



Chapter 9. Critical Area



Critical Area

Travel and trade along the Mississippi River spurred the City of Fridley's early growth and cemented the City's river heritage. Today, access to the River's natural, recreational, and scenic amenities contributes to the vibrancy of Fridley as a place to live and work. The City of Fridley is committed to managing the River as a multi-purpose resource in order to protect the River's natural resources alongside development and recreational access.

9.0 Critical Area Plan

This Critical Area plan has been developed for the portion of the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) within the City of Fridley. It is an amended version of the Critical Area Plan that was included in the City of Fridley's 2030 Comprehensive Plan. These amendments reflect new rules regulating the MRCCA published by the Minnesota Department of Resources (DNR) on January 4, 2017. The MRCCA shares the same boundary as the Mississippi National River and Recreation (MNRRA), a unit of the National Park System established in 1988. The MNRRA unit relies on the MRCCA to manage land use within the park. The purposes of designating this portion of the River as a Critical Area are:

- 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 nation, state and region transportation, sewer and water and recreational systems; and
- To protect and preserve the biological and ecological functions of the corridor.



MRCCA /MNRRA (Source: Friends of the Mississippi River)

Since the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, the City has completed a number of the established goals related to the MRCCA including:

- Adoption of a Transit Oriented Development District which increases parkland and access to parkland along the river;
- Completion of the East River Road Corridor study with Anoka County and the City of Coon Rapids to increase pedestrian/bicyclist access and place-making with the MRCCA;
- Oak Glen Creek stabilization project to reduce erosion of watercourse into the Mississippi River;
- Stoneybrook Creek flood mitigation project to alleviate flooding within the MRCCA

Fridley's Critical Area is primarily comprised of residential, institutional, and parkland uses, although there is a small commercial center located at the intersection of East River Road and Mississippi Way NE. The largest riverfront property owners are Anoka County, which manages more than two miles of shoreline as parkland and the City of Minneapolis, which manages more than a mile of shoreline as part of their Water Treatment and Distribution facility. In total, there are approximately 6.25 miles of river frontage in Fridley.

The BNSF railroad yard, one of the largest rail yards in the upper Midwest, is situated directly east of the Critical Area. Although the yard and associated right-of-way are not located within the MRCCA, safety factors, noise pollution, and transit barriers associated with yard must be considered when evaluating the future of the Critical Area. In 2009, the Northstar Commuter Rail Service began on the BNSF between Minneapolis and Big Lake along the BNSF route.

Three major islands are located within Fridley's reach of the River- 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 is currently maintained by Anoka County as part of the Islands of Peace Park and is used as a recreational amenity for the residents of Fridley and surrounding areas.



View of Durnham Island from Chase Island in Islands of Peace Park in Fridley

9.1 Mississippi River Districts

The portion of the MRCCA located in Fridley is defined as the area to the west of East River Road/County Road 1. The MRCCA in Fridley is comprised of three different management districts:

CA-RN District

The portion of the MRCCA directly along the River north of 61st Avenue is defined as a CA-RN (River Neighborhoods) District. According to the specifications outlined in MR 6106.0100, this district is characterized by residential neighborhoods that are riparian, readily visible from the river or that abut riparian parkland. The district includes parks and open space, limited commercial development, marinas, and related land uses.

The CA-RN district must be managed to maintain the character of the river corridor within the context of existing residential and related neighborhood development, and to protect and enhance natural habitat, parks and open space, public river corridor views, and scenic, natural, and historic areas. Minimizing erosion and the flow of untreated stormwater into the river and enhancing habitat and shoreline vegetation are priorities in the district.

CA-SR District

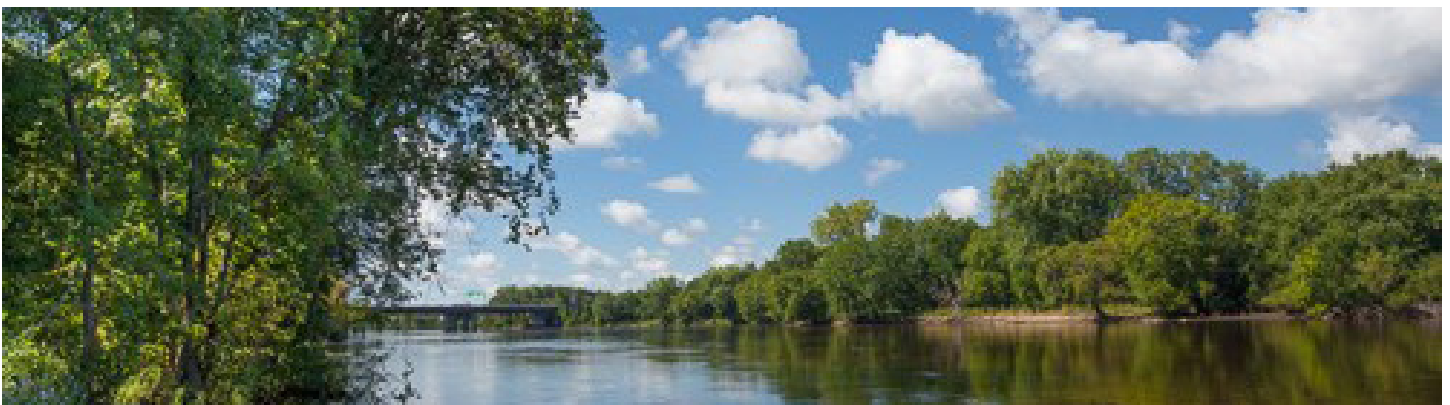
The portion of the MRCCA between the CA-RN District and East River Road north of 61st Avenue is defined as part of the CA-SR (Separated from River) District. This district is characterized by its physical and visual distance from the Mississippi River and includes land separated from the River by distance, topography, development, or a transportation corridor. The land in this district is not readily visible from the Mississippi River.

The CA-SR district provides flexibility in managing development without negatively affecting the key resources and features of the river corridor. Minimizing negative impacts to primary conservation areas and minimizing erosion and flow of untreated stormwater into the Mississippi River are priorities in this district.

