



**106GROUP**

# THEODORE WIRTH REGIONAL PARK CULTURAL LANDSCAPE STUDY FOR THE BLUE LINE EXTENSION LRT PROJECT

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**Golden Valley and Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota**

September 2015



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**Golden Valley and Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota**

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# MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

From March to May of 2015, The 106 Group Ltd. (106 Group) conducted a cultural landscape study for the Theodore Wirth Regional Park (Theodore Wirth Park; HE-GVC-00081). The cultural landscape study was conducted under contract with HDR on behalf of the Metropolitan Council as part of the Blue Line Extension Light Rail Transit (BLRT) (previously known as Bottineau LRT) Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The proposed BLRT project is receiving funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and, therefore, must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (Section 106). Metropolitan Council is completing the FEIS under the direction of the FTA for compliance with NEPA. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Cultural Resources Unit (CRU) is acting on behalf of the FTA for many aspects of the Section 106 process.

The proposed BLRT project is an approximately 13-mile transit corridor connecting downtown Minneapolis with the northwest suburbs in order to improve regional mobility and meet long-range transit needs. The proposed alignment is located within the cities of Crystal, Brooklyn Park, Golden Valley, Minneapolis, and Robbinsdale. The proposed alignment runs near the eastern edge of Theodore Wirth Park within the existing right-of-way of the Osseo Branch Line of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba (StPM&M)/Great Northern Railway (GN)/Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) (Osseo Branch Line; HE-RRD-002 [this inventory number replaces inventory number XX-RRD-010 used in previous documentation and includes previously inventoried segments HE-BPC-0084; HE-CRC-0238; HE-RBC-0304; HE-MPC-16389]) between Highway 55 and Golden Valley Road. At Highway 55, the alignment curves east and runs down the center of the highway. Two transit stations are proposed along the portion of the alignment running within Theodore Wirth Park, one at Golden Valley Road and another at Plymouth Avenue. Both are located in the City of Golden Valley, Hennepin County. An Area of Potential Effect (APE) for architecture/history resources for the BLRT project was determined in consultation with MnDOT CRU and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (MnSHPO) in 2011 as part of the *Bottineau Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement*, which includes: 500 feet on either side of proposed alignment; a 0.25-mile radius around proposed stations, modifications of existing structures, and new structures with the potential for pile driving; and a 500-foot radius around structures with proposed pier modifications without the potential for pile driving (106 Group 2011).

For compliance with Section 106, consultation is ongoing to assess the effects the BLRT project may have on historic properties within the APE. One historic property within the APE is Theodore Wirth Park, which is identified as a contributing resource to the Grand Rounds Historic District (GRHD). The current boundary of Theodore Wirth Park contains approximately 760 acres (307.6 hectares) of land in the municipalities of Minneapolis and Golden Valley, Hennepin County, Minnesota (Figure 1). The GRHD has been previously determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) by the MnSHPO. The GRHD is currently determined as eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation, and under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture. Its period of significance is currently documented as 1884 to 1942, although the district is currently being evaluated by the MnSHPO and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

(MPRB), which is unrelated to the BLRT project, to determine if it possesses significance within the period of 1943 to the mid-1970s, reflecting improvements developed in accordance with a 1971 plan by Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams. The boundaries of Theodore Wirth Park depicted in the draft NRHP nomination for the GRHD are slightly different than the current boundary for the park (Figure 1). For example, the boundary from the draft NRHP nomination excludes a portion of the Par 3 Golf Course and the area identified as the "Back 40," both located on the far western side of the park. There are also slight differences in the eastern boundary along Olson Memorial Highway. To ensure that all possible contributing features are identified, the focus of this study is the entirety of Theodore Wirth Park that is encompassed by both boundaries, the one from the draft NRHP nomination and the current Theodore Wirth Park boundary ("Study Area," see Figure 1). This study identifies features within the APE that may be affected by the BLRT project, both within the current period of significance from the draft NRHP nomination and the potential extension to 1975, to inform the analysis of effects and Section 106 consultation for the BLRT project. This study does not address other MPRB-owned properties or other historic properties that are located outside of the Study Area.

The specific purpose of this cultural landscape study includes the following:

- Provide a historic context for Theodore Wirth Park and document its developmental history to provide an understanding of the landscape features of the park (see Section 3).
- Identify viewsheds within Theodore Wirth Park where the BLRT project may be visible, including the four viewsheds specifically identified by the MPRB and MnDOT CRU, and identify any other viewsheds that may exist through field survey and comparing those areas to the current APE (see Section 4).
- Identify the physical characteristics of the landscape, including a broad overview across the entire park and specific details within the APE and viewsheds, using existing documents and field survey (see Sections 5.1 and 5.2).
- Identify contributing elements to the GRHD within the APE and viewsheds where properties may be affected by the proposed BLRT project (see Section 5.4).

A total of 41 features have been previously documented within the Study Area and corresponding inventory forms are on file at the MnSHPO. These resources are primarily evaluated within the current period of significance for the GRHD that ends in 1942. Of these 41 total features, 30 are identified in the draft NRHP nomination prepared in 2012 for the district. All 41 features are summarized in Appendix A. Elements such as topography, vegetation, and views and vistas, which are mentioned in the draft NRHP nomination but do not have separate inventory forms, are also part of the cultural landscape in Theodore Wirth Park and are included in this study. The resources identified in the current draft NRHP nomination for the GRHD, which is the basis for MnSHPO's determination of eligibility, are relied upon as a basis for identifying contributing and non-contributing features within the currently documented period of significance (ending in 1942) for the purposes of Section 106 compliance. Features dating between 1943 and 1975 are further documented by this cultural landscape study since these features have not been formally evaluated by previous studies. The current evaluation by MPRB and MnSHPO of contributing and non-contributing features during this extended timeframe may not be finished prior to completion of the Section 106 compliance review process for the BLRT project. Thus, this cultural landscape study also

identifies features dating within the extended timeframe (1943 to 1975) that appear to be contributing, to better inform the Section 106 compliance review process for the BLRT project. Parisa Ford, M.S., AICP, who meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards* for Architectural History and History, served as the principal investigator for this study.

The current architecture/history APE defined for the project captures all of the viewsheds of the BLRT project within the park except for one area in Theodore Wirth Golf Course, located north of Highway 55, encompassing approximately 5.5 acres. FTA/MnDOT CRU will determine what changes to the APE may be required. As a result of the survey and research completed for this cultural landscape study, a total of 14 features located within the APE and viewsheds of the BLRT project have been previously determined or appear to be contributing features to the GRHD.

