

# MISSISSIPPI RIVER CORRIDOR CRITICAL AREA

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## Introduction and History

In 1973, the State legislature enacted the Minnesota Critical Areas Act (Minnesota Statute 116G) that established a process for planning and managing geographic areas designated as being of significant state or regional importance. According to this Act, places considered historically, culturally or environmentally significant by the State may qualify for recognition as a “Critical Area”. The Critical Area designation allows for the coordination of planning and development activities to protect and enhance the environmental, cultural and historic qualities of an area or place.

In 1976, a 72-mile portion of the metropolitan Mississippi River corridor was designated as a Critical Area by state law and implemented by Executive Order No. 130, and reaffirmed and made permanent by Executive Order No. 79-19 in 1979. The segment of the Mississippi River corridor within Hastings was included within this Critical Area. Municipalities and counties were required to develop plans and implementation strategies based upon standards established within the executive order. In 1980, Hastings officially adopted the original Critical Area plan for the portion of the Mississippi River corridor within its boundaries following approval by the State Environmental Quality Board (EQB). The City’s Comprehensive Plan was revised in 1993 and incorporated the original Critical Area Plan. The City never adopted an ordinance to implement provisions of the Critical Area Plan, with the regulations of Executive Order 79-19 serving as local regulation.

The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) was established in 1988 by the United States Congress coincident with the boundaries of the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area and became part of the National Park System. The state Critical Area (MRCCA) program was incorporated into the MNRRA as part of the Comprehensive Management Plan for the river, signed by the Governor and Secretary of the Interior. Rather than institute a separate layer of federal regulations, the MNRRA largely relies on the MRCCA to manage land use, resource protection and open space within the park.

Finally, the Upper Mississippi River has been designated as part of the American Heritage Rivers Initiative. This initiative streamlines access to federal agencies and resources to help implement local plans for restoring and protecting the river’s environmental, economic and cultural values. The Metropolitan Council is responsible for coordinating the efforts of 40 local agencies involved with this initiative.

## Purpose

The purposes of the Critical Area and the MNRRA program are complementary to each other. However, the MNRRA program stresses the additional protection and enhancement of the natural, cultural and economic resources of the river corridor to a greater extent than the Critical Area program. The purpose of the Critical Area program is 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;
- Prevent and mitigate irreversible damage to this state, regional and natural resource;
- Preserve and enhance its natural, aesthetic, cultural and historic value for the public use;
- Protect and preserve the river as an essential element in the national, state and regional transportation, sewer and water and recreational systems; and
- Protect and preserve the biological and ecological functions of the corridor.

The MNRRA Comprehensive Management Plan is broad and intended to address a variety of different river corridor issues. The management plan contains elements that go beyond what is required under State law. There is additional emphasis on public access to the river, historic preservation, and habitat restoration/mitigation.

The Mississippi River and Recreation Area was established by Congress to:

- Protect, preserve and enhance the significant values of the Mississippi River corridor through the Twin Cities metropolitan area
- Encourage coordination of federal, state, and local programs
- Provide a management framework to assist entities in the development and implementation of integrated resource management programs to ensure orderly public and private development.

The Metropolitan Council, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the National Park Service coordinated efforts to provide technical assistance to communities that are updating their plans to meet mandatory Critical Area planning requirements, as well as encouraging communities to address the voluntary elements of the MNRRA Comprehensive Management Plan. Hastings received funds from the National Park Service administered by Metropolitan Council to assist in the preparation of this chapter and revisions to regulatory controls that affect Critical Area/MNRRA Corridor lands.

State law requires communities to complete Critical Area plans as well as ordinances that are consistent with the plan. The City must submit the plan to the Metropolitan Council for review. Additionally, the City must submit the plan and ordinances to the DNR, for review and approval, based upon consistency with elements of Minnesota Rules Chapter 6106 and Minnesota Statutes Chapter 116G..

## Public Input

The public input for the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Analysis and Plan was gathered through the same process as the rest of the Hastings 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update. Stakeholders were exposed to the idea of the river as a critical area. The details of the public input and engagement process for this plan are detailed in chapter two of the Hastings 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update.

It is important that the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan include a chapter that is specifically oriented towards the Mississippi River corridor. This is because of the history, environment and planning of

community that has been influenced by the Mississippi River in Hastings. This portion of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan has been developed to include:

- The mandatory requirements of the Critical Area program (Tier I),
- The voluntary requirements of the MNRRA plan (Tier II), and
- To coordinate river corridor planning with other 2040 Comprehensive Plan chapters.

Likewise, all other 2040 Comprehensive Plan chapters need to be consistent with and support the goals and policies of the Hastings Mississippi River Corridor Area Plan and strive to meet the Tier II policies. This plan is intended to replace the original 1979 Critical Area Plan that was incorporated into the 1993 update to the Comprehensive Plan. Although the Mississippi River Corridor is part of the National Park System, there is no federal regulatory authority over land within the corridor except for properties owned by the federal government. The land use controls over the river corridor are the responsibility of the City of Hastings

## Local Progress Since 2030 Plan

Over the past decade the City of Hastings has made significant progress with improvements in the River Corridor Area that comply with the policies of the 2030 plan, including the following:

- Improved public access to and along the Mississippi River through rehabilitation of a public boat launch and parking improvements at Jaycee Park in partnership with the MN DNR.
- Facilitated the installation, in collaboration with the National Park Services and MN DOT, of additional signage and interpretive displays at public locations along the riverfront.
- Completed a four million dollar rehabilitation of Levee Park in collaboration with the Hastings Rotary Club and private partnerships.
- Encouraged and partnered with private and public entities to attract reinvestment along the riverfront, including partnering with Confluence Development, the Minnesota Livable Communities program and to utilize historic tax credits in order to transform the former H.D. Hudson Manufacturing campus into a multi-use facility that includes a hotel, apartments, retail space and riverfront park open for public access.

Overall, many of the goals of the 2030 plan were ongoing goals that the City of Hastings has pursued and supported. The City of Hastings will continue to do so by reincorporating applicable elements of the ongoing 2030 goals into the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and MRCCA Plan.



# Plan Goals and Policies

The City of Hastings has adopted the following goals for the corridor that are intended to be consistent with the purpose of the Critical Area and MNRRRA programs:

- To adhere to the purpose and goals of the State Critical Area Act and the Mississippi National River and Recreational Area Program in all municipal planning activities.
- To provide for the continuation and the development of a variety of urban and rural land uses in the Mississippi River Corridor.
- To promote the scenic, environmental, recreational, economic, cultural, and historic resources and functions of the Mississippi River Corridor in a balanced manner.
- To use certain reaches of the river as a water supply source.
- To provide adequate public access (views, trails, boat access, etc.) to and along the river.
- To encourage private sector involvement and interest in the Corridor in a manner that complies with the policies of this plan, MNRRRA standards and sustainable development practices.
- That the City adopt regulations for protection and enhancement of the river corridor, updated as needed, and continually enforced.

The policies to implement these overall goals are presented in the Plan and Policies section of this plan.

## River Corridor Districts

The Mississippi River corridor occupies approximately 2.5 square miles of land in Hastings as depicted on Figure 11.1. The portion of the downtown north of Second Street and CSAH 42 and rural areas to the east of downtown is within the river corridor area.

Minnesota Rules Chapter 6106 established six general districts within the entire corridor. The purpose of the districts is to provide overall general guidelines to achieve consistent management throughout the corridor. The districts and guidelines include the following:

- **Rural and Open Space District (CA-ROS):** The Rural and Open Space District (CA-ROS) is characterized by rural and low-density development patterns and land uses, and includes land that is riparian or visible from the river, as well as large, undeveloped tracts of high ecological and scenic value, floodplain, and undeveloped islands. Many primary conservation areas exist in the district.

The CA-ROS district must be managed to sustain and restore the rural and natural character of the corridor and to protect and enhance habitat, parks and open space, public river corridor views, and scenic, natural, and historic areas.

- **River Neighborhood District (CA-RN).** The River Neighborhood District (CA-RN) is characterized by primarily residential neighborhoods that are riparian or 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 habitat, parks and open space, public river corridor views, and scenic, natural, and historic areas.

Minimizing erosion and the flow of untreated storm water into the river and enhancing habitat and shoreline vegetation are priorities in the district.

- **River Towns and Crossings District (CA-RTC).** The River Towns and Crossings District (CA-RTC) is characterized by historic downtown areas and limited nodes of intense development at specific river crossings, as well as institutional campuses that predate designation of the Mississippi River Critical Corridor Area and that include taller buildings.

The CA-RTC district must be managed in a manner that allows continued growth and redevelopment in historic downtowns and more intensive redevelopment in limited areas at river crossings to accommodate compact walkable development patterns and connections to the river. Minimizing erosion and the flow of untreated storm water into the river, providing public access to and public views of the river, and restoring natural vegetation in riparian areas and tree canopy are priorities in the district.

- **Separated from River District (CA-SR).** The Separated From River District (CA-SR) is characterized by its physical and visual distance from the Mississippi River. The district 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 storm water into the Mississippi River are priorities in the district.

- **Urban Mixed District (CA-UM).** 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 storm water into the river, and providing public access to and public views of the river are priorities in the district.

- **Urban Core District (CA-UC).** The Urban Core District (CA-UC) includes the urban cores of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

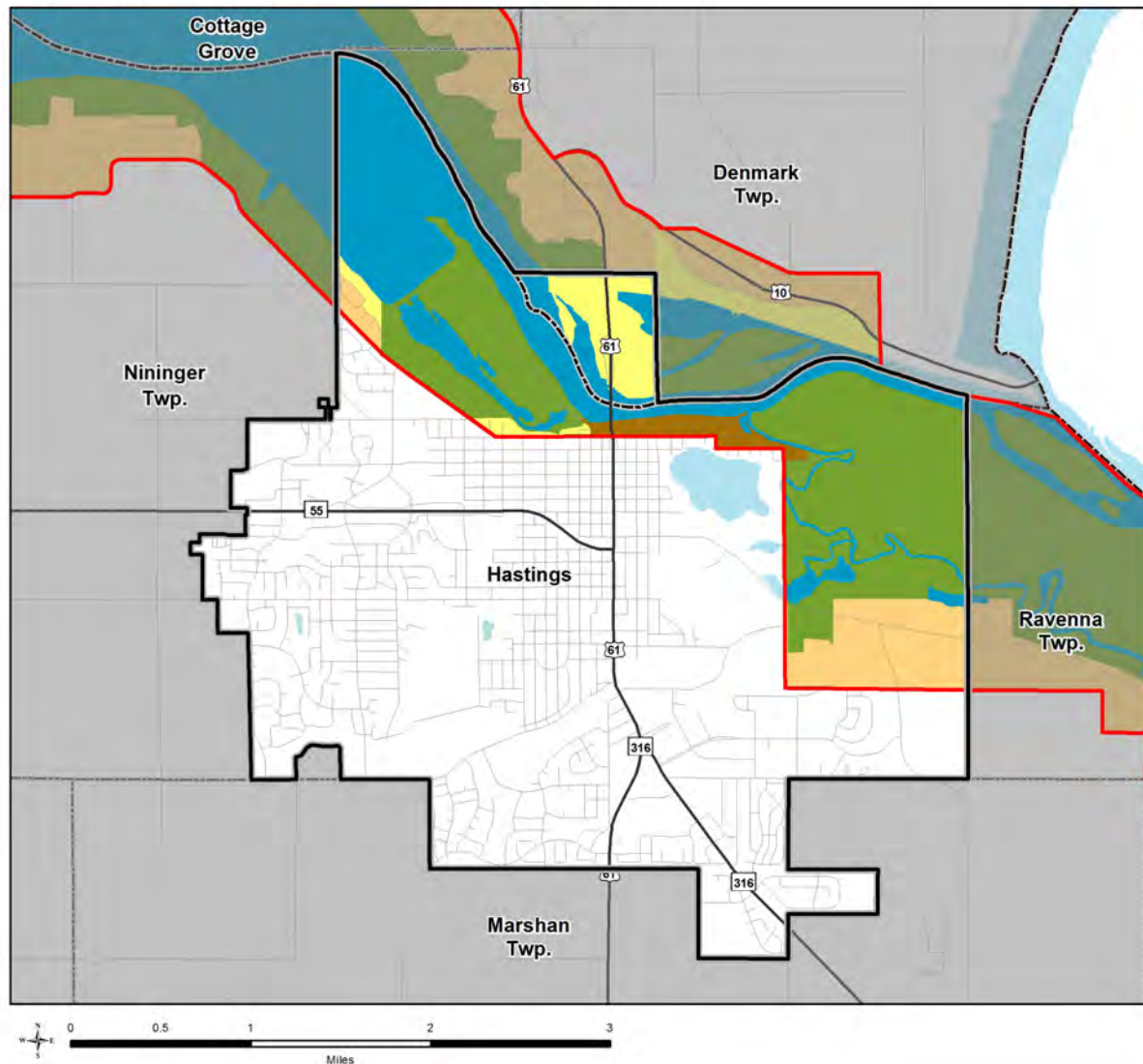
The CA-UC district must be managed with the greatest flexibility to protect commercial, industrial, and other high-intensity urban uses, while minimizing negative impacts to primary conservation areas and minimizing erosion and flow of untreated storm water into the river. Providing public access to and public views of the river are priorities in the district.

There are four districts within Hastings: 1) The Separated from River District; 2) the Rural Open Space District; 3) the River Towns and Crossings District; and 4) the River Neighborhood District.