CA-UM District

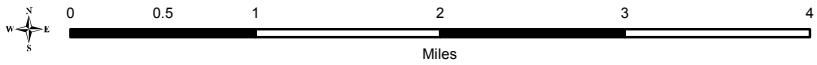
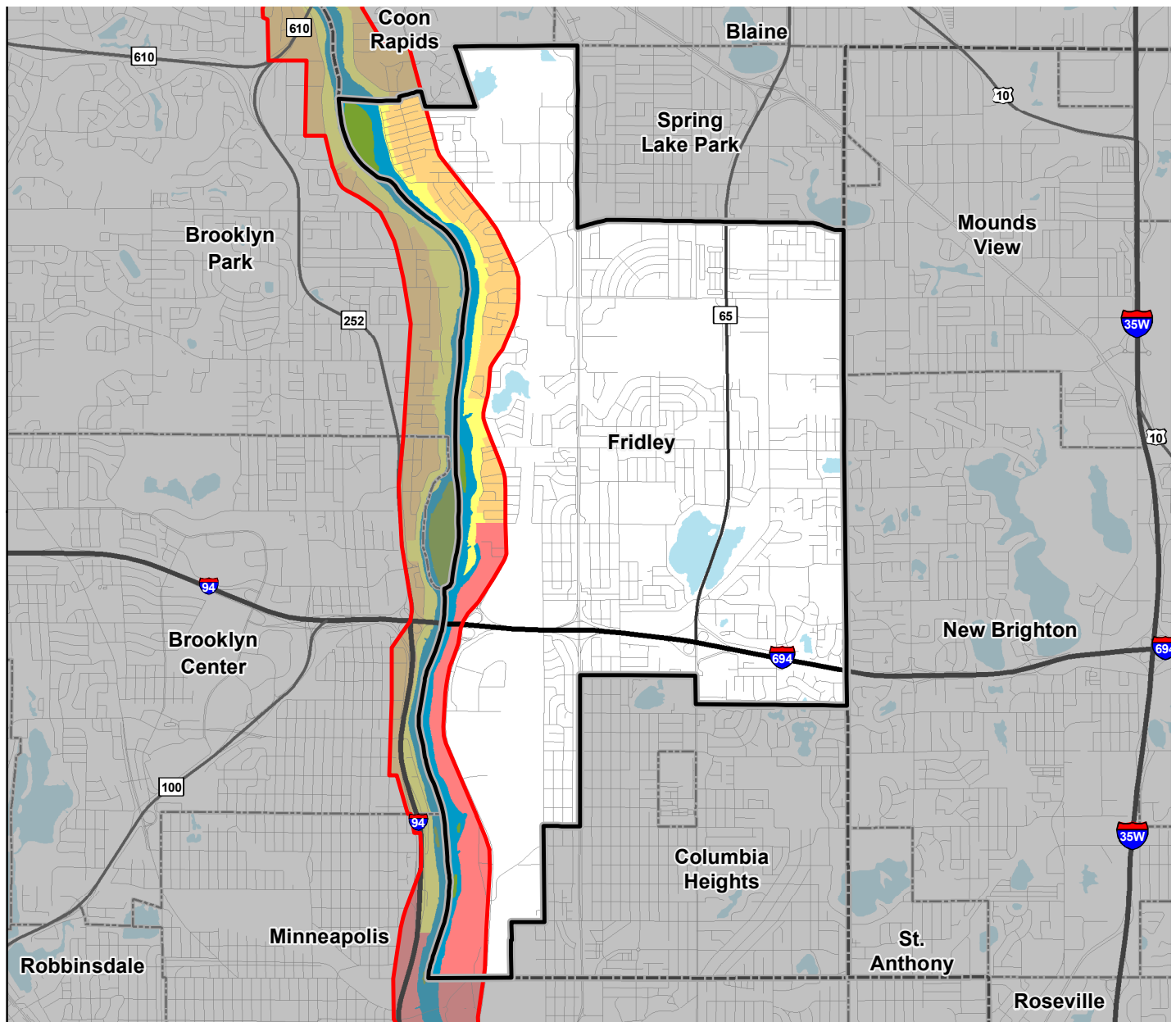
The portion of the MRCCA south of 61st avenue is classified as CA-UM (Urban Mixed) District. The urban mixed district (CA-UM) includes large areas of highly urbanized mixed use that are a part of the urban fabric of the river corridor including institutional, commercial, industrial, and residential areas and parks and open space.

The CA-UM district must be managed in a manner that allows for future growth and potential transition of intensely developed areas that does not negatively affect public river corridor views and that protects bluffs and floodplains. Restoring and enhancing bluff and shoreline habitat, minimizing erosion and flow of untreated stormwater into the river, and providing public access to and public views of the River are priorities in the district.



View from Islands of Peace Park

Figure 9.1 *Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Districts*



- MRCCA Boundary
- MRCCA Districts**
- CA-RN (River Neighborhoods)
- CA-ROS (Rural and Open Space)
- CA-RTC (River Towns and Crossings)
- CA-SR (Separated from River)
- CA-UC (Urban Core)
- CA-UM (Urban Mixed)
- Water
- County Boundaries
- City and Township Boundaries
- NCompass Street Centerlines

9.2 Future Redevelopments in the MRCCA

Increased connection with the River was identified as a desired change by Fridley residents in the 2020, 2030 and 2040 Comprehensive Planning processes. The following statement, which was included in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan and reaffirmed in the 2030 Plan, continues to hold true today:

“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.”

Four areas have been identified for redevelopment in the MRCCA. More detail can be found in Chapter 1 of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan (Land Use).

Area 1 includes three properties located wholly within the CA-SR Separated from River District. The area has been identified for redevelopment due to a planned realignment of Fairmont Street, although the remaining property is still guided as commercial.

Area 5, the Girl Scout Camp, is one property located within the River Neighborhoods District and the Separated from River District, currently owned by the Metropolitan Council. This property is guided for utilities and parkland.

Area 6 is located wholly within the Separated from River District and is zoned commercial. The best use of the three existing properties is to remain commercial but combined into one property.

Area 15 is located within the Urban Mixed District. This property comprises part of the Transit Overlay District (TOD), a zoning district that was developed to encourage dense, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development within one-half mile of the Northstar Commuter Rail Station in Fridley.

The design of the TOD is consistent with the standards of the CA-UM district as it creates new parkland through increased building setbacks, improves visibility and public access to the Islands of Peace Park, and provides regional stormwater treatment while increasing the number and density of housing units.

A master plan for the Transit Overlay District was approved by the Fridley City Council on December 8, 2014.

Figure 9.2 MRCCA Districts and Redevelopment Areas

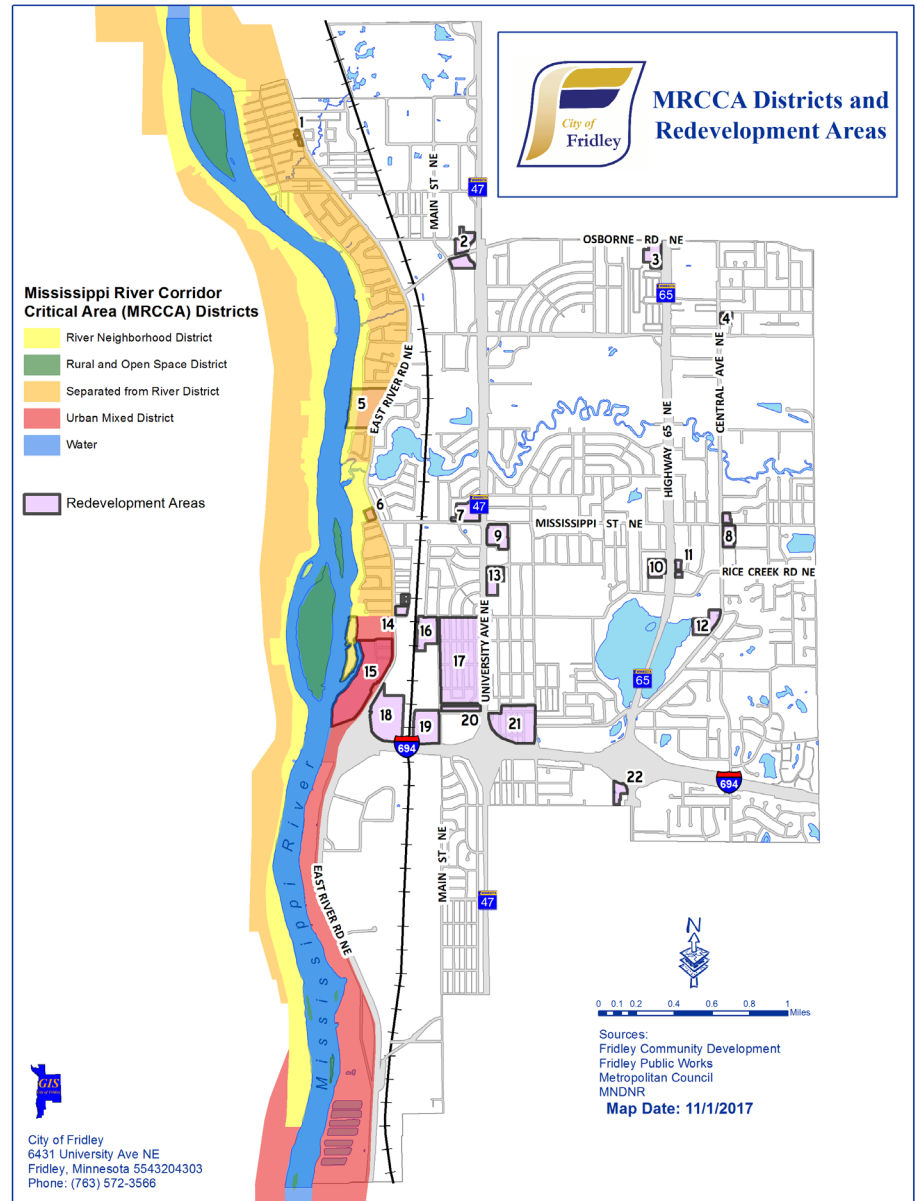


Figure 9.3 Transit Oriented District Master Plan

ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN



REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Estimated Housing Development

- » 1,250 - 1,400 total units WITHOUT redevelopment of Georgetown's southern buildings; net growth of 650 - 800 units
- » 1,550 - 1,750 total units WITH redevelopment of all of Georgetown's buildings; net growth of 950 - 1,150 units

Projected Office Development

» 306,000 sq. ft.

