support existing educational, planning and regulatory efforts by the federal, state and local governments as well as those sponsored by organizations such as Springbrook Nature Center.
20. Work with surrounding communities to develop education programs to inform private landowners, public agencies, businesses, and industries about practices that prevent pollution and help protect the Mississippi River watershed.
21. Reduce the use of chemicals for fertilizer and pest control in residential and commercial areas and on public lands, which would support sustainable land treatment activities and pest management activities.

22. Encourage alternatives to lawns in the shoreline area to minimize fertilizer and pesticide runoff into the river.
23. Support efforts to clean up brownfield sites or other potentially hazardous sites.
24. Reduce the use of salt on area roads by encouraging greater use of alternative materials for winter maintenance while considering public safety needs.

9.13 River Corridor Image

The visual quality of the Mississippi River is a unique asset to the City. Measures must be taken to preserve and improve its visual quality. Preventive measures are the easiest and least costly way to maintain visual quality. However, in some cases management will be necessary to restore the aesthetic quality of the river corridor.

River Corridor Image Policy

It is the policy of the City to:

1. Prevent development that in any way obstructs or has a significant negative impact on key scenic views.
2. Encourage design that preserves, enhances or creates scenic views.
3. Improve the scenic quality of shorelands through removal of blighted structures and the screening of manmade features.
4. Minimize utility crossings and encourage location of necessary crossings along existing bridges and utility crossings. If feasible, crossing should be underground and should not negatively impact natural or cultural significant resources.
5. Minimize transportation crossings and encourage location of necessary crossings to reduce the visual impact along the river.
6. Promote physical design of roadways and trails to allow views of the river at a minimal disruption of the natural and cultural environment.

9.14 Visitor Interpretation

The Fridley community recognizes the significance of the Mississippi River both for its historical significance and its environmental significance. The principle of the community to “re-connect” with the river is supported by the following policy.

Visitor Interpretation Policy

1. Encourage new developments and redevelopment within the corridor (as well as throughout the City) to incorporate design elements that provide interpretation of the Mississippi River to the project.
2. Work with Anoka County to provide historical river interpretation within County parks.
3. Evaluate the feasibility of developing a visitor interpretation center for MNRRA in Fridley either at Islands of Peace Park or within the Springbrook Nature Center.

9.15 Critical Area Plan/MNRRA Goals

The general goals of the Critical Area Plan/MNRRA are to:

1. Ensure appropriate land use within the Mississippi River Critical Area Corridor.
2. Increase connections to and within the river corridor for the City's residents and general public.
3. Enhance the visual quality of the Mississippi River Critical Area Corridor.
4. Properly manage and preserve the natural and cultural resources within the Mississippi River Critical Area.

9.16 Critical Area Implementation

The Critical Area Overlay zoning district, Section 205.28 of Fridley City Code, was amended in 1999 to include all current State and Federal regulations. Further, the City developed and adopted a Shoreland Overlay zoning district (Section 205.32) in 2006, which includes all property abutting the Mississippi River. The language contained in this code was approved by the DNR. No further code changes are found to be necessary at this time, so no action is planned related to the Critical Area in Fridley.