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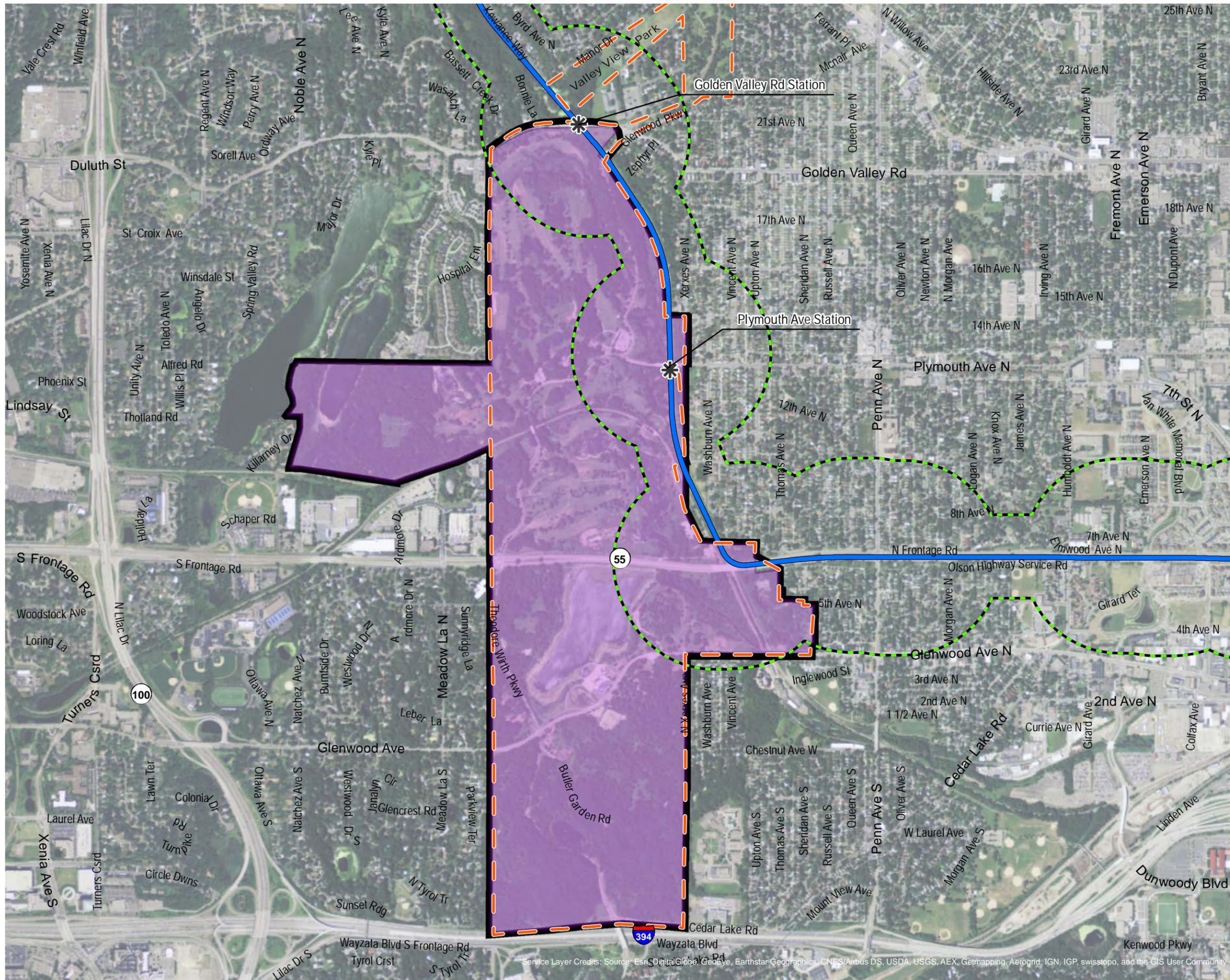
## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

From March to May of 2015, The 106 Group Ltd. (106 Group) conducted a cultural landscape study for the Theodore Wirth Regional Park (Theodore Wirth Park; HE-GVC-00081). The cultural landscape study was conducted under contract with HDR on behalf of the Metropolitan Council as part of the Blue Line Extension Light Rail Transit (BLRT) (previously known as Bottineau LRT) Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The proposed BLRT project is receiving funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and, therefore, must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (Section 106). Metropolitan Council is completing the FEIS under the direction of the FTA for compliance with NEPA. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Cultural Resources Unit (CRU) is acting on behalf of the FTA for many aspects of the Section 106 process.

The proposed BLRT project is an approximately 13-mile transit corridor connecting downtown Minneapolis with the northwest suburbs in order to improve regional mobility and meet long-range transit needs. The proposed alignment is located within the cities of Crystal, Brooklyn Park, Golden Valley, Minneapolis, and Robbinsdale. The proposed alignment runs near the eastern edge of Theodore Wirth Park within the existing right-of-way (ROW) of the Osseo Branch Line of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba (StPM&M)/Great Northern Railway (GN)/Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) (Osseo Branch Line; HE-RRD-002 [this inventory number replaces inventory number XX-RRD-010 used in previous documentation and includes previously inventoried segments HE-BPC-0084; HE-CRC-0238; HE-RBC-0304; HE-MPC-16389]) between Highway 55 and Golden Valley Road. At Highway 55, the alignment curves east and runs down the center of the highway. Two transit stations are proposed along the portion of the alignment running within Theodore Wirth Park, one at Golden Valley Road and another at Plymouth Avenue. Both are located in the City of Golden Valley, Hennepin County. An Area of Potential Effect (APE) for architecture/history resources for the BLRT project was determined in consultation with MnDOT CRU and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (MnSHPO) in 2011 as part of the *Bottineau Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement*, which includes: 500 feet on either side of proposed alignment; a 0.25-mile radius around proposed stations, modifications of existing structures, and new structures with the potential for pile driving; and a 500-foot radius around structures with proposed pier modifications without the potential for pile driving (106 Group 2011).

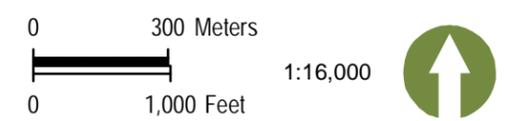
For compliance with Section 106, consultation is ongoing to assess the effects the BLRT project may have on historic properties within the APE. One historic property within the APE is Theodore Wirth Park, which is identified as a contributing resource to the Grand Rounds Historic District (GRHD). The Grand Rounds Historic District (GRHD) has been previously determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) by the MnSHPO. The district is currently determined as eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation, and under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture.

Blue Line Extension LRT (BLRT)  
Theodore Wirth Regional Park  
Cultural Landscape Study  
*Minneapolis and Golden Valley, Minnesota*



-  Proposed Alignment
-  Proposed Station
-  Architecture/History Area of Potential Effect
-  Current Park Area
-  Grand Rounds Historic District - Theodore Wirth Segment\*
-  Study Area

\* The Grand Rounds Historic District boundary for the Theodore Wirth Segment reflects the currently documented period of significance to 1942. The boundary for the potential extended period of significance to 1975 may vary.



Project Overview

Figure 1

Its period of significance is currently documented as 1884 to 1942, although, the district is currently being evaluated by the MnSHPO and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), which is unrelated to the BLRT project, to determine if it possesses significance within the period of 1943 to the mid-1970s, reflecting the significance of improvements developed in accordance with a 1971 plan by Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams.

The current boundary of Theodore Wirth Park contains approximately 760 acres (307.6 hectares) of land in the municipalities of Minneapolis and Golden Valley, Hennepin County, Minnesota; however, not all of this area has been determined eligible for the NRHP. The boundaries of Theodore Wirth Park depicted in the draft NRHP nomination for the GRHD are slightly different than the current boundary for the park (Figure 1). The main difference is that the boundary from the draft NRHP nomination excludes a portion of the Par 3 Golf Course and all of the area identified as the "Back 40," both are located on the far western side of the park. There are also slight differences in the eastern boundary along Olson Memorial Highway. To ensure that all possible contributing features are identified, the focus of this study is the entirety of Theodore Wirth Park that is encompassed by both boundaries, the one from the draft NRHP nomination and the current Theodore Wirth Park boundary ("Study Area," see Figure 1).

The presence of LRT infrastructure may alter the characteristics of elements of Theodore Wirth Park by changing the character of the property's use or physical features that contribute to the property and/or its setting, or introducing visual elements that otherwise diminish aspects of its integrity that qualify it for inclusion in the NRHP as a contributing resource to the GRHD. A summary of specific Project elements and potential visual effects is provided in Section 4.0 Viewsheds. Therefore, the focus of this cultural landscape study is to identify features within the APE that may be affected by the BLRT project, both within the current period of significance from the draft NRHP nomination and the potential extension to 1975, to inform the analysis of effects and Section 106 consultation for the BLRT project. This study does not address other MPRB-owned properties or other historic properties that are located outside of the Study Area.