Projected Light Industrial Development

» 134,000 sq. ft.

Projected Retail Development

» 15,000 - 20,000 sq. ft.

9.3 Primary Conservation Areas

Primary Conservation Areas (PCAs) are defined in the MRCCA rules (6106.0050, Subp. 53) as key resources and features to be protected and maintained. The following PCAs have been identified in Fridley:

Shore Impact Zone

The Shore Impact Zone (SIZ) is defined as the land located between the ordinary high water level of public waters and a line parallel to it at a setback of 50 percent of the required structure setback. Reducing visual disruptions in the SIZ is important to preserving the natural and scenic value of the River.

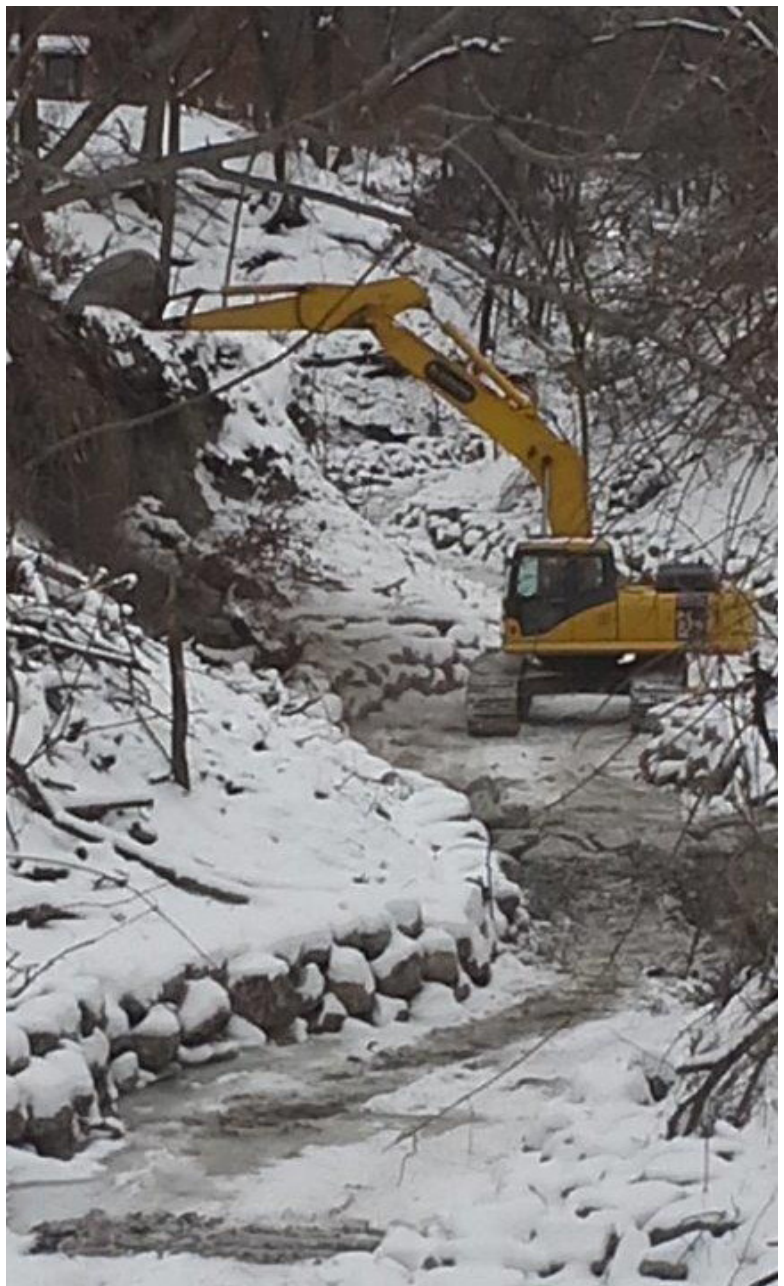
Bluff Impact Zones

Bluff impact zones (BIZ) include steep slopes of over 18% and a surrounding twenty foot buffer. Bluffs in Fridley are characteristically found along the banks of the River and along tributary creeks such as Rice Creek, Oak Glen Creek, Stonybrook Creek, and Springbrook Creek. Due to their structural instability and vulnerability to erosion, bluffs are not suitable for development.

The City of Fridley, in collaboration with the Anoka Conservation District and the Coon Creek Watershed District, completed an extensive restoration of the bluffs along 1,400 feet of Oak Glen Creek near its confluence with the Mississippi River in 2015. This project stabilized eroding banks that threatened 21 homes and reduced annual sediment and phosphorus discharge into the River by approximately 633,600 pounds and 507 pounds respectively. Reducing erosion from bluffs continues to be an important priority for the City.

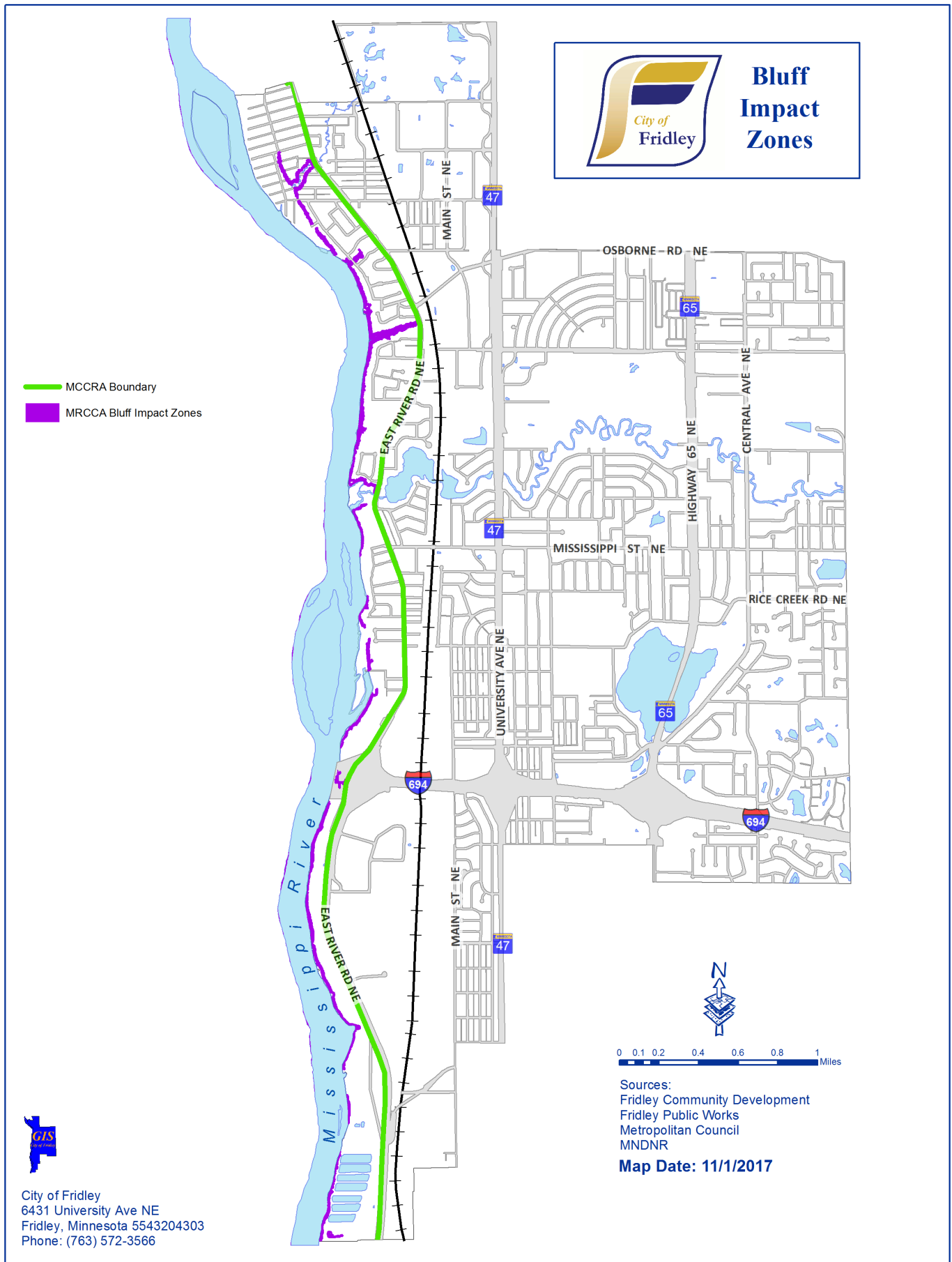
Water Resources

Wetlands and floodplain within the Critical Area corridor provide valuable flood protection, water quality benefits, and wildlife habitat. Wetlands in Fridley are identified by the National Wetland Inventory as well as through the 1993 City of Fridley Wetland Inventory. Floodplains for several drainage ways (Oak Glen Creek, Springbrook Creek, Stonybrook Creek, and Rice Creek) as well as for the Mississippi River are located in Fridley. FEMA floodplain maps were developed for Anoka County in 1980 and have undergone slight revisions. As additional modeling data is released, these maps are revised. The floodway maps are incorporated by the City within the Floodway Overlay Zoning District.