**Figure 11.1**

**Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Districts  
City of Hastings, Dakota & Washington Counties**



- 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)

- Water
- County Boundaries
- City and Township Boundaries
- NCompass Street Centerlines

Source: Metropolitan Council

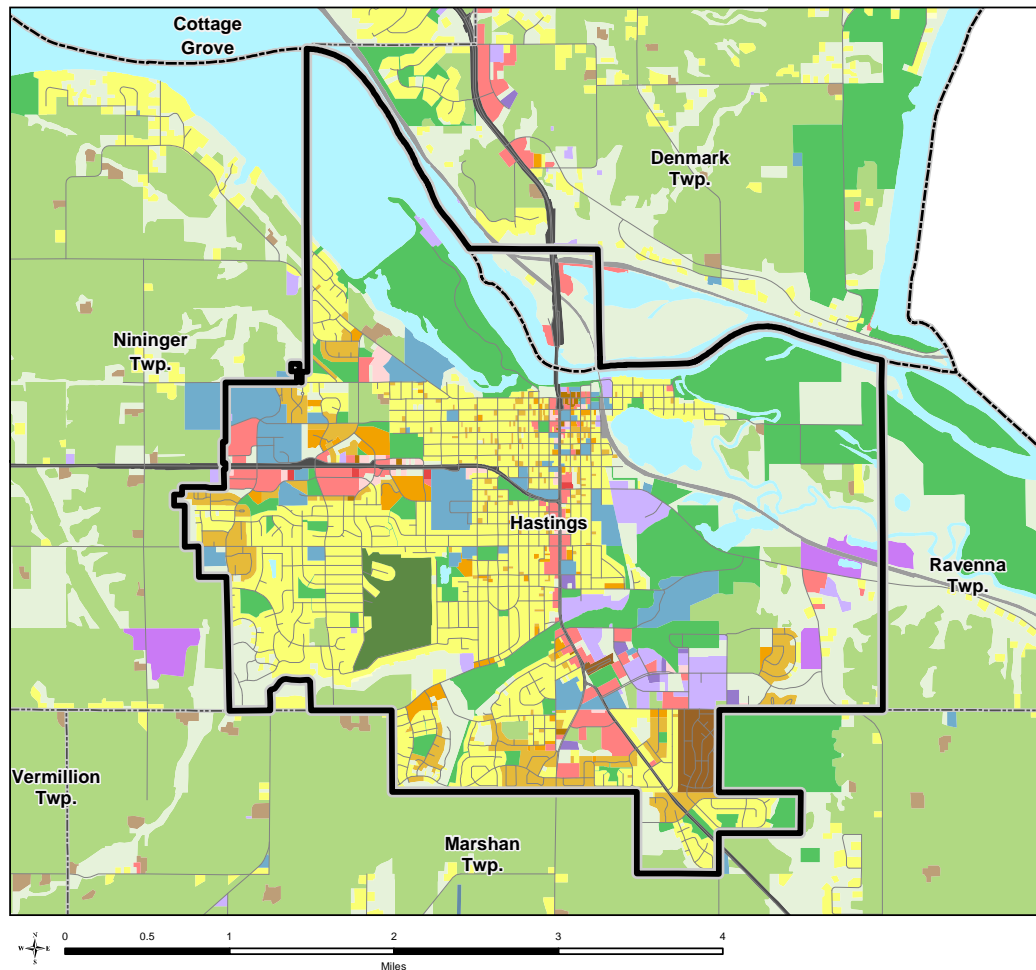


# Existing Land Use

The majority of the existing land uses in the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor is undeveloped floodplain, parkland and open space. However, the central area of the river corridor contains urbanized land uses. River Towns and Crossings, Separated from the River and Rural and Open Space Districts within the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor. Figure 11.2 below shows the existing land use of the City of Hastings; a larger version is located in Chapter 4 - Land Use.

**Figure 11.2**

**2016 Generalized Land Use  
City of Hastings, Dakota & Washington Counties**



**2016 Generalized Land Use**

- |                             |                                |               |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Farmstead                   | Mixed Use Residential          | Major Highway |
| Seasonal/Vacation           | Mixed Use Industrial           | Railway       |
| Single Family Detached      | Mixed Use Commercial and Other | Airport       |
| Manufactured Housing Park   | Industrial and Utility         | Agricultural  |
| Single Family Attached      | Extractive                     | Undeveloped   |
| Multifamily                 | Institutional                  | Water         |
| Retail and Other Commercial | Park, Recreational or Preserve |               |
| Office                      | Golf Course                    |               |

- County Boundaries
- City and Township Boundaries
- NCompass Street Centerlines

Source: Metropolitan Council

# Primary Conservation Areas

Primary Conservation Areas (PCAs) are defined in the MRCCA rules (6106.0050, Subp. 53) as key resources and features, including shore impact zones (SIZ), bluff impact zones (BIZ), floodplains, wetlands, gorges, areas of confluence with tributaries, natural drainage routes, unstable soils and bedrock, native plant communities, cultural and historic properties, significant existing vegetative stands, tree canopies and “other resources” identified in local government MRCCA plans. The following pages provide description of the PCA’s in Hastings. Mapping is provided where applicable.

## Shore Impact Zones

Figure 11.3 below shows the Shoreline Impact Zones (SIZ) in the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor. SIZ is defined as the land located between the ordinary high water level of a public water and a line parallel to it at a setback of 50 percent of the structure setback. Hastings has SIZ areas identified along the lengths of the Mississippi and Vermillion rivers.

**Figure 11.3**

Shoreline Impact Zones  
City of Hastings, Dakota & Washington Counties



Source: Metropolitan Council and Minnesota DNR

## Wetlands

There are several wetlands as depicted on Figure 11.4 within the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor according to the National Wetland Inventory maps (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and the Protected Waters and Wetlands Inventory maps (MnDNR). The wetlands are classified according to Circular 39 produced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and are protected by the State Wetland Conservation Act. The six types of wetlands as defined by the Circular 39 classification system in the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor are:

**Type 1:** Seasonally flooded basin or flat. Soil is covered with water or is waterlogged during variable seasonal periods but usually is well-drained during much of the growing season. Vegetation varies greatly according to season and duration of flooding: from bottom-land hardwoods to herbaceous plants.

**Type 2:** Shallow marsh. Soil is usually waterlogged early during the growing season and may often be covered with as much as 6 inches or more of water. These marshes may nearly fill shallow lake basins or sloughs, or may border deep marshes on the landward side. These are common as seep areas on irrigated lands. Vegetation includes grass, bulrush, spikerush and various other marsh plants such as cattail, arrowhead, pickerelweed and smartweed.

**Type 3:** Deep marsh. Soil is usually covered with 6" to 3' or more of water during the growing season. These deep marshes may completely fill shallow lake basins, potholes, limestone sinks and sloughs, or they may border open water in such depressions. Vegetation includes cattail, reed, bulrush, spikerush, and wild rice. In open areas, pondweed, naiad, coontail, water-milfoil, waterweed, duckweed, waterlily or spatterdock may occur.

**Type 4:** Shallow open water. Shallow ponds and reservoirs are included in this type. Water is usually less than 10' deep and fringed by a border of emergent vegetation similar to open areas of Type 4.

**Type 5:** Shrub swamp. Soil is usually waterlogged during the growing season and is often covered with as much as 6" of water. These occur mostly along sluggish streams and occasionally on flood plains. Vegetation includes alder, willow, buttonbush, dogwood and swamp-pivet.

**Type 6:** Wooded swamps. Soil is waterlogged at least to within a few inches of the surface during the growing season and is often covered with as much as 1' of water. These occur mostly along sluggish streams, on old riverine oxbows, on flat uplands and in ancient lake basins. Forest vegetation includes tamarack, arborvitae, black spruce, balsam fir, red maple and black ash. Deciduous swamps frequently support beds of duckweed and smartweed. Other wetland plant community types include lowland hardwood swamps and coniferous swamps.

Type 1 and 2 wetlands are located throughout the corridor, including an abundant wetland area around Lake Rebecca and adjacent to the meandering portions of the Vermillion River in extreme eastern Hastings. The Type 3 wetlands include much of the bottom-lands in eastern area of Hastings adjacent to the Vermillion River and the Vermillion Slough. Lowlands around Lake Rebecca and the low areas north of the Mississippi River channel also fall within this category. Lake Rebecca, Lake Isabel, Conley Lake and Pool No. 3 are all classified as Type 4 wetlands.

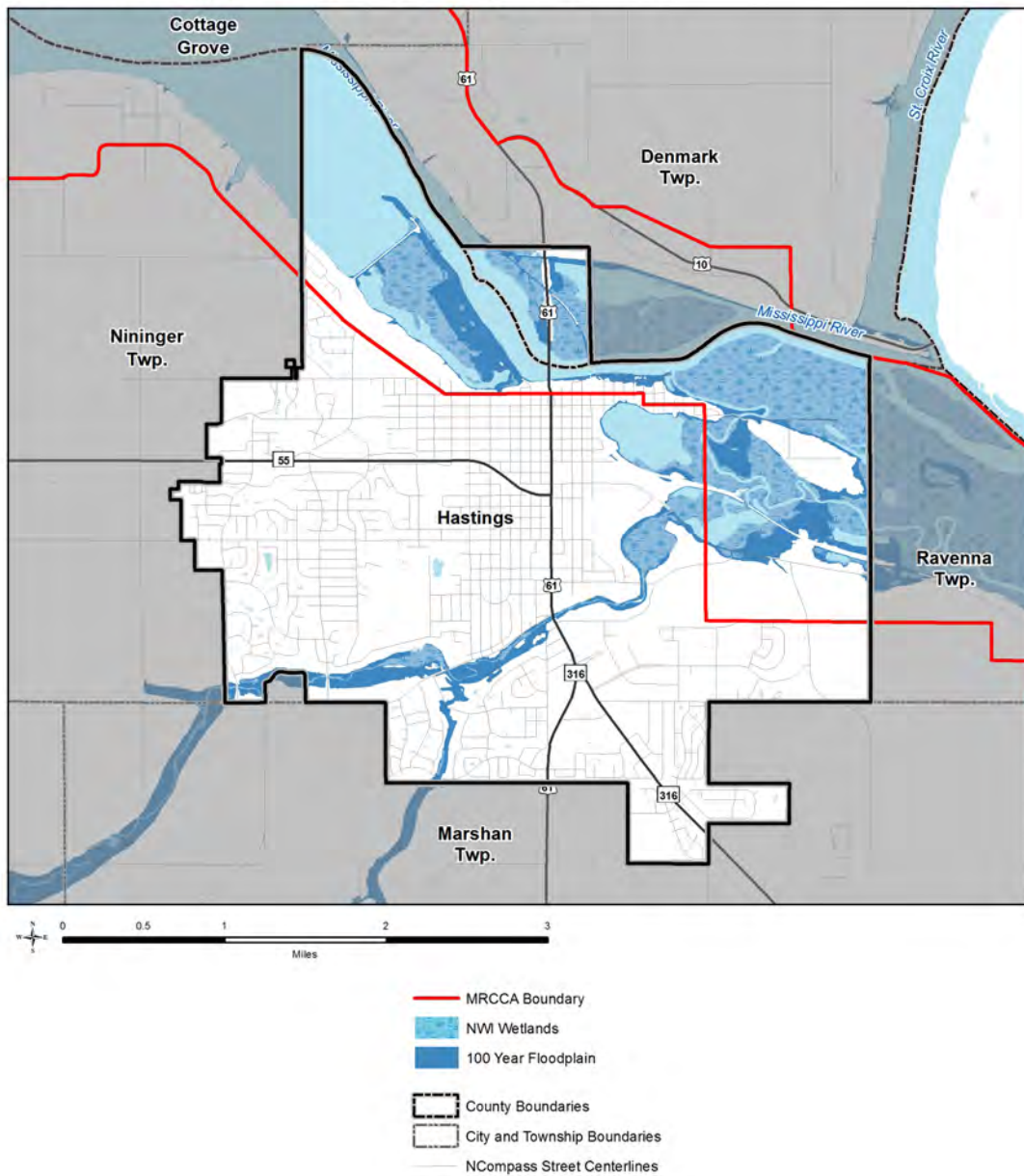
Types 5 and 6 wetlands are only located in the Rural Open Space District of Hastings. These two wetlands are located in small areas in the north and eastern parts of the district.

## Floodplain

A majority of property within the corridor area in Hastings is floodplain as depicted on Figure 11.4. Several structures located to the east of the Canadian Pacific Railroad are within the designated floodplain of the Mississippi River. The high terrace above Lake Rebecca along West Second Street is the only large expanse of undeveloped River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts land not subject to flood hazard. In the Rural Open Space District, the high ground in the extreme southeastern section above the bluff line is not within the floodplain district. However, the remainder of the district is open water, wetlands, floodplain or subject to periodic inundation.