Theodore Wirth Park roughly extends from Interstate-394 on the south to Golden Valley Road on the north; and from France Avenue North and South/Sweeney Lake on the west to Xerxes Avenue North on the east. Theodore Wirth Park and Theodore Wirth Parkway have also been previously recommended as individually eligible for the NRHP under Criteria A, B, and C with a period of significance of 1889 through 1952 (Pearson 2002:7-8, 23). However, MnSHPO has not officially concurred with this finding (Personal Communication, Denis Gardner, National Register Historian, MnSHPO, May 4, 2015). A majority of the resources within Theodore Wirth Park have not been previously evaluated to determine their individual eligibility for listing in the NRHP.

The specific purpose of this cultural landscape study includes the following:

- Provide a historic context for Theodore Wirth Park and document its developmental history to provide an understanding of landscape features of the park (see Section 3).
- Identify viewsheds within Theodore Wirth Park where the BLRT project may be visible, including the four viewsheds specifically identified by the MPRB and MnDOT CRU, and identify

any other viewsheds that may exist through field survey and comparing those areas to the current APE (see Section 4).

- Identify the physical characteristics of the landscape, including a broad overview across the entire park and specific details within the APE and viewsheds, using existing documents and field survey (see Sections 5.1 and 5.2).
- Identify contributing elements to the GRHD within the APE and viewsheds where properties may be affected by the proposed BLRT project (see Section 5.4).

A total of 41 features have been previously documented within the Study Area and the corresponding inventory forms are on file at the MnSHPO. These resources are primarily evaluated within the current period of significance for the GRHD that ends in 1942. Of these 41 total features, 30 are identified in the draft NRHP nomination prepared in 2012 for the district. All 41 features are summarized in Appendix A. Elements such as topography, vegetation, and views and vistas, which are mentioned in the draft NRHP nomination, but do not have separate inventory forms, are also part of the cultural landscape in Theodore Wirth Park and are included in this study. The resources identified in the current draft NRHP nomination for the GRHD, which is the basis for MnSHPO's determination of eligibility, are relied upon as a basis for identifying contributing and non-contributing features within the currently documented period of significance (ending in 1942) for the purposes of Section 106 compliance. Features dating between 1943 and 1975 are further documented by this cultural landscape study since these features have not been formally evaluated by previous studies. The current evaluation of contributing and non-contributing features during this extended timeframe is currently in progress by MPRB and MnSHPO and may not be finished prior to completion of the Section 106 compliance review process for the BLRT project. Thus, this cultural landscape study also identifies features dating within the extended timeframe (1943 to 1975) that appear to be contributing, to better inform the Section 106 compliance review process for the BLRT project. Parisa Ford, M.S., AICP, who meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards* for Architectural History and History, served as the principal investigator for this study.

## 2.0 METHODS

The cultural landscape within the Study Area was identified and documented in accordance with guidance published by the National Park Service (NPS) and The Secretary of the Interior. *National Register Bulletin 18: How to Evaluate and Nominate Historic Designed Landscapes*, *National Park Service Cultural Landscapes Inventory Professional Procedures Guide*, and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes* were consulted (NPS 1993; NPS 1995; NPS 2000). Landscape features were documented within the historic context of Theodore Wirth Park and the larger GRHD.

The cultural landscape of Theodore Wirth Park within the Study Area was documented through research and fieldwork. Previous studies and inventory forms on file at the MnSHPO were reviewed. Research was conducted using primary and secondary source materials focusing on the original design intent. This research further informed the identification of contributing features to the GRHD. Primary source research was conducted at the Minneapolis Central Library Government Records Collection. Additional plans and studies were obtained from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) and Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC).

The following reports provided a framework for developing the historical context of Theodore Wirth Park: *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Grand Rounds (draft)* (“draft NRHP nomination”) (Roise, et al. 2012); *Theodore Wirth Parkway and Theodore Wirth Park: An Assessment of Significance* (Pearson 2002); and *Kenilworth Lagoon/Channel Context, History, and Physical Description* (Mathis 2014). The *Theodore Wirth Regional Park Master Plan* (“2015 Master Plan”) was also referenced (MPRB 2015). “Potentially contributing” features identified in the 2015 Master Plan were further assessed through fieldwork and the historical context developed in this study.

The purpose of fieldwork was to examine specific views identified in consultation with MPRB and MnDOT CRU and define viewsheds where the project is visible, and document landscape features within the Study Area and contributing features within the APE and viewsheds. Character-defining features are prominent or distinctive aspects, qualities, or characteristics of a cultural landscape that contribute significantly to its physical character. Land use patterns, vegetation, furnishings, decorative details, and materials may be such features (NPS 1995). Contributing features date from within the period of significance, retain at least fair integrity, and support the areas of significance for which the GRHD is eligible for listing in the NRHP. Character-defining features may be contributing or non-contributing features.

Visibility of the project may change with the season due to the vegetative cover of deciduous plants. Therefore, fieldwork was conducted in mid-April, when no snow was present and prior to full leaf-out of deciduous plants, in an effort to observe potential viewsheds when the lowest level of natural obstructions would exist during the timeframe of this study. During fieldwork, overview photographs were taken to document landscape features throughout the Study Area, visibility to the proposed BLRT project within the Study Area and from other specified vantage points, and contributing features within the APE and viewsheds of the BLRT project. The viewshed analysis identified areas within the Study Area from where

the project would be visible. Typical sections of the project design contained in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and current project plans were referenced to determine project elements that would be visible within the Study Area (FTA and Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority 2014). Adjacent utility structures, fencing, and buildings aided in conceptualizing the visibility of project elements.

## 3.0 CONTEXT AND HISTORY

Theodore Wirth Park contains both native vegetation communities and designed landscapes. The park is a component of the current Grand Rounds system. The comprehensive park system was first conceptualized by H. W. S. Cleveland in 1883. It was referred to as the “Grand Rounds” in a March 14, 1891 letter titled *Report for the Special Committee on Park Enlargement*, which was submitted to the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners (MBPC; known as the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board [MPRB] after 1968) by the Special Committee on Park Enlargement led by William Folwell. The park system was later implemented and expanded under Theodore Wirth during his tenure as Park Superintendent (1906-1942) (Wirth 2002:63,116). The land comprising Theodore Wirth Park was first identified as the “northwest park” in the “Grand Rounds” system described by the Special Committee on Park Enlargement, and later incorporated into the Grand Rounds under Theodore Wirth.

The park includes recreation areas that were shaped by trends in conservation, landscape design, urban planning, and recreation, as well as the individual visions of Theodore Wirth and Eloise Butler, a retired botany teacher who established the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden. While the designed landscape areas resulted from a series of plans and consultant recommendations, the “natural” areas evolved more independently under the stewardship of Eloise Butler and the MPRB. The MBPC was largely responsible for early acquisition and development within the broader framework of the Minneapolis park system (Roise et al. 2012:7.1). In 1971, the San Francisco landscape architecture and environmental planning firm of Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams prepared a comprehensive parkway system plan for the Grand Rounds that included recommendations for Theodore Wirth Park (Eckbo et al. 1971). The implementation of these plans is discussed in Section 3.2.2. Most recently, when the GRHD was designated as the first urban National Scenic Byway by the Federal Highway Administration in 1998, a new layer of signage and other elements were installed (Roise et al. 2012).

