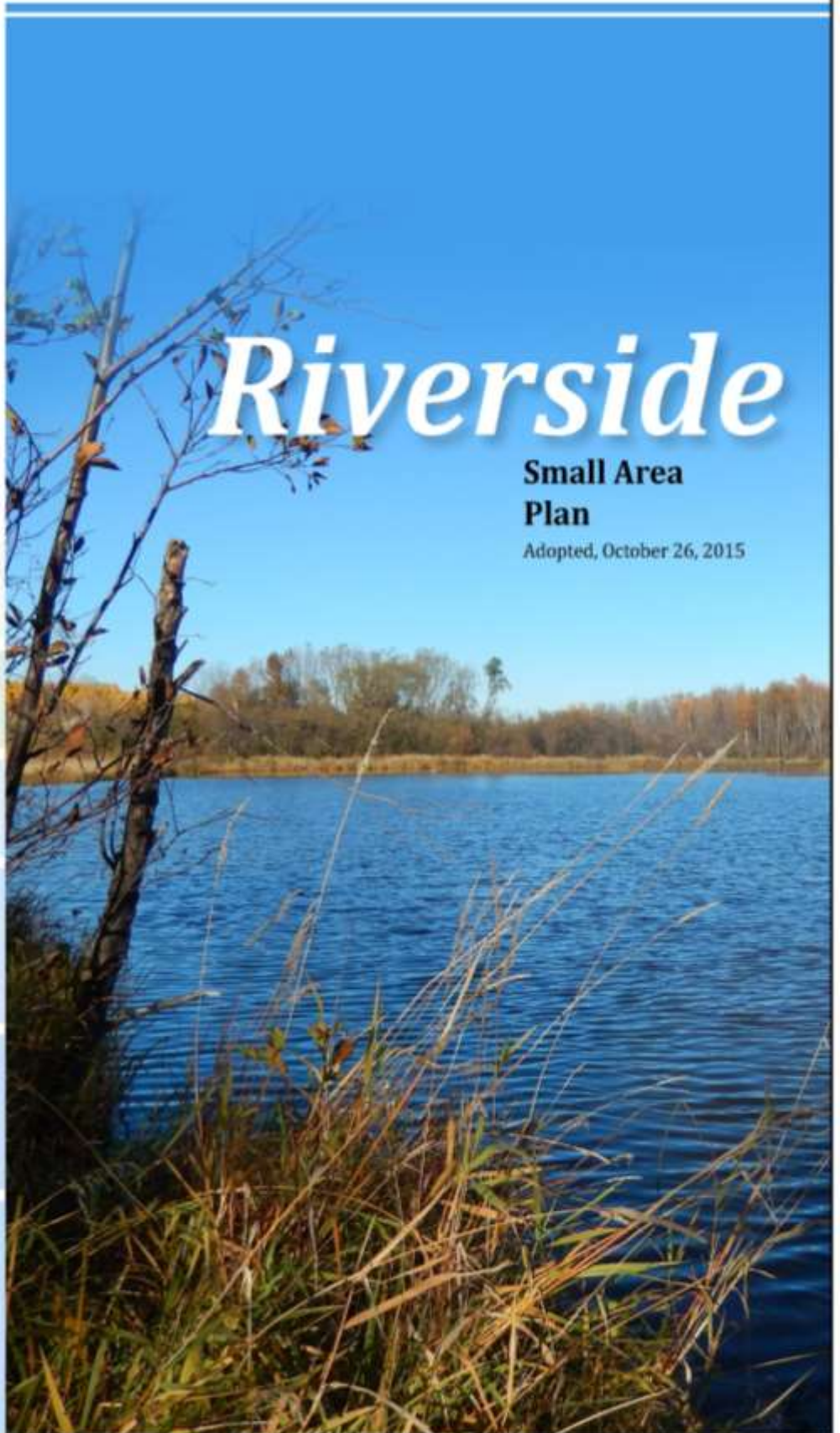




# *Riverside*

## **Small Area Plan**

Adopted, October 26, 2015



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# Riverside Small Area Plan

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## Chapter 1: Assessment

### Purpose of Plan

The City of Duluth has commissioned a planning study to provide guidance for the Riverside area that will influence future developments. Through a series of community engagement events, analysis of the history of the neighborhood, review of past and current planning efforts, and an analysis of the current demographics, the planning team has gained an intimate understanding of the current community context, as well as its present challenges, and future opportunities.

The small area study will reveal areas of opportunity surrounding land use and housing, businesses, and economic development to strengthen recreational amenities as well as recreational amenities in the neighborhood.

The study reveals areas in which investments should be made in the existing housing stock and where new housing should develop in a way that will blend with the historical character of the neighborhood. The small area plan is a framework to guide the future development of the Riverside community, offering tangible implementation action items to make connections between short-term actions that will help shape the long-term visions articulated by residents and community members who live and work in the neighborhood.

*"There's no question that if not for Lake Superior, Duluth would be defined as a river city. Duluth should be defined by both the world's greatest lake AND the world's largest fresh water estuary. By doing so, we open up many possibilities along the River." - Mayor Don Ness*

## Project Area Defined

The Riverside Small Area Plan project area is defined as that area between Lenroot Creek and Knowlton Creek, and from the base of Spirit Mountain to the St. Louis River. Neighborhoods located within this area are Riverside and a portion of Smithville. This area is shown graphically below. Specific areas within the project area include Spirit Mountain, Spirit Lake Marina, Riverside Community, Tate & Lyle Plant, and USDA Forest Service Center. Grand Avenue, which will see a major street reconstruction in 2016, is the backbone of the area running northeast to southwest through the planning area. Recreationally the project area includes the Duluth Winnipeg & Pacific Trail, Willard Munger State Trail and Western Waterfront Trail. Additionally, the St. Louis River is a large asset to the project area and is currently seeing a large amount of restoration due to its identification as a federal “area of concern.” However, with the cleanup underway, the river is expected to be de-listed by 2025.





## Demographics

### *Background:*

The population of the Riverside Small Area Plan project area has remained stable around 700 residents. The demographics of the project area mirrors very closely with the City of Duluth with the exception being the 18-24 year old range classification. While twenty percent of the City's population is represented by the 18-24 year range, just 8% of the project area's population is represented by this demographic. The City's effort to achieve a population of 90,000 by 2020 is focused on the attraction of young professionals because of a high quality of life and unmatched recreational amenities. However, this project area has 12% less residents in the 18-24 age range likely due to its low availability of rental housing and aging overall housing stock.

Total Population and share of City's population (2008-2012 ACS)				
Sex and Age	Riverside Project Area		City of Duluth	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Male	359	51%	42,243	49%
Female	349	49%	44,022	51%
Under 5	43	6%	4,798	5%
5 - 9 years	39	5%	4,296	5%
10 - 14 years	36	5%	4,010	5%
15 - 17 years	27	4%	2,853	3%
18 - 24 years	60	8%	16,877	20%
25 - 34 years	103	15%	11,523	13%
35 - 44 years	72	10%	8,676	10%
45 - 54 years	114	16%	11,117	13%
55 - 64 years	103	15%	10,249	12%
65 - 74 years	56	8%	5,473	6%
75 - 84 years	34	5%	4,067	5%
85 years and older	21	3%	2,326	3%
17 Years and younger	145	20%	15,957	18%
18 - 64 years	452	64%	58,442	68%
65 years and older	111	16%	11,866	14%

The following table depicts the ethnic makeup of the Riverside Small Area Plan project area and its comparison to the ethnic makeup of the City of Duluth. This data provides a window into understanding where the project area stands with respect to its racial diversity.

Total Population and share of City's Population (2008 – 2012 ACS)				
Race/Ethnicity	Riverside Project Area		City of Duluth	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White	675	94%	77,968	90%
Black	4	<1%	1,988	2%
American Indian	18	3%	2,134	2%
Asian	4	<1%	1,293	1%
Pacific Islander	0	0%	29	<1%
Some Other Race	1	<1%	224	<1%
Population Reporting Two or More Races	11	1%	2,629	3%
Hispanic	12	1%	1,305	1%



## Past and Current Planning Efforts Involving the Riverside Project Area

### *2006 City of Duluth Comprehensive Plan*

The City completed a comprehensive plan to help guide the orderly development of the City in 2006. This was the first completed comprehensive planning process the City had undertaken since the original comprehensive plan in 1927. That comprehensive study aided the City in addressing a number of land use decisions for the more than 43,000 acres (67 square miles) encompassed within the City. The Comprehensive Plan identified existing land uses in the project area, which included Park, Cemetery, Recreation, Low Density Residential, Low-Medium Density Residential, Manufacturing, Undeveloped, and Commercial. It also set forth future land use designations which included Preservation, Recreation, Traditional Neighborhood, Low-density Neighborhood, Neighborhood Commercial, General Mixed Use, and Commercial Waterfront.

### *City of Duluth Natural Systems Profile*

The City has completed a comprehensive natural systems profile which provides an analysis of the existing state of Duluth's natural resources and systems. The profile explores the City's geology, topography, soils, climate, water resources, and terrestrial resources. The profile identifies goals, and policies to protect the City's natural systems as land use scenarios are considered. The plan specifically can enforce or encourage the following:

- Development design alternatives (e.g., conservation design)
- Protection of areas through natural buffers
- Private actions during development such as stormwater management and habitat protection to contribute to the public natural resource realm
- Incentives to landowners in the management of their private lands for natural resource protection
- Best management practices for all types of development in an effort to protect and preserve Duluth's natural resources.

### *St. Louis River Corridor – From Vision to Action*

In its effort to environmentally, recreationally, and economically enhance western Duluth, the City has identified a number of public improvement projects to take place between 2015 and 2017, some of which have already been implemented. These improvements include the extension and improvements of

a number of trails, improvements to the Wade/Wheeler Stadium, and the addition of many recreational opportunities.

### ***Spirit Mountain Water Line***

Spirit Mountain is currently installing a waterline that will pump water from the St. Louis River to provide a water source for the creation of artificial snow that can be made to establish an early season snow base and hopefully assist in maintaining snow cover during those years when the region receives a light cumulative snowfall. In spring, melt water will flow through the waterline from Spirit Mountain and back into the St. Louis River. This consistent snowpack will aid in the development of Spirit Mountain as a recreation hub for the City of Duluth.

### ***Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel for Kayak Bay – Spirit Mountain Area***

In a volunteer effort, a number of professionals who are members of the Urban Land Institute analyzed the planning area to help guide its future and assist the City in its planning effort. The panel identified that if a small area plan was deemed necessary that the zoning should be flexible and not so specific that it restricts development creativity. In addition that a focus be placed on the Spirit Mountain access drive as a central node from which to build development momentum. The volunteer panel conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats/Challenges) analysis of the area. A key strength was its natural beauty and proximity to outdoor recreation. A key weakness was the status of Grand Avenue and the overall lack of identity or branding as “Kayak Bay”. The name in and of itself was noted to be too subtle. A specific opportunity was that a critical mass of land has been acquired by one development team allowing for the potential for a unified development project. The natural amenities of the area also reduce the need for larger lots and offer the opportunity for smaller lots and higher density housing which is connected to public recreational amenities. Threats or challenges identified included the perception of the area as an “industrial company town” with a lack of updated housing and low visual curb appeal.

### ***St. Louis River Corridor Strategic Action Plan***

The City has engaged a consultant, WSB & Associates, to analyze the St. Louis River Corridor to identifying nodes of importance which will play a key role in the identification of areas which have the capacity to improve water quality in the St. Louis River. This is being done in a way to help the effort to have the St. Louis River delisted by 2025 by the EPA as an Area of Concern (AOC). In addition to



the identification of the nodes of importance, a development suitability analysis will be completed for the corridor, and a transfer of development rights district will be drafted.

### ***Tallas Island Paddle Center***

The City has engaged a consultant, HKGi, to develop a concept plan for a paddle center. The exact project and programming details remain to be decided. However, this project will play a key role in the way recreational development takes shape east of Grand Avenue.



### ***Grand Avenue Nordic Ski Center***

The vision for the Nordic cross country ski trail includes 3.3 km in trails which are augmented with the ability to produce artificial snow with state-of-the-art snowmaking technology which is much quieter than previous technologies. While the trails will be lit to provide for extended skiing hours in the mornings and evenings, the lighting will be unobtrusive to local residences. The expansion of recreational opportunities and its possible effect on local residences in this area was discussed and the City will work with those residents to provide a buffer that minimizes local impacts. It is intended that this project will become a regional

center for cross country skiing and provide the area with an amenity for all to use. The project is halfway through its public engagement process, with construction authorization planned for the winter of 2016 and actual project construction to take place from May 2016 to October 2016.

#### ***Grand Avenue / Highway 23 Improvements***

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) will be conducting a road improvement project in 2016 through the project area that will include road resurfacing, intersection improvements, shrinking of lanes, and the inclusion of additional room for bicyclists and pedestrians.

#### ***½ and ½ Tourism Tax***

The Minnesota Legislature authorized the City to reinstate the half-percent sales tax at will. The tax is applied to hotel stays and food and beverages served in the City. The tax is expected to generate \$1.4 million annually and will be spent on projects in western Duluth meant to bolster the area's economy and revitalize the St. Louis River corridor.

## Comprehensive Plan

### *Background:*

The City of Duluth adopted its most recent Comprehensive Plan in 2006. That Comprehensive Plan is meant as a guidance tool to promote a unified land use vision for the entire City. The twelve governing principles that are listed below were adopted at the beginning of the 2006 Comprehensive Land Use Plan process. They were created to provide the foundation and fundamental concepts by which physical planning in the City should take place and were a primary guide to development of the Future Land Use Map.

It will be important that guiding principles of the Riverside Small Area Plan reinforce these overarching principles to promote planning clarity and unity throughout the City. The twelve governing principles are:

1. Reuse previously developed lands
2. Declare the necessity and secure the future of undeveloped places
3. Support traditional economic base
4. Support emerging economic growth sectors
5. Strengthen neighborhoods
6. Reinforce the place-specific
7. Create and maintain connectivity
8. Encourage mix of activities, uses and densities
9. Support private actions that contribute to the public realm
10. Take sustainable actions
11. Include consideration for education systems in land use actions
12. Create efficiencies in delivery of public services

The future land use categories located in the existing Future Land Use plan include the following:

*Low Density Neighborhood* – Single-family housing with city utilities located on curvilinear streets with parcels having the longer side parallel to the street. The density of this district is 3-4 units/acre.

*Commercial Waterfront* – Waterfront dependent commercial uses sometimes mixed with residential or adjacent to higher density residential land uses. These areas include tourist or recreation oriented uses and can be adjacent to industrial waterfronts or abut other commercial, recreation, and preservation uses. Accesses to these areas are expected to have water and regional arterial access.

*Neighborhood Commercial* – Intended for commercial and office development focused primarily on needs and convenience of the



motorist, without losing pedestrian access and connection. No residential uses are located along arterial roads. Building footprints are expected to be less than 50,000 sq. ft.

*Neighborhood Mixed Use* – Purpose is to provide a transitional use between more intensive commercial uses and purely residential neighborhoods. This use includes conversions of houses to office or live-work spaces and aesthetically, the appearance should maintain a largely residential building character.

*Preservation* – Characterized by lands with substantial restrictions due to high natural resource or scenic value, or severe development limitations. These lands are primarily public lands and include most city parklands, shoreland, rivers, streams, wetlands, and floodplains. Uses include water access for passive use such as fishing, canoe/kayak with limited parking.

*Recreation* – Intended to provide areas for park and open space areas dedicated to active recreation, such as neighborhood parks, community centers, downhill ski areas, playgrounds, ball fields, water recreation, and associated facilities such as parking. This district is expected to receive higher human impacts than preservation areas.

*Rural Residential* – Areas of single-family lots of at least five acres in size and which limit the extension of municipal utilities for new development. This district includes existing rural density areas with lots as small as an acre now served by municipal utilities but not planned for further subdivision. Conservation development is encouraged and in some instances required of this designation.

*Traditional Neighborhood* – Characterized by grid or connected street patterns with houses oriented with shorter dimension to the street and detached garages, some with alleys. Limited commercial, schools, churches, and home business are located within this district. This district includes many of Duluth's older neighborhoods, infill projects and neighborhood extensions. The density of this district is 4-8 units per acre, and form standards and conservation development is an option.

*General Mixed Use* – This category has the broadest mix of uses which includes light industrial, office, commercial, and residential uses but ensures compatibility with adjacent land uses. For large sites, master planning is suggested to allow for appropriate separation of uses.

*Urban Residential* – Greatest variety of building types including medium to high densities. Areas may include live/work unities, and include limited

neighborhood retail. Generally connected or adjacent to parks and open space.

Historic Resources Overlay – Identifies high resource value of cultural/historic areas and buildings. Redevelopment focuses primarily on adaptive reuse and new development is based on design standards which require a design review.

Sensitive Lands Overlay – Characterized by high resource value lands or natural resources that may be developed under conservation design standards, transfer of development rights program designs, or low-impact performance standards.

## Chapter 2: Land Use



### *Public Input on Land Use:*

Community priorities identified during public engagement included the following:

- Utilize developed areas for redevelopment to protect riverfront
- Enhance residential areas which include buffering of natural areas
- Mixture of tax base (restaurants, light commercial, mixed use)
- Rustic simple development tailored to recreation

### *Vision:*

Land use should provide opportunities for the strategic locating of residential and commercial development and redevelopment while also protecting and buffering from natural areas.