**Figure 11.4**

### Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area - Wetlands & Floodplains City of Hastings, Dakota & Washington Counties



Source: Metropolitan Council

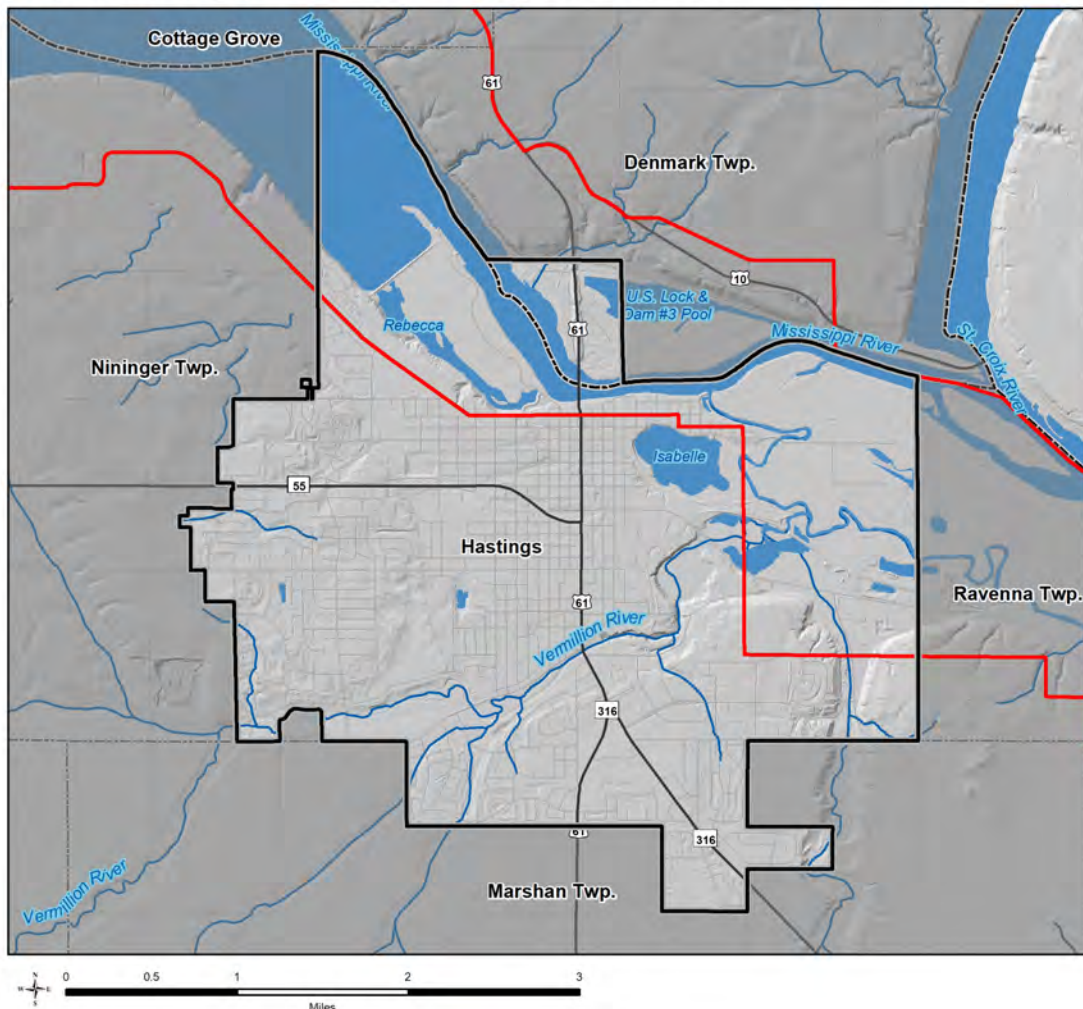


## Natural Drainage Routes

The north and northwestern portions of the corridor within the City drains to the Mississippi River and the majority of the eastern portion of the City within the Rural Open Space District drains to the Vermillion River before it discharges to the Mississippi River north of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. Additionally, there is a sand coulée that parallels the west side of Co. Rd. 91 and terminates just south of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. The northwestern area of the city is within the Lower Mississippi River watershed, the area to the north of the downtown is within the Cottage Grove Ravine watershed and the remaining portion of the City is within the Vermillion River watershed.

**Figure 11.5**

### Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area - Major Natural Drainage Routes City of Hastings, Dakota & Washington Counties



- MRCCA Boundary
- Background Layer: MnGEO Hillshade (LIDAR)
- ~ Streams (All Types - Perennial & Intermittent)
- Lakes and Major Rivers
- County Boundaries
- City and Township Boundaries
- NCompass Street Centerlines

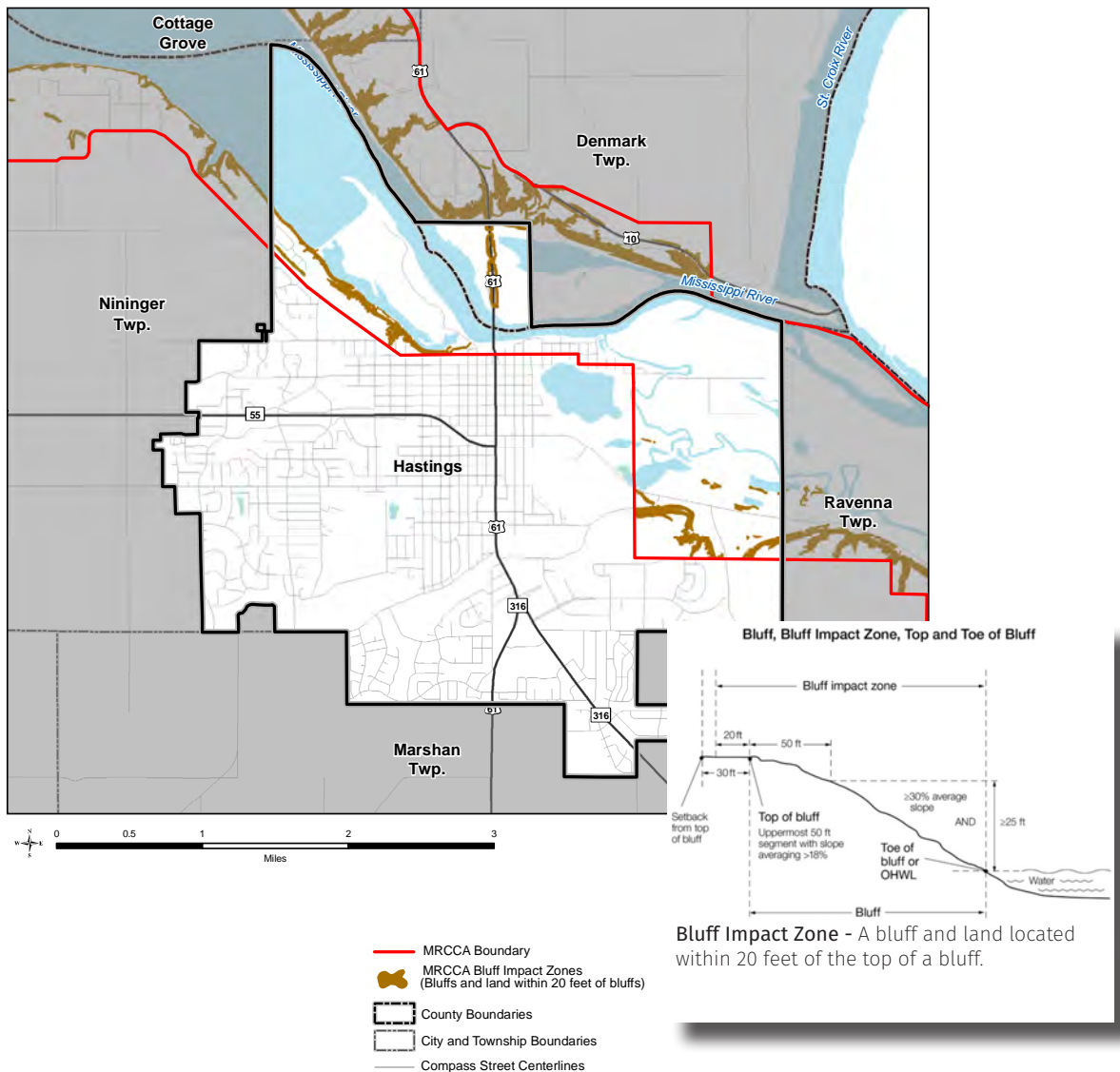
Source: Metropolitan Council

## Bluff Impact Zones

The floodplain portion of the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor is comprised primarily of level to nearly level lands and out-wash plains. Slopes ranging from 0% to 6% dominate the floodplain with greater topographic variation as distance from the river channel increases. Both the Mississippi and Vermillion Rivers contain areas of steep slopes that are defined as rising 12' or more within a distance of 100' (12%). The most dramatic bluffs, defined as a feature that exceeds a rise of 18' within 100' (18%), along the Mississippi River in Hastings reach as high as 200', producing an elevation rise from 675' to around 900' above sea level. Two areas of slopes that exceed 12% in grade exist within the corridor. One area is the bluff line along the south side of Lake Rebecca that extends along the Mississippi Riverbanks to the northwest, where slopes are at or exceed 18%. The other area is adjacent to Co. Rd. 91 in the southeast section of the City. These bluffs extend to the Veterans Home and the Hastings State Scientific and Natural Area. Figure 11.6 below inventories the Bluff Impact Zones in Hastings.

**Figure 11.6**

**Bluff Impact Zones  
City of Hastings, Dakota & Washington Counties**



Source: Metropolitan Council and Minnesota DNR



## Native Plant Communities and Significant Existing Vegetative Stands

The original vegetation of the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor included the “River Bottom Forest” plant community according to the Natural Communities and Rare Species Map for Dakota County, Minnesota prepared by the DNR in 1997. Species within this plant community include elm, ash, cottonwood, box elder, silver maple, willow, aspen, and hackberry. A plant community termed the “Oak Openings and Barrens” surrounded the “River Bottom Forest” community in the mid 1800s. The “Oak Openings and Barrens” community is characterized by scattered trees and groves of oaks of scrubby form with some brush and thickets. Only small areas of the “River Bottom Forest” along the Mississippi River floodplain have remained in their natural state due to development activities.

There are three general plant communities present in the Hastings corridor today according to information collected by the Minnesota Biological Survey under the direction of the DNR. These plant communities are described as follows:

1. Natural areas generally follow the Vermillion River from Lake Isabel to the eastern border of the City within the Rural Open Space District. The DNR describes this native plant community, termed “Floodplain Forest” (that succeeded the River Bottom Forest), as:

“Silver maple subtype: lowland forests on alluvium along the Mississippi River, flooded for weeks at a time during seasonal high water; canopy dominated by silver maple, which contributes >50% cover; common canopy associates include green ash, cottonwood, and peach-leaved willow; sub canopy and shrub layer poorly developed; woody climbers such as Canada moonseed and wild grape common, especially in light gaps; common ground-layer species include wood nettle, tall coneflower, and honewort”.

2. An “Emergent Marsh” is located on the east side of a wetland, locally known as Bullfrog Pond, in the Rural Open Space District. This type of marsh is defined by the DNR, as:

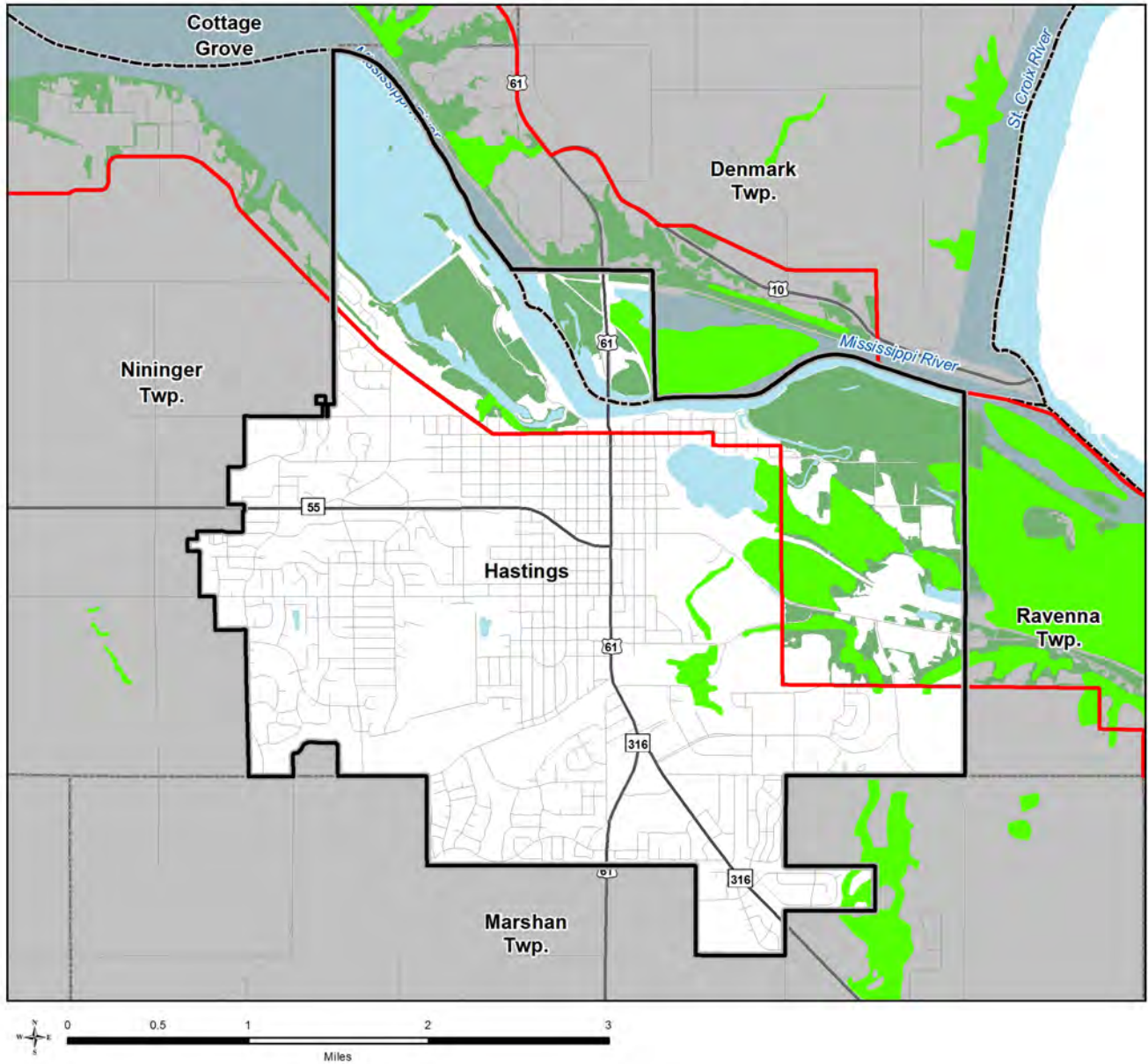
“Open wetlands along stream or lake margins or in river backwaters on floodplains of the Mississippi River and its tributaries; standing water present most of the year; dominant species vary but often include distinct zones of broad-leaved cattail, river bulrush, broad-leaved arrowhead, and occasionally giant bur-reed.”