### 3.1 Minneapolis Parks System

Beginning in the mid-1800s, the City of Minneapolis began acquiring park land in a piecemeal fashion based on either donations or solicitations from individual land owners (Wirth 2002:16-18). When the MBPC was established in April of 1883 and granted legislative authority to develop a system of public parks and parkways separate from the City of Minneapolis, it immediately authorized its president to engage Horace William Schaller (H. W. S.) Cleveland as an advisor. Cleveland was a well-known landscape architect who had previously lectured on park development in Minneapolis and St. Paul in 1872, and was developing several plans for St. Paul (Roise et al. 2012:8.1,8.3).

Cleveland delivered his report, *Suggestion for a System of Parks and Parkways for the City of Minneapolis*, to the MBPC in June of 1883 (Wirth 2006:28). He promoted the development of parks as a sound investment from the perspectives of conservation and desirability to future generations. He argued that, “a judicious expenditure for such objects is always a wise and safe investment” (Cleveland 1883:3). His plan suggested a system of interconnected parks and parkways, highlighting the Mississippi River, Lake Calhoun, Lake Harriet, Loring Park, Hawthorn Park, and two other proposed parks. He gave special emphasis to the striking character of the Mississippi River, while also stressing the potential of Minnehaha Falls and Minnehaha Creek as a link back to the Mississippi River. However, the present-day

Theodore Wirth Segment of the Grand Rounds (inclusive of Theodore Wirth Park, Theodore Wirth Parkway, and Valley View/Glenview Terrace Park) was not included Cleveland's plan (Cleveland 1883). Most of the area for this segment was outside of the Minneapolis municipal boundary at that time. Three years after Cleveland's report, Fredrick Law Olmsted, a nationally prominent landscape architect, wrote a letter to the MBPC urging its leadership and forethought in planning park acquisitions (Wirth 2006:34-38).

Cleveland's plan made a strong impression on the MBPC. In 1891, the Special Committee on Park Enlargement issued a letter titled *Report for the Special Committee on Park Enlargement* that contained recommendations for the Minneapolis park system. They refer to Cleveland's concept as an outline of a general plan or scheme of a park system, which was not intended to be carried out with literal exactness. Its true value as a plan was that it would treat parkland as a comprehensive whole, rather than isolated and unrelated fragments. The Special Committee on Park Enlargement argued that "the new park areas, should not be such, in location and extent as property holders may, in view of their private interests, donate or sell to the city..." (Wirth 2006:113). Furthermore, they argued, "to meet the needs and wants of the city, as a whole, there must then be a general plan, organizing a system" (Wirth 2006:113).

The MBPC sought to extend the Minneapolis park system beyond the specific areas Cleveland highlighted. The 1891 letter prepared by the Special Committee on Park Enlargement stated that the parkways, "...shall not be confined to the southwestern quarters of the city, but that they shall be extended to encircle practically all of its quarters" (Wirth 2006:113). They proposed extending the parkway from Kenwood Boulevard to Cedar Lake and north to Glenwood Park (Theodore Wirth Park), where a park not less than 1,500 feet wide would be developed at the northern boundary of the city. Their report concluded by listing seven suggestions for the park system as a whole. The first suggestion was to name the system of parks and parkways "The Grand Rounds." The second suggestion was to develop a "northwest park." The northwest park is at the present-day location of Theodore Wirth Park (Wirth 2006:113-116). The remaining five suggestions pertained to other areas of the park system. Land was first acquired for Theodore Wirth Park (first known as Saratoga Park, and later as Glenwood Park) in 1889 (Roise et al. 2012:7.50).

In addition to Olmsted's and Cleveland's recommendations to the MBPC, Warren Manning submitted a report in 1900 offering recommendations for expanding the system and giving even more focus to the Mississippi River gorge (Wirth 2006:68). However, like Cleveland, neither Olmsted nor Manning offered any specific recommendations for Theodore Wirth Park, for which the first tract of land had already been acquired in 1889. Continued acquisitions through the 1950s and 1960s would then expand Theodore Wirth Park to its current extent.

Theodore Wirth was hired as Park Superintendent in 1906 and served in that capacity until his retirement in 1935. Originally from Switzerland, his career in the United States (U.S.) began in 1888 as a landscape gardener for Central Park in New York under Superintendent Samuel Parsons. He also worked independently on landscaping plans for private estates and cemeteries across New Jersey, Connecticut, along the Hudson River, and on Long Island. As Superintendent of the newly created Hartford, Connecticut, park commission, he carried out plans by Olmsted and Charles Eliot, and designed and

constructed the first municipal rose garden in the U.S. at Elizabeth Park. Charles Loring identified Wirth as part of a search committee to replace Superintendent William Berry upon his retirement in 1905. Shortly after assuming the role of Minneapolis Park Superintendent, Wirth issued his first report, which included a series of recommendations for developing more playground and recreation space, removing fences and unnecessary signage, systematically improving street trees, undertaking special forestry work in the parks, and enlarging the nursery for cultivation of planting materials. He greatly expanded Theodore Wirth Park over several decades, as well as the Minneapolis park system on whole. He extended the parkway system to link Theodore Wirth Park to the Chain of Lakes on the south, and Victory Memorial Park and Parkway on the north. Over his 30-year tenure, the park system grew from 1,800 acres to approximately 5,200 acres. When Wirth retired in 1935, he was given the title Superintendent Emeritus and awarded several medals, and in honor of his accomplishments, Glenwood Park and its features were renamed Theodore Wirth Park in 1938 (Roise et al. 2012:8.4-8.6).

The Grand Rounds is among the earliest interconnected parkway systems in the nation and one of the largest ever constructed. It also responds to the individual characteristics of each segment in the system while maintaining a recognizable consistency. By 1931, much of the park system was in place. Depression-era federal relief programs further improved the parks and parkways, and expanded West River Parkway (Roise et al. 2012:1.4).

The following decades focused on maintenance, improving recreational facilities, and transportation. The prominent landscape architecture and environmental planning firm of Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams prepared the last notable plan for the Grand Rounds system in 1971, titled, *Minneapolis Parkway System Concepts for the Future* (Eckbo et al. 1971). Garrett Eckbo formed an initial partnership with his brother-in-law Edward Williams in 1939 that eventually grew to include Francis Dean and Don Austin by 1964. The firm adopted the name “EDAW” by 1973. Their progressive work in landscape architecture quickly gained national and international prominence in sustainable planning at the regional scale (TCLF 2015). The plan that Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams prepared for the Grand Rounds sought to unify the system with consistent naming conventions, signage, lighting, and rose-colored pavement. It also sought to reduce transportation conflicts, decrease commuter traffic, and increase recreational use by narrowing roadway widths and installing parking bays. Additionally, the plan introduced separate paved bicycle and pedestrian paths throughout the parkway system (Eckbo et al. 1971). These paths remain in place today and add to the overall usage and enjoyment of the parkways.

The current GRHD is approximately 50 miles long and encircles most of Minneapolis. Portions also extend into the cities of Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Saint Anthony, and Saint Louis Park. The GRHD contains the following seven segments: Kenwood, Chain of Lakes, Minnehaha, Mississippi River, Northeast, Victory Memorial, and Theodore Wirth. The Theodore Wirth segment includes Theodore Wirth Parkway (HE-MPC-00082), Valley View Park (HE-GVC-00088), and Theodore Wirth Park (HE-GVC-00081). Theodore Wirth Park was established in 1889 when the first tract of land was acquired. Later expansion to the north and construction of a parkway linking the park to the broader system began after Wirth’s hire in 1906. The last major purchase of land for the “Back 40” area, west of Theodore Wirth Golf Course and the Par 3 Golf Course, occurred in 1957, and the final purchase of land north of Glenwood Avenue occurred in 1966 (MPRB 2010:28). Theodore Wirth Park is the largest park in the

Minneapolis park system and the largest single component of the Grand Rounds (Roise et al. 2012:7.50). While the majority of the 760-acre (307.5-hectare) park is located in Golden Valley (563 acres [227.8 hectares] or 74.1%), 197 acres (79.7 hectares) are located in Minneapolis.