## Background:

A variety of zoning districts are found in or immediately adjacent to the planning area, including Mixed Use Neighborhood (MU-N), Residential – Rural 1 (RR-1), Residential – Tradition (R-1), Residential – Urban (R-2), and Industrial – General (I-G). R-1 properties can be found along both sides of Grand Avenue with a small injection of R-2 and MU-N districts. Areas south of Grand Avenue adjacent to Tallas Island are primarily zoned I-G for industrial uses. Areas north of Grand Avenue adjacent to and surrounding Spirit Mountain are primarily designated as an RR-1 district.



Uses found within the Rural Residential (RR-1), Residential Traditional (R-1), and Residential Urban (R-2) zoning districts are residential homes at varying degrees of densities. Uses found within the Mixed Use Neighborhood (MU-N) zoning district include residential homes, but also include commercial uses which both provide a service and are compatible to area residences. The general industrial (I-G) zone is meant for general industrial uses which include the Tate & Lyle plant.

The City's current comprehensive plan guides lands in the project area for commercial waterfront, preservation, recreation, neighborhood mixed use, traditional neighborhood, general mixed use, neighborhood commercial and low-density neighborhood. In addition, lands surrounding and including Spirit Mountain are designated with a sensitive lands overlay district. The sensitive lands overlay is used to identify high resource value lands or natural resources that may be developed under conservation design standards, transfer of development rights program designs, or low-impact performance standards. Spirit Lake Marina and the lands surrounding it are guided for commercial waterfront which is the same designation given to a portion of land along canal park. The riverside community is guided for traditional neighborhood.

Through the community visioning and engagement process land use priorities were identified including the following:

- Utilization of previously developed areas along the river to protect existing natural riverbanks.
- Enhancement of current residential areas.
- Current lack of local restaurants and light commercial or retail space

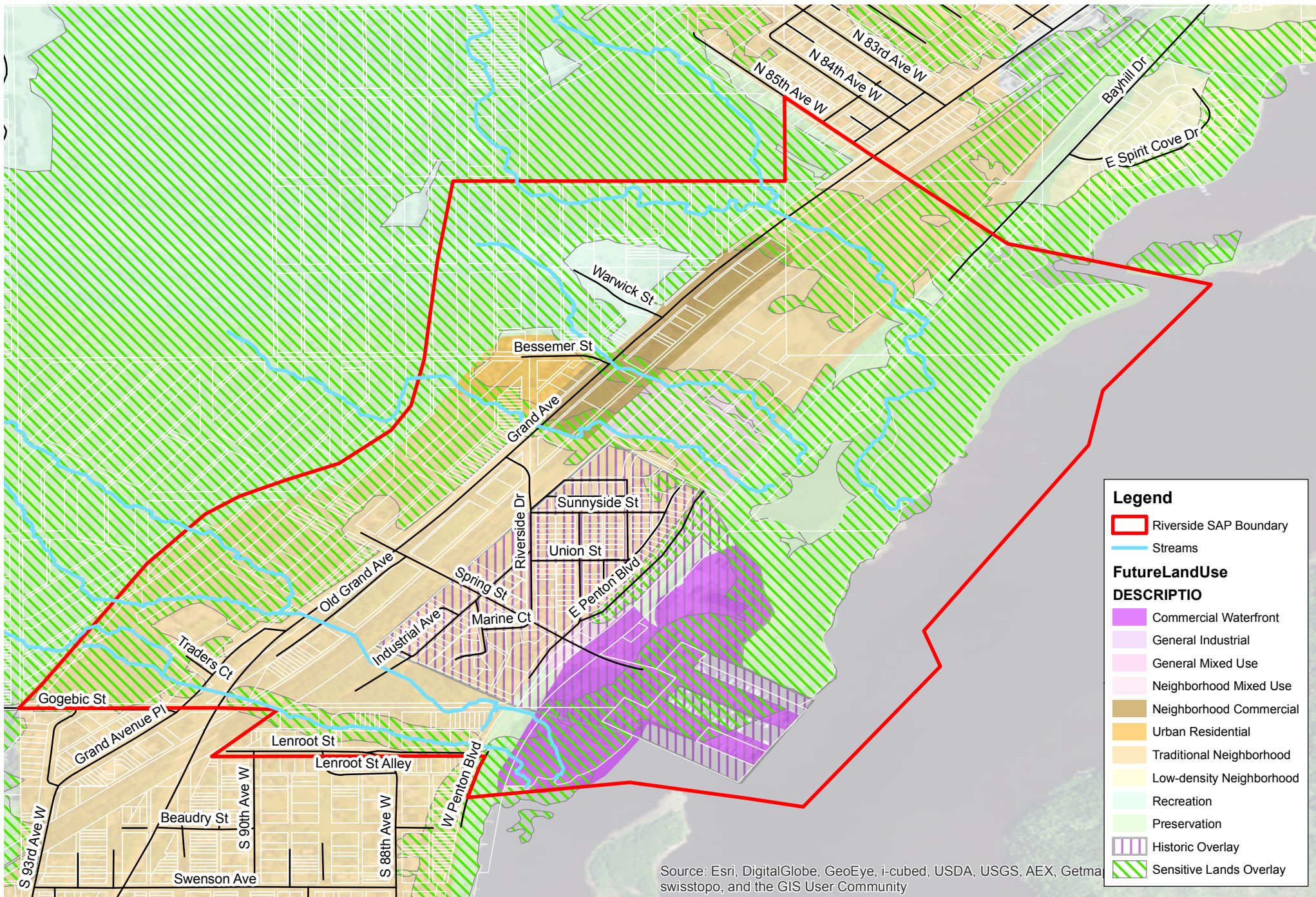
Those in attendance of the May 7<sup>th</sup> public visioning session took part in a citizen driven future land use mapping activity. The activity allowed for tables of residents to utilize either markers or play-doh to identify what types of land uses they would like to see located in their community. Provided on the following pages are ideas that some groups had regarding future land use guidance.

In addition to the land use exercise, property owners in the area have begun to bring together development concepts. This concept and concepts brought forth at the public visioning session have a number of similar qualities including the desire for additional housing, commercial support for recreational amenities, and passive recreational opportunities that buffer ecologically sensitive areas.

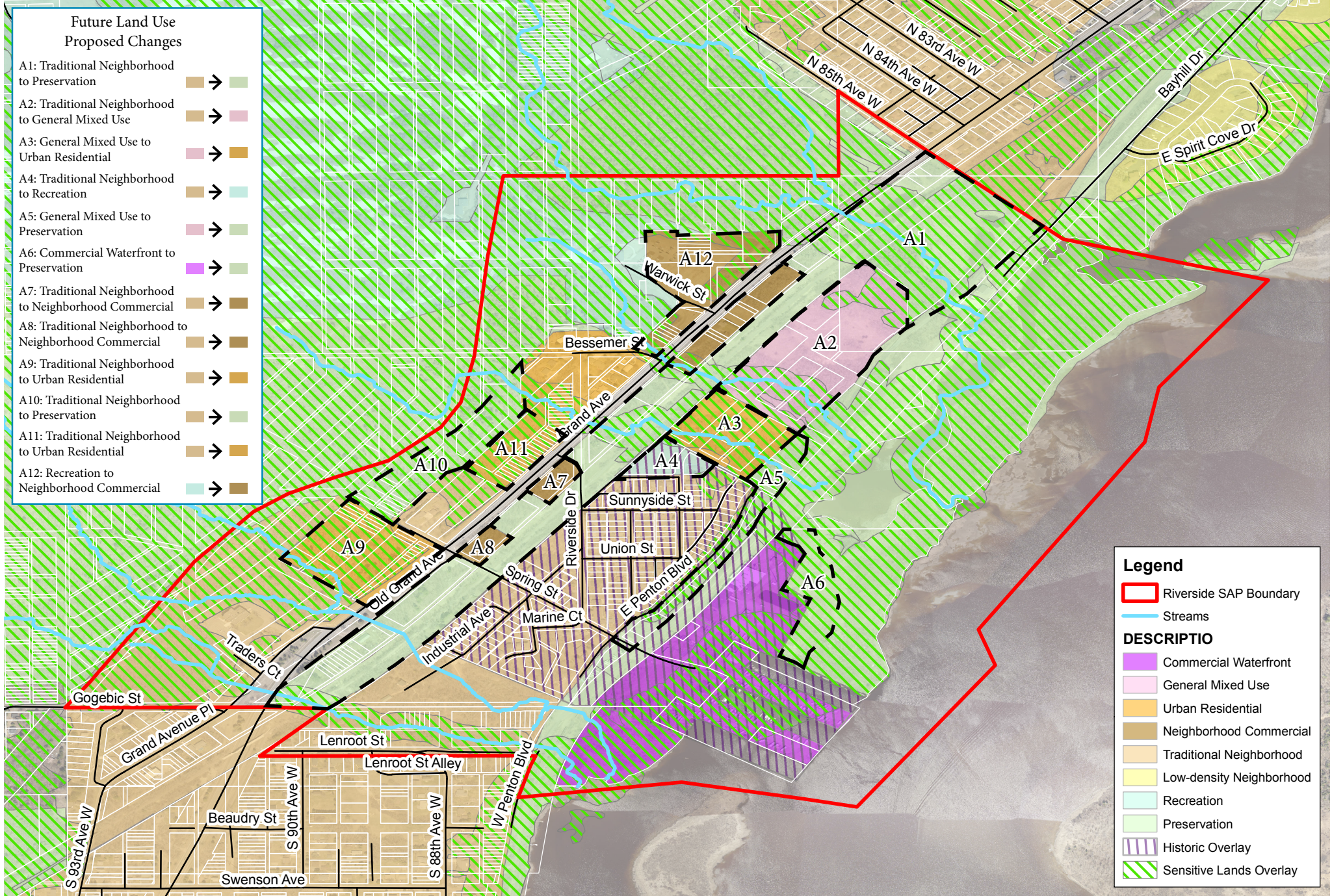
Through the development of these land use scenarios, discussions with residents in attendance, and property owners in the area, a number of themes were identified which included the following:



- Desire for additional housing opportunities
- Preservation of environmentally sensitive areas
- Need for commercial enterprises to support local families and recreational amenities
- Maintenance and expansion of local recreational assets.







Future Land Use Proposed Changes	
A1: Traditional Neighborhood to Preservation	→
A2: Traditional Neighborhood to General Mixed Use	→
A3: General Mixed Use to Urban Residential	→
A4: Traditional Neighborhood to Recreation	→
A5: General Mixed Use to Preservation	→
A6: Commercial Waterfront to Preservation	→
A7: Traditional Neighborhood to Neighborhood Commercial	→
A8: Traditional Neighborhood to Neighborhood Commercial	→
A9: Traditional Neighborhood to Urban Residential	→
A10: Traditional Neighborhood to Preservation	→
A11: Traditional Neighborhood to Urban Residential	→
A12: Recreation to Neighborhood Commercial	→

**Legend**

- Riverside SAP Boundary
- Streams

**DESSCRIPTIO**

- Commercial Waterfront
- General Mixed Use
- Urban Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Low-density Neighborhood
- Recreation
- Preservation
- Historic Overlay
- Sensitive Lands Overlay



Alterations to the existing Future Land Map were identified through information collected at public meetings, online engagement tools, and through the citizen advisory committee. Some information gathered was provided by the public in a very spatial format in mapping exercises, other input was gathered in a text format and was applied spatially. Conversations with property owners identified the desire for additional housing opportunities, commercial space to support the local neighborhoods needs and the needs of local recreational amenities. In addition, stakeholders identified the need to attract more families to the area.

**Neighborhood Commercial:**

Property at specific nodes along Minnesota Highway 23/Grand Avenue were identified as appropriate for additional commercial activity. Access to these properties will be a challenge due to the depth of the lots; however, is believed to be achievable.

**Urban Residential:**

Property has been included for guidance to urban residential to promote housing density that will preserve larger tracts of open space while still providing necessary population density to aid the area in achieving its goals to attract new families and attracting additional commercial services.

**General Mixed Use:**

In response to community feedback, additional property between the Munger and Western Waterfront trail has been proposed to be guided for General Mixed Use to allow for commercial and residential uses with performance standards to ensure compatibility and buffering.

**Recreation:**

Public input described the desire to build upon the strength of the existing recreational amenities located within that area. As such, lands associated with the Munger and Western Waterfront Trails have been proposed to be guided for Recreation, and additional lands between the two trails have been proposed to be guided for recreation to provide the opportunity for recreational synergies between the two trails.

**Preservation:**

The importance of ecological preservation is at the forefront for many local stakeholders. As such lands associated with Tallas Island remain to be guided for preservation. Land guided for preservation is done with the intent for that land to be used for low intensity uses such as trails, and passive water access including fishing, canoeing, and kayaking.

### **Sensitive Lands Overlay:**

The Sensitive Lands Overlay is proposed to remain intact as it currently exists as it provides important oversight to environmentally sensitive locations within the project area.

### **Historic Overlay:**

The Historic Overlay is proposed to remain intact to ensure important historic characteristics of the neighborhood are retained. The inclusion of the Riverside Neighborhood into a Historic Preservation district was a point of discussion for community members and the consideration for that zoning is a suggested implementation strategy.

### **Goals**

1. Preserve and enhance the existing and future recreational opportunities in Riverside area by exploring a "recreation destination" for Duluth residents and the Greater Duluth area.
2. Enhance residential land use opportunities and allow for infill-housing opportunities to cluster residential density that will allow for more open green space elsewhere.
3. Utilize previously developed areas for redevelopment to protect the riverfront.
4. Promote mixed land uses that provide recreational synergies between commercial and residential land uses.

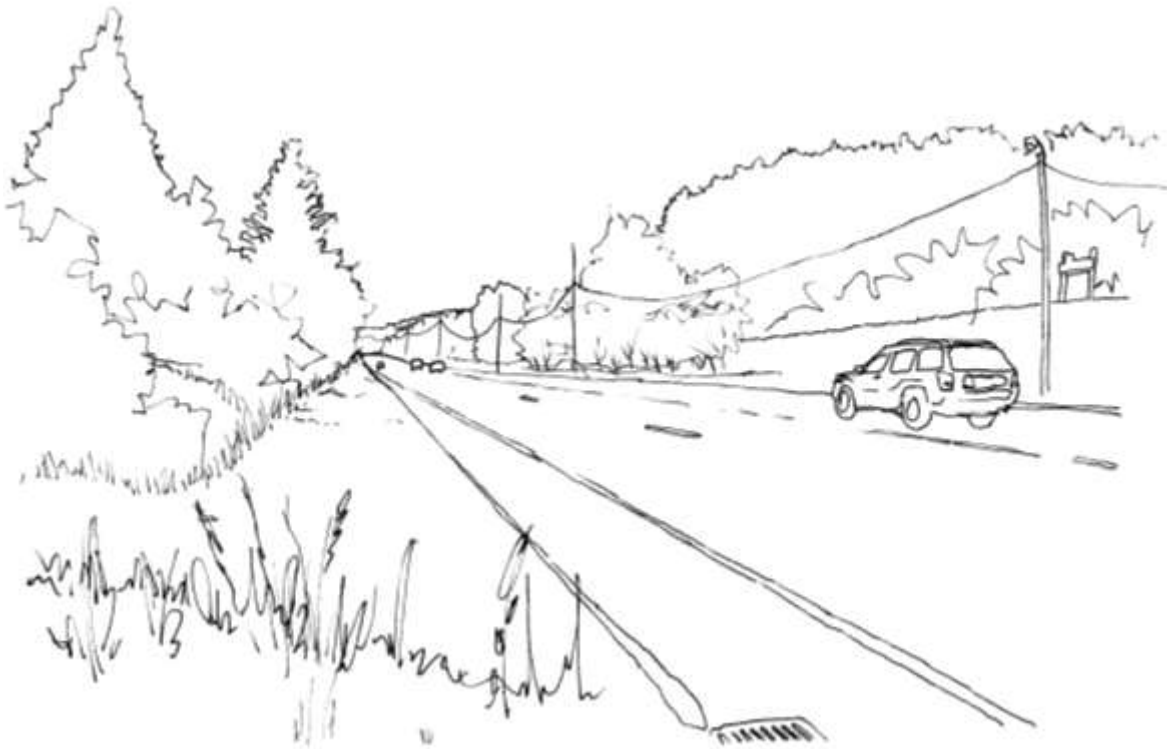
### **Implementation Strategies:**

1. Review landscape buffering requirements in the Unified Development Code.
2. Amend the Land Use Map to allow for a mixture of housing including single, duplex, mixed use, and low rise buildings to allow for necessary density, as outlined on the Land Use Map.
  - a. Guide area identified as A1 from Traditional Neighborhood to Preservation
  - b. Guide area identified as A2 from Traditional Neighborhood to General Mixed Use
  - c. Guide area identified as A3 from General Mixed Use to Urban Residential
  - d. Guide area identified as A4 from Traditional Neighborhood to Recreation
  - e. Guide area identified as A5 from General Mixed Use to Preservation
  - f. Guide area identified as A6 from Commercial Waterfront to Preservation
  - g. Guide area identified as A7 from Traditional Neighborhood to Neighborhood Commercial
  - h. Guide area identified as A8 from Traditional Neighborhood to Neighborhood Commercial



- i. Guide area identified as A9 from Traditional Neighborhood to Urban Residential
  - j. Guide area identified as A10 from Traditional Neighborhood to Preservation
  - k. Guide area identified as A11 from Traditional Neighborhood to Urban Residential.
  - l. Guide area identified as A12 from Recreation to Neighborhood Commercial.
- 3. Consider language used to define “Preservation” and what infrastructure is appropriate within land with this land use guidance.
  - 4. Consider inclusion of the Riverside Community to Duluth Historic Preservation district.
  - 5. Coordinate with the local visitor's bureau to encourage tourism expansion into the Riverside area and to enhance the existing and proposed recreational assets in the area. Refer to the goals and strategies in this small area plan when conducting pre-application reviews with interested property owners and developers.