Restoration of Oak Glen Creek

Figure 9.4 Bluff Impact Zones

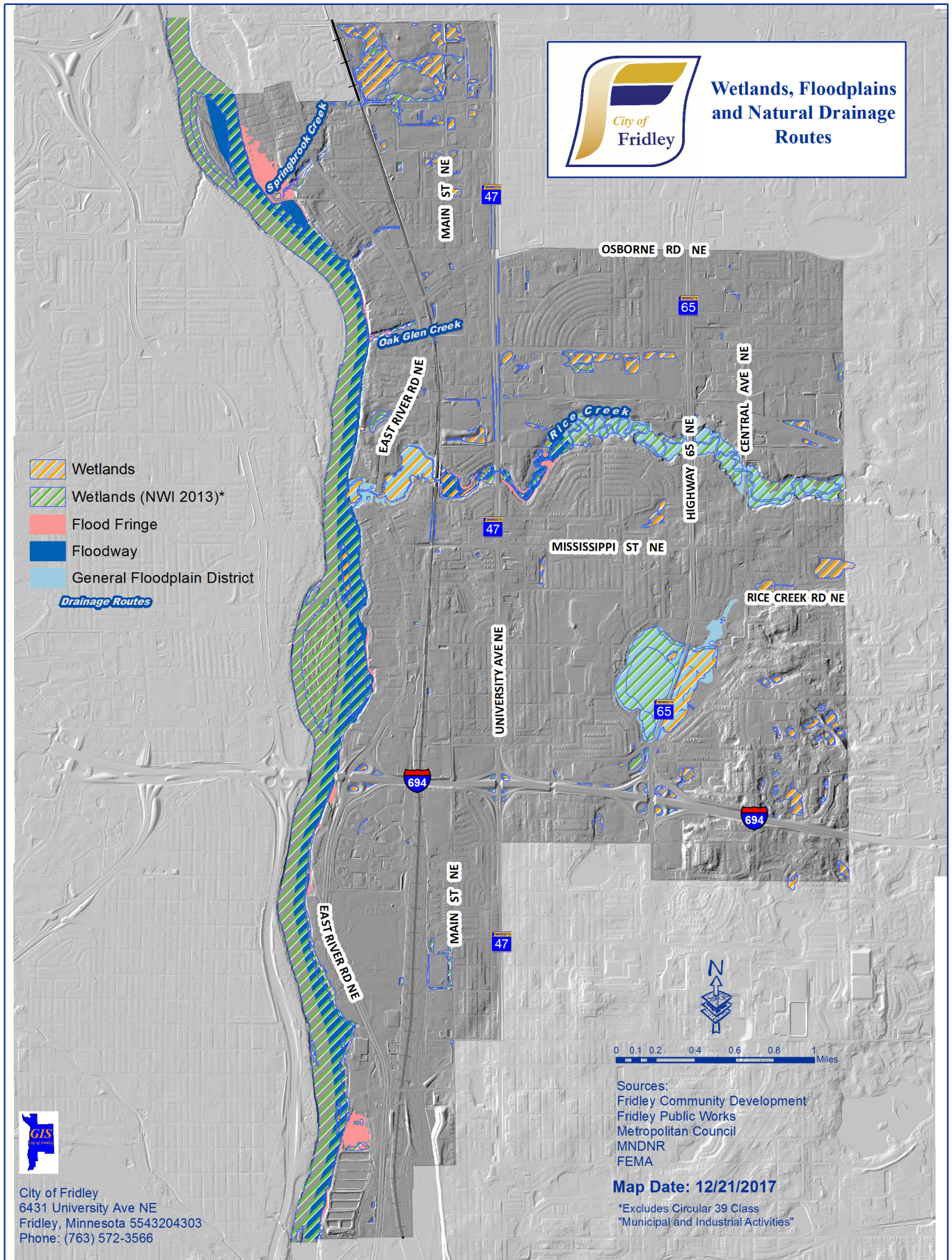


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Sources:
 Fridley Community Development
 Fridley Public Works
 Metropolitan Council
 MNDNR

Map Date: 11/1/2017

Figure 9.5 Wetlands, Floodplains, and Natural Drainage Routes



Unstable Soils and Bedrock

There are eight soil types within Fridley's reach of the Mississippi River Corridor study area: Anoka, Becker, Hayden, Hubbard, Marsh, Rifle mucky Peat, Zimmerman, and Cut and Fill. These soil 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. 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. 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.

Certain areas along the Mississippi River have recently been documented to experience slope shifting. Changes in precipitation or groundwater level may accelerate or exacerbate these types of events. Specific priorities for erosion prevention and bank stabilization have not been identified.

Vegetation

One tree species found commonly in the Critical Area is the green ash, which is vulnerable to a new invasive pest to Minnesota, the emerald ash borer (EAB). This pest can quickly cause ash tree mortality and result in drastic changes to forest composition. Presence of EAB has been confirmed in Fridley, and Anoka County is under quarantine by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. The City of Fridley has developed an emerald ash borer mitigation plan to maintain tree cover and improve the resiliency of our urban forest.

In Fridley, the most significant vegetation stands are located on Banfill, Gil Hodges, and Chase's Islands, Riverview Heights Park, the Girl Scout Camp property, Manomin County Park, Islands of Peace Park, and Riverfront Park. There is also a significant natural habitat area located just outside of the Critical Area within the Springbrook Nature Center that is connected to the MRCCA via Springbrook Creek.