## 3.2 Theodore Wirth (Glenwood) Park Development

### 3.2.1 DESIGN INTENT

The 1891 letter published in the MBPC annual report, titled *Report for the Special Committee on Park Enlargement*, referred to Theodore Wirth Park as the “northwest park.” The report recommended that the northwest park should be treated as a large park for general purposes and would be accessible to residents of the whole northwestern quarter of the city (Wirth 2002:114). However, at the time of the report, specific plans were not made for the park, nor were improvements made. The present character of the park largely reflects the visions of Theodore Wirth in its designed areas and Eloise Butler in its more natural areas. The 1971 plan by Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams reinforced the recreational value of the park, offered solutions to transportation conflicts, and provided guidance for creating a more cohesive parkway system. Theodore Wirth Park (then known as Glenwood Park) (HE-GVC-00081) and Wirth Lake (then known as Glenwood Lake) (HE-GVC-00094) were renamed in honor of Theodore Wirth on September 7, 1938 (Pearson 2008h). The wildflower garden (HE-MPC-05098) was renamed in honor of Eloise Butler on June 19, 1929 (Pearson 2008a).

The original design that Theodore Wirth developed for Theodore Wirth Park in 1914, titled, *General Plan for the Improvement of Glenwood Park*, follows the model of country parks by taking advantage of natural features to create a more pastoral environment within urban areas, an approach that was established by Fredrick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux for Central Park in Manhattan and Prospect Park in Brooklyn (Pearson 2002:9). Wirth recognized that the park’s primary value was in its natural character, which reminded him of his Swiss homeland, and he sought to artistically enhance the park through landscape design. Wirth’s upbringing and early career path had a strong influence on his plans for the park. Growing up, Wirth visited horticultural gardens near his home and traveled through the Swiss valleys and hills, where he studied the flowers, trees, rocks, and flowing rivers in the area (Thorpe 2004:8). His career began as a landscape gardener in Switzerland, followed by travels in London and Paris to build on his experience. His early work in the U.S. included gardening and maintenance in Central Park and the implementation of designs by Olmsted and Vaux in Hartford (Roise, et al. 2012:36). While Cleveland advised against large central parks in Minneapolis due to its harsh northern climate and warned that Bassett Creek was a health hazard, Wirth was able to see the value of such a large-scale park and its water features (Cleveland 1883:12-14, Wirth 2006). After first touring the area for Theodore Wirth Park with C. J. Rockwood, Board Attorney, Wirth remarked, “the topographical contour and many natural attractions of those beautiful wooded hills and open country along the western city limits, as well as the possibilities offered for charming water landscape through the Bassett Creek Valley, impressed me as affording splendid opportunity for the development of an extensive natural park” (Wirth 2006:174). In 1914, Wirth developed the first comprehensive plan for the park that included circulation paths, landscaping, recreation, and water features. Over the course of his career, Wirth recognized a growing trend that had begun as early as the 1890s among the public and park authorities to provide more active recreation areas for activities such as boating, bathing, skating, and music, and playgrounds for children (Wirth 2006:67).

Wirth's 1914 plan is described in further detail in Section 3.2.2 Acquisition and Development. Wirth's key design elements for the park included the planting of thousands of evergreen trees and shrubs, the custom-designed Chalet (HE-GVC-00015) based on a model he had seen on his wedding trip to his homeland in 1895, development of the first public golf course, and a series of aesthetic lagoons along Bassett Creek (Pearson 2008h, Pearson 2002:10). Wirth continually advocated for expanding the park acreage, first remarking in 1906 that, "the adjoining land to the east and south is irresistibly attractive with its wooded hills and dells and mall woodland meadows...for all other purposes this land is almost useless, for park purposes it is made to order" (MBPC 1907:43). He also continuously urged the MBPC to acquire sufficient land that would ensure the park would remain an oasis as the city developed. Wirth had also intended for a much larger section of park land to be acquired west of Theodore Wirth Park, as depicted in the map titled, *Location Map Showing Contemplated Acquisitions West of Glenwood Park & Sunset Hill*, and published in the MBPC annual report for 1922. This larger area included Twin and Sweeney lakes and land southwest of Sunset Hill, each comprising approximately 250 acres, that was never fully realized (MBPC 1923:40).

The Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden is a 15-acre nature area located east of Birch Pond and South of Wirth Lake containing a wetlands area, a hardwood forest and an oak savanna (Pearson 2008a). Eloise Butler was a retired botany teacher who served as the wildflower garden's first formal caretaker and advocate. She shared the concerns of other teachers and students about rapidly disappearing natural areas as a result of urban development. Much of her inspiration for the wildflower garden came from Minneapolis area parks, including specifically the quaking bog and prairie areas linking the golf courses in Theodore Wirth Park (FWG 2015). Butler was largely influenced by the Romantic Movement, and the romance of nature studies and botanical education (Neckar 1995:5).

In 1971, the internationally prominent landscape architecture and environmental planning firm Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams developed a comprehensive parkway-system plan for the Grand Rounds with recommendations for Theodore Wirth Park. The plan focused on reducing commuter traffic and retaining the recreation use of the parkway system, while also reducing transportation conflicts.

### **3.2.2 ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Theodore Wirth Park was acquired incrementally over 68 years, beginning first with a 64-acre section in 1889 that included Birch Pond, Brownie Lake, and land east of Brownie Lake up to the present-day Xerxes Avenue (MPRB 2015:3.3). The last portion, known as the "Back 40," was located east of Sweeney Lake and acquired in 1957. Since land was acquired in a pattern moving from south to north, and then west, the oldest portions of the park are located south of Highway 55 and were primarily developed by 1940; portions located north of Highway 55 were primarily developed from 1916 through 1962.

The area where Theodore Wirth Park is now located was first surveyed by Jessie Jarrett in 1853, who noted it had numerous streams, marshes, ponds, swamps, and tamarack bogs that he declared "unfit for cultivation" (FWG 2015). It was later purchased by land speculator Samuel Gale in 1883 and sold to Thomas Wilson shortly thereafter (FWG 2015). Adjacent land owners then petitioned the MBPC to acquire the land. While the adjacent land owners offered to help fund the purchase, its price of \$100,000 was ultimately funded through a 10-year assessment plan payable by property taxes. The 64-acre area,

which had been platted as the Saratoga Springs Addition and Lyon's Spring Park Addition, was purchased in 1889 and was the first tract of land comprising the park (Pearson 2002:2).

The Oak Park Improvement Association first requested expanding the park from its initial tract in 1905 to include Wirth Lake (first known as Keegan's Lake and later as Glenwood Lake). However, Wirth's later, more ambitious recommendation to the MBPC was to acquire land all the way to Golden Valley Road. The additional land was acquired in 1907 and 1909, totaling 100 acres. It encompassed Wirth Lake, the former Minneapolis Brewing and Malting Company's beer garden located east of Wirth Lake, and the former Schell Farmstead located northwest of Wirth Lake (Pearson 2002:3). Another major addition in 1917 extended the park along France Ave to 19th Avenue North (Glenwood Avenue), bringing the park's total acreage to 681 (Wirth 2006:174). While neighbors and civic organizations largely supported MBPC's acquisitions, the last portion required condemnation proceedings from two property owners in 1916 (Gardner and Hess, Roise and Company 2000:3). In 1922, Wirth proposed more extensive acquisitions that would include all of Twin and Sweeney Lakes west of Theodore Wirth Golf Course, as well as land southwest of Sunset Hill (located at the intersection of Theodore Wirth Parkway and 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, outside of Theodore Wirth Park), encompassing approximately 500 additional acres combined. However, this was never fully realized. By 1950, only 87 of the 250 acres located west of the park that were originally advocated by Theodore Wirth were still undeveloped and available for park land acquisition (MPRB 2010:27). In 1952, the land around Brownie Lake was sold to Prudential Insurance Company for a regional headquarters and proceeds were used to purchase the "Back 40" area in 1957. The remaining portion of the 250 acres was located north of Theodore Wirth Park, part of which was acquired for Valley View/Glenview Terrace Park and the remainder of which was developed.