## Chapter 3: Transportation



### ***Public Input on Transportation Concerns:***

Community priorities identified during public engagement included the following:

- Slow traffic on Grand Avenue/Highway 23 to Fond-du-Lac
- Physical improvements to Grand Avenue road surface
- Provide safe crossings along Grand Avenue
- Increase visibility of signage for community assets like Spirit Mountain Lower Chalet.
- Extend the Western Waterfront Trail

### ***Vision:***

Creation of a transportation network that efficiently moves vehicular traffic and provides enhanced public transportation opportunities which are accessible by safe sidewalks and crosswalks and reserve space for pedestrian, bicycles, and transit riders.

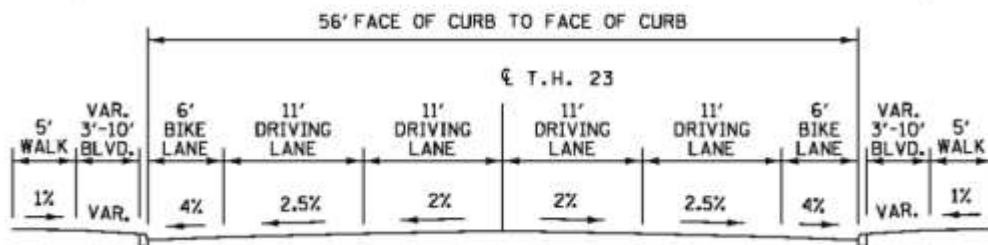
### ***Background:***

Roadways are depicted by their classification which is assigned based upon their ability to provide through-vehicle mobility and the amount of access provided to local properties. This classification method is one that is used nation-wide to

provide consistency in transportation planning. Classifications include Interstate, Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial, Major Collector, Minor Collector, and Local Streets.

Trunk Highway 23/Grand Avenue is scheduled for a road reconstruction in 2016 that will provide the now patch-worked roadway with a much needed face lift. As part of that project, the lanes will be narrowed, sidewalks widened, and bike lanes provided.

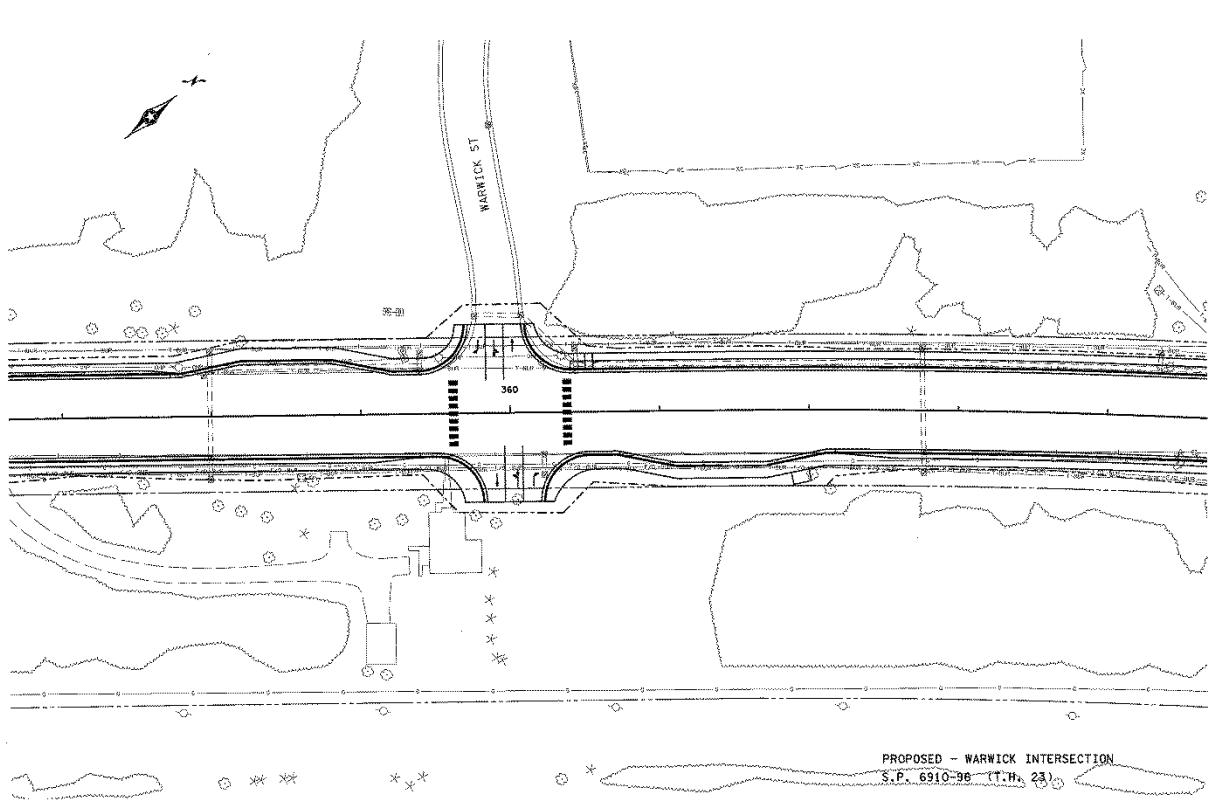
### **PROPOSED T.H. 23 URBAN TYPICAL SECTION (INPLACE CURB WITH NEW SIDEWALK)**



Principal Arterials: Minnesota Highway 23/Grand Avenue is the only principal arterial in the project area. Principal arterials provide little access to local properties and are instead meant to connect to other principal arterials, serve truck traffic, and generally carry an average daily traffic count of more than 10,000 vehicles traveling at speeds of 30 to 55 miles per hour.

Local Streets: There are many examples of local streets within the project area; however, one such example is Sunnyside Street. Local streets are designed to make connections to residential areas and provide a high level of access to connections to the collector systems and local arterials.

An expansion of Warwick Street south across Minnesota Highway 23/Grand Avenue has been proposed that would provide necessary access to land between the Munger and Western Waterfront trails. The intersection of Warwick Street and Minnesota Highway 23/Grand Avenue would be a signalized intersection and would contain marked crosswalks for added safety. This intersection has been designed as part of the 2015/16 maintenance project. This intersection would be the focal point in the strategic development of the Riverside Area. Focused and site specific development at a key node like this intersection will aid in the preservation of other lands which are more environmentally sensitive. It will be important that a preliminary layout for the Warwick extension is cognizant of environmental impacts and where possible minimize or mitigate those impacts.



As mentioned, the project area is served by the Western Waterfront, Munger, and Duluth Winnipeg & Pacific (DW&P) trails. The Superior Hiking trail also connects at the top of Spirit Mountain. The Munger trail is a paved surface which runs parallel to Grand Avenue through the project area and is used by bicyclists and walkers alike. The Western Waterfront Trail is an unpaved trail used by walkers and hikers taking in the scenic views of Tallas Island. The DW&P trail is

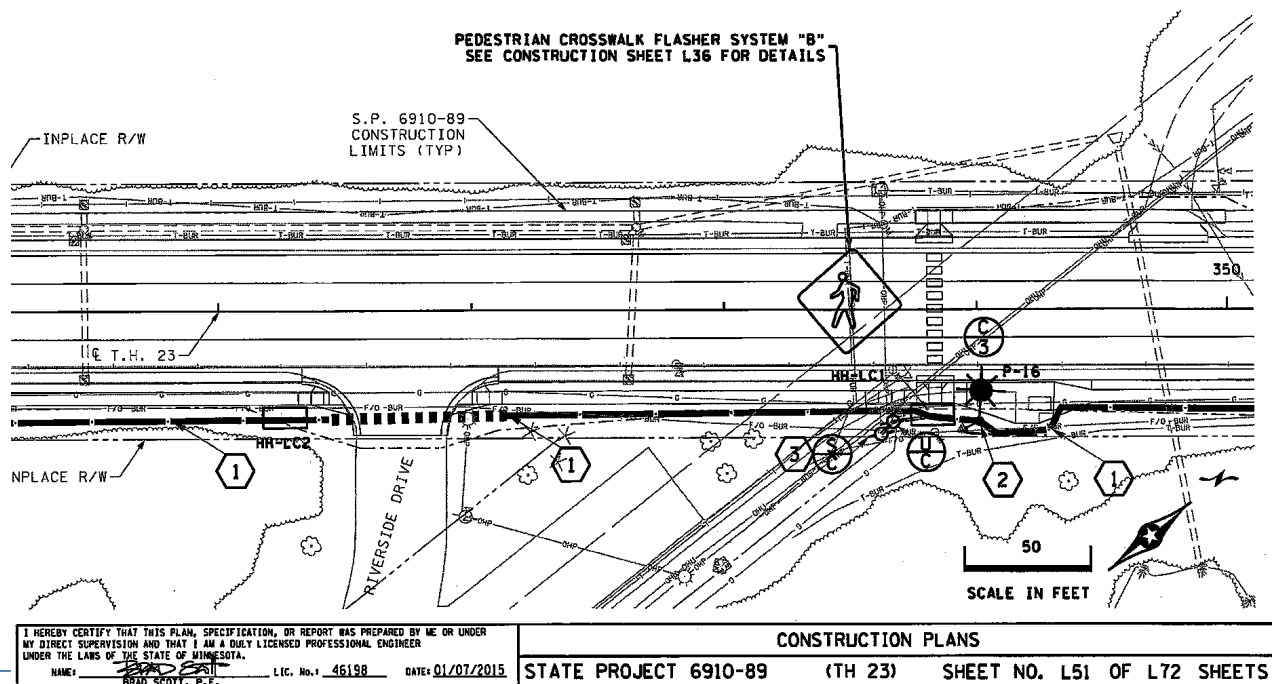
also unpaved and runs along the base of Spirit Mountain and connects to the Superior Hiking Trail

Bus stops are located along Grand Avenue placing a high importance of pedestrian connectivity within the Riverside neighborhood to ensure a safe and high quality user experience for community members traveling to the bus stop. The project area has a large sidewalk network with sections receiving varying degrees of on-going maintenance.

The Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) currently provides bus transit to the project area and has dedicated bus stops with shelters. The expansion of public transportation availability and maintenance was identified by members of the community as a point



of concern due to the degradation of the current facilities. Current service times for dedicated bus stops have gap intervals of between 20 – 90 minutes. Below is a construction figure that depicts the bus stop next to Riverside Drive which includes a redesigned bus stop and improved cross walk that will improve safety.





**Goals:**

1. Increase use of public transit.
2. Improvement of public transit facilities.
3. Enhance/repair sidewalk network in project area.
4. Increase pedestrian safety along Minnesota Highway 23/Grand Avenue.
5. Increase efficiency of parking and provide additional handicap access throughout the project area.
6. Better signage to identify place.
7. Expansion of trail network.

***Implementation Strategies:***

1. Increase the amount of pedestrian signage and roadway striping which indicate pedestrian crossings, especially at bus stop locations and the intersection of future Kayak Bay Road and Grand Avenue. Where feasible install blinking crosswalk signs.
2. Allow for the sharing of parking spaces between complimentary land uses which utilize parking at different times of the day.
3. Work with private landowners, residents, Minnesota DNR, and St. Louis County to plan for the eventual development of Kayak Bay Road, a road connecting Grand Avenue with Spirit Mountain to the west, and to lands east of Grand Avenue.
4. Install wayfinding signage along Grand Avenue that promotes local destinations and recreational opportunities meeting MnDOT standards.
5. Expand the Western Waterfront Trail to provide added connectivity to local regional trail networks.
6. Coordinate the construction and re-construction of roads with development opportunities to maximize the opportunities for the development of "Complete Streets" that includes spaces for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles.
7. The City will work with the Duluth Transit Authority to assess the need for adjusting bus route frequency, stop locations including loop locations, and design of stop locations including bus stop cutouts within the SAP project location.

## Chapter 4: Environmental Characteristics



### *Public Input on Environmental Concerns:*

Community priorities identified during public engagement included the following:

- Preserve and enhance natural resources including St. Louis River shoreline.
- Increase connectivity between local and regional trails.
- Provide for nesting and breeding areas for fish and birds.
- Maintain/manage existing open spaces.
- Public access to the river that is sensitive to the natural shoreline.
- Ecology education opportunities.

### *Vision:*

Enhance and protect of local ecosystems that provide both recreation and preservation opportunities.

### *Background:*

Located adjacent to one of the world's largest fresh water estuaries and Spirit Mountain, the Riverside Small Area Plan project area has a variety of environmental qualities and topographical changes. An ecological improvement project that was recently completed is the Tallas Island Improvement project which included dredging to improve and increase habitat availability and restoration of wet meadow areas. As part of the restoration project, the connection of Knowlton Creek to the bay was restored and enhanced. Just south of the restored connection a large pool seven to eight

feet deep was created to catch incoming sediment. A bay was also created further south from Tallas Island and just north of the Tate & Lyle plant which includes a new eight to nine foot pool which will provide for improved fish habitat. Lastly, a continuous channel was created which is five feet deep by thirty feet wide to ensure water and sediment movement through the Tallas Island area.

The project area is flanked by Knowlton and Lenroot Creeks. These creeks play a key role in the connection of the upland areas of the project area and the St. Louis River. As such, both of these creeks saw major flooding in the 2012 Duluth flood and are still in need of restoration.

The project area is serviced by Riverside Community Park which offers an open lawn area, baseball field, and playground for local residents to enjoy. The park is in need of on-going maintenance and a redesign assessment of the park may be considered. This assessment will be part of a future master planning effort conducted by the City of Duluth Parks and Recreation Department.

Three major trails, Duluth, Winnipeg & Pacific, Western Waterfront and Munger Trails run through the project area. The Munger trail runs parallel to Minnesota Highway 23/Grand Avenue and is a paved trail which is utilized by many bicyclists and walkers. The Western Waterfront trail is an unpaved surface utilized primarily by hikers and local residents and runs parallel to the St. Louis River and adjacent to Tallas Island. Lastly, the Duluth, Winnipeg & Pacific Trail is a major regional trail along the northwestern edge of the project area that connects with the Superior Hiking Trail.

### **Goals:**

1. Preserve and enhance Tallas Island.
2. Provide for additional public access to the St. Louis River.
3. Balance the needs for recreation with the needs for preservation.
4. Preserve stream corridors.

### ***Implementation Strategies***

1. Coordinate with the Parks and Recreation Department and Spirit Mountain Recreation Authority to identify areas of potential pedestrian access to the St. Louis River Corridor and utilization of the ½ and ½ tax program.
2. Require buffering from high impact land uses from those areas reserved for preservation.
3. Repair and improve Western Waterfront Trail and all current parks and trails in the area.

4. Assess the need for a paddle center to be located adjacent to Tallas Island. If deemed necessary work with the DNR and local stakeholders to minimize environmental impacts.
5. Explore the feasibility for the design and installation of wildlife viewing platforms near the Western Waterfront Trail and Tallas Island.
6. Work with the Minnesota DNR, St. Louis River Alliance, and Izaak Walton League to establish areas of particular natural resource value.

## Chapter 5: Community Characteristics



### *Public Input on Community Characteristics:*

Community priorities identified during public engagement including the following:

- Preserve and incentives for existing housing maintenance and opportunities for new housing that allows for the retention of green space.
- Attract new families to the area.
- Reduce noise coming from local industrial uses, and limit lighting intensities.
- Retain neighborhood feel, history, and architectural heritage.