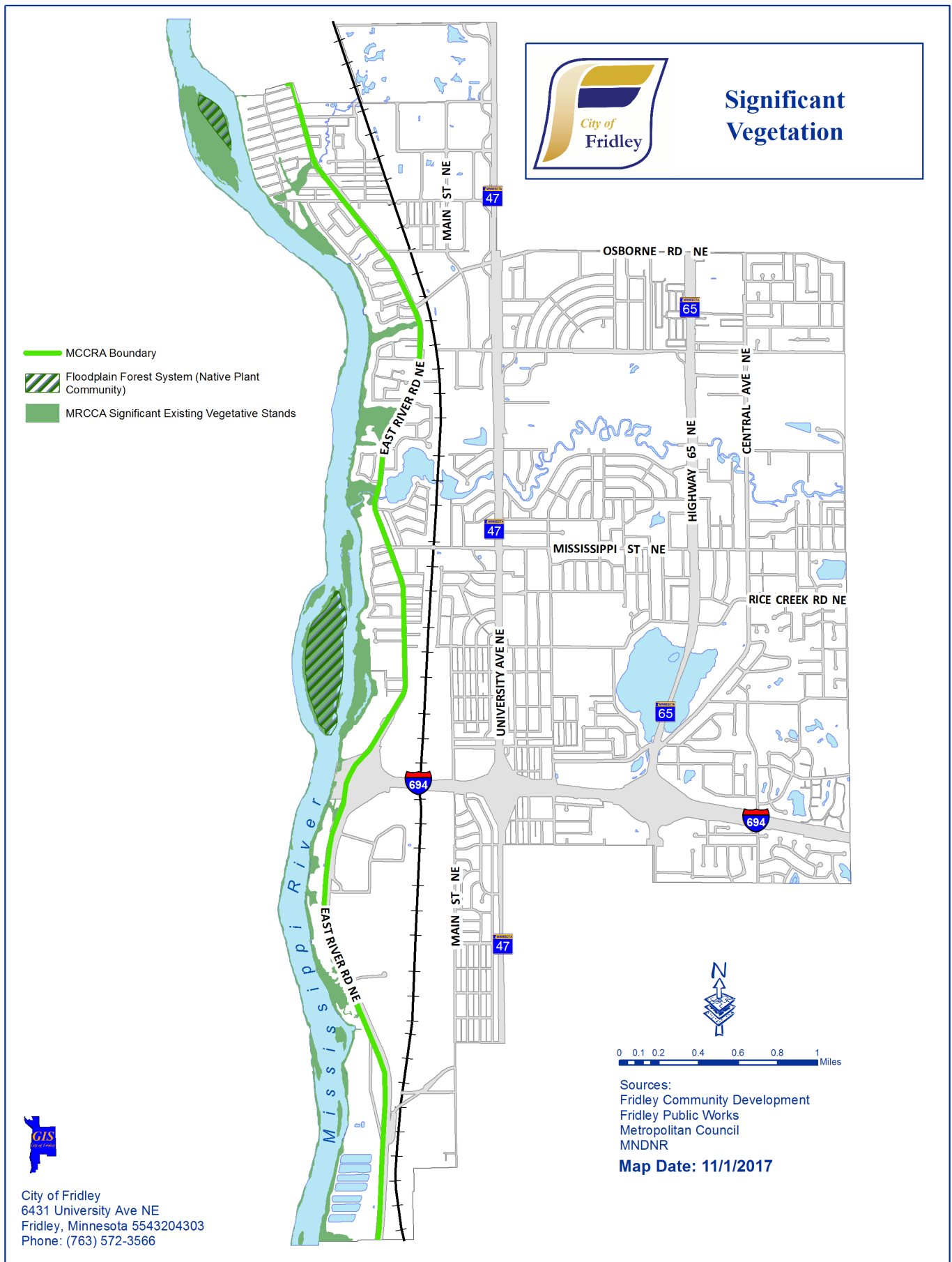
Opportunities for vegetative restoration were identified using the Minnesota DNR's *Framework for Identifying Vegetation Restoration Priorities*.

Residential portions of the City that were identified include areas within the Riverview Terrace, Hartman Circle, and River's Edge Way neighborhoods as well as the multi-family properties located directly north of Interstate 694. While the City of Fridley's Critical Area overlay district prevents clear cutting in these privately owned areas, detection of clear cutting that is screened from the right-of-way can be difficult. The location of the Riverview Terrace road directly along the River also contributes to a lack of vegetation along the River in the northern portion of the City.



Public and institutional lands were also identified for vegetative restoration including parts of Manomin Park, Riverfront Park, the City of Minneapolis' water treatment facility and the portion of the Girl Scout Camp property where the Metropolitan Council maintains an access road. Opportunities for revegetation are often limited by existing infrastructure and development. Established vegetation often provides higher levels of erosion control and ecological benefits; therefore, vegetation removal along the River should be prevented where feasible.

Figure 9.6 Natural Vegetation

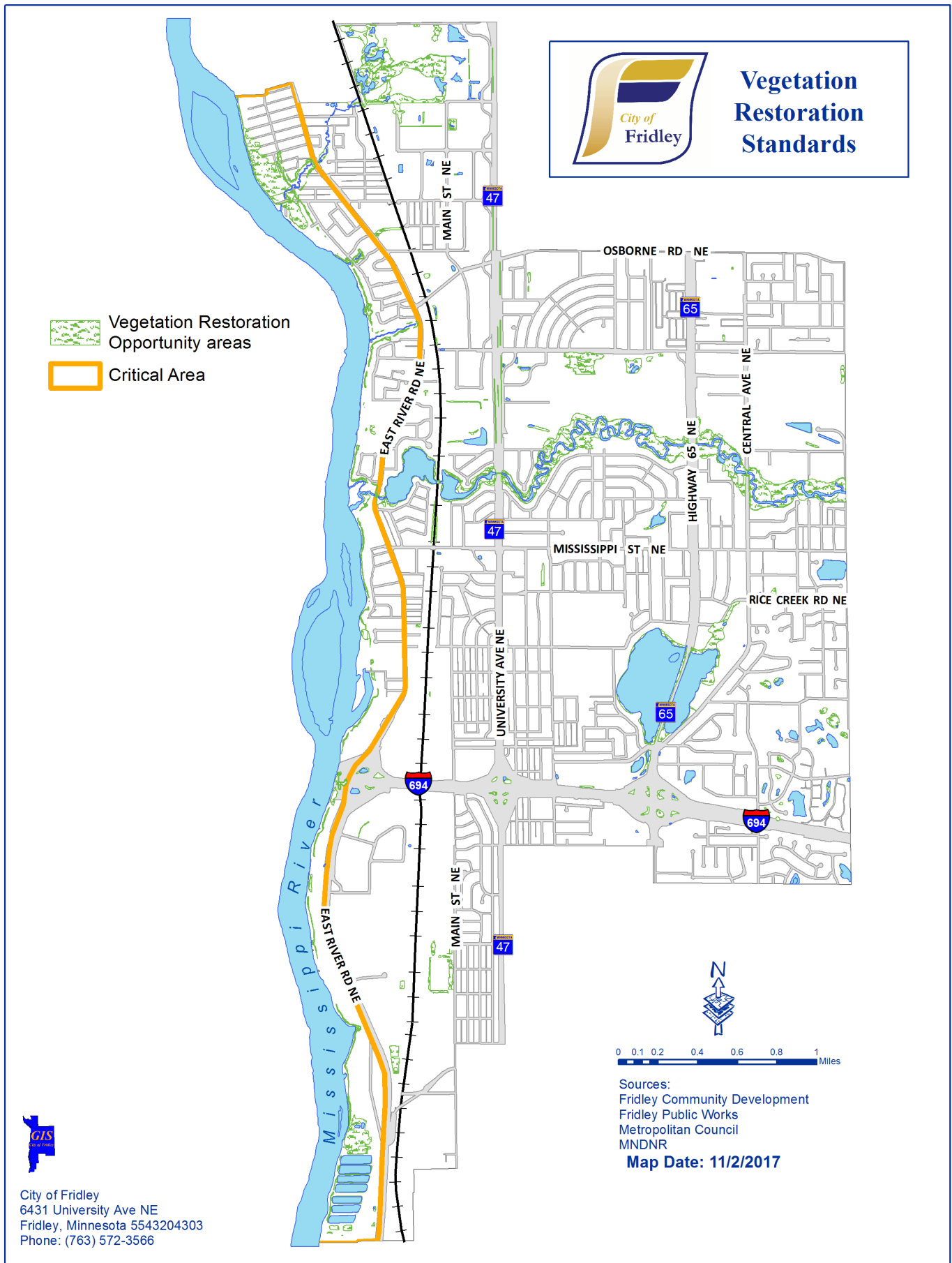


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Map Date: 11/1/2017

Figure 9.7 Vegetation Restoration



Cultural and Historic Properties

The most notable and identifiable cultural feature in Fridley's Critical Area 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 for a dairy farm, and a summer home and retreat for young people from the city. The building currently sits within Manomin Regional 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 Banfill-Locke Center of the Arts.



Banfill- Locke Center for the Arts (Source: Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts)

While not on the National Register of Historic Buildings, the Riedel House in Riverfront Regional Park, is another site important to Fridley's history. This 1880's home currently serves as a special event facility.