3. An “Oak Forest – mesic subtype” follows an intermittent stream located along the east side of Co. Rd. 91 (Glendale Road) and along the south side of the Canadian Pacific Railroad within the southern portion of the Rural Open Space District. This community is defined by the DNR as:

“Dry-mesic to mesic forests on loess, colluvium, or glacial till, often on north to east facing slopes; canopy most often dominated by one or more oak species, usually including red oak, other dominant or important canopy species are bur oak, northern pin oak, white oak, and basswood; common sub canopy and shrub-layer species include ironwood, sugar maple, paper birch, bitternut hickory, gray dogwood, and American Hazelnut; ground layer dominated by summer-blooming species such as pointed-leaved tick-trefoil, wild geranium, and sweet cicely.”

Figure 11.7

### Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area - Native Plant Communities and Significant Existing Vegetative Stands City of Hastings, Dakota & Washington Counties



- MRCCA Boundary
- DNR Native Plant Communities
- MRCCA Significant Existing Vegetative Stands
- - - County Boundaries
- ▭ City and Township Boundaries
- NCompass Street Centerlines

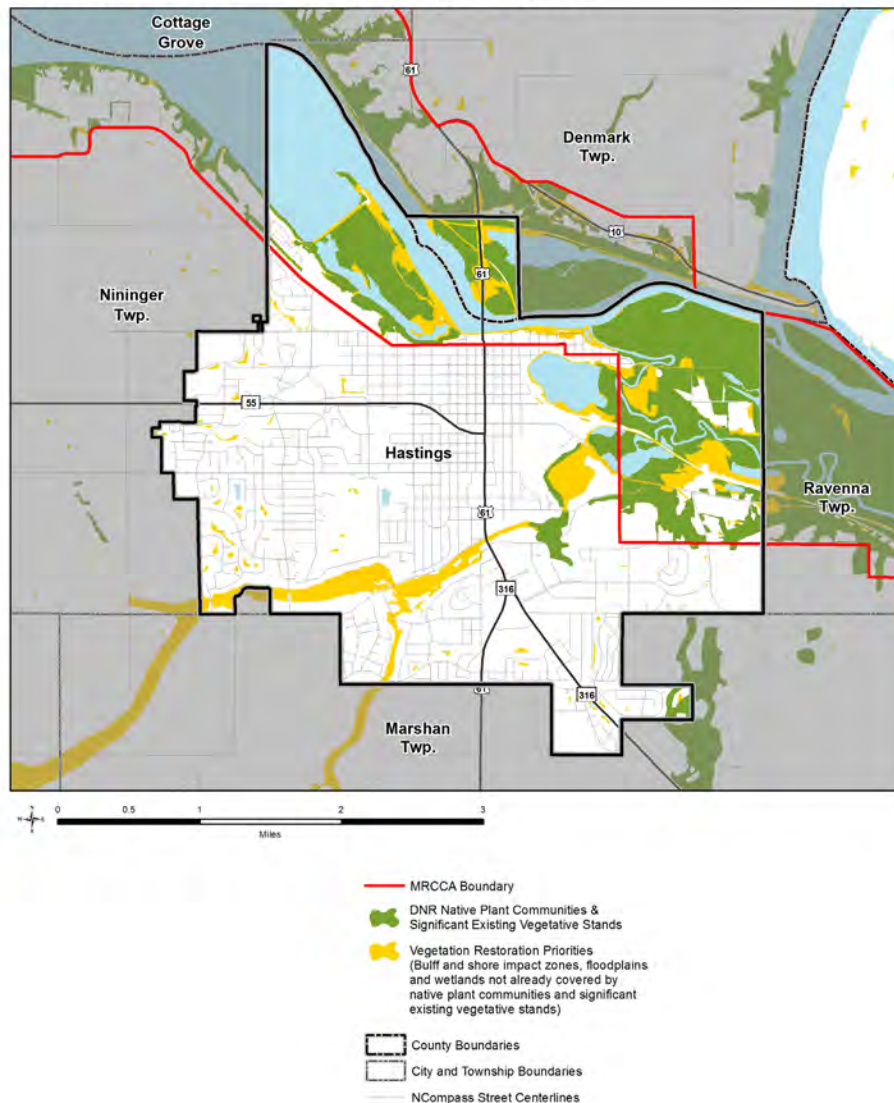
Source: Metropolitan Council

## Vegetation Restoration Priorities

The process of urbanization within the River Towns and Crossings and the River Neighborhood Districts of the corridor has completely altered native vegetation. Development normally includes tree removal, grading and filling activities and the installation of sod and new plantings. Plantings of deciduous and conifer species are common, though conifers are not native to the area. Large areas of River Towns and Crossings and the River Neighborhood Districts vegetation exist throughout the district from Lock and Dam Road and to the eastern edge of downtown area of Hastings.

**Figure 11.8**

**Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area - Vegetation Restoration Priorities  
City of Hastings, Dakota & Washington Counties**



Source: Metropolitan Council

## Cultural and Historic Properties

The Mississippi River is one of the primary reasons for the founding of the City of Hastings in 1850. The location at a narrow point in the river channel contained a deep water landing area for steamships and a level crossing point for a future ferry or bridge. The location offered easy access to the Dakota County farmlands to the west and south of the City. Additionally, timber, limestone and clay were available in the vicinity for constructing buildings. Many of the cultural resources of early Hastings remain in existence.

**Heritage Preservation:** There are two National Register historic districts within Hastings that include portions of the River Towns and Crossings District: the West Second Street Historic District and the East Second Street Commercial District. The West Second Street Historic District is a residential neighborhood comprised of homes with varying architectural styles. This district extends along West Second Street between Forest and Eddy Streets and includes 13 contributing homes. Figure 11.9 depicts the location of the historic districts within the corridor.

The East Second Street Commercial District consists of the two blocks on East Second Street between Ramsey and Vermillion Streets and the east side of the block along Sibley Street between Second and Third Streets. The East Second Street historic district includes 37 brick or stone structures, 35 contributing structures. Many have been restored, but some still need improvements. All 37 of these buildings are on the National Register of Historic Sites.

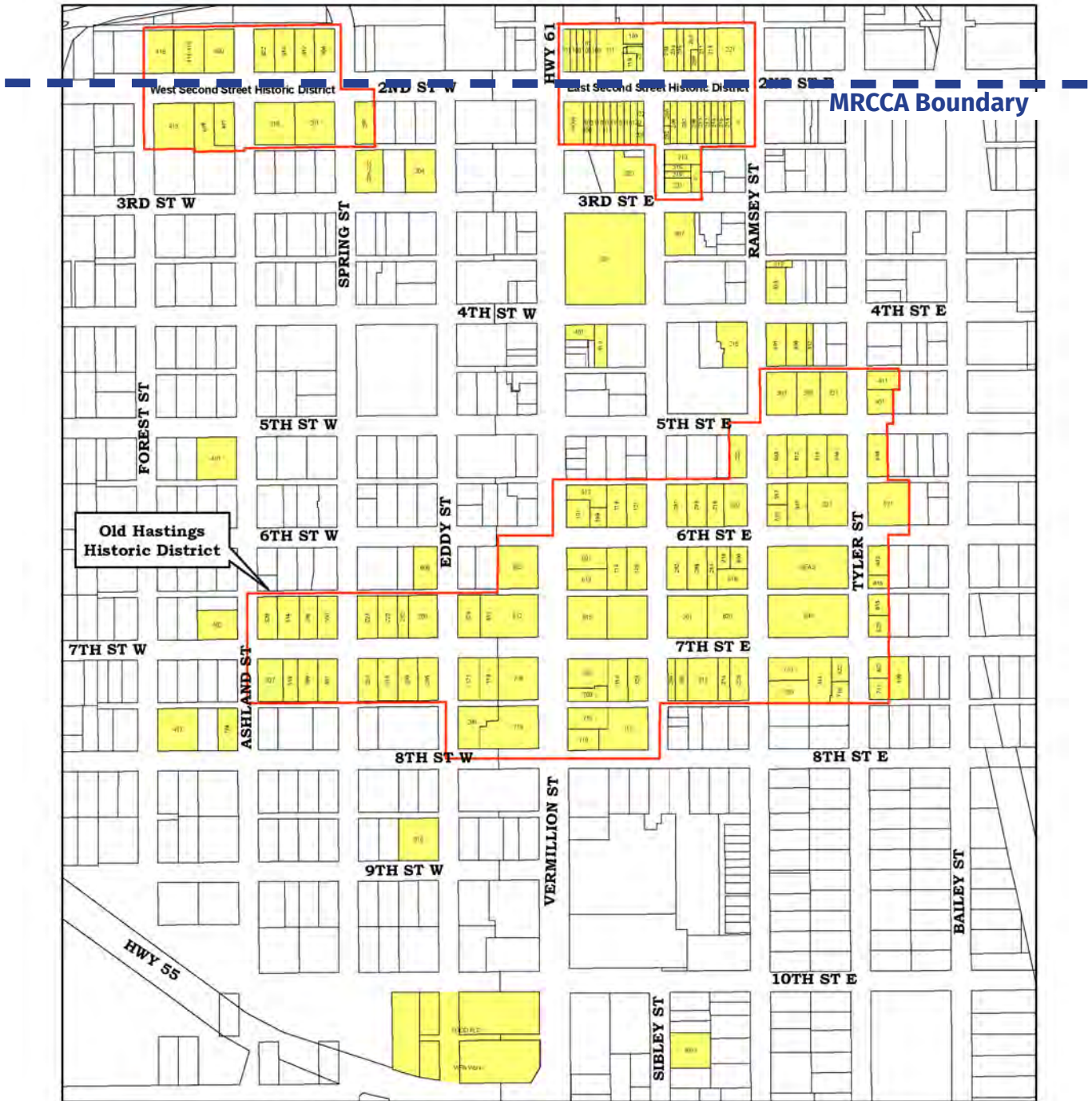
The Hastings Foundry is also listed on the National Register but is not situated in a historic district. This building is located on East First Street and Chestnut Street on the east side of the downtown. Additionally, there are other buildings and sites which have been listed on the National Register or considered for Heritage Preservation sites within or adjacent to the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor as referred to in the Heritage Preservation chapter of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Two important sites include the Lakeside Cemetery on the north side of CSAH 42 and the Soldier's and Sailor's Cemetery on the south side of CSAH 42 along the bluff in the western portion of the River Towns and Crossings District. These sites were established in 1867 and 1905, respectively, and provide picturesque settings overlooking the river corridor.

**Archaeology:** There are no known Native American sites within the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor.



Figure 11.9

## City of Hastings Heritage Preservation Sites



**Designated properties not show on the map:**

- |                  |                       |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 707 1st St East* | 700 6th St West       |
| 615 3rd St West  | 315 Pine St           |
| 625 3rd St West  | 801 Pine St           |
| 700 4th St West  | 1629 Vermillion St    |
| 1512 4th St East | 18th St E- Mill Ruins |

\*Located within the MRCCA Boundary



NGISGIS Map9-PC Map September 2014

Source: City of Hastings

## Wildlife

There are few remaining native vegetation areas in the County that support high value wild life habitat according to the “Environment and Resources Chapter” of the Dakota County Comprehensive Plan. The Mississippi River corridor and portions of the Vermillion River floodplain in Hastings contain small areas of native vegetation that have the ability to support high value wildlife habit. Birds listed as federally endangered or threatened that are found along the Mississippi River include bald eagles and peregrine falcons. A bald eagle nesting area is located in the vicinity of Lock and Dam No. 2. Additionally, the Blue Sucker and Higgens Eye Mussel are fish and mollusk species that are on the Federally endangered or threatened species list that have been found in the Mississippi River near the City.

The Wildlife Section of the DNR manages the Hastings State Scientific and Natural Area located in the west central section of the Rural Open Space District. This area contains a variety of upland vascular plants, aquatic/riparian birds, and terrestrial natural communities according to the Sensitive Resources Map prepared for District 5, Environmental Protection Agency.

## Unstable Soils and Bedrock

Hastings is built upon the middle and lower terraces of the Mississippi River. The northern edge of the City outside of the south and north sides of the river channel is within the floodplain alluvium of the river that is comprised of soil deposited during flood stages. The generalized soil types within the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor are the nearly level sand and sandy loam.

Most of the existing development within the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts is located on out-wash soils. These soils are primarily the Dakota, Esterville or Waukegan series. The soils are dark colored and nearly level on out-wash flats and terraces. The soil profile is one of silt loam to loamy sand underlain by sand and gravel at depths of 1’ to 4’, which is generally acceptable to urban development. The nearly level soils on the floodplain in the east portion of Hastings within the Rural Open Space District are a composite of loam and sand that is frequently flooded, generally too wet and unstable for development.

Several soil groups within the Rural Open Space District that are outside of the floodplain areas are very permeable and pose problems for on-site septic systems. Permeability is the capability of soils to allow water to pass through them. Excessively coarse soils, or soils with bedrock close to the surface, or soils with a high water table are all severely limited for on-site septic systems. Coarse soils percolate too rapidly while tight soils percolate too slowly. Development increases the flood hazard on soils with a low permeability, which have a high water retention capability. These areas are also susceptible to shrink/swell alterations with changes in moisture content.