The area dedicated to what is now the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary was well-known to teachers and students studying nature due to its quality timber and undergrowth. These qualities also made it a wonderful bird sanctuary within the urbanizing city. Eloise Butler became its official steward in 1911. She kept detailed records of the plant species, locations and conditions. In addition to preserving native vegetation onsite, she also imported other species from different areas of the park, throughout the city, and from other states that she thought would grow well in that environment. Therefore, the garden was not managed strictly as a conservation space, but more as a natural garden (Neckar 1995; FWG 2015). Butler served as the garden's curator until her death in 1933. In 1929 the garden was renamed in her honor, and a memorial oak and boulder were placed in the garden commemorating her dedication. The Martha E. Crone Visitor's Shelter was constructed in the middle of the wildflower garden in 1969 (Atwood 2009b). It replaced the original, smaller structure that served as Butler's office (Figure 2) (FWG 2015).



*Figure 2. Eloise Butler's original office in the Wildflower Garden (MHS 1915)*

While Butler found inspiration in the bog's plants, the area comprising the Quaking Bog did not receive much attention historically in planning, recreation, or maintenance by the MBPC. It has been noted as the site of a former Tuberculosis (TB) Camp for children, although no remains have been documented (MPRB 2014:5.5, 5.10). After becoming overgrown with buckthorn and purple loosestrife, the MPRB began efforts to restore the area in the 1980s by clearing out undergrowth, removing invasive species, replanting tamarack trees, and constructing a boardwalk (Pearson 2008o). This type of vegetation management to reduce invasive species and protect natives and cultural plantings continues (Personal Communication, Andrea Weber, Project Manager, MPRB, July 7, 2015).

Wirth's early development of Theodore Wirth Park focused on plantings, topography, and parkways to enhance its alpine character. Between 1908 and 1935, Wirth's recorded plantings included 25,488 evergreens, 5,266 shrubs, and 1,016 deciduous trees. The varieties of evergreens included Norway spruce, white pine, bull pine, pitch pine, jack pine, balsam fir, cedar, eastern hemlock, juniper, yew, Black Hills spruce, and arborvitae (Pearson 2002:10). Many were cultivated in the park nursery, which was located South of Highway 55 and west of Wirth Lake at the site of the former Keegan-Schell Farmstead between 1909 and 1980 (MPRB 2015:5.9). Wirth intended these plantings to overcome what he considered a "lack of coniferous growth" and to provide year-round greenery and conceal the edges of the park (Pearson 2002:10). In 1908 he stated, "It is my aim to plant evergreens freely in most of our parks and especially throughout woodlands and along our picturesque driveways. It is to be regretted that so few evergreens have been planted in the past, for while the climate may be limited, those that are hardy produce splendid specimens within reasonable time" (MBPC 1909:47). His growing affinity for evergreen plants was evident throughout annual reports between the early 1900s and early 1940s. At one point Wirth remarked: "The introduction of evergreen foliage amongst the deciduous will greatly enhance the general aspect of our natural woodland scenes, and enliven them in the winter. It is impossible to do too much of such a planting" (MBPC 1921:57).

Historic evergreen plantings along the parkway and around the Chalet are signature features of Wirth's design intent for the park. To a lesser extent, evergreen plantings along the park edges are indicative of Wirth's plans to conceal the edges of Theodore Wirth Park. The nursery, which supplied much of the plant material for the park, was relocated to the former Keegan/Schell Farmstead in 1910 (Pearson 2002:2-3, 14). The nursery also supplied plant material for the larger Minneapolis park system and streets. At times surplus material was also sold to private customers. However, by 1948 Wirth recommended that a new location be identified in the near future since so much of the soil and nutrients had been stripped from its intensive use over time (Wirth 2006:207).

In addition to expanding park acreage, Wirth consistently sought ways to extend access into the park and link it to the larger Grand Rounds system. Wirth first began making his case in 1907 (MBPC 1908:11). In 1909, he began focusing on streetcar line extensions to bring more people into the park. When the streetcar line was finally extended into the park in 1916, Wirth remarked that it "advanced greatly the usefulness and popularity of our largest park." He credited the streetcar line for bringing more visitors to the park and especially to the beach and picnic area (Atwood 2010).

Theodore Wirth Parkway was constructed between 1911 and 1915 to link the park to the Grand Rounds system. It was designed as a curving pleasure drive following the natural contours of the land (Pearson 2002:12). Scenery along the drive was meant to be enjoyed while in transit. The route in its entirety is depicted in Theodore Wirth's 1914 plan titled, *General Plan for the Improvement of Glenwood Park*. The western extension of Plymouth Avenue into the park became another important opportunity to expand access to the park and link it to the Grand Rounds system. Wirth first introduced this opportunity in his 1914 plan for the park (MBPC 1914:94a). In 1916, he states an entrance at Plymouth Avenue must be provided and that its setting will allow for "...a picturesque entrance, which may well be considered a part of the 'Grand Rounds.'" (MBPC 1917:40)

In 1914, Wirth developed his *General Plan for the Improvement of Glenwood Park* as an elaborate plan for the park's design and use (Figure 3). It also provided the first comprehensive program for the park, including roadways, paths, lagoons (HE-GVC-00089), a golf course (HE-GVC-00097), playgrounds, and tree-lined boulevards around the park perimeter (note the extension of Plymouth Avenue shown at the center). While the plan sought to preserve the wildflower garden, it recommended replacing the Quaking Bog with a camp and playground to attract more visitors. The camp grounds were extensive, reaching from the Osseo Branch Line ROW to Birch Pond. However, these improvements were never made (Pearson 2008o).

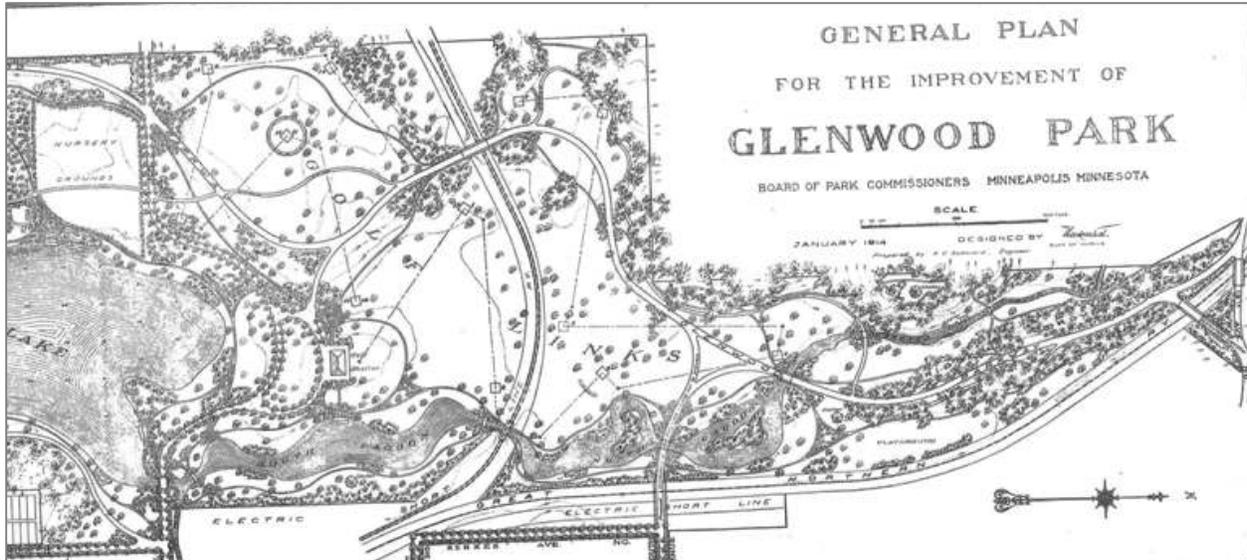


Figure 3. General Plan for the Improvement of Glenwood Park (northern section only shown here) (1914) (MBPC 1914:94a).