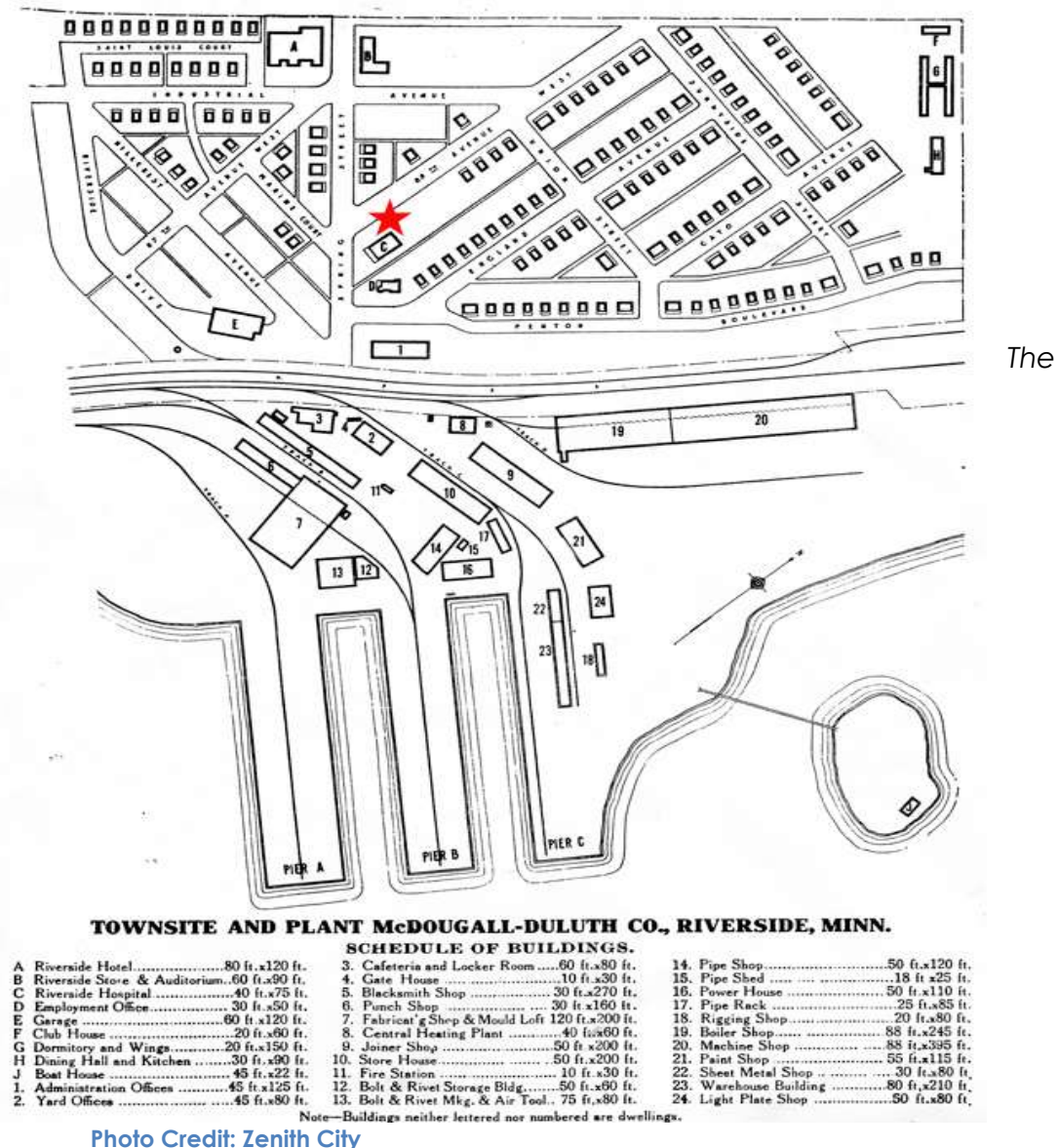
### *Vision:*

A community which retains existing residents and attracts new ones because of its rich history and culture of riverfront activity, recreational opportunities, ecological enthusiasm, and regional recreation destinations.



### Background:

The Riverside community has a strong history rooted in its connection to the St. Louis River. The community, first championed by ship builder and principal operator of the McDougall-Duluth Ship Builders, inc., Alexander McDougall, was a community built entirely around the operation of the shipyard. Construction of the shipyard took place in 1917 and employed 3,500 laborers most of which lived right in Riverside. Between 1918 and 1922, the shipyard and its employees completed thirty-six 265 foot freighters.



community of Riverside was constructed for the workers of the facility and included original construction of 50 cottages with plans for over 75 more. Many of the original cottage foundations still remain today and have received high

praise for their longevity due to the high construction quality. Plans for the community included a hotel, grocery and retail store. A large dormitory for single male employees was constructed to house 250 men and included a large dining facility. The shipyard was closed in 1922 and reopened under new ownership in 1941 to supply allied war efforts. The reopening employed over 10,000 men and women and produced a fleet of 230 ships, which at one point averaged one ship every ten days. Upon the war ending in 1945, the shipyard was sold and turned into a marina which remains in operation today.

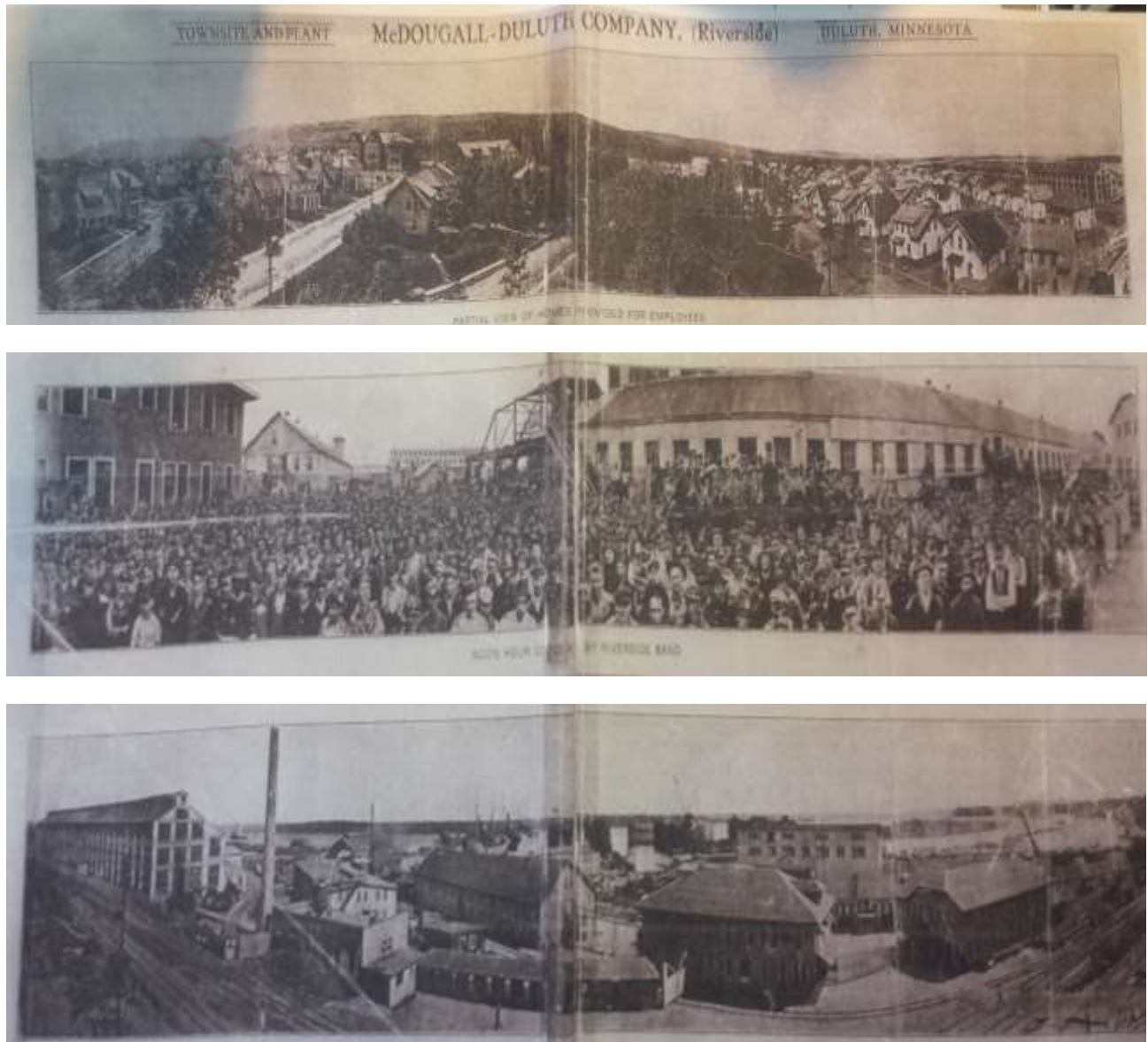


Photo Credit: Charlie Studahar

## Lake Superior Mississippi Railroad

Tracks for the Lake Superior & Mississippi Railroad were laid in 1870 and was the first to provide rail service to Duluth. Today the railroad is used on weekends during the summer and is operated solely by volunteers. Many flock to the train in the fall for a unique viewing of the changing tree colors in the area. The railroad is an important part of the community's history and will be a topic of interest as the U.S. Steel site and other contaminated sites are cleaned up. The railway has been owned by the City since 1980 when it was donated to them by Burlington Northern Railway. Many residents in the area view the train as part of the community both now and into the future.



### Local Housing Stock

Today the housing stock in the project area is 79% owner occupied which is almost 20% higher than the average for the City of Duluth. While this makes for a very stable neighborhood, it leaves little room for the influx of young professionals looking for rental property in the area. In addition, of the total 306 housing units, 75%, or 230 housing units were built on or before 1949 resulting in an overall aged housing stock.

Housing Age Summary (2008 – 2012 ACS)				
Year Structure Built	Riverside Project Area		City of Duluth	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2010 or later	0	0%	20	<1%
2000 – 2009	19	6%	2,723	7%
1990 to 1999	19	6%	1,947	5%
1980 to 1989	1	<1%	1,614	4%
1970 to 1979	9	3%	3,783	10%
1960 to 1969	8	3%	2,851	7%
1950 to 1959	20	7%	5,090	13%
1940 to 1949	34	11%	2,633	7%
1939 or earlier	196	64%	17,529	46%

Housing Occupancy Summary (2008 – 2012 ACS)				
Housing Units	Riverside Project Area		City of Duluth	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Owner Occupied	242	79%	21,380	60%
Renter Occupied	64	21%	14,482	40%

### Goals:

1. Maintain and improve upon local housing stock.
2. Make this area a recreation destination known to residents and visitors.
3. Promote history of the neighborhood.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Create a kiosk of history along local trails.
2. Install wayfinding signage installed at trail crossings
3. Coordinate with Spirit Mountain on current and future plans for expansions
4. Involve the neighborhood in planning and executing special events.
5. Examine the appropriateness for establishment of a historic preservation district within the existing residential neighborhood.



## Chapter 6: Plan Recommendations / Implementation Summary



**Vision Statement** – *promote the harmonic development of land for additional housing and commercial opportunities that enhances recreational amenities and preserves local ecologies.*



## Goals and Recommendations

Land Use & Housing	
Goals	
#1	Preserve and enhance the existing and future recreational opportunities in Riverside area by exploring a “recreation destination” for Duluth residents and the Greater Duluth area.
#2	Enhance residential land use opportunities and allow for infill-housing opportunities to cluster residential density that will allow for more open green space elsewhere.
#3	Utilize previously developed areas for redevelopment to protect the riverfront.
#4	Promote mixed land uses that provide recreational synergies between commercial and residential land uses.

Land Use & Housing	
Implementation	
#1	Review landscape buffering requirements in the Unified Development Code.
#2	Amend the Land Use Map to allow for a mixture of housing including single, duplex, mixed use, and low rise buildings to allow for necessary density, as outlined on the Land Use Map. (A1 – A12)
#3	Consider language used to define “Preservation” and what infrastructure is appropriate within this land use guidance.
#4	Consider inclusion of the Riverside Community to Duluth Historic Preservation district.
#5	Coordinate with the local visitor’s bureau to encourage tourism expansion into the Riverside area and to enhance the existing and proposed recreational assets in the area. Refer to the goals and strategies in this small area plan when conducting pre-application reviews with interested property owners and developers.

Transportation	
Goals	
#1	Increase use of public transit.
#2	Improvement of public transit facilities.
#3	Enhance/repair sidewalk network in project area.
#4	Increase pedestrian safety along Minnesota Highway 23/Grand Avenue.
#5	Increase efficiency of parking and provide additional handicap access throughout the project area.
#6	Better signage to identify place.
#7	Expansion of trail network.

Transportation	
Implementation	
#1	Increase the amount of pedestrian signage and roadway striping which indicate pedestrian crossings, especially at bus stop locations and the intersection of future Kayak Bay Road and Grand Avenue. Where feasible installation of blinking crosswalk signs.
#2	Allow for the sharing of parking spaces between complimentary land uses which utilize parking at different times of the day.
#3	Work with private landowners, residents, MnDOT, Minnesota DNR, and St. Louis County to plan for the eventual development of Kayak Bay Road, a road connecting Grand Avenue with Spirit Mountain to the west, and to lands east of Grand Avenue.
#4	Install wayfinding signage along Grand Avenue that promotes local destinations and recreational opportunities.
#5	Expand the Western Waterfront Trail to provide added connectivity to local regional trail networks.
#6	Coordinate the construction and re-construction of roads with development opportunities to maximize the opportunities for the development of "Complete Streets" that includes spaces for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles.
#7	The City will work with the Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) to assess the need for adjusting bus route frequency, stop locations including loop locations, and design of stop locations including bus stop cutouts within the SAP project location.

Environmental Characteristics	
Goals	
#1	Preserve and enhance Tallas Island
#2	Provide for additional public access to the St. Louis River
#3	Balance the needs for recreation with the needs for preservation
#4	Preserve stream corridors

Environmental Characteristics	
Implementation	
#1	Coordinate with the Parks and Recreation Department and Spirit Mountain Recreation Authority to identify areas of potential pedestrian access to the St. Louis River Corridor and utilization of the ½ and ½ tax program.
#2	Require buffering from high impact land uses from those areas reserved for preservation.
#3	Repair and improve western waterfront trail and all current parks and trails in the area.
#4	Assess the need for a paddle center to be located adjacent to Tallas Island. If deemed necessary, work with the DNR and local stakeholders to minimize environmental impacts.
#5	Explore the feasibility for the design and installation of wildlife viewing platforms near the Western Waterfront Trail and Tallas Island.
#6	Work with the City of Duluth, Minnesota DNR, the St. Louis River Alliance, and Izaak Walton League to establish areas of particular natural resource value.

Community Characteristics	
Goal	
#1	Maintain and improve upon local housing stock
#2	Make area a recreation destination known to residents and visitors.
#3	Promote history of the neighborhood

Community Characteristics	
Implementation	
#1	Create a kiosk of history along local trails
#2	Install wayfinding signage installed at trail crossings
#3	Coordinate with Spirit Mountain on current and future plans for expansions
#4	Involve the neighborhood in planning and executing special events.
#5	Examine the appropriateness for establishment of a historic preservation district within the existing residential neighborhood.

## Appendix A:



## Public Process

### Advisory Committee

The project advisory committee provided specific guidance throughout the development of this Small Area Plan. Advisory committee members held its kick off meeting on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 where issues, concerns, and opportunities were discussed. The advisory committee identified the following issues/concerns:

- Western Waterfront
- Impact of the Railroad
- Coordination with Spirit Mountain
- Coordination with the Riverside Community
- Need to balance recreation uses with residential uses
- Management of trail crossings
- Balancing of the wants/needs of local residents with tourism expansion.
- Impact of the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District sanitary sewer

The advisory committee identified the following opportunities:

- Planning with the Nordic Ski trail and paddle center
- Corridor recreation plan
- Newly implemented ½ and ½ tax
- Epicenter of Recreation
- Downhill/mountain biking
- Connections to Morgan Park
- Integrate with ½ and ½ tax projects
- Vast public lands
- Ideal opportunity to clean up existing areas creating improvements for both residents and tourists

The second meeting was held on May 21<sup>st</sup> which included a walkabout of the project area with project staff to provide specific insight into local amenities and



issues concerning the neighborhood. At that meeting the advisory committee provided the following insights:

- Status and usage of local trails,
- Important viewsheds
- community assets with great redevelopment potential like the old hospital building
- Architecture of neighborhood homes
- Necessity for maintenance of existing housing stock
- Impacts of the Tate & Lyle plant
- High usage of the community park by local children
- Impacts of the sanitary sewer pump house
- Status of local stream corridors

The third meeting of the advisory committee took place on June 18<sup>th</sup> when they provided comment on the first draft of the small area plan. At that meeting the advisory committee reviewed the draft future land use map and provided suggested alterations and reviewed and agreed upon goals and visions for land use, transportation, environment, and community characteristic chapters.

The final advisory committee meeting was held on June 25<sup>th</sup> to comment on the revised draft small area plan. At that meeting additional comments were provided regarding implementation strategies for Land Use, Transportation, Environmental Characteristics, and Community Characteristics. In addition to implementation, conversation regarding the refinement of the proposed future land use map including nodes of commercial land uses around the Spring, Riverside, and Warwick intersections took place.



## Public Meetings / Open Houses

A public visioning session was held on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and was attended by approximately 80 residents including residents from within the project area and adjacent neighborhoods. The meeting was covered by local news agencies providing additional public knowledge of this planning effort. Those in attendance provided project staff with a wide array of area knowledge through a number of activities including a “key strategies” exercise, a build your own future land use map exercise, and an issues and opportunities mapping exercise. The following information was gathered at that May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### Key Strategies Exercise:

Those in attendance were asked to close their eyes and imagine it was the year 2025 and the Riverside Community as the premier place to live, to raise a family, and to enjoy recreation. They were asked “What did the City of Duluth do in 2015 that provided the groundwork to create such a vision. Once they provided that information, each table was asked to rank their suggestions by highest level of priority. Those suggestions were then categorized into “Land Use”, “Transportation”, “Environmental/Open Space”, and “Housing/Community”. That information is provided below.