Unstable bedrock has not been identified for Hastings. Hasting has no developable areas identified within the MRCCA boundary area that are concerns for erosion prevention, bank and slope stabilization or other identified restorative activities.

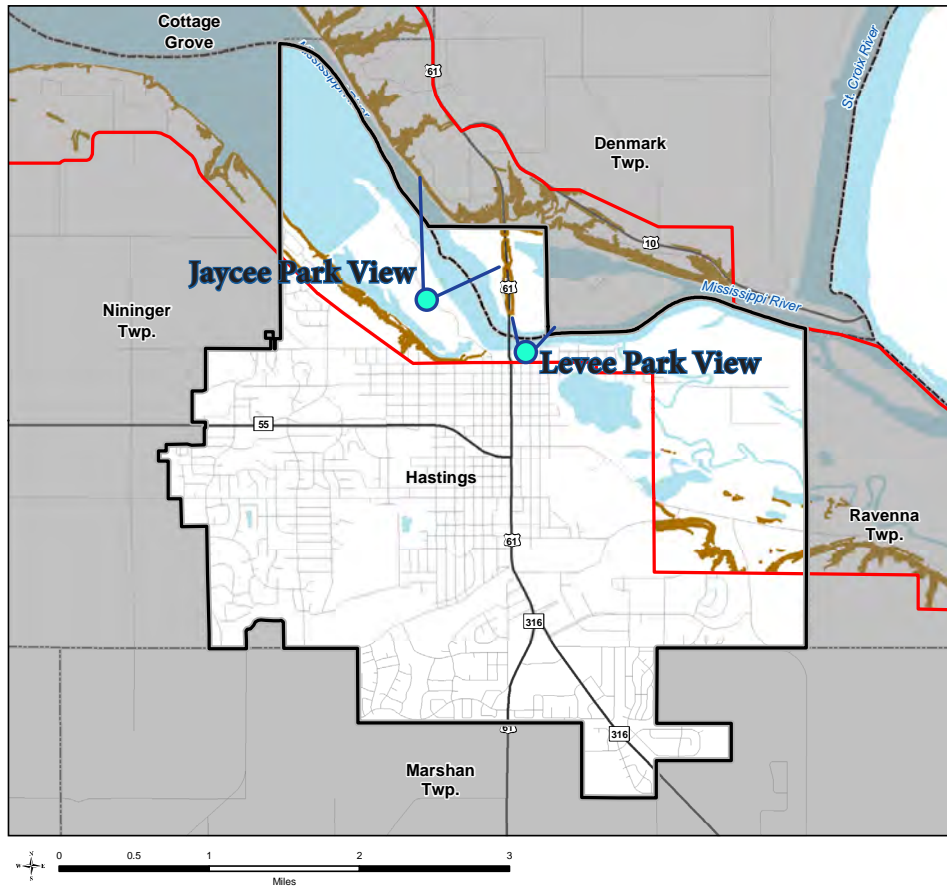


# Public River Corridor Views

Public river corridor views are views toward the river from public parkland, historic properties, and public overlooks, as well as views toward bluffs from the ordinary high water level of the opposite shore, as seen during the summer months. Formal scenic overlooks have been developed along the river trail and within several parks. There are two Public River Corridor views of the river and bluffs from public parkland and historic properties. These two views are from Levee Park and Jaycee Park and are shown on Figure 11.10.

**Figure 11.10**

Public River Corridor Views  
**City of Hastings, Dakota & Washington Counties**



- MRCCA Boundary
- MRCCA Bluff Impact Zones (Bluffs and land within 20 feet of bluffs)
- Public River Corridor Views
- County Boundaries
- City and Township Boundaries
- NCompass Street Centerlines

Source: Metropolitan Council

## Levee Park River View

The photo below shows a view from Levee Park towards the Mississippi River. In this particular area, any allowance for significant changes to the river course, flood control operations, or vegetation would have a negative impact on this view. This view is valuable because of its historical interpretation to past conveyances across the river. The famous Spiral Bridge and Rope Ferry used to be in this location. Some remnants of these are located on the north side of the river but obscured by vegetation.



## Jaycee Park River View

The photo below shows a view from Jaycee Park towards the Mississippi River. In this particular area, any allowance for significant changes to the river course, flood control operations, or vegetation would have a negative impact on this view. The view is valuable because it provides a great view of high bluffs in a mostly lowland area. The view has been compromised by bluff destruction for the installation of the railroad and the installation of power-lines. Additionally, homes have been built on the bluffs on the opposite bank.



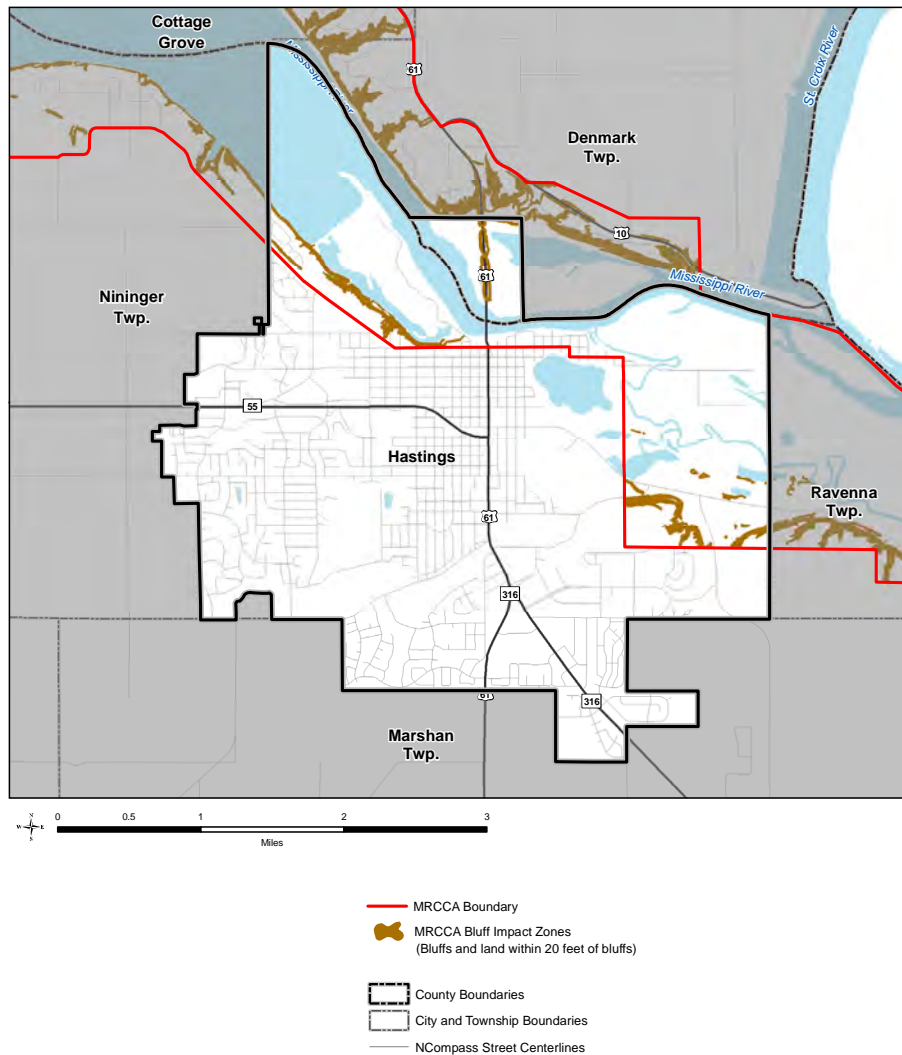
# Surface Water-Oriented Uses

There are four existing surface water-oriented marinas in Hastings as show on Figure 11.11. The recreational marina in the north eastern section of the city, on the south side of the Mississippi, provides storage space for boats, boat repairs, and boat launch facilities. Three additional marinas exist on north side of the Mississippi in Hastings and offer similar services to boaters. These four marinas and the traffic associated with them does not have any negative impacts on the community. Additionally, the developed areas in the MRCCA boundary have been developed and have no negative impacts on surface water uses.

Many commercial barges travel the Mississippi also travel through the MRCAA boundary in Hastings and have no negative impacts on the community.

Seaplanes are also allowed on the Mississippi but are not allowed in the Hastings area on account of the river’s limited width and proximity to Lock and Dam No. 2.

**Figure 11.11**  
**Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area - Bluff Impact Zones**  
**City of Hastings, Dakota & Washington Counties**



Source: Metropolitan Council

# Open Space and Recreational Facilities

There are several important park and recreational resources within the Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor in Hastings that capitalize upon the Mississippi River. The existing parks and recreational resources are identified on Figure 11.12 and include:

**Lake Rebecca Park:** The 4.1-acre Lake Rebecca Park complex is closely related to Jaycee Park, the public access to the Mississippi River, and Lock and Dam No. 2. Lake Rebecca, an 80-acre lake associated with the river, was improved in 1998, and major environmental and aesthetic improvements were made. The park contains a picnic area and a canoe access. Improvements are planned for the park and may include an interpretive center for the Mississippi National River and Recreational Area, interpretive shelter, band shell, a picnic pavilion, trail connections and lighting. All planned improvements will comply with Critical Areas requirements, as well as shore land and floodplain standards.

**Lock and Dam No. 2:** Opened and operated by the Federal government, the facility is open to the public and includes the interpretive center and scenic overlook.

**Jaycee Park:** This park is approximately 30 acres in size and includes a public boat ramp to the Mississippi River that is maintained by the DNR, a picnic area, benches, a bike and pedestrian path and lighting.

**Veterans Memorial Levee Park:** This riverfront park is located between First Street and Ramsey/Tyler Streets and represents the current eastern terminus of the Mississippi River Trail. Amenities within the park include benches, fireplace, indoor bathrooms, labyrinth, musical playground, picnic shelter, an observation deck, seasonal ice rink, a monument to the Veterans of American Wars, and lighting.

**Riverfront Trail:** The existing 2.7-mile trail extends along CSAH 42 near the western municipal boundary of Hastings, northward along the earthen berm that forms the northwestern shore of Lake Rebecca to Lock and Dam No. 2. It then proceeds southeastward along Lock and Dam Road through Jaycee Park and along the river shoreline to Veterans Memorial Levee Park in downtown Hastings.

**Lake Isabel Park:** Lake Isabel Park is located immediately outside of the corridor area and is classified as a neighborhood park. Improvements within the park include a baseball field, basketball court, playground, boat ramp, and fishing pier to Lake Isabel, warming house, and picnic area. Access to the park is available via sidewalks along Second Street.

**Gores Aquatic Management Area (AMA):** This AMA is a 189.24 acre area acquired in 2008 that allows angling, non-motorized travel, wildlife observation and trapping allowed. The area does not allow hunting.

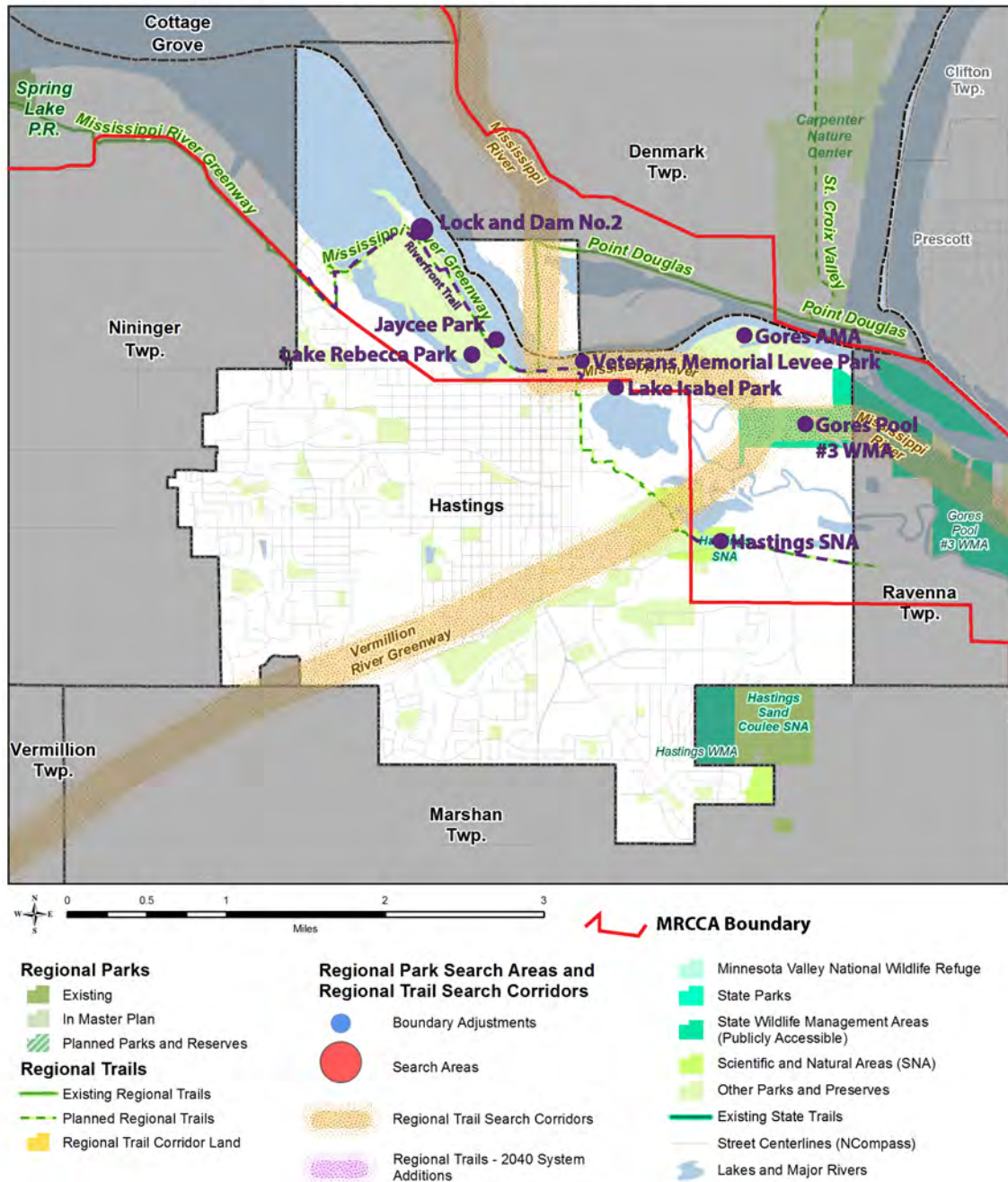
**Gores Pool #3 Wildlife Management Area (WMA):** This 7,049.03 acre WMA is located in both Dakota County and Goodhue County. The purpose of the WMA is to preserve and provide recreation in a large, unbroken area of floodplain forest, as well as preserving waterfowl and furbearer habitat. Only a small portion of this WMA is located within the City of Hastings.