After World War I, Minneapolis residents had an increased interest in golf and Wirth developed the first public golf course in the city at Theodore Wirth Park and it quickly gained popularity. Wirth's original plans for the golf course called for 16.7 miles of walks to reach all areas of the park and the development of lagoons as an aesthetic enhancement (Pearson 2008g). The original nine-hole course was constructed in 1916 and later expanded to 18 holes in 1919. Both the original and expanded courses were designed by golf course architect William D. Clark (Pearson 2008h). Wirth's 1918 plan titled, *Proposed Extension of Municipal Golf Course* (Figure 4) shows the course extending fully north to 19th Avenue North (Golden Valley Road) (MBPC 1918:38a). The Chalet is shown its current location, set into a "woodland" area at the foot of the hill, although it would not be constructed until 1922. The lagoons first represented in this plan underwent several iterations until they were finally implemented through federal relief programs in 1933 under the Civil Works Association (CWA), then in the late 1930s under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) (Wirth 2002:105). As early as 1913, Wirth began promoting lagoons for rowboat and canoe use (MBPC 1914:94). Several years later he argued that attractive and navigable lagoons would make the swamp land available for useful purposes and enhance the park's scenic effects without destroying its natural character (MBPC 1916:40).

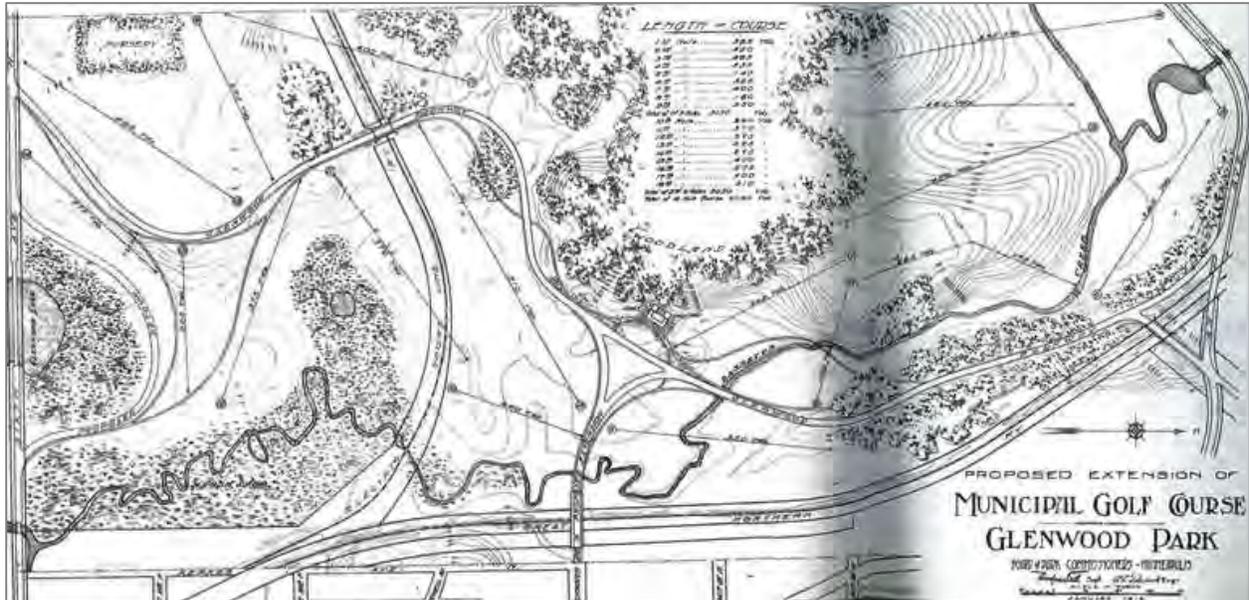


Figure 4. Proposed Extension of Municipal Golf Course (MBPC 1918:38a).

The golf course became increasingly popular, necessitating the introduction of user fees to manage access and maintenance of the course. While only a modest few cents were charged per player, these fees supported the construction of an impressive chalet-style clubhouse (built in two phases in 1922 and in 1923), and fully funded maintenance and staffing needs by 1925 (Pearson 2008h). The Chalet was designed by architects Magney and Tusler and modeled after a building Wirth had seen on his honeymoon in Switzerland (Figures 5 and 6) (MPRB 2010:18). Later, the 1930 Tool Building (HE-GVC-00086) and the 1940 Bridge L9327 (HE-GVC-00050) were designed to reflect the style of the Chalet (Pearson 2008b, Pearson 2008h). After the final western tract of land was acquired in 1957, the Par 3 Golf Course and Par 3 Golf Course Clubhouse (HE-GVC-00087 and HE-GVC-00085, respectively) were constructed in the early 1960s (Pearson 2008i; MPRB 2010:27).



Figure 5. Glenwood Golf House Perspective by Magney & Tusler, showing the second concept design as it exists today. Note the lower vegetation density and absence of evergreen plantings (MBPC 1921:72).



Figure 6. Chalet building and its landscaping. Note the introduction of evergreen plantings (MHS 1936).

Throughout the park's history, the hills on the west and north sides of the golf course were used for winter recreation. Ski jumping reached its height in popularity roughly between 1910 and the 1920s when Olympic ski trials were held in the park (Figure 7). The sport continued into the 1980s, but the jumps were removed around 1986 after they fell into poor condition (MPRB 2010:18). Other popular winter activities included tobogganing and sledding.