### Land Use

#### Priority 1's:

- Utilize developed areas to avoid disturbing river- like the marina
- Whatever development needs to have buffer zones to protect the rivers and creeks from runoff
- Preservation of the “wilderness feel” of the area by the river
- Limit commercial and residential development in the area. Enhance current residential areas
- Green buffer between natural habitat

#### Priority 2's:

- Develop zoning ordinances to “conservation” development. Any developments must follow strict zoning which protects the river
- Low density housing
- Mix of tax base opportunities (businesses, homes, green/rec)

- Housing- single, duplex, slightly larger, low rise to create more open space, kid friendly

Priority 3's:

- Designate this area as "Duluth Natural Area"
- Grand Ave planning needs to be able to handle more density (More connective to main roads)
- Development high density problem
- Restaurants, light commercial, artist-in-residence

Priority 4's:

- Restrict development along trails

Priority 5's:

- Rustic, simple development tailored to recreation

Priority 7's:

- Annex Wisconsin land on Minnesota side of the river

Suggestions Not Ranked:

- Single-level, low impact residential development- "walker/senior" friendly

## Transportation

### Priority 1's:

- Slow traffic on HWY 23 to FDL
- Fix the road (Grand Ave.)

### Priority 2's:

- Restrict development and heavy trucks on Grand Ave.

### Priority 4's:

- No train horns at Riverside Crossings
- Parking/handicap access

### Priority 5's:

- Safe crossings for Grand Ave (several of them)

## Environment / Open Space

### Priority 1's:

- Preserve and protect the natural resources of the area/ keep shoreline undisturbed
- Put environmental concerns first!
- Portable bathrooms along trails
- Connectivity between trails
- Cross country skiing trails through neighborhood
- Maintain "Wilderness" natural area habitat
- Begin by being certain we secure the natural resources

### Priority 2's:

- Protect the bay, river and estuary
- Preserve the nesting & breeding area for fish
- Include LSMSRR in the plan
- Extend WWT
- Consider a use fee for trails

### Priority 3's:

- River access in already disturbed areas- no new disturbances
- Manage/maintain open spaces
- Maintain green space!
- Preservation of green space
- Extend the Western Waterfront Trail west
- Move pump station or fix smells
- Paddling Center at Clyde Ave. or Indian Point, not Tallas Island
- Public access to the river

### Priority 4's:

- Nature center on Grand with trails going to the river and all.
- Bird sanctuary- protect the birds
- Repair and improve western waterfront trail and all of the current parks and trails in the area
- Trail access to river and along river to hook up with western waterfront trail
- Non-motorized access. No power boats: canoes, kayaks & sailboats
- Pedestrian friendly access to recreation
- More water access

### Priority 5's:

- Interpretive signs along trail
- fishing pier, wildlife viewing, boardwalks
- Keep the green space- for the river hiking trails



- There is a need for a boat launch for this area to serve campground, Indian Point, etc.
- Fishing pier, snowmobile trail
- Better signage informing people where things are

Priority 6's:

- Observation deck blind along river for family
- Increase access to the inner shallow channels
- Dredge channel from Clyde Ave. ramp
- Campground areas

Suggestions Not Ranked:

- Interpretive kiosks about natural history on the river
- Marina property sea walls
- Waterfront should not be privately owned!
- Money to upkeep trail system
- Trash barrels at trail access
- Prevent erosion from Spirit Mountain and Knowlton Creek
- Keep main channel open and marked all the way to HWY 23

## Housing / Community

### Priority 1's:

- No tax increase

### Priority 2's:

- Maintain new housing within neighborhoods, retaining green space between neighborhoods
- Community Club building renovation

### Priority 4's:

- Especially important to attract families to the area
- Incentives for maintenance of older housing stock

### Priority 5's:

- Reduce noise coming out of Tate & Lyle

### Priority 6's:

- New home construction incentives

### Priority 8's:

- New and improved housing. Affordable! One roof community housing

### Suggestions Not Ranked:

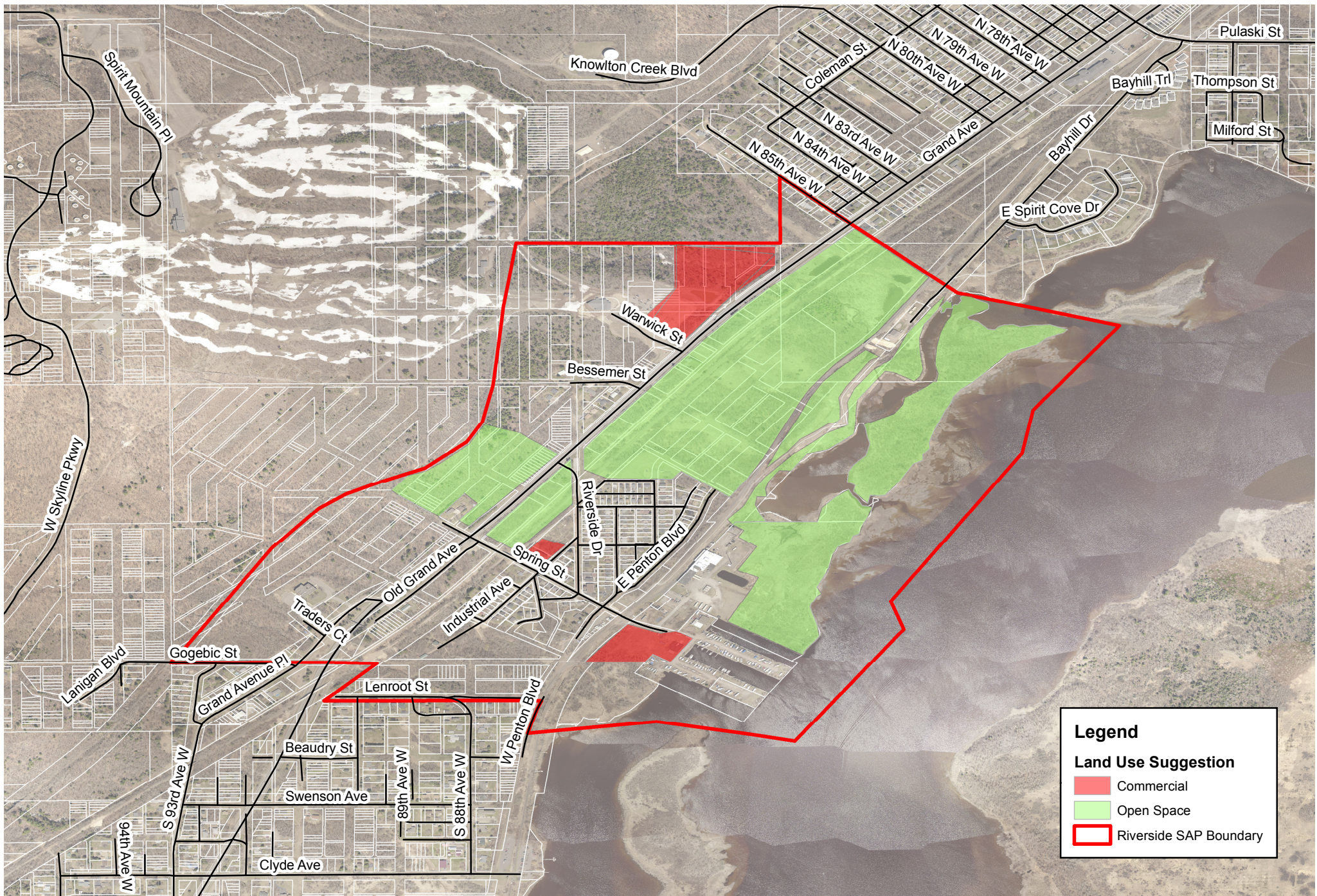
- Low-lighting, minimal city lighting
- Historic property repair
- Housing available for mixed income
- Limit signage, i.e. billboards
- Limit lighting intensity

### **Suggested Land Use Exercise:**

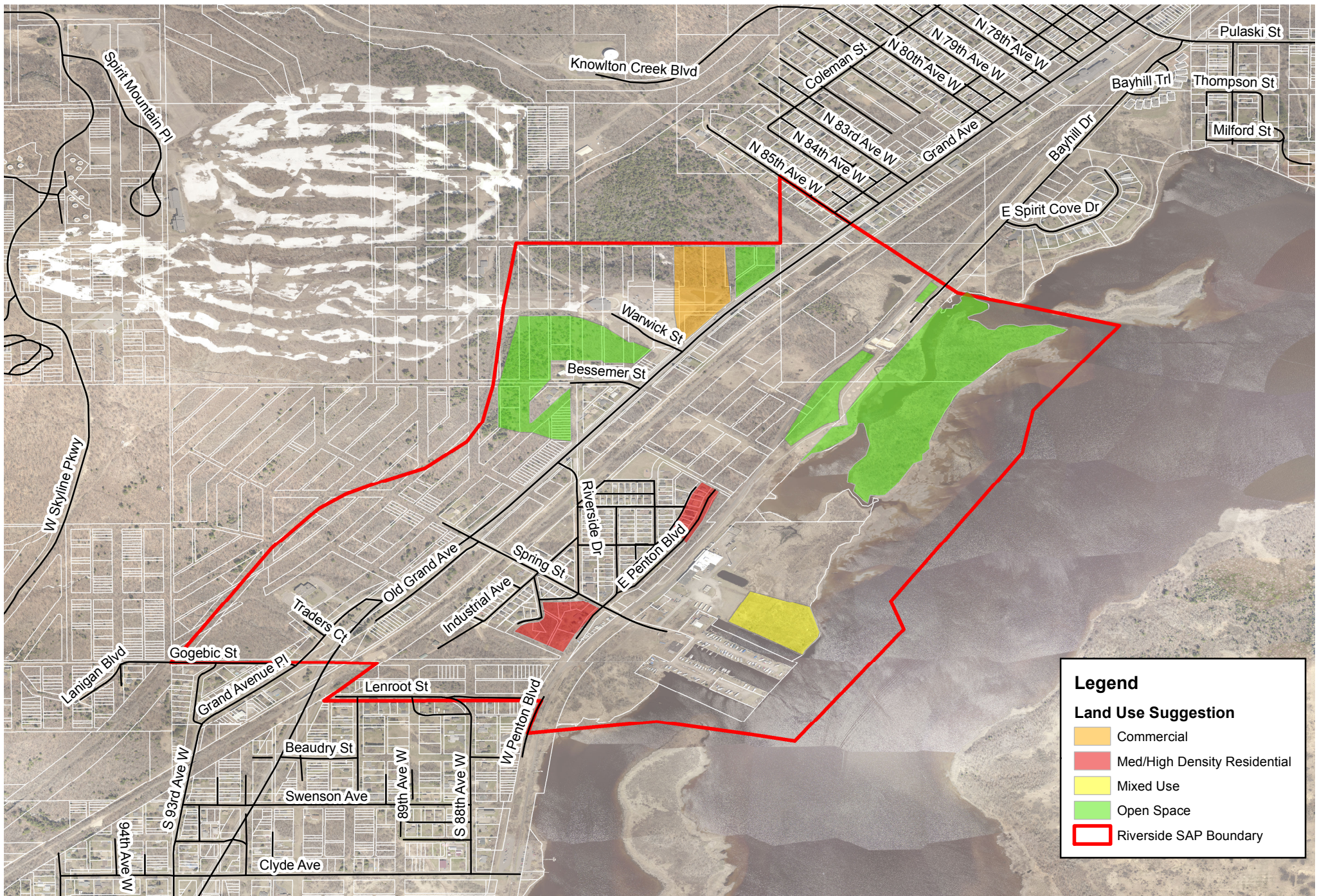
Those in attendance were asked to fill in a map of the project area with either Play-Doh, or markers suggesting the types of land uses they would like to see in the area.