Riedel House

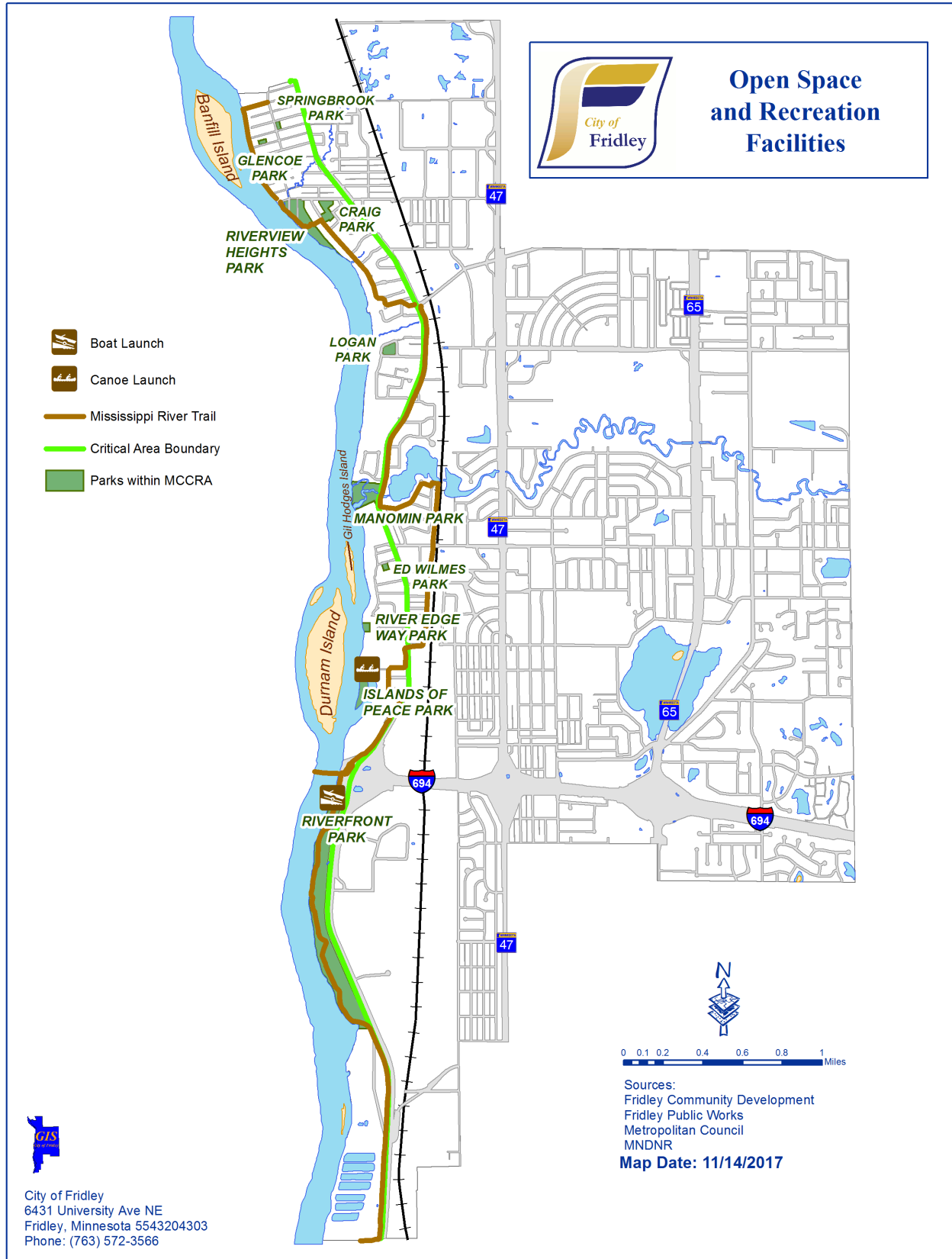
Other Primary Conservation Areas

Gorges and Areas of Confluences with Tributaries have not been identified in Fridley.

9.4 Open Space and Recreational Facilities

The MRCCA overlaps with the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA), a unit of the National Park Service. There are ten parks located within the Critical Area in Fridley and approximately 2.3 miles of river frontage is managed as parkland. The Critical Area also contains a portion of the multi-state Mississippi River Trail (MRT).

Figure 9.8 *Open Space and Recreation Facilities*



Of the ten parks located within the Critical Area, one is a regional special-use park owned by Anoka County (Riverfront Park), two are county parks (Manomin and Islands of Peace), four are neighborhood parks (Craig, Riverview Heights, River’s Edge Way, and Logan), and three are mini-parks (Springbrook, Glencoe, and Ed Wilmes). Five parks are located directly on the river (Riverview Heights, Manomin, River’s Edge Way, Islands of Peace, and Riverfront).

Riverfront Regional Park contains a motorized boat launch area. Water depths are fairly shallow in this part of the River. Other access points to the River are pedestrian-oriented and allow visitors to launch canoes and kayaks. River’s Edge Way is an undeveloped park that is maintained in a natural state for use as a possible trail connection and access point in the future.

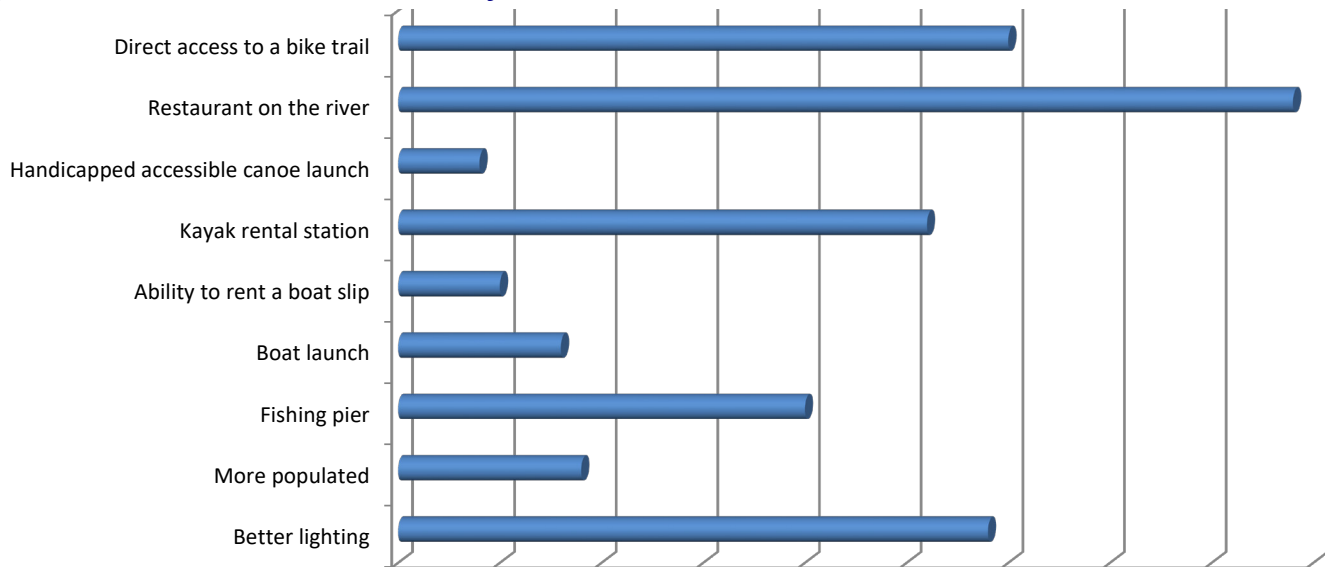
Table 9.1 Recreational Facilities

Park	Owner	Size (Acres)	Recreational Facilities
Riverview Heights	City of Fridley	7.4	Trails; picnic area
Manomin	Anoka County	15.0	Trails; picnic area;
River Edge Way	City of Fridley	1.3	None
Islands of Peace	Anoka County/City of Fridley	79.0	Trails; picnic area; canoe launch
Riverfront Regional	Anoka County	60.0	Trails; picnic area; boat launch; playground

Despite the large amount of park space, these parks are historically under-utilized. As part of the 2017 Citizen Survey, Fridley residents were surveyed on methods to increase use of the parks. Direct access to a bike trail was the second most common recommendation which emphasizes the need for increased publicity of the existing trails as well as increased connectivity within the Fridley trail system. The City is addressing these gaps through an evolving Active Transportation Plan (ATP). In the latest version of the ATP, East River Road and portions of Riverview Terrace were designated as priority streets for trails and sidewalks (see Chapter 4 for more information). Plowing trails during the winter is also crucial to ensuring year-round recreational opportunities.

Increased canoeing and boating access was also a common theme in the survey. The City currently only contains one vehicle accessible boat ramp along the river (Riverfront Park), one formal canoe launch which lacks adequate parking and visibility (Islands of Peace Park), and no opportunities to store or rent kayaks/canoes.