**Hastings Scientific and Natural Area (SNA):** This SNA consists of two parcels totaling 64.9 acres. The northwest parcel, about 26 acres, is entirely in the Vermillion/Mississippi River floodplain and consists of floodplain forest and emergent marsh. The Vermillion River covers about 3 acres here as it meanders through this parcel. Silver maple dominates the forest, with green ash and small diameter American elm. The southeast unit, about 43 acres, is dominated by mesic oak forest, with old-growth red oak, sugar maple, and basswood on steep north-facing bluffs and bluff tops. Sugar-maple basswood forest covers a small section of the mid-slope, and emergent marsh, pond and floodplain forest cover low-lying areas.

**Figure 11.12**

**Regional Parks System  
City of Hastings, Dakota & Washington Counties**



Source: Metropolitan Council

# Transportation

The primary transportation system within the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor consists of a roadway network of local, county and state facilities oriented towards the movement of people and goods. Other major transportation facilities including the Mississippi River and the Canadian Pacific Railroad are also located within the corridor and contribute to the economic vitality of the region. The following describes existing facilities in the corridor.

## Roadways

The total length of roadways in the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor is 13.7 miles and are owned and maintained by the entities listed in Table 11.1.

All of the roadways are paved except for approximately 2.7 miles of local streets in the Rural Open Space District east of the downtown. The unpaved roads are located below the 100 year floodplain elevation and are subject to flooding. Most local streets with the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts were recently reconstructed (except for Lock and Dam Road) and equipped with curb, gutter and storm-water facilities.

TH 61, a route on the Great River Road, is designated as a Principal Arterial roadway in the Transportation Plan chapter of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. TH 291, CSAH 42, CSAH 54, and CSAH 91 are designated collector roadways. The remaining roadways are classified as local roads.

Table 11.1 - Roadway Jurisdiction	
Roadway Jurisdiction	Miles of Street/Road
State Highways 61 & 291	1.1 miles
County State Aid Highways 42 & 54	2.9
County Road 91	.4
Local Streets	9.3

Source: Metropolitan Council

## Bridge Crossings

There is one highway bridge that currently cross the Mississippi River. The current bridge, which carries US Highway 61, was completed in 2013. It is a four lane bridge that is 545 feet long and has a designed lifespan of 100 years. The other crossing is the Canadian Pacific Railroad bridge located to the east of the TH 61. This bridge is 106 feet long and 21.9 feet above the normal pool. In 1965, the level of the Mississippi came to within two feet of inundating the bridge.

## Transit

There are no existing or planned public transportation facilities in the MRCCA boundary in Hastings as show in Figure 11.13.

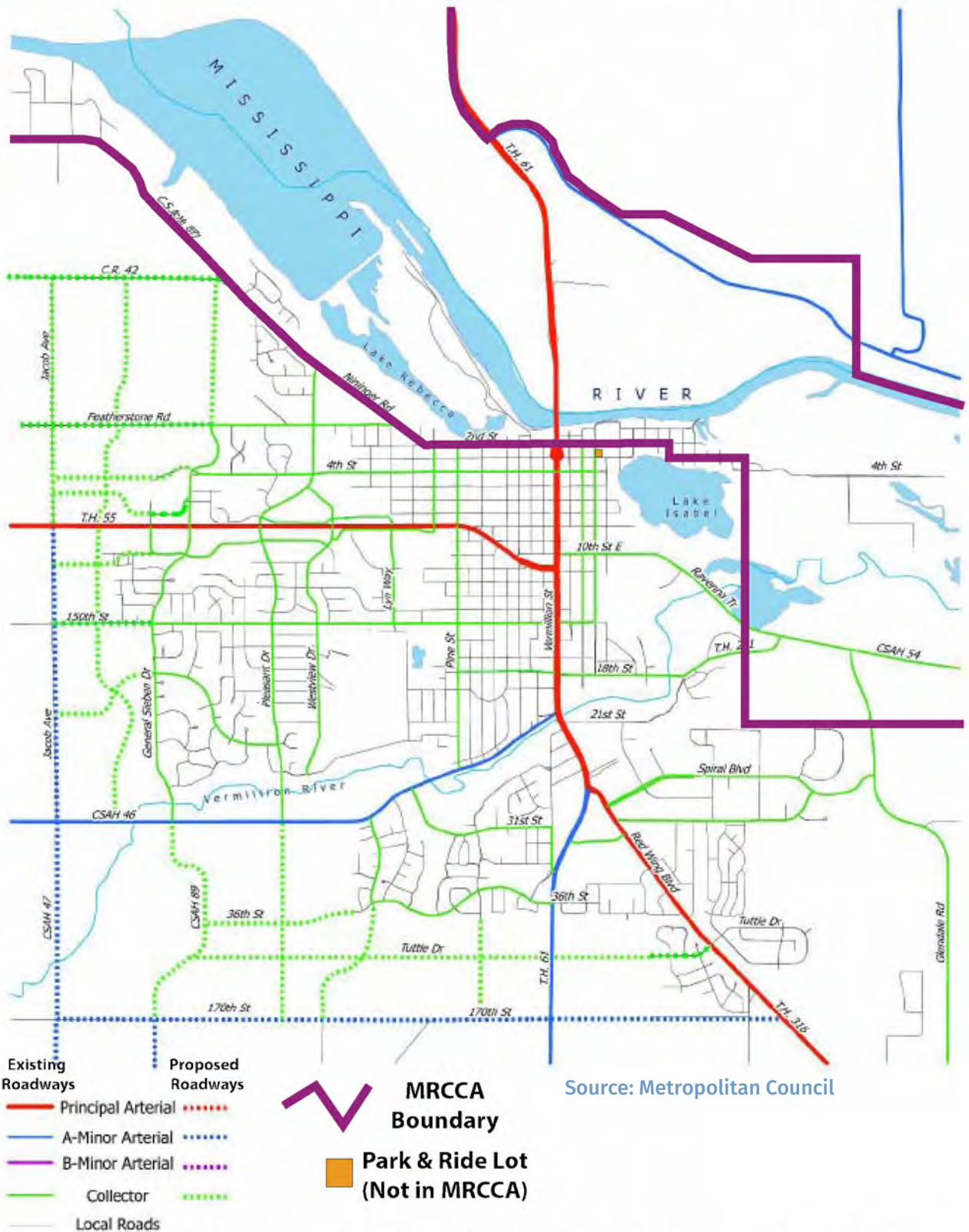
## Railroads

The Canadian Pacific Railroad serves the Hastings area, passing both through and over the Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor. Service is provided to the Burlington Northern system in St. Paul. A spur track serves Con Agra, Smead Manufacturing and industry directly south of downtown.



Figure 11.13

# EXISTING AND PLANNED\* PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES



\*There are no planned public transportation facilities in the MRCCA boundary in Hastings.

# Public and Private Utilities

The City of Hastings provides sanitary sewer, water, power and limited storm sewer facilities to properties within the River Towns and Crossings district and the River Neighborhood districts and limited services within the Rural Open Space District. The services in the rural district are limited to assuring that properties comply with local ordinances and state regulations governing the installation and maintenance of on-site septic tanks and wells.

## Sanitary Sewer

Most of the existing development within the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts of the corridor is served by municipal sanitary sewer services. Effluent is discharged to the Hastings wastewater treatment plant, owned and operated by the Metropolitan Council. The plant is a secondary treatment plant using an activated sludge process with a capacity of 2.34 million gallons per day. The discharge point for the treated effluent is directly north of the plant on the Mississippi River. The treatment plant is planned for relocation to 133 acres located north of Ravenna Trail at the eastern city limits, within the Rural Open Space district.

On-site sewer systems are utilized in the Rural Open Space district where public sewer service is unavailable. New on-site systems must be constructed and maintained in compliance with City, County and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Rule 7080 requirements. Further, systems are not permitted on slopes greater than 18%, wetlands or floodplain areas of high groundwater or areas where impervious soils or bedrock are near the surface. Further discussion of these regulations is found within the Comprehensive Sanitary Sewer Plan chapter of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

## Drinking Water

Development within the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts is served by the public water system that draws water from the Jordan aquifer. All wells supplying the City system are located outside of the Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor. Uses within the Rural Open Space District rely upon individual wells that are required to be in compliance with Department of Health standards.

## Storm Sewer System

In 1980, the City adopted the Comprehensive Drainage Plan that established a trunk and lateral storm-water sewer system, and retention ponds. The ultimate drainage system recommended in this plan was based upon existing facilities, future land uses planned at the time and state and federal regulations in existence in 1980. The storm-water drainage districts established as part of the Comprehensive Drainage Plan that are part of the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor includes the East and Northwest Districts.

The East Drainage District falls within the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts and is served by an existing storm-water system in the downtown district west of Bailey Street and east of Maple Street. The downtown commercial district and surrounding neighborhoods discharges into the Mississippi River. Much of the storm-water in west Hastings discharges directly into the Mississippi River via an outlet located north of the earthen berm of Lake Rebecca. Two ponds treat and accommodate runoff from the bluff before it is discharged into the Mississippi River. A

Run-off from the Rural Open Space District to the north and east of downtown Hastings surface drains to the Mississippi and Vermillion Rivers. There are a limited number of culverts and ditches at informal discharge points to the east of downtown.

## Electrical Transmission Lines

Two major transmission lines traverse the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor. In the Rural Open Space District, a pair of 345 KW lines within a 245' wide right-of-way, extends north-south the length of the district. The lines cross the Mississippi River to the east of the Conley Lake outlet. A 69 kW line originating in Prescott, Wisconsin follows East Fourth Street west to the northeast corner of Lake Isabel, then west along East First Street through downtown to the Xcel Energy substation located beneath the Mississippi River bridge. From the substation the electrical line follows West First Street to Lock and Dam Road and then parallels the road northwest along federal lands to a tower where it crosses the Mississippi River directly east of Lock and Dam No. 2.

These existing transmission lines have a significant negative visual impact on the City's riverfront within the MRCCA boundary. The transmission line along the riverfront negatively impacts the view from the river to the south. This line also negatively impacts the view to the river from downtown Hastings, both by unsightliness and obscuring the view completely. The impacted view has limited businesses from taking advantage of an orientation towards the river. The city of Hastings has recently buried local electrical transmission lines running along the alley to the north of the downtown in an effort to improve views to and from the river.

## Electric Power Generating Facilities

A hydro-kinetic power generation facility is located at Lock and Dam No. 2 is located on the Mississippi River in Hastings, show on Figure 11.14. The hydro-kinetic power generation facility is owned by the City of Hastings and produces about 4.4 megawatts. Lock and Dam No. 2 is owned and operated by the Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District.

There are no existing or planned solar or wind powered electric power generating facilities inside the MRCCA boundary in Hastings. These facilities are not currently allowed in any zoning district located in the MRCCA boundary and therefore there is no anticipated impact on PCAs/PRCVs.

## Pipelines

There is one pipeline that currently exists within the corridor. The Whiting-Moorhead pipeline is a 10- inch refined-products line running through the eastern portion of Hastings to the Standard Oil terminal in Roseville. The alignment roughly parallels the 345 KW power line corridor, crossing CSAH 54, the Vermillion River, East Fourth Street and the Mississippi River.