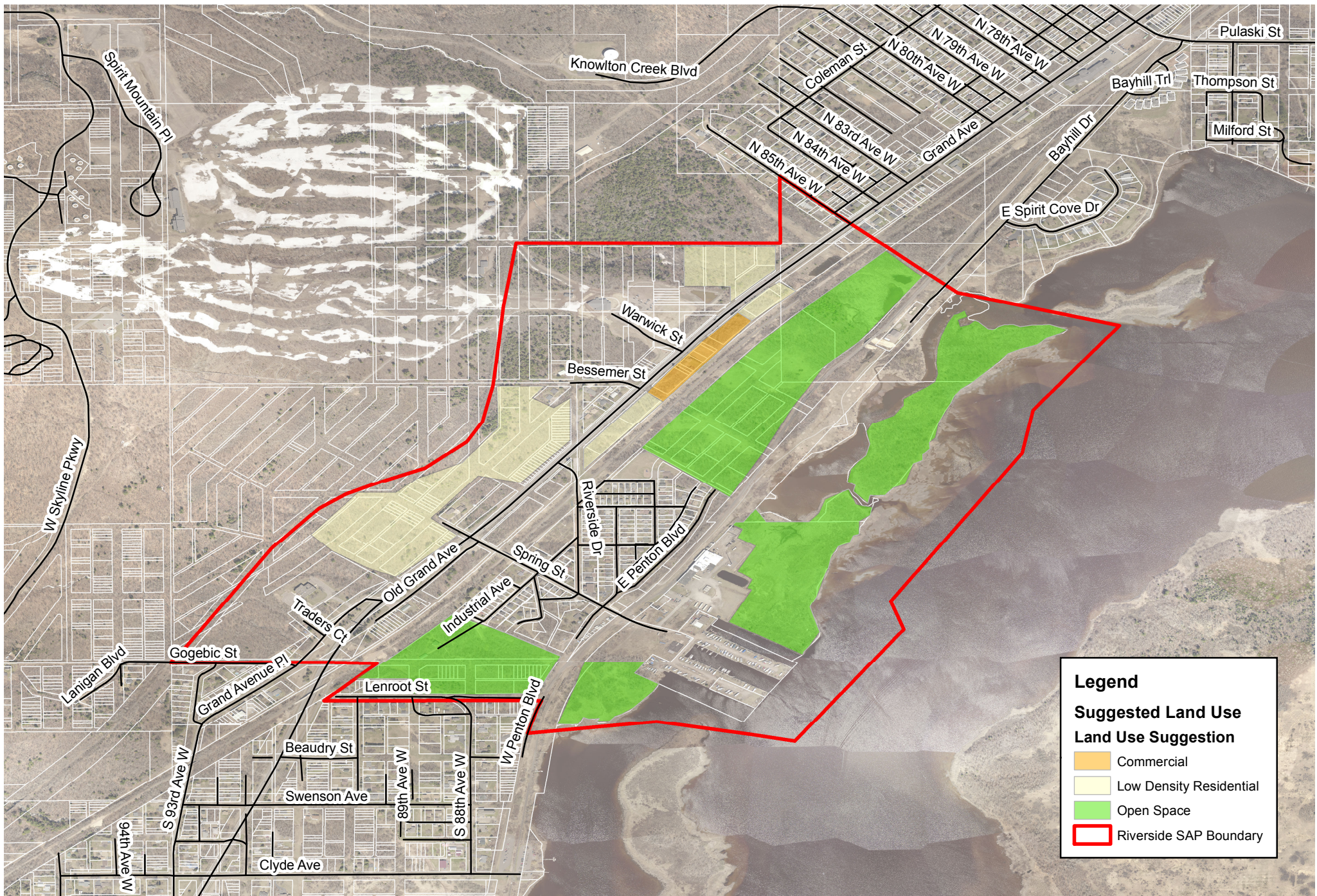




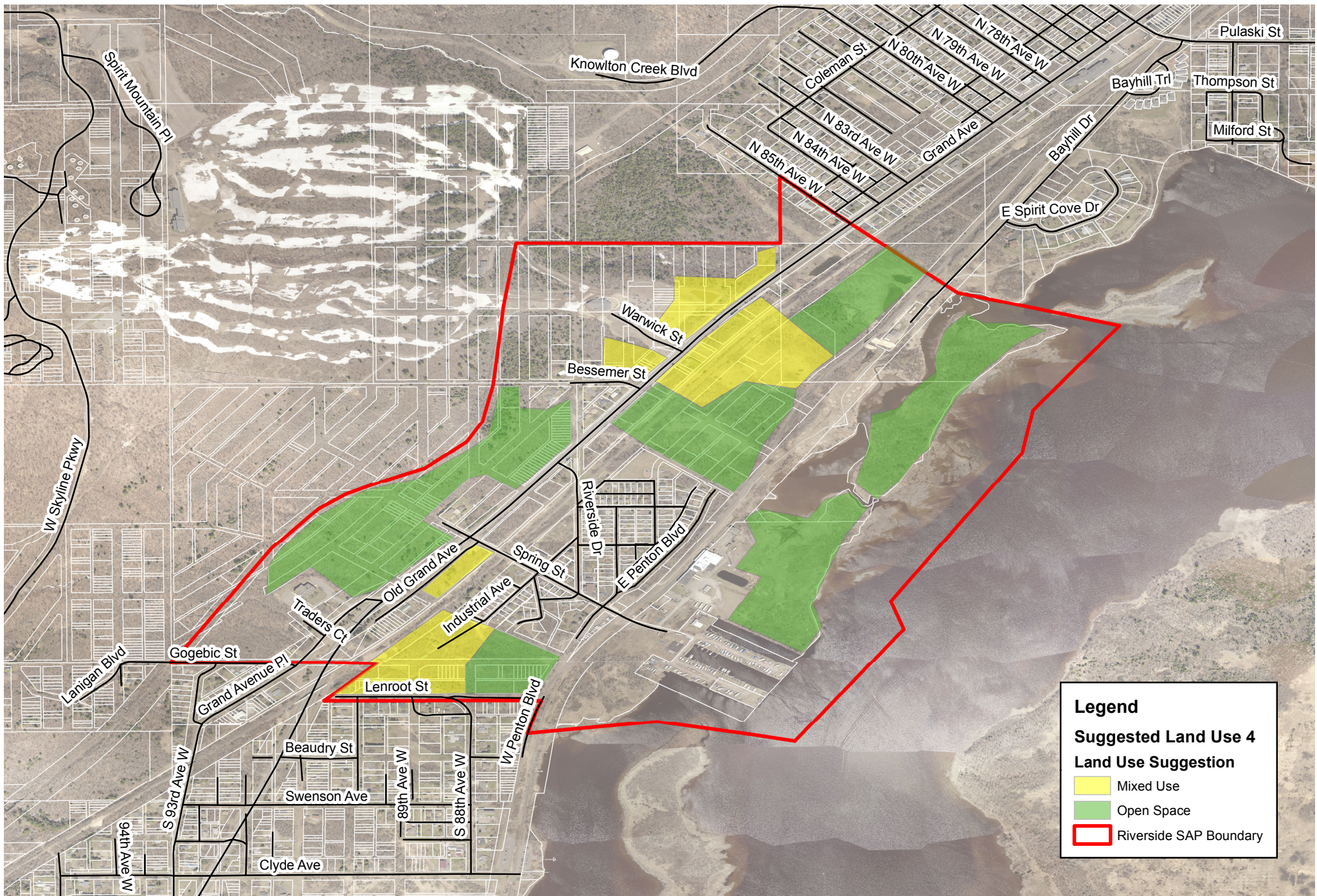




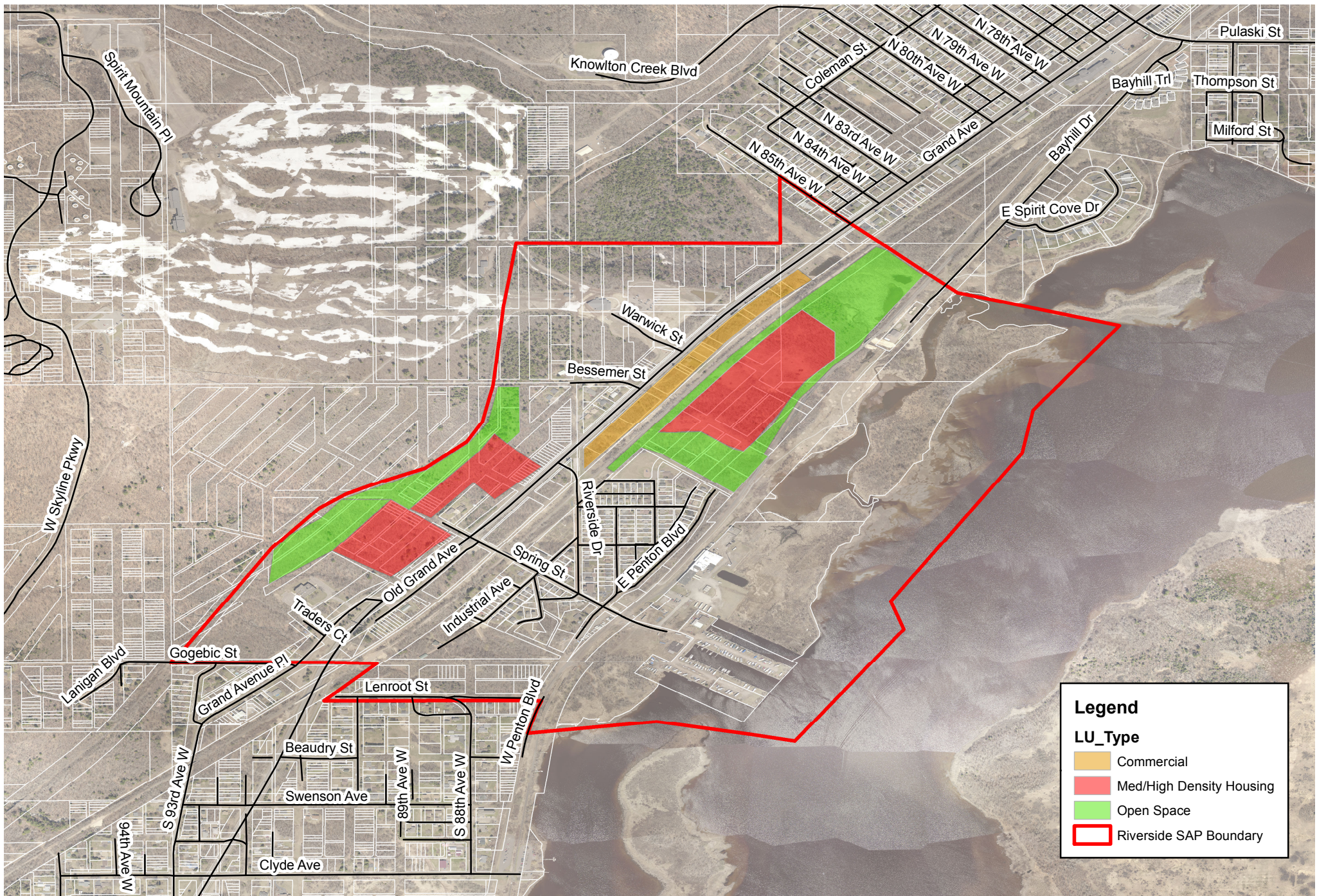




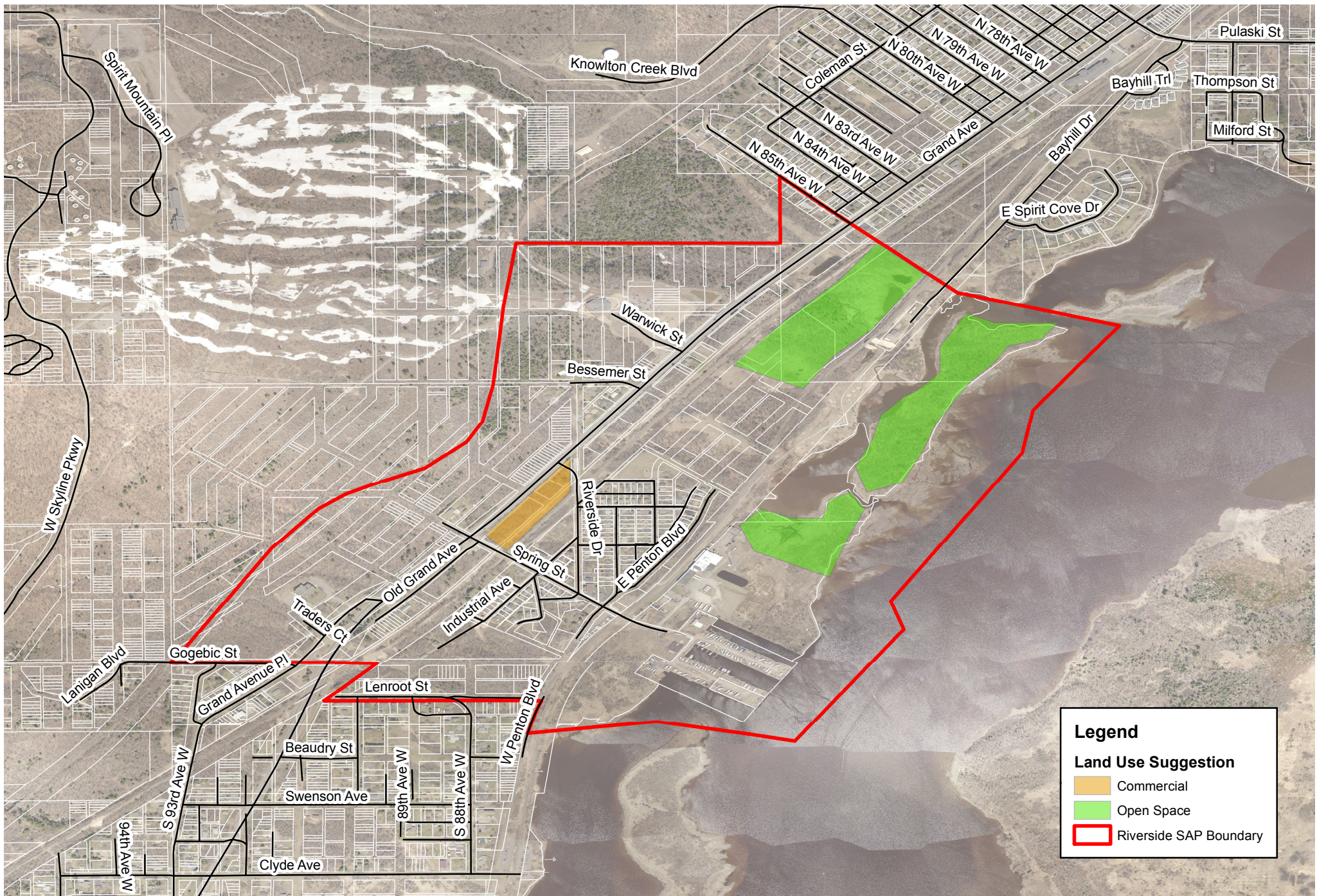












**Legend**

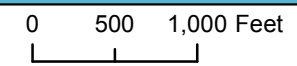
**Land Use Suggestion**

- Commercial
- Open Space
- Riverside SAP Boundary

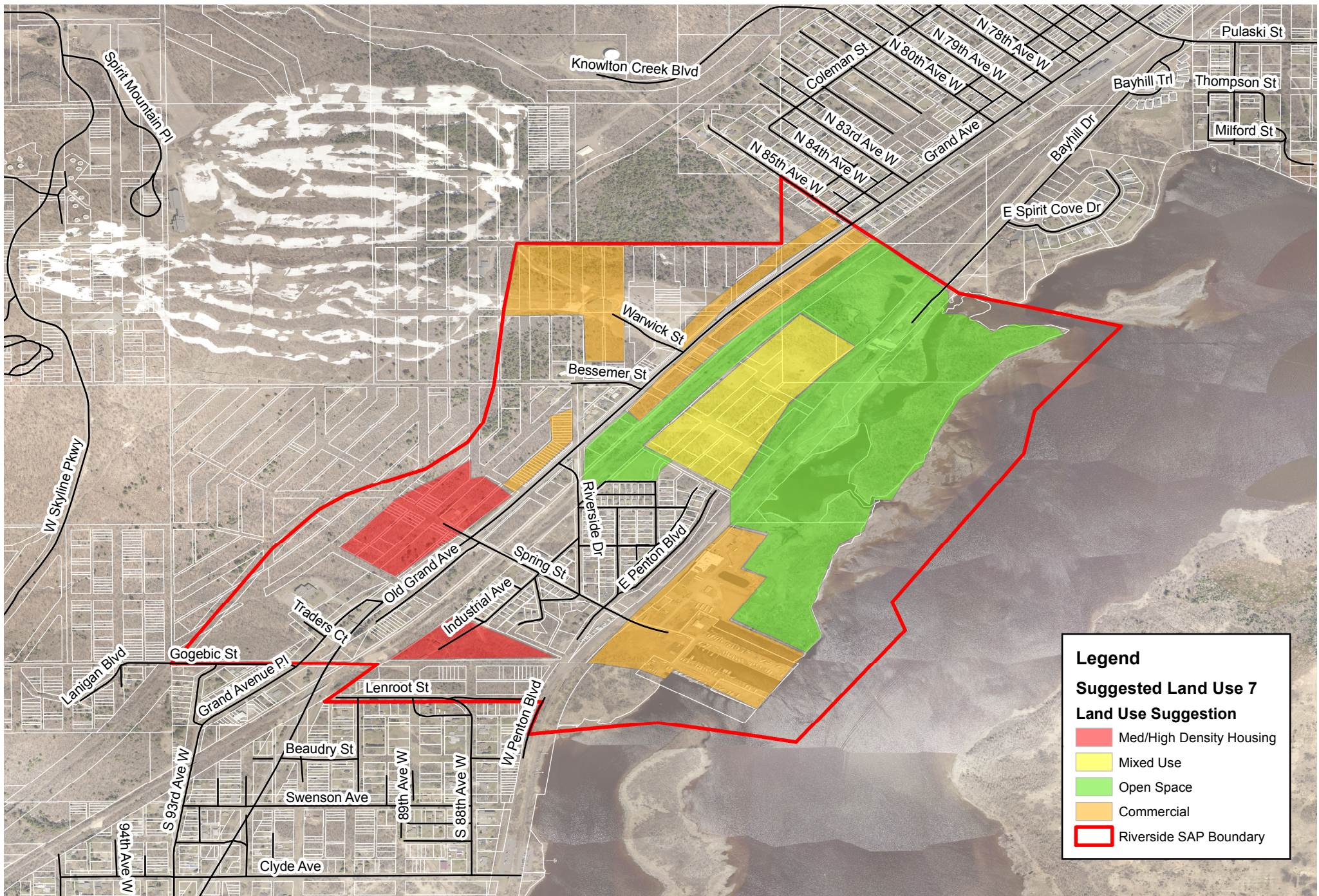


# Visioning Session Public Land Use Exercise

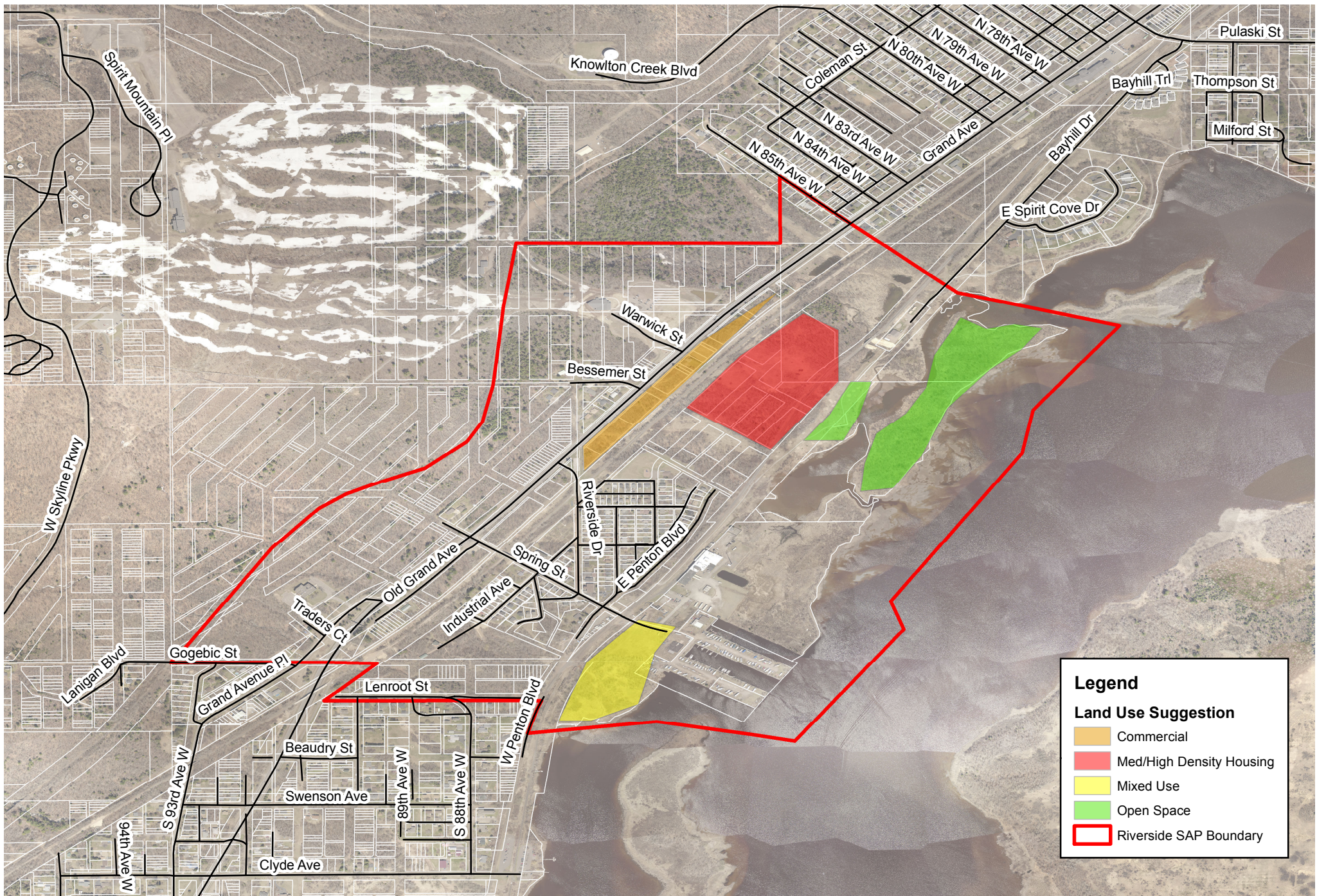
Riverside Small Area Plan



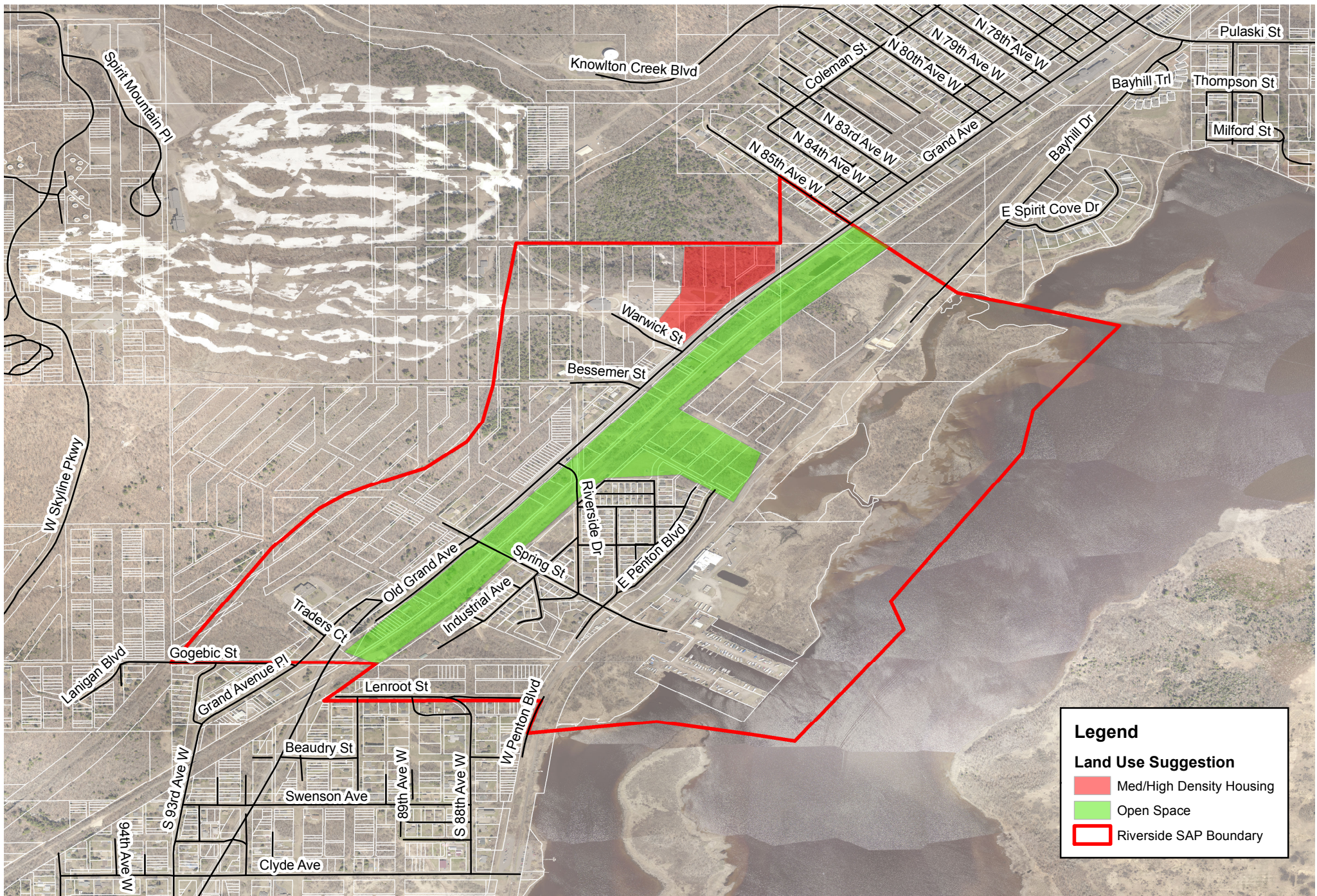
















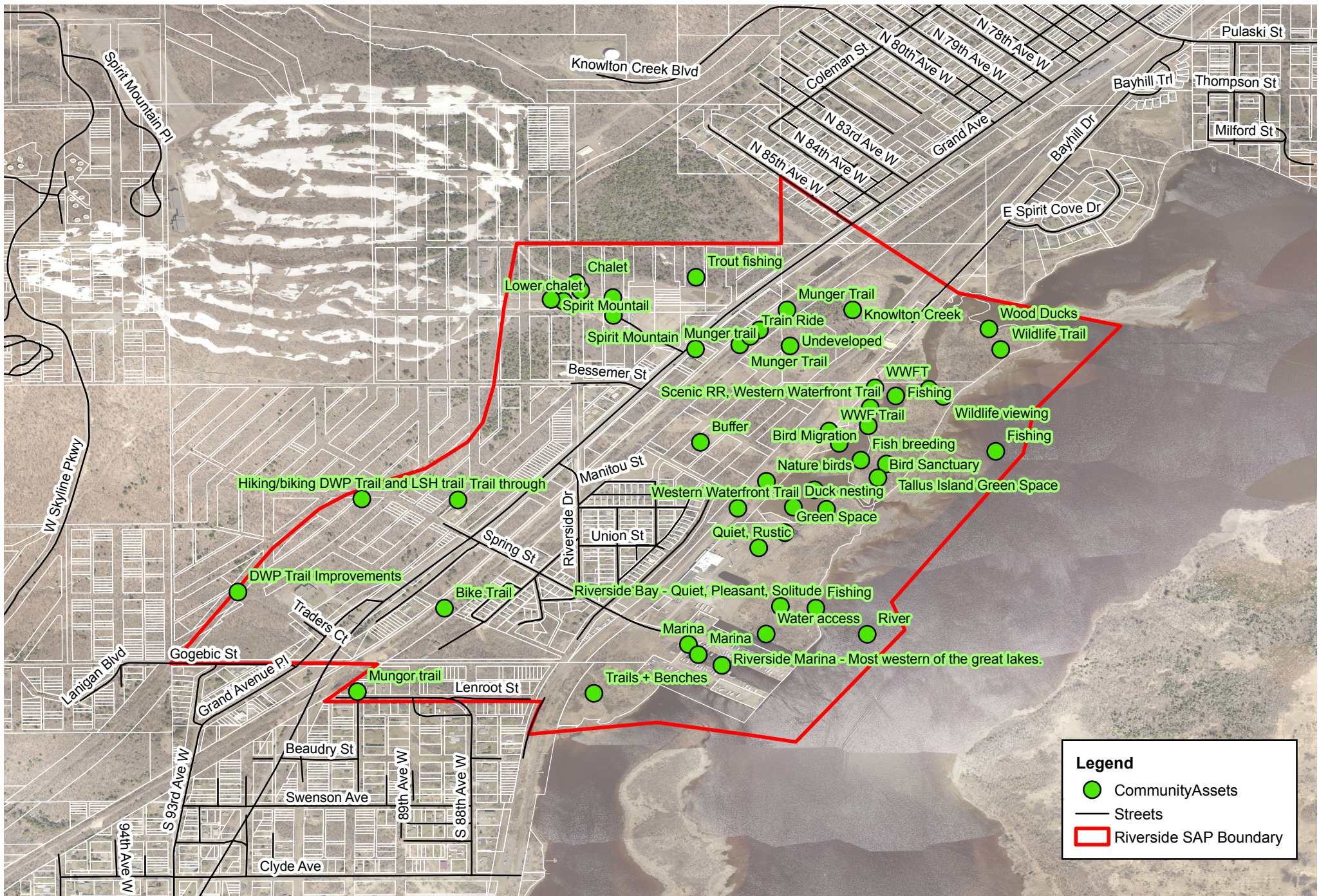
In addition to the future land use exercise held that evening, a local property owner has taken the time to sketch up ideas for the area which are shown above. Those ideas include additional housing space and commercial opportunities to support local recreational assets like Spirit Mountain and Spirit Lake Marina.

**Issues and Opportunities Mapping Exercise:**

Stakeholders in attendance used a series of colored dots and identified places they considered to be community strengths, community weakness, places they go, and areas they perceived to have development potential.