Figure 9.9 Desired Features in Riverfront Parks



No improvements to parks in the Critical Area are currently planned within the City’s 2019-2023 Capital Investment program; however, Anoka County has plans to redevelop portions of Islands of Peace Park. Expansion of parkland around Islands of Peace Park may also occur as opportunities arise from the development of the adjacent multi-family units in line with the North Start Transit Overlay District.

Additional open space and recreational facilities may also become available at the Camp Lockslea/Girl Scout Camp property currently owned by the Metropolitan Council. If the Camp Lockslea/Girl scout camp property is transitioned to parkland, public access to the River would be a priority.

9.5 Public River Corridor Views (PRCVs)

Public River Corridor Views are those view-sheds determined to be of high value within the MRCCA. Within the City of Fridley, PRCVs are located within the public parkland along the River. Many of the riverfront parks for Fridley and the Cities of Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center are located across from one of another or the River’s undisturbed islands. These natural view-sheds are a scenic amenity for park visitors, providing an opportunity to connect with nature in the middle of an urban area. Public River Corridor Views should be protected to ensure the existing unique character and aesthetics of the MRCCA. Public River Corridor Views in Fridley are located within:

Riverview Heights Park

Riverview Heights Park provides a view of the outlet of Springbrook Creek (County Ditch 17) into the Mississippi River, with a decorative pedestrian bridge that forms part of the Mississippi Regional Trail. This view is valuable due to the ability to see the confluence of the two waterbodies, and it’s location along a pedestrian/bicycle route. Negative changes would include damage to the bridge or significant deforestation across the river.

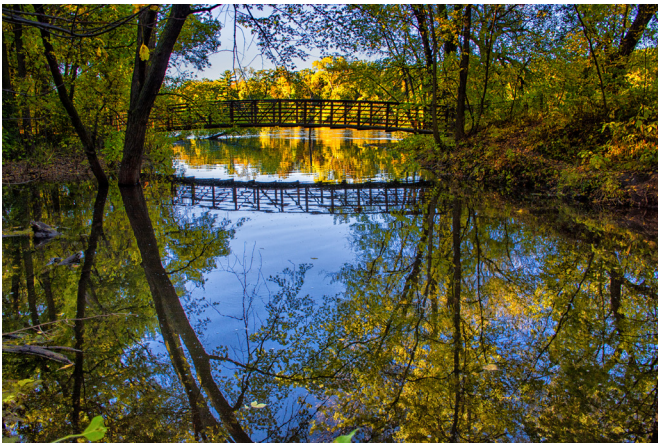


Photo 1. View of River from Riverview Heights Park

Additionally, Anoka County has identified PRCVs from parks that they own and/or manage in the City of Fridley, including Manomin Park, Islands of Peace Park, and Riverfront Park. These PRCVs can be found in the Anoka County Park System Plan. The City acknowledges that all identified views in Fridley, as well as those located across the River in the Cities of Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center should be protected from impact.

9.6 Transportation and Public Utilities

Transportation

There are three main transportation facilities located within or near the Fridley Critical Area: Interstate 694, East River Road, and the BNSF Railroad. Interstate 694 is the only vehicular transportation route across the River in Fridley and consists of two bridges- one carrying eastbound traffic and the other carrying westbound traffic. The MRT runs along the northern side of the bridge with views of the River. I-694 has been designated by the Metropolitan Council as a principal arterial carrying traffic to and from metropolitan sub-regions.

East River Road (Anoka County Road 1), is a minor arterial road that carries traffic in a north-south direction along the River. A master plan for the East River Road corridor was developed by Anoka County and the Cities of Coon Rapids and Fridley in 2012. Recommendations including addition of trails and transitioning certain connector streets to cul-de-sacs. Improvements to East River Road are expected to be implemented over time as funding permits.

East River Road Vision Statement

The Cities of Fridley and Coon Rapids, with Anoka County, will develop a safe and visually appealing corridor, one that embraces the residential feel and natural environment in the area, and provides for effective pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections.

The BNSF railroad yard and right-of-way lies east of East River Road, outside of the critical area. However, the location of the railroad is a barrier for transportation into and out of the Critical Area as there are limited roads and trails which cross the tracks. On the other hand, the Northstar Commuter Line provides a convenient mode of public transit into Fridley, allowing regional access to the City's and County's riverfront parks.

Transportation facilities are not scheduled in the City's 2019-2023 Capital Investment Program; however, road reconstruction projects are planned in 2023, 2024, and 2025 (see Transportation Chapter).

Power Generation/Utilities

There are no existing or planned power generating facilities, including wind farms or solar farms, within the MRCCA; however there are transmission line crossings as well as natural gas line crossings underneath the River in the Fridley Critical Area. Since the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, two 42-inch sanitary sewer forcemains have been installed by the Metropolitan Council under the River to connect to a sanitary sewer pump house in Brooklyn Park. The Metropolitan Council has plans to construct a lift station within the Girl Scout Camp property.

Storm sewers in the City of Fridley range in size from 12-inches to 84-inches. While outfalls used to discharge surface runoff directly into the river, efforts have been made to retrofit the storm sewer system upstream to reduce velocities and improve water quality.

Attached rooftop solar is allowed in all land-uses in the MRCCA without a special-use permit. Detached solar facilities and wind generating facilities are allowed in the MRCCA with a special use permit. Impacts to PRCVs and PCAs are considered as part of the special use permit process.

Water Intake Facilities

Both the Saint Paul Water Pumping Station and the Minneapolis Water Treatment and Distribution facility exist in the Fridley Critical Area. The Saint Paul Pumping Station is located east of 75th Way NE in the CA-RN River Neighborhood District. The Minneapolis Water Treatment and Distribution facility is located west of 43rd Avenue in the CA- UM Urban Mixed District.

9.7 Surface Water and Water Oriented Uses

The Mississippi River is a “working river” and is utilized as an important mode of transportation into and out of the Metropolitan Area. This transportation would not be possible without a channel maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for barge traffic; however, this channel does not extend in to Fridley. Fridley does not regulate Surface Water uses under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 86B.

Barge Traffic

The City of Fridley’s reach of the river corridor does not contain a navigation channel maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers; therefore, barge traffic is prohibited.

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

Small motorized watercraft can access the River in Fridley from the Riverfront Regional Park. Additionally, some private properties maintain personal docks. During the 2017 Citizen Survey, Fridley residents indicated an interest in non-motorized boating along the River, including the ability to rent and store canoes and kayaks. Since there is no barge traffic within the portion of the River in Fridley, increased canoes and kayaks should not present a conflict in this area.

Water-Oriented Land uses

Existing water-oriented land uses are related to utilities such as drinking water intake systems. The only planned water-oriented land use is a Metropolitan Council lift station at the Girl Scout camp.

9.8 Resiliency

Communities along waterways such as the Mississippi River are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to risks of flooding. As a river community, the City of Fridley must account for the effects of increased rain storms and higher water levels on the stability of its shorelines, the functioning of its infrastructure, and the safety of its residents. Effective shoreland management, such as planting deep-rooted native vegetation and limiting floodplain fill, can help mitigate the negative impacts of higher water and increased erosion. Ensuring that buildings and infrastructure near the River are located and designed to minimize flooding can minimize risks to life and property.

9.9 Goals and Objectives

These goals and objectives have been agreed upon related to the vision of keeping Fridley *safe, vibrant, friendly, and stable*:

Goal # 1: Provide a Safe environment for residents and businesses.

Objectives:

- Housing and infrastructure are located and designed to reduce risks of flooding, erosion and potential for bank failure.
- Shorelines are planted with deep-rooted native vegetation to reduce soil erosion and potential for bank failure.
- Flood storage is provided to accommodate rising water.

Goal # 2: Provide a Vibrant community in the Twin Cities.

Objectives:

- Access to the River is enjoyed equitably through various modes and in balance with protection of natural resources.
- Residents on both sides of the River are able to enjoy scenic views and natural settings from public and other valued areas.
- Transportation and utilities are designed efficiently to minimize impact on the natural resources, Primary Conservation Areas, and scenic amenities of the Critical Area.

Goal # 3: Continue to be known as Friendly Fridley in the Twin Cities

Objectives:

- Coordinate with our partners such as Anoka County, Watershed Organizations, the Department of Natural Resources, and the National Park Service, to ensure efficiency management of the MRCCA.
- Surface Water and Water Oriented Uses occur in harmony.