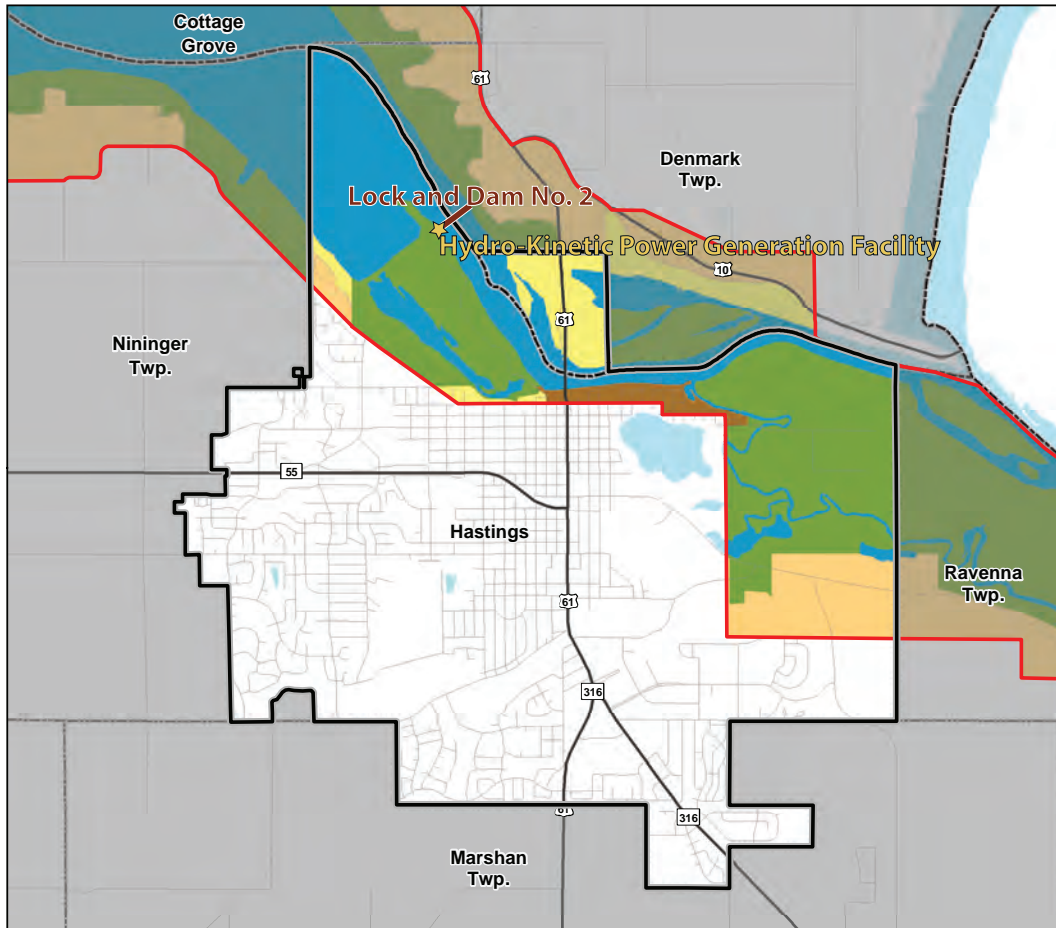
A pipeline that served the former Koch Refining facility along Lock and Dam Road was recently removed. The utility easement containing the former pipeline has been abandoned and now contains a public trail. The easement is owned and maintained by the City.

These existing pipelines have no visual impact the two Public River Corridor View points in Hastings in the MRCCA boundary. These pipelines also have no impact on the Primary Conservation Areas in the Hastings MRCCA boundary. There are no planned new pipelines and no projects impacts.

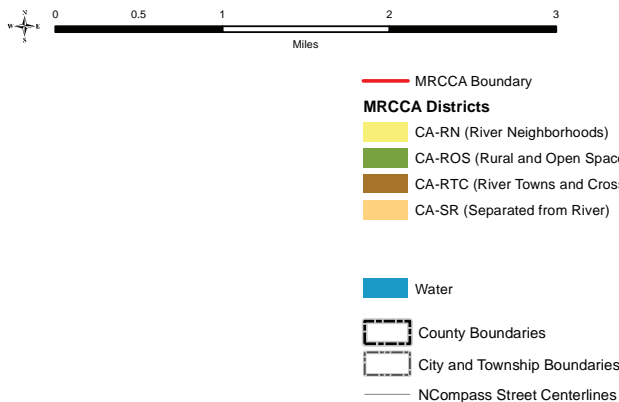
# Impacts from Essential Services and Transmission Services on PCAs and PRCVs

The existing transmission lines along the riverfront are the only existing essential and transmission services that have significant negative visual impact on adjacent Primary Conservation Areas and Public River Corridor Views. There are no known planned underground and/or overhead facilities planned for the area of Hastings within the MRCCA boundary.

**Figure 11.14**  
**Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Districts**  
**City of Hastings, Dakota & Washington Counties**



Source: Metropolitan Council





## Overview of Known Issues

The City has made significant strides in implementing the policies of the Critical Area Plan adopted in 1980. The most positive changes within the Critical Area corridor include the following:

- The environmental clean-up and purchase of the Koch Refining property resulting in the removal of oil tanks and the underground pipeline, the acquisition of easements and property for a portion of the MRRT, and the removal of the temporary barge terminal and railroad spur,
- The creation of the two historic districts in the old downtown Installation of Riverfront Trail and lights,
- Restoration of Lake Rebecca,
- Installation of new storm sewer facilities, curb and gutter and street surface throughout much of the downtown in 1985
- New sewer and water facilities to replace on-site septic systems and private wells in the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts, and
- Acquisition and clean-up of certain properties within the downtown by the Hastings and Dakota County HRA's.

However, there remain issues that need to be addressed over the next 20 years as part of this planning process to achieve the goals established by the State and Federal governments for the Mississippi River corridor. This section discusses these issues and is based upon information contained within the Background Information portion of the chapter.

### Land Use and Development Issues

The number of inconsistent land uses has decreased within the Critical Area Hudson Manufacturing remains an inconsistent land use. Hudson occupies approximately 4 ½ acres and is located at the west edge of the downtown on the river. The business has existed in this location since 1906. It is also zoned I-1 and designated for commercial uses.

There are several sites within the downtown that are appropriate for redevelopment. However, the redevelopment of these sites could impact the Riverfront Trail and Veterans Memorial Levee Park. Unobstructed views and public accessibility to the river must be preserved with any type of redevelopment activity. The preparation of the Downtown Riverfront Master Plan from Lock and Dam Road to the railroad will help address design and accessibility issues. The City will continue to work with the Minnesota DNR on these plans to achieve protection and balance in Critical Areas.

Additionally, the City will need to review the magnitude and effects of the development impacts of redevelopment projects to specific natural and cultural resources located within the downtown area of the corridor. These impacts need to be balanced with the potential contributions of the redevelopment project to the overall Critical Area/MNRRRA goals and those of the City. All planned improvements in the downtown should comply with Critical Areas requirements, as well as shore land and floodplain standards.

## Heritage and Neighborhood Preservation

There is a need to integrate components of the Heritage Preservation Plan chapter with the natural resource and recreation use of the Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor. The historic district design and architectural guidelines as administered by the HPC should continue to be followed and the development of programs to prevent the demolition of affordable housing and to guide in-fill development within neighborhoods should be considered.

## Development Opportunities

There are few vacant or underdeveloped properties that remain available for new development within the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts of the corridor. The Hoffman property located in the northwestern area of the corridor adjacent to CSAH 42 is the largest parcel. The property is guided A – Agriculture. It is unknown if the Hoffman properties will undergo development because of its current use as a horse farm.

## Water Oriented Uses/Public Access

New or expanded water oriented uses and access points will be limited in location and size along the Hastings portion of the Mississippi River because of the narrow channel, the proximity to Lock and Dam No. 2, existing environmental preservation regulations, and existing land uses. Access to the Vermillion River is confined to small boats and canoes due to the shallow depth of the river. The introduction of new uses along the Vermillion River is also difficult because of the amount of floodplain associated with the river and the lack of urban services. The City will need to carefully review requests for new or expanded uses and access points to ensure compatibility with river activities and existing commercial, recreational, and fishing uses of the river.

## Parks, Trails and Open Space Issues

### Mississippi River Regional Trail (MRRT)

The riverfront trail serves as the portion of the MRRT in Hastings. The MRRT is an important recreational amenity to residents and businesses in Hastings. The City needs to encourage policymakers to determine the appropriate alignment and commit funds for trail completion within the City and the region.

### Trail Connections

One of the overall goals of the Comprehensive Park and Trail Plan is to develop an integrated system of greenways that connect local, regional and state resources. A trail access plan needs to be coordinated with Marshan, Nininger and Ravenna townships and Dakota County to allow for full access to trails on the south side of the Mississippi River. Additionally, the greenways system needs to include Washington County trails with a connection at the Mississippi River bridge.

Open Space

There are limited opportunities for the acquisition of public open space within the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts because of the nearly fully developed nature of the downtown area of Hastings. The potential development of underdeveloped properties in the northwest portion of the district and redevelopment of downtown parcels represent opportunities to obtain public open space. The City will need to determine the type and location of desired public open space within this district and develop an implementation strategy for acquisition before development is proposed.



## Public/Private Utility Issues

### Downtown Surface Water Management

The City has demonstrated efforts to manage stormwater runoff and improve water quality through the adoption of “Best Management Practices” and compliance with watershed, state and federal requirements for stormwater treatment facilities in developing areas of the community. However, there are limitations for implementing complete stormwater management techniques in the downtown. These limitations include the existing hard surface coverage of development, the extent and investment with existing infrastructure and the bedrock underlying the downtown. The City continues to respond to these conditions in the downtown by implementing stormwater techniques that divert surface drainage from entering the river to stormwater facilities as infrastructure is replaced or new development occurs.

## Transportation Issues

### Mississippi River Bridge (TH 61)

Mn/DOT constructed a new Mississippi River Bridge in 2013. The design of the new bridge follows the aesthetics of the river and the historic downtown.

The reconstruction and widening (to four lanes) of the bridge affected Veterans Memorial Levee Park, the Riverfront trail, local access, abutting properties and views of the river. Some more issues that were addressed included access from the bridge to downtown and Second Street, traffic and noise impacts, right of way impacts, pedestrian/bicycle access, use of space under the bridge and views from the bridge.

In addition, the old bridge was an important visual symbol of the cultural heritage of Hastings downtown setting. The historic spiral bridge is continually memorialized in displays, artwork and graphics as an important symbol of Hastings past.

The graceful appearance and structural design of the new bridge shape the future of Hastings and help bring the city forward. The four lanes of traffic help with congestion issues, and make it easier for visitor to experience downtown.

### Red Rock Corridor Bus Rapid Transit

Development of Red Rock Corridor bus rapid transit is underway and recently an implementation plan was approved by the Red Rock Corridor Commission. The Red Rock Corridor is a proposed 20-mile transitway, connecting the Twin Cities’ southeastern suburbs to St. Paul and Minneapolis. The transitway will originate in Hastings and stop in Cottage Grove, Newport and St. Paul’s Battle Creek neighborhood before connecting to the St. Paul Union Depot.

### Barge Facilities

The narrow channel at Hastings precludes extensive fleeting or storage of barges. There are no areas within the Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor in the City where barge storage or fleeting is appropriate due to the narrow channel, the adjacent public land uses, and the location of the historic downtown. Temporary barge fleeting caused by barge traffic delays at Lock and Dam No. 2 can be accommodated on a limited basis without causing land or water use conflicts.

### Marinas

The narrow river channel also limits the potential for any new marinas because of the Corps of Engineers specifications for channel clearance and regional parking standards. Expansion potential of the private marina, Kings Cove, is minimal due to zoning regulations and its current size. Expansion to the Hastings Marina is not possible because of existing parking constraints, access and the need to dredge for additional boat slips.

## Implementation Issues

### City's Resource Protection Ordinances

The City's resource protection ordinances include the shoreland, floodplain, and wetland ordinances. Due to the age of development within the City, there are numerous properties that do not comply with standards contained within these ordinances. The City needs to adopt policies and amend the ordinances to allow for flexibility and deviations from the ordinance standards when it can be demonstrated that the resource will not be harmed.

Specifically, the adoption of several of the shoreland ordinance standards precludes redevelopment or new development in a manner that is compatible with other development in the downtown portion of the River Towns and Crossings District. The City needs to develop flexible standards that will allow for the achievement of historic preservation, downtown redevelopment, Livable Communities, and transit/commuter rail goals while meeting the intent of the shoreland regulations and goals. Other changes are needed to the portions of shoreland ordinance that are out of date or inconsistent with state and local regulations.

The adoption of an Environmental Overlay District that incorporates the shoreland ordinance, floodplain district, critical area and wetland regulations within the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor would alleviate concerns over redundancy between ordinances and be easier to utilize and administrate. On the other hand, a single ordinance may impose stricter standards in certain areas that may be inconsistent with other City policies. The City needs to review the merits of preparing a single Environmental Overlay District versus adding the critical area zoning district to the ordinance.

### Site Plan/Performance Standards

The City's site plan review provisions within the Zoning Ordinance require the submission of site plans for new development (except one and two family homes). However, there is no review criteria or performance standards to gauge the compatibility of development with natural resources. The adoption of specific standards will allow the City to review the quality of urban design, to gauge the expected impacts of development, and better regulate the protection of natural resources on the site. Additionally, the site plan review standards will need to be modified to include review for two family homes as required by Critical Area Executive Order No. 79-19.

# Mississippi River Corridor Area Plan

Hastings is at the terminus of the Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor, a 72- mile long National River and Recreation Area. The lands and physical features of the corridor have a direct effect on the character, function and use of the river.

Therefore, the corridor must be viewed as an integrated planning district. Retaining its character as a multiple use resource and protecting the river's scenic, aesthetic, and economic functions is the primary function of this plan.

The direct and indirect effects of actions to the Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor affect most of the metropolitan region, much of the State, and certainly all communities downstream. This plan has been developed to manage elements of the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor and guide development and redevelopment in a manner consistent with the Critical Areas Act, the MNRRRA Comprehensive Management Plan, and the other chapters of the Hastings 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The Hastings Mississippi River Corridor Area Plan recognizes the entire Mississippi River corridor as an integrated system of natural and development functions.

The Mississippi River Corridor Area Plan complements the 2040 Land Use Plan for the entire City. The plan is designed to accommodate a variety of existing activities and resources that promote the purpose of the MNRRRA and Critical Area laws. Further, the implementation measures of the Plan are intended to continue activities that were established in the original Critical Area Plan for the City adopted in 1979. The plan and policies are intended to facilitate existing development and redevelopment in a manner that promotes the economic and natural resource value of the Mississippi River corridor.

In sum, the overall land use plan for the Hastings portion of the corridor will remain close to its present use. The largest initiative will be in the completion of the Highway 61 bridge and downtown riverfront park development.

# Policies

## Districts and Land Use

- Guide land use and development and redevelopment activities consistent with the management purpose of each district.