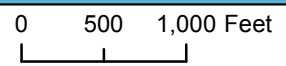
**Legend**

- CommunityAssets
- Streets
- ▭ Riverside SAP Boundary



# Visioning Session "What is here now?" exercise

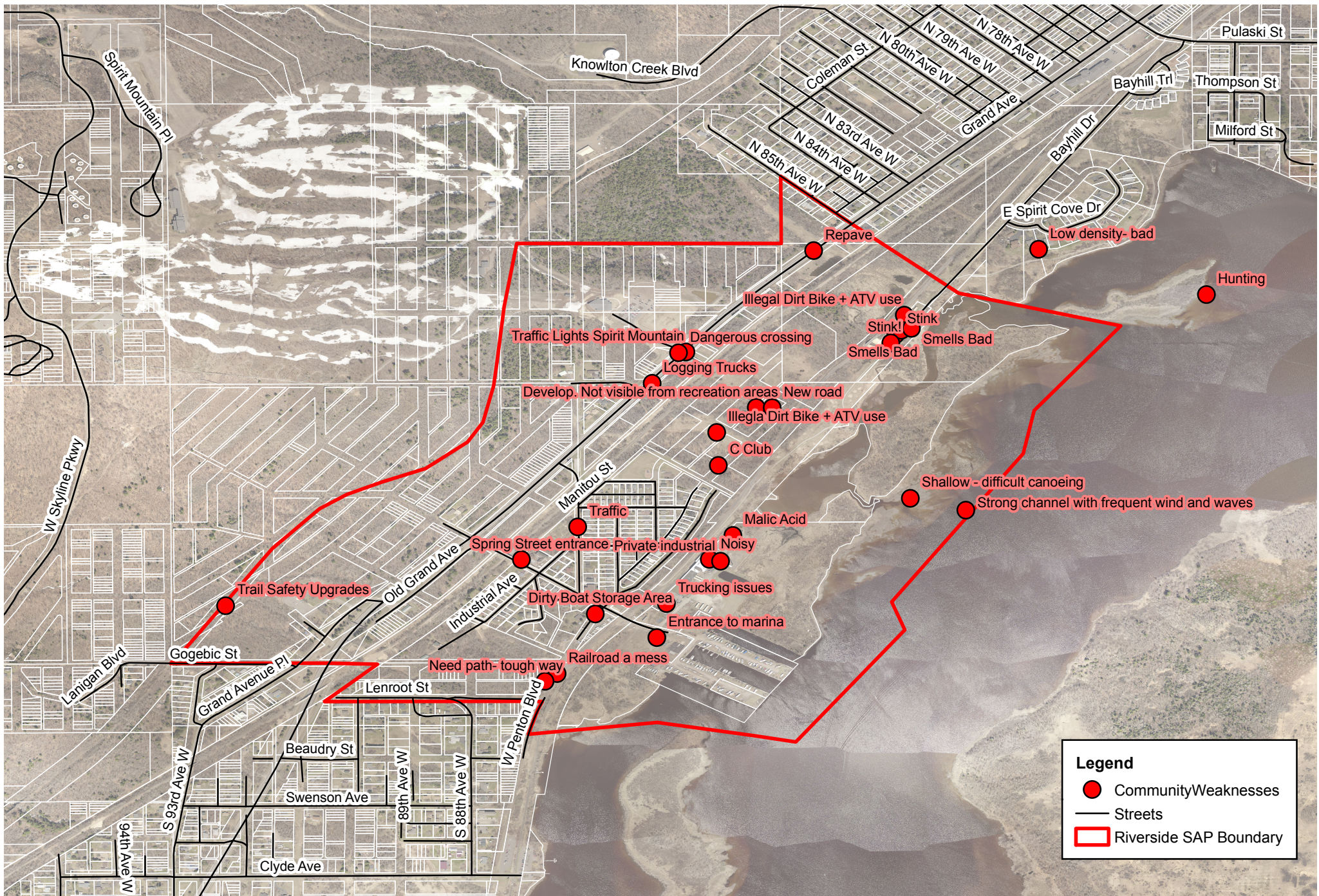
Riverside Small Area Plan



Community Assets



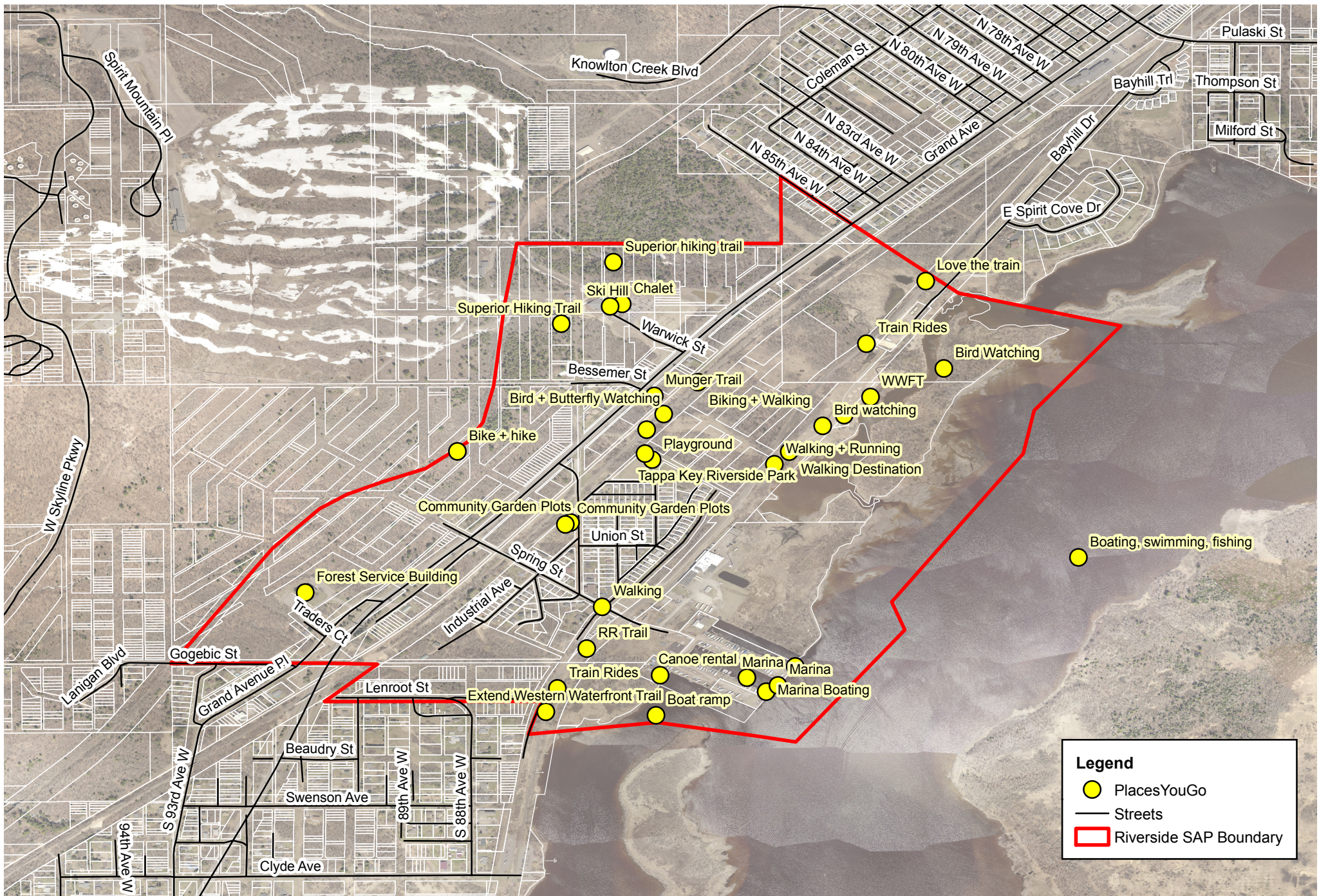




**Legend**

- CommunityWeaknesses
- Streets
- ▭ Riverside SAP Boundary

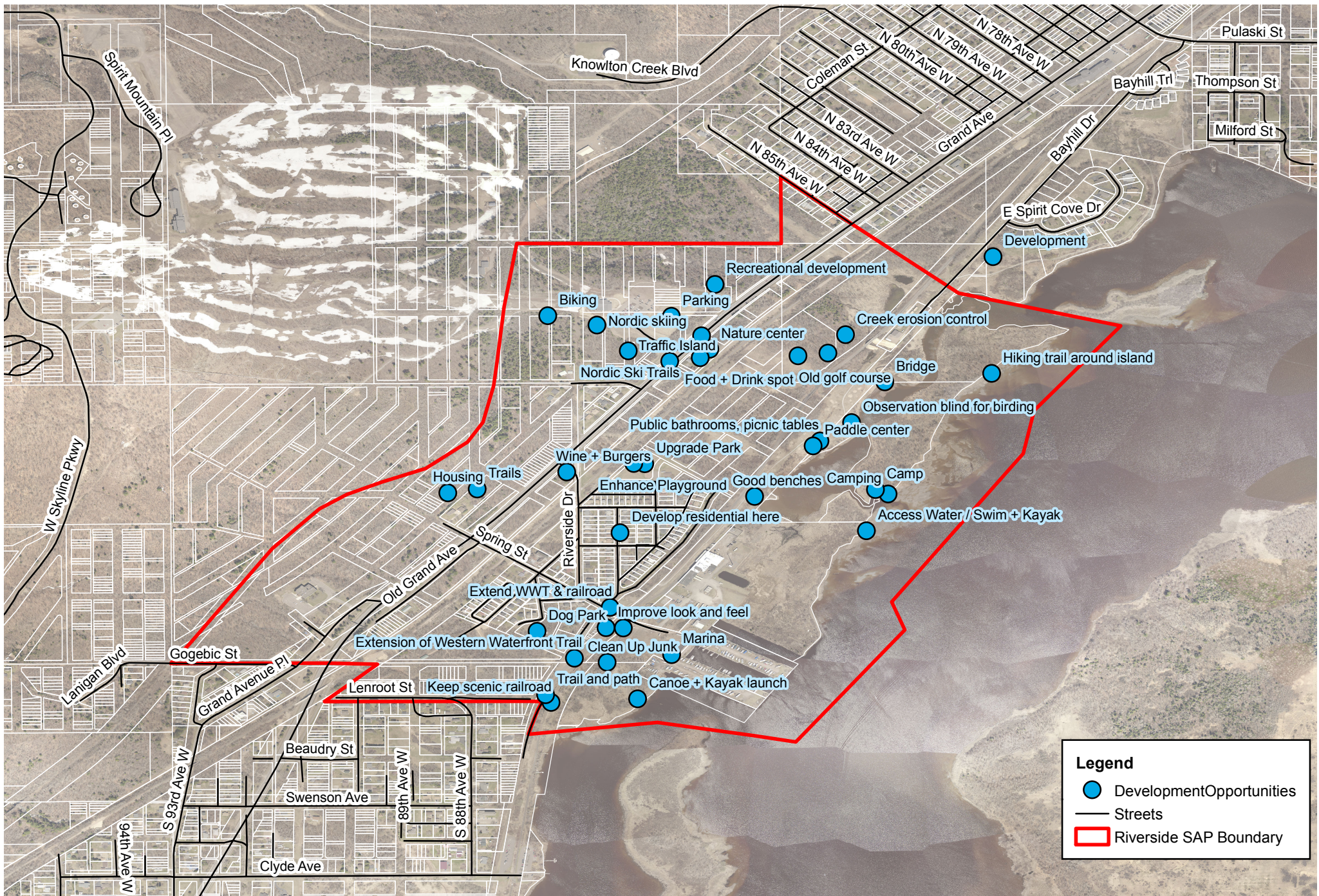




**Legend**

- PlacesYouGo
- Streets
- Riverside SAP Boundary





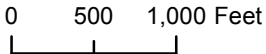
**Legend**

- Development Opportunities
- Streets
- ▭ Riverside SAP Boundary



# Visioning Session "What is here now?" exercise

Riverside Small Area Plan



Opportunity Areas for Development





A public open house was held on June 25<sup>th</sup> 2015 to provide those in attendance with a view of the draft Small Area Plan and an opportunity to provide their comment on the plan prior to the plan being sent to the Planning Commission and City Council for review and adoption. At that meeting those in attendance were split into four working groups and worked their way through stations set up to inform them of identified goals and implementation strategies on each of the four main categories of the Small Area Plan (Land Use, Transportation, Environmental Characteristics, and Community Characteristics). Provided below are public comments gathered regarding each:

Land Use:

- What does the "preservation" land use guidance allow for with regard to capital improvements like roads, parking lots, and bathrooms?

Transportation:

- Would tax base be needed to pay for the extension of Warwick Street?
- Where would the extension of Warwick Street be located?
- What environmental concerns are there for the Warwick Street extension?
- Is it possible to get a turn lane into the Riverside Community?
- What improvements can the DTA provide at bus stops?
- Feasibility of a bus loop at Spring Street to service Riverside.

Environmental Characteristics:

- What is the appropriate spacing for passive water access relative to a paddle center near Tallas Island? Access is available both north and south of the project area.
- Possibility for wildlife viewing platforms near Tallas Island.
- Tallas Island is a great kayak destination; however, if it is turned into an access, where is it expected kayak and canoers will travel to?

Community Characteristics:

- Train as part of the community both in the past and into the future.
- Important to highlight the Riverside community as a history center.
- Feasibility to create a kiosk at the Marina to showcase local history.
- Find local sources of Riverside history and display them for community and tourists to view.

## Draft Plan Public Comment

Following the public open house on June 25th, a revised draft of the Small Area Plan was made available for public comment on July 13. To garner as much feedback as possible, the draft was posted to the projects "My Sidewalk" page, and an email with the draft was sent to each resident who provided an email address at previous public input meetings. Lastly, a targeted email was sent to a dozen local conservation experts who included members of the National Audubon Society, Izaak Walton League, and University of Minnesota Duluth researchers. Comments during this period were instructive and lead to the reformatting of the goals and implementation steps to provide added clarity, as well as additional information provided for the Environmental Characteristics chapter. The following are comments which were collected from this period of public outreach.

"Hi Eric,

Thank you for sending me the draft of the Riverside Small Area Plan. In general I am supportive of the principles identified and detailed in the plan, and as a resident of western Duluth I am certain that I will enjoy benefits from the improvements that have started and are planned for the future. I do, however, have one significant concern. As an ecologist, paddler, and fisherman I am viewing plans to create Kayak Bay as an access point to the river as counterproductive to the overall plan and the spirit of an aquatic management area's purpose. The creation of the Tallas Island Aquatic Management Area was a statement about the value and possibility of re-establishing the ecological integrity of unique habitat in the reach of the St. Louis River downstream of Spirit Lake. As part of the suite of activities that

- (1) will improve Spirit Mountain's snow making circumstances,
- (2) will relieve erosion issues in Knowlton Creek and sedimentation issues in Tallas Bay, and
- (3) started restoration of Tallas Bay through removal of sediment and reconnection to the river

the establishment of the Tallas Bay Aquatic Management Area should speak to an area that is left as undisturbed as possible. The guidelines pertaining to the establishment of Aquatic Management Areas are focused upon what occurs on and in the water (docks are not permitted), but connected to an AMA's establishment is the condition and use of the landscape with which they are contiguous. A healthy, unpaved, and quiet shoreline at Tallas Bay will allow for a higher quality AMA to establish itself over time.

From the perspective of the landscape Tallas Bay is small with respect to handling human activity in a way that does not interfere with its value as a natural area that is valued as bird and fish habitat. Access via a new road, parking, and a generally increased human footprint on the shore of Tallas Bay will degrade what could be a hidden gem if paddled into from another access. Immediate arrival at the destination results in deterioration, while paddling or walking to get there inspires a sense of accomplishment and protection. Tallas Bay's secluded and quiet nature

is what makes it attractive to people, migratory and nesting waterfowl, raptors, and beavers alike. Other nearby river accesses (Munger Landing, Spirit Lake Marina, and, possibly, Indian Point) are just a short paddle away from Tallas Bay in areas that are already designed to handle traffic.

In short, I believe that Warwick Street should not extend farther toward the river than the railroad tracks. Additionally, the Western Waterfront Trail corridor as it traverses through the Tallas Bay area should be replanted in native wetland and upland vegetation characteristic of that area.

Sincerely, Glenn Merrick

Glenn Merrick  
1219 105th Ave. W.  
Duluth, MN 55808  
218-391-0264"

"Eric;

Per your request, I am responding to the Small Area Plan "draft" for Riverside. My comments are just that, my comments. I appreciate v. much your reaching out to a number of folk for similar in-put.

Comments:

I believe the general "framing principles" (utilization of previously developed areas for future development, buffers, maintain green space and key natural resources etc.) are good, are positive. Having said that, I would suggest that it is critical that this small area plan, and, all of the related small area plans, be a part of an over-lay that attempts to identify the best, the highest use conservation properties, public, and, private, from the Point of Rocks to Chambers Grove, and where practical based on present land condition, as far in-land as Skyline Drive. My personal concerns include not making hard and fast decisions until we get very sound professional advice on the environmental services presently provided by our urban undeveloped lands regardless of ownership. The vision that Mayor Ness has us all working on is a generally sound vision. As I understand his vision, it is a combination of utilizing our remarkable natural assets to both serve our existing population, and, to position Duluth as an attractive place for families who combine possession of the skill sets needed by employers to grow our economy, and, families who want very much to settle in an area like Duluth because of their strong sense of "place". Without first understanding what we have, what the lands produce and serve, it becomes

problematic whether we will make good decisions on where to preserve, where to develop, where to provide connections between people and resources.

The paddle center, or so-called kayak bay is but one example. I do not oppose such a development at the present. I have enjoyed kayaking, and, I've spent an enormous amount of time canoeing. I struggle on the paddle center, first with whether we need it, and, if we do, where we should locate it. I do believe we still need to have those conversations, then confirm the need, how large the project should be, where it should be located, do it all with the purpose of concluding with an informed community, and, clear direction. I am open to that. I am apprehensive to what I sense might simply be a dash to create a paddle center that might be over-built based on realistic use assumptions, and, located where it might impair other values that are also important to many of us.

The speed of the over-all W. Duluth Corridor vision is unsettling to numerous acquaintances of mine. Not just conservation acquaintances, business as well. On several occasions I've mentioned this to city staff. I am aware that our Mayor does want to keep this moving, I do respect that. However, if calendar is to trump thoughtful analysis, surely there will be more conflict, and need for "damage control", than might be the case with a bit slower pace, more time for examination, inter and intra-consultation (shared knowledge is critical), and I would speculate broader support over-all.

As an active environmental / conservation volunteer, and, retired Duluth business professional over many years, I am well aware that the small area plans, and the over-arching vision, must encompass the economy, our business community, not just preservation. Having said that, to first seek the highest and best uses for our lands has to be an elemental function in order for the vision of Mayor Ness to accomplish his multiple legacy goals. To lay out a vision based on people attracted by natural resources amenities, and not keep the best of them, serves neither our economy nor our conservation goals.

I attended the May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, and also the meeting hosted by the Izaak Walton League and partners groups on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Both meetings confirmed very high interest, passion for Duluth and passion for our green space, all-the-while showing a willingness to listen to each other, and, to be willing to recognize a variety of needs.

Thank-you for offering this opportunity to comments.

Dave Zentner  
2116 Columbus Avenue  
Duluth, MN 55803  
218-724-3926

"Eric,

I reviewed the SAP one more time and wish to encourage the protection of the area near the estuary. This land would be a great place for a city effort to establish a rich pollinator habitat which would attract a wide variety of birds, insects, mammals, and humans who wish to be among the critters. With a viewing platform, appropriate signage, a maintained trail and a maintained plant community, it could be an attractive and unique place for residents and visitors. If signage includes pre-historical as well as historical information it would increase its educational benefit.

If there has to be a housing development on Brad Johnson's land, it would be very advisable to have many restrictions in place prior to construction permitting regarding runoff, changes in hydrology, wide use of buffers, and use of pervious pavers.

Gail Gilliland"

"Eric,

I have read through the draft two times today and am confused by the last part where goals and implementation are charted. In many, if not most of the chart the goals do not match the implementation. One glaring example: Transportation. #3 goal is to enhance/repair sidewalk networks. The implementation is the Kayak Bay Road which is not part of any goal that I could find. I found similar mismatching in many of the goals and implementations leaving me confused of how the goals were set and how the implementation was developed. Are the implementation recommendations what would be presented to the a planning Commission?

I am not seeing any specific recommendations regarding the paddle center's existence or location, any site for the WWFT parking, and no mention of Brad Johnson's development plans.

What is the next step in this draft?

Gail Gilliland"

"Hi, Eric,

I want to send the draft of the Riverside SAP to various organizations and members to review and provide comments. Gail sent me the communication forwarded below. Is the best way for you to receive comments? My Sidewalk can be a bit time consuming and not that easy to work with if you are not computer savvy. I could send it out both ways - what do you think?

We reviewed the current version at our meeting last Monday evening - I really appreciate the edits and your openness to our conservation concerns. I would like to encourage you to look at a milestone document which, I think, should be included in the "past and current planning efforts'. I have attached the original



document and recent "Roadmap Update".

I also think that the City of Duluth Comprehensive Plan Natural Systems Profile is an important document and should be given equal mention in referencing the City of Duluth Comprehensive Plan. <http://duluthmn.gov/media/121143/Natural-Systems.pdf>

Another planning effort of importance is the Parks & Recreation Master Plan which identifies protection of the St. Louis River (see Action Step #3.) [http://www.duluthmn.gov/media/115917/Action\\_Steps\\_Strategies.pdf](http://www.duluthmn.gov/media/115917/Action_Steps_Strategies.pdf)

I hope you will consider carefully these documents and efforts. As you know, I believe important stakeholder groups have not been adequately engaged in this process. I don't think it is too late or what is public comments for? I sure can easily connect you with some important conservation persons in our City. Dave Zentner is one of them. (<http://www.startribune.com/the-land-has-fan-in-dave-zentner/28675199/>). Jan Green, another. (<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mcvmagazine/issues/2014/nov-dec/green-legacy.html>). In one hour with them, you would be inspired and hear amazing stories from people so much more knowledgeable and experienced than I.

Thank you for everything and for listening.

Connie"

"Eric,

We are impressed with your small area plan. However, we have lived here nearly fifty years and we believe the green area on the map shown on the upper side of Grand Ave. and above Spring St. should be preserved. (I once witnessed a moose walking from that area down Spring St.!)

Aside from house density and disrepair we also believe Riverside's natural beauty and sense of community is greatly compromised by the presence of Tate and Lyle and their need to deliver their product with eighteen-wheelers through our neighborhood.

Like your plan. Stay mindful of our concerns.

Sincerely, Beverly Berglund"

## Online Engagement

Not every stakeholder is able to attend a public visioning or public open house meeting. For that reason an online engagement method was utilized which allowed stakeholders to take part in the public engagement process through the comfort of their own home and on their own schedule. A variety of questions, polls, and public notices were provided through this engagement tool. Data collected from the “Mindmixer” and “My Sidewalk” project sites are provided below.

### *Survey Questions:*

What is the Riverside Community and it's immediately surrounding areas most pressing issues?

- Parks and Open Space Maintenance – 10 votes
- Housing Stock – 2 votes
- Road Maintenance – 1 vote

What types of commercial businesses would you like to see in the area?

- Mixed Use Development (commercial/residential) – 7 votes
- Recreational Shops – 4 votes
- Hospitality (Hotel, Restaurant) – 2 votes

How best can public transportation in the area be improved?

- Increase connectivity of sidewalk network – 10 votes
- Traffic calming – 2 votes
- Improvement to Bus Stops – 1 vote

Riverside Community... In 20 years is known as the premier place for (fill in the blank)?

- Year round recreation – 3 votes
- Housing – 2 votes
- Community – 7 votes
- Ecological Education – 4 votes
- River Oriented Recreation – 4 votes
- Trail Riding – 0 votes
- Other – 3 write in votes
  - New successful development
  - Chance to observe a natural riverine habitat
  - Community access

What, in your eyes, is the biggest concern for the Riverside Small Area Plan Project Area?

- Housing Variety – 2 votes
- Pedestrian Access to St. Louis River – 5 votes
- Access/Status of Public Transportation – 1 vote
- Road Repair – 1 vote
- Other – 7 write in votes
  - Environmental protection, preservation of the character of the area
  - Economic growth and new investment in the area
  - The river corridor should be upgraded to contain more native plants, shrubs, trees
  - Protecting the natural character of the river
  - Noise from the Tate & Lyle plant
  - The infrastructure improvements are certainly welcomed but I think the other piece to the puzzle is an incentive or initiative to improve the existing housing stock and promote home ownership
  - Improving local parks and other free recreation

*Open Ended Questions:*

What do you wish you could be able to do in the Riverside Small Area Plan Project Area?

- Restore the “store building” in Riverside & use it as a gift shop or other retail space. Promote the history of the area.
- Redevelop the housing stock, waterfront, and amenities.
- Through informational kiosks, help trail users appreciate the importance of the unique habitat.
- Continue to monitor the monarch population for the Monarch Larval Monitoring project.
- Offer natural history tours of the river to Fon-du-lac
- Continue to provide quality access to the St. Louis River
- Be able to use trails and parks by the river – free of charge and handicapped accessible
- Create a public campground and boat mooring area, providing more and better access for all.
- Create a pollinator friendly natural area where now so many invasive species exist to improve the habitat for all. It could be a totally lovely natural area for educational purposes.
- Enjoy the natural assets of the water & the birding environment & restore the historic building at Spring Street & Industrial Avenue.

- I'd also like to see the old boat house restored and rebuilt as a micro-brewery / café.

What words do you feel most represent the Riverside Small Area Plan Project Area?

- Green! Country in the City.
- Waterfront
- Peaceful retreat within the City and a chance for wildlife to thrive
- Urban wilderness with rich history and adventure recreation opportunities
- Recreation
- An outskirt community with tremendous wilderness
- Improving access to St. Louis River and creating healthy neighborhoods
- Country environment with City amenities. Quite. Friendly