Goal # 4: Provide a Stable environment in which families and businesses can thrive.

Objectives:

- Minimize impacts to Shore Impact Zones, Bluff Impact Zones, wetlands, floodplains, and Primary Conservation Areas.
- Design and manage the Critical Area for resiliency against climate change.

9.10 Policies

The following policies have been established to guide development within the MRCCA

- New development along the riverfront shall have a relationship to the river, the potential to increase river access, and the capability of enhancing the river environment.
- Land use, development, and redevelopment activities shall be guided in a manner consistent with the management purposes of each District, the Critical Area Plan, the Transit Oriented Development Master Plan, site development policies, and the Shoreland, Critical Area, Transit Oriented Development, and Floodplain zoning overlay districts, and other relevant policies.
- Primary Conservation Areas (PCAs) including Shore Impact Zones, Bluff Impact Zones, wetlands, floodplains, natural drainage routes, native plant communities (floodplain forests), native and existing vegetation, unstable soils and bedrock, and significant cultural and historic properties shall be protected and impacts to these PCAs from public development, private development, and land use activities shall be minimized.
- Alternative design standards that protect PCAs and achieve better restoration results shall be prioritized.
- Impacts to PCAs in restoration priority areas identified in Figure 9.7 shall be mitigated through the Special Use Permit, variance, vegetation permit and subdivision/PUD processes through subdivision, variance, and other permits.
- Opportunities to restore vegetation and promote uninterrupted vegetated shorelines along the Mississippi and its tributary streams and ravines (such as Rice Creek, Springbrook, Stoneybrook Creek and Oak Glen Creek) shall be sought to preserve a natural look of the river, enhance PRCVs, provide ecological corridors to nearby natural areas (such as Springbrook Nature Center).
- Restoration of removed Native Plant Communities and natural vegetation in riparian areas, stabilization of erodible soils, riparian buffers, and bluffs and steep slope shall be a high priority during development and required to be restored if removed by development.
- Proposed development sites shall be evaluated for erosion prevention and bank stabilization issues (note, priority areas for erosion prevention, and bank/slope stabilization have not been identified).
- Permanent protection measures that protect PCAs shall be made and public spaces (such as overlooks, plazas, historic landscapes, or interpretive facilities) shall be encouraged where possible in new development or redevelopment projects in the corridor.
- Park dedication that is generated within the corridor shall 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, or other public service within the River Corridor.
- Efforts to limit the discharge of point and non-point pollution sources into the River shall be supported to protect and enhance water quality.
- Transportation shall be designed to minimize impacts on residential, recreational, scenic, and environmentally sensitive areas.
- 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 archaeological resources within the corridor.
- Reduce the use of salt on area roads by encouraging greater use of alternative materials for winter maintenance and other best management practices while considering public safety needs.
- Provide easements for future trail corridors and connections in new developments, redevelopments, and appropriate tax-forfeited parcels within the Corridor.

- Evaluate options to facilitate crossing the BNSF railroad from the eastern side of the City into the Corridor.
- Evaluate options to connect CA-SR district land to existing and planned parks and trails. Coordinate with Anoka County on the management of riverfront parks to reduce the environmental impacts of parks and promote increased environmental resilience.
- Promote Fridley’s riverfront parks as destinations, including for users of the NorthStar Commuter Rail.
- Encourage creation, connection, and maintenance of open space, recreational facilities, including public access to the river.
- Promote opportunities for multi-modal transportation including bicycle, kayak, canoe-sharing and pedestrian use.
- Facilitate educational activities that offer information on the natural and built environment within the Critical Area Corridor.
- Protect and minimize impacts to Public River Corridor Views identified by the City, Anoka County, and Cities adjacent or across the River to Fridley public and private development activities as well as vegetation management activities.
- Seek opportunities to restore vegetation to protect and enhance PRCVs identified in this plan.
- Coordinate with river corridor neighborhoods to identify additional river views or corridors and link them with the City’s Active Transportation Plan
- Encourage the design of redevelopment to maximize off-site views to the Mississippi River and associated natural features.
- Minimize impacts to PCAs and PRCVs from solar and wind generation facilities, public transportation facilities and public utilities.
- Prohibit installation of billboards or other advertisement signs that are visible from the river or its opposite shores.
- Ensure new or modified transportation and utility facilities complement the planned land and water uses and do not stimulate incompatible development.
- Minimize utility crossings and encourage the location of necessary crossings along existing bridges and utility crossings. If feasible, crossings should be underground and should not negatively impact natural or cultural significant resources.
- Encourage the placement of utilities underground.
- Manage the use of River for complimentary recreational uses.
- Evaluate commercial uses and water-dependent uses of the River in Fridley as they occur.

9.11 Action Steps

The DNR recently updated the rules and regulations regarding Mississippi River Critical Corridor Area that leads to inconsistencies with the City of Fridley’s zoning overlay district and zoning map. Updating the City of Fridley code and associated permit will facilitate the development process for residents and reduce inefficiencies.

- **Action Step:** Update Chapter 205.28 Critical Area overlay district, Chapter 205.32 Shoreland Overlay District, and Chapter 205.27 Flood Plain Management overlay district for compliance with the goals and policies of the MRCCA plan and with Minnesota Rules, part 6106.0070, Subp.5 - Content of Ordinances.

- **Action Step:** Update Chapter 205.28 Critical Area and Chapter 205.32 Shoreland Overlay District to establish procedures and criteria for processing applications with potential impacts to PCAs and PRCVs for compliance with the MRCCA plan and with Minnesota Rules, part 6106.0070, Subp.5 - Content of Ordinances.
- **Action Step:** Update zoning map with new MRCCA districts.
- **Action Step:** Develop administrative procedure for integrating DNR and local permitting of riprap, walls, and other hard armoring as needed.
- **Action Step:** Establish a vegetation permitting process that includes permit review procedures to ensure consideration of restoration priorities identified in this plan in permit issuance, as well as standard conditions requiring vegetation restoration.
- **Action Step:** Ensure that information on the location of PCAs and PRCVs, permitting standards for land alteration activities, and location of restoration priorities is readily available to property owners to understand how relevant ordinance requirements apply to their property for project planning and permitting.
- **Action Step:** Establish process for evaluating priorities for natural vegetation restoration, erosion prevention and bank and slope stabilization, or other restoration priorities identified in this plan in Special Use Permits, variances and subdivision processes.
- **Action Step:** Establish process for determining appropriate mitigation procedures for impacts to PRCVs and PCAs identified this plan in Special Use Permits, variances and subdivision processes.
- **Action Step:** Establish procedures for prioritizing protection of PCAs when necessary.
- **Action Step:** Develop process to actively communicate with other communities to protect PRCVs that are valuable.
- **Action Step:** Develop a system for reviewing, tracking, and monitoring open space required as part of the subdivision process.
- **Action Step:** Ensure that solar and wind generation facilities, public transportation facilities, and public utilities have minimal, if any, impact on PCAs and PRCVs.

The City of Fridley's riverfront parks are historically under utilized for recreation. Current barriers for park use include lack of crossings over the BNSF railroad to the Parks, trail gaps to reach the parks via multi-modal transportation, and a lack of amenities.

- **Action Step:** Update Active Transportation Plan to include connections to Parks within the Critical Area. Include funding for trails within the budget for Capital Investment Projects.
- **Action Step:** Coordinate with the BNSF railroad to establish methods to safely cross the railway to access the Critical Area.
- **Action Step:** Coordinate with partners to promote the River and riverfront parks as destinations and install infrastructure to support multi-modal transportation.
- **Action Step:** Evaluate the feasibility of developing a visitor interpretation center at Islands of Peace Park as part of the redevelopment of the NorthStar Transit Overlay District.
- **Action Step:** Implement the Transit Overlay District to bring restaurants and other commercial amenities closer to the Islands of Peace Park.
- **Action Step:** Prioritize public access to the River in the redevelopment of Camp Lockslea/the Girl Scout Camp property owned by the Metropolitan Council.
- **Action Step:** Install and utilize low-impact design, energy conservation, low maintenance turf grass, pollinator plants and other GreenStep Cities best practices during the redevelopment of riverfront parks.

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