## Primary Conservation Areas

- Protect PCAs and minimize impact to PCAs from public and private development and land use activities (landscape maintenance, river use, walking/hiking, etc.).
- Support mitigation of impacts to PCAs through, subdivisions/PUDs, variances, CUPs, and other permits.
- Make restoration of removed Native Plant Communities and natural vegetation in riparian areas a high priority during development.
- Support alternative design standards that protect the LGU's identified PCAs, such as conservation design, transfer of development density, or other zoning and site design techniques that achieve better protections or restoration of primary conservation areas.
- Make permanent protection measures (such as public acquisition, conservation easement, deed restrictions, etc.) that protect PCAs a high priority.

## Public River Corridor Views

- Protect and minimize impacts to PRCVs from public and private development activities.
- Protect and minimize impacts to PRCVs from public and private vegetation management activities.
- Protect PRCVs located within the community and identified by other communities (adjacent or across the river).

## Restoration Priorities

- Protect native and existing vegetation during the development process, and require restoration if any is removed by development. Priorities for restoration shall include stabilization of erodible soils, riparian buffers and bluffs or steep slopes visible from the river.

- Seek opportunities to restore vegetation to protect and enhance PRCVs identified in this plan.
- Seek opportunities to restore vegetation in restoration priority areas identified in this plan through the CUP, variance, vegetation permit and subdivision/PUD processes.
- Sustain and enhance ecological functions (habitat value) during vegetation restorations.
- Evaluate proposed development sites for erosion prevention and bank and slope stabilization issues and require restoration as part of the development process.

## Surface Water Uses

- Recognize the Mississippi River as a “working river” that is important to the economy of the Twin Cities metropolitan area and the Midwest.
- The City is not currently regulating surface waters or uses on the Mississippi.
- Provide for barge fleetings and identify areas where barge fleetings could have a negative impact on PCAs and should be avoided.
- Seek to balance commercial and recreational surface water uses.

## Water-Oriented Uses

- Acknowledge existing and future water-oriented uses and provide for their protection.
- Minimize potential conflict of water-oriented uses with other land uses.

## Open Space and Recreational Facilities

- Encourage creation, connection, and maintenance of open space, recreational facilities, including public access to the river.
- Identify and encourage connection of CA-SR district land to existing and planned parks and trails, for LGUs with developable land in CA-SR districts. (Not applicable in communities with no CA-SR district.)
- Encourage that land dedication requirements be used to acquire land suitable for public river access.



## Transportation and Public Utilities

- Minimize impacts to PCAs and PRCVs from solar and wind generation facilities, public transportation facilities and public utilities.

## Implementation Actions

### Ordinance Updates

- Amend existing or adopt new MRCCA ordinance overlay district consistent with the goals and policies of the MRCCA plan, and with Minnesota Rules, part 6106.0070, Subp. 5 - Content of Ordinances.
- Amend zoning map to reflect new districts.
- Incorporate specific design and placement conditions that minimize impacts to PCAs and PRCVs into local permits for solar and wind generation facilities and essential and transmission services.
- Provide for water-oriented uses in the ordinance.

### Ordinance Administration

- Establish procedures and criteria for processing applications to ensure compliance with MRCCA dimensional and design standards and to evaluate potential impacts to PCAs and PRCVs, including:
  1. Identifying the information that must be submitted and how it will be evaluated (PCAs, PRCVs),
  2. Determining appropriate mitigation procedures/methods for variances and CUPs (PCAs, PRCVs)
  3. Establishing evaluation criteria for protecting PCAs when a development site contains multiple types of PCAs and the total area of PCAs exceed the required set aside percentages (PCAs only)
- Develop administrative procedures for integrating DNR and local permitting of rip-rap, walls and other hard armoring. (PCAs)
- Actively communicate with other communities to protect views they have identified in your community that are valuable, and vice versa. (PRCVs)

- 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 for those priority areas.
- 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 CUP, variances and subdivision/PUD processes.
- Develop visual analysis approach for CUPs for additional height in the RTC and UM districts (if applicable), as well as for proposed PUDs and variances. (PRCVs)
- Develop a system for reviewing, tracking, and monitoring open space required as part of the subdivision process.

### Education and Outreach

- Ensure that information on the new MRCCA districts and zoning requirements, and the location of PCAs, PRCVs, and restoration priorities is readily available to property owners to help them understand which ordinance requirements - such as setbacks, height, vegetation management and land alteration permits - apply to their property for project planning and permitting.
- Specific actions may include:
  1. Develop outreach and communication strategy to alert MRCCA property owners of new districts and zoning requirements, and the location of PCAs, PRCVs, and restoration priorities.
  2. Develop web materials (mapping applications, FAQs, handouts, and other materials) to help property owners identify if their property is in the MRCCA and what regulations apply.
  3. Provide information to residents and park and facility users that these facilities are in the MRCCA, including information on what the MRCCA is and ways in which the resources are being protected.

## Capital Improvements

- Include facilities in the capital improvement program for parks and open space facilities (if relevant). (Open Space and Recreational Facilities)
- Include transportation facilities in the capital improvement program. If applicable, identify which facilities, or portions of facilities, are in the MRCCA.
- Recreation Facilities and improvements are currently listed in the City's Capital Improvement Plan which is included in Chapter 15 on page 15-16.

## Land Acquisition

- Identify specific land acquisitions within the MRCCA.

## Specific Planning Efforts and Projects

- Conduct feasibility studies/research as needed to address issues in the MRCCA.
- Coordinate with regional, state, and national park planning efforts within the MRCCA.
- Conduct master planning or other planning efforts Planning Efforts.
- Key corridor projects and initiatives.

# Goals and Purpose

## Goals

The overall goals of the Hastings Mississippi River Corridor Area Plan are as follows:

**MRCA1:** The City supports and adopts the goals of the Critical Area/MNRRRA designation: a) preservation and enhancement of environmental values, b) enhanced outdoor recreation opportunities, c) conservation and protection of scenic, historical, cultural, natural and scientific values, and d) commercial use consistent with purpose of designation.

**MRCA2:** Recognition and support of the Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor as an integrated system of natural and human elements.

**MRCA3:** The development and redevelopment

of a variety of urban land uses compatible with existing development and the historic downtown within the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts of the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor.

**MRCA4:** The continuation of rural land uses within the Rural Open Space District at densities that will not need urban levels of services.

**MRCA5:** Provision for public access to the river, boat launching facilities, temporary docking and scenic overlooks.

**MRCA6:** Preservation of open spaces, cultural landscapes, archaeological and historical resources, and native areas through public purchase, scenic easements or dedication.

**MRCA7:** Connection of the municipal river front trail to the Mississippi River Regional Trail.

**MRCA8:** Provision of adequate transportation services within the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor while maintaining the aesthetic, environmental, recreational and economic functions of the river.

**MRCA9:** Recognition and support the regional economic benefits provided by river transportation.

## Purpose

The purpose of the Hastings Mississippi River Corridor Area Plan is 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;
- Prevent and mitigate irreversible damage to this state, regional and natural resource;
- Preserve and enhance its natural, aesthetic, cultural and historic value for the public use;
- Protect and preserve the river as an essential element in the national, state and regional transportation, sewer and water and recreational systems; and
- Protect and preserve the biological and ecological functions of the corridor.

# Land Use Plan and Policies

The Background section of this chapter detailed much of the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor as floodplain or flood fringe in the Rural Open Space District. Passive and agricultural uses will continue to dominate future land use in this district. Poor soils, severe slopes and seasonal inundation of land will prohibit most development except in the southeast portion of this district. However, intense development is not anticipated because there are no plans for the extension of urban services to that area. These lands are designated in the Rural Open Space District to be used and developed to preserve their open, scenic and natural characteristics as well as their primary ecological functions.

The River Towns and Crossings and the River Neighborhood Districts are within the 2040 Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) boundary as designated within the Land Use Plan chapter and is nearly fully developed. The only potential for new development is in the extreme northwest section of these districts, away from the bluff line and outside of the floodplain.

The potential for redevelopment exists in the downtown in accordance with the Heart of Hastings Master Plan. The protection of vacant or underdeveloped lands within the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts for development that is compatible with the functions of the Mississippi River will ensure the continuation of balanced land uses within the corridor and City as a whole. The land use designations and policies of the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts have been developed to:

- Maintain a diversity in housing and commercial activities
- Promote historic preservation activities
- Maintain reasonable transportation facilities that complement the adjacent land uses
- Provide public open space, trails and park

facilities with a river orientation

- Protect natural scenic and environmental resources

The majority of the Rural Open Space District falls outside of the 2040 MUSA boundary and reflects a rural character. There is little potential for significant development except at the southwest corner of the district. The land use designations and policies of the Rural Open Space District are designed to:

- Preserve open space,
- Protect the environmentally sensitive area associated with the eastern portion of the Mississippi River in Hastings and the Vermillion River slough and floodplain,
- Allow an area for residents that desire a rural lifestyle without services, and
- Allow managed rural land use activities such as agricultural, mining and recreational activities that do not impact the environment and city service needs.

## Land Use Definitions

**Low Density Housing:** Includes single-family housing, two family housing and low-density attached housing. Allowable densities in the zoning ordinance range from approximately 2.5 to 6 housing units per net acre, with lot sizes in the range of 6,000 square feet and up.

**Medium Density Housing:** Small-lot detached houses, duplexes, townhouses, 4, 6, and 8-unit buildings with individual exterior entrances. The density is expected to be in the range of 5 to 22 dwelling units per acre with a medium average of 8.

**Mixed-Use:** Allows and promotes high-intensity office, retail, housing, hospitality, public land uses,

preferably in mixed-use buildings with strong pedestrian orientations and historic character.

**Commercial:** Business providing retail trade or series for individuals or businesses. Also including office buildings.

**Institutional:** Public or private schools, City Hall and the Dakota County Government Center. Also included are private business such as cemeteries, or the YMCA that have a public service orientation, not-for Profit objectives and community financial support.

**Park:** Existing and proposed public park areas.

**Conservation:** Sensitive natural areas protected from development. Includes steep slopes and DNR protected areas.

**Agriculture:** Includes farming and very low density housing (not exceeding one house per 10 acres).

## Land Use

1. Residential and commercial development will be allowed in the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts where municipal services are available and compatible with the guideline goals of the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts.
2. New industrial development and expansions to existing industrial uses will not be allowed within the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts of the Hastings Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor. New industries will be directed to industrial parks located elsewhere in the City.
3. New land uses that have the potential to cause adverse impacts on the river shall not be allowed within the riverfront area (300' landward from the ordinary high water level).
4. New river dependent uses or expansions to

existing river dependent uses shall be allowed only if it can be demonstrated that there will be no or limited impacts to the transportation, recreation and environmental functions of the river; and compatible with adjacent uses. The City will require additional mitigation of impacts to the River including screening, stormwater/erosion control, and restoration of the natural environment where appropriate.

5. All land uses in the Rural Open Space District shall be used and developed to preserve their open, scenic and natural characteristics, and ecological and economic functions.
6. Development shall not be allowed in the Rural Open Space District that requires the premature expansion of urban services as defined in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.
7. Impacts of mining and extraction or other incompatible uses in the Rural Open Space District shall be minimized, and reclamation, buffering and reforestation of mining sites shall be completed in accordance with City regulations.
8. The City will encourage the relocation of existing non-conforming land uses in the corridor to other appropriate locations within Hastings in accordance with the City's zoning ordinance and state law. The City shall prohibit the reconstruction of nonconforming uses if > 50% market value is destroyed.
9. The City shall continue to encourage historic preservation efforts in the old downtown within and adjacent to the Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor in accordance with the Heritage Preservation Plan chapter of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.
10. The City shall ensure that information on various categorized districts and the zoning requirements of those districts is available to the public and property owners to help create



a mutual understanding for what restrictions and permissions typically apply for planning and permitting of projects.

11. The City shall evaluate proposed development sites for erosion prevention and bank and slope stabilization issues and require restoration as part of the development process.

## **Development and Urban Design**

1. Site plans shall be submitted for new development and expansion to existing development in the Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor which include the following items:

- Measures to address adverse environmental impacts
- Standards to ensure compatibility of structures, roads, screening, landscaping, construction placement, maintenance, and storm water runoff with characteristics and use in that district.

2. New development and expansion shall be permitted only after approval of site plans which adequately assess and minimize adverse effects and maximize beneficial effects.

3. New development site plans shall be designed to minimize site alteration to the extent feasible based on the permitted land use. New development shall also provide opportunities for open space establishment and public viewing of the river corridor whenever applicable, and shall contain specific conditions with regards to buffering, landscaping, and re-vegetation

4. Access to the riverfront shall be incorporated, where appropriate, in new development and redevelopment activities within the Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor.

5. Cluster development and other innovative residential and mixed use development design techniques shall be encouraged within the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts and the Rural Open Space District of the Hastings Critical Area/

MNRRRA Corridor to preserve open space, vegetative stands, and wildlife habitat areas.

6. Subdivisions shall be designed to preserve natural topography, wildlife habitat areas and native resource features, to the extent possible. Re-vegetation and stabilization of all disturbed sites shall immediately follow construction activity.

7. The City shall require the use of existing vegetation or the planting of a native buffer (in the absence of existing vegetation) between new land uses and the Mississippi River.

8. New development shall be designed to allow for off-site views to the Mississippi River and associated natural features.

9. The City shall preserve existing scenic vistas and cultural landscapes of the Mississippi Rivers through such techniques as subdivision and development design, easement acquisition and land/ easement dedication.

10. Signage that is visible to and from the Mississippi River shall be prohibited in the Rural Open Space District.

11. Signage except for aesthetically pleasing business identification and public signs shall be prohibited within the River Towns and Crossings, and the River Neighborhood Districts of the Critical Area/MNRRRA Corridor.

12. Direct overland runoff will be minimized through site design and best management practices.