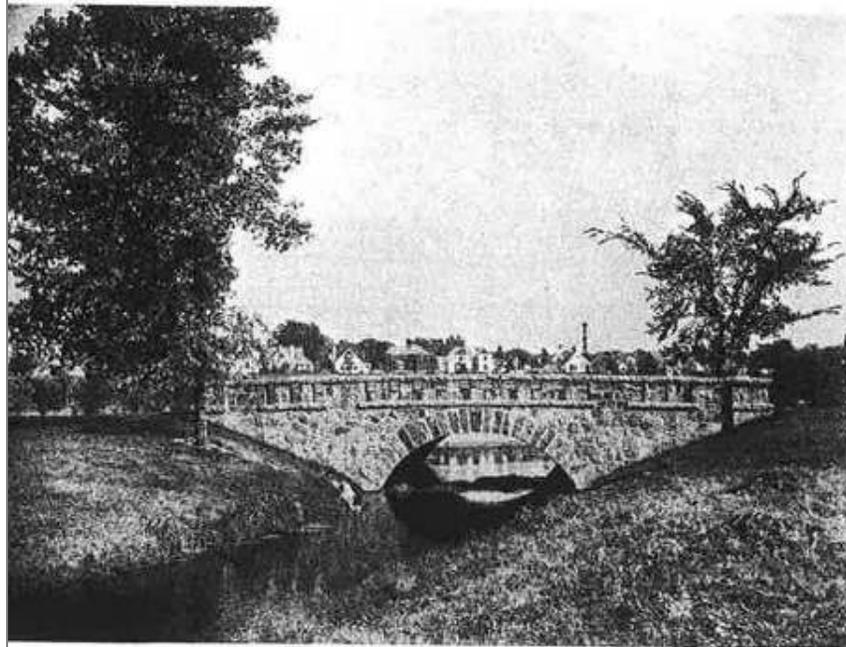


*Figure 7. Ski jump on the western slopes of the golf course (MHS 1923).*

During the Great Depression, federal relief programs operated in Theodore Wirth Park. Camps were set up for workers at the western edge of the park, northwest of the Chalet and maintenance buildings. They were used year-round by the CWA, and later by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and WPA. Afterwards, youth camps used the camps until they were dismantled in the 1950s (MPRB 2010:21). These federal relief programs were responsible for the construction of the lagoons, additional lake dredging, benches and picnic areas, and the construction of Bridge No. L9327 over Bassett Creek (Figure 8). The CWA and CCC began work at the lagoons, which the WPA later completed (Figures 9 and 10). Overall, the WPA had the most extensive work orders and longest-term assignment at the park. The WPA resurfaced the Wirth Lake Beach shoreline and rebuilt the golf course. Between 1937 and 1939, the WPA also installed screens on the Picnic Pavilion (HE-GVC-00083), which was originally constructed by the MBPC in 1930, and constructed concrete picnic tables throughout the area. WPA crews also installed cobblestone riprap along Bassett Creek to prevent shoreline erosion (MPRB 2010:22). The WPA's 1941 annual report notes the construction of other small-scale features, including a cobblestone-backed drinking pump and a semi-circular stone wall surrounding the spring at Glenwood Avenue and Theodore Wirth Parkway (also known as Great Medicine Spring) (MPRB 2010:23-25).



Old Bridge.



Pictures by Walter Dahlberg  
A New Substantial Bridge of Seam-faced St. Cloud Granite Replaces the Old Bridge Over Bassett's Creek in Theodore Wirth Park.

Figure 8. Before-and-After comparison of Bridge L9327 (MBPC 1940:61).



Figure 9. Federal relief workers placing riprap along Bassett Creek (MBPC 1941:33).

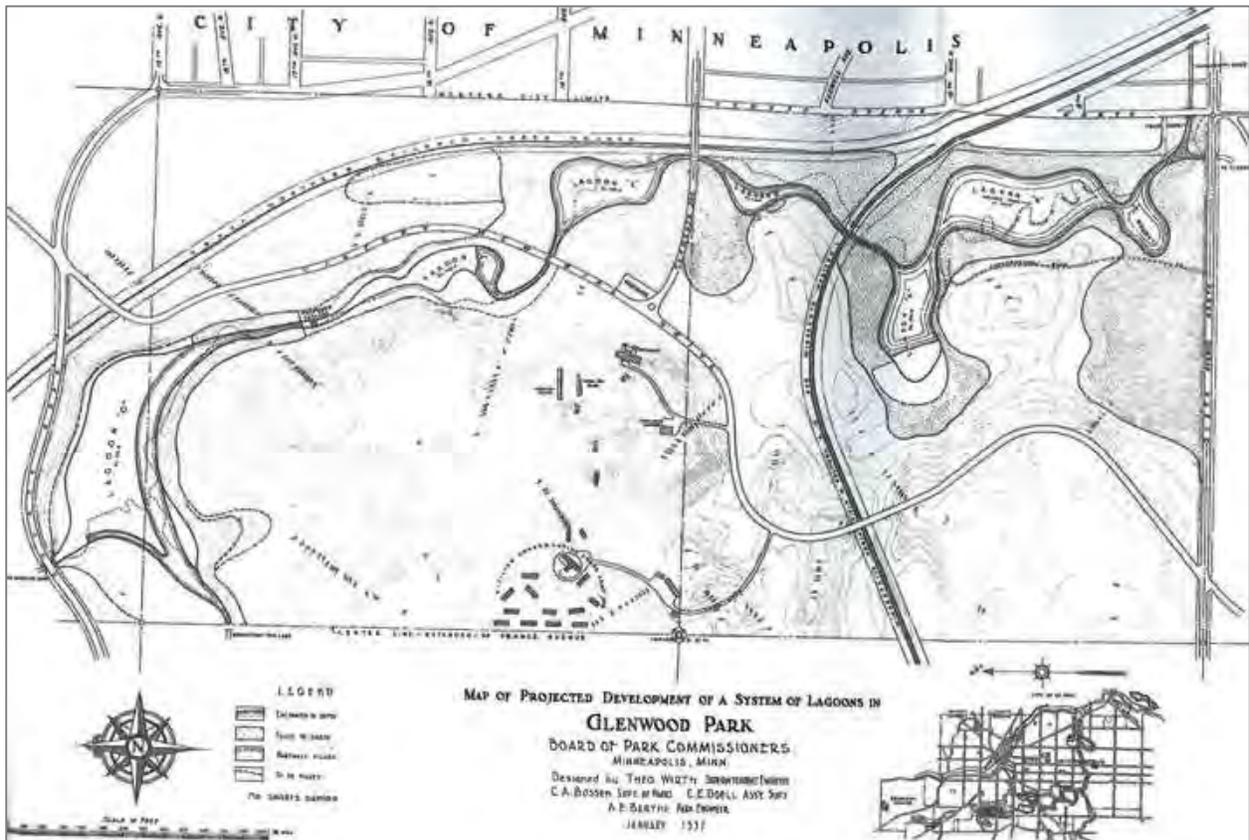


Figure 10. Map of Projected Development of a System of Lagoons in Glenwood Park, as implemented by the CWA, CCC, and WPA (MBPC 1936:110a).

In 1941, a study was conducted identifying Wirth Lake as the most suitable location for Minneapolis' Aquatennial celebration. A 6,000-seat grandstand, diving platforms, and formal, Olympic-sized pool were constructed for these celebrations and remained in place until the late 1960s (MPRB 2010:25-26). However, Wirth considered these structures obtrusive to park scenery. Historical postcards and photographs document a wall of evergreens added as a backdrop to the stage, which likely helped to soften the imposing facility (Figure 11). The MBPC accepted ownership of the facility in 1949. Wirth Lake was the site of the Aqua Follies celebrations from 1941 to 1964. After Aquatennial President Everett Taft declared in 1968 that, "the stadium had long outlived its usefulness as a staging location for summertime entertainment," it was demolished and set on fire as a training exercise by Civil Defense workers (Pearson 2008).



Figure 11. Aqua Follies site at Wirth Lake with evergreen tree enhancements (MHS ca. 1940).

When Robert Ruhe became superintendent in 1966 he was very concerned about the parkways being used as commuter routes and commissioned a study by Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams (Pearson 2010:188). Their recommendations were laid out in the 1971 plan titled, *Minneapolis Parkway System Concepts for the Future* ("Eckbo Plan"). The plan focused on circulation and signage to reinforce the cohesiveness of the parkway system as a whole, and enhance its recreational value. The plan states its purpose as a guide for responding to future conflicts, rather than advocating for specific design styles or forms (Eckbo et al. 1971:1.02). It includes more specific recommendations for circulation patterns (i.e., roads, paths, and parking), and broader concepts for signage and lighting. One notable recommendation was the creation of a "Bicycle Grand Rounds" providing for a designated bicycle path routed around all of the lakes, including Wirth Lake, and adjacent to roadways connecting the lakes (Eckbo et al. 1971:4.22). Grade-separated crossings were also shown in plans for Theodore Wirth Park, including footbridges over the parkway and underpasses for pedestrian and bicycle paths (Figures 12 and 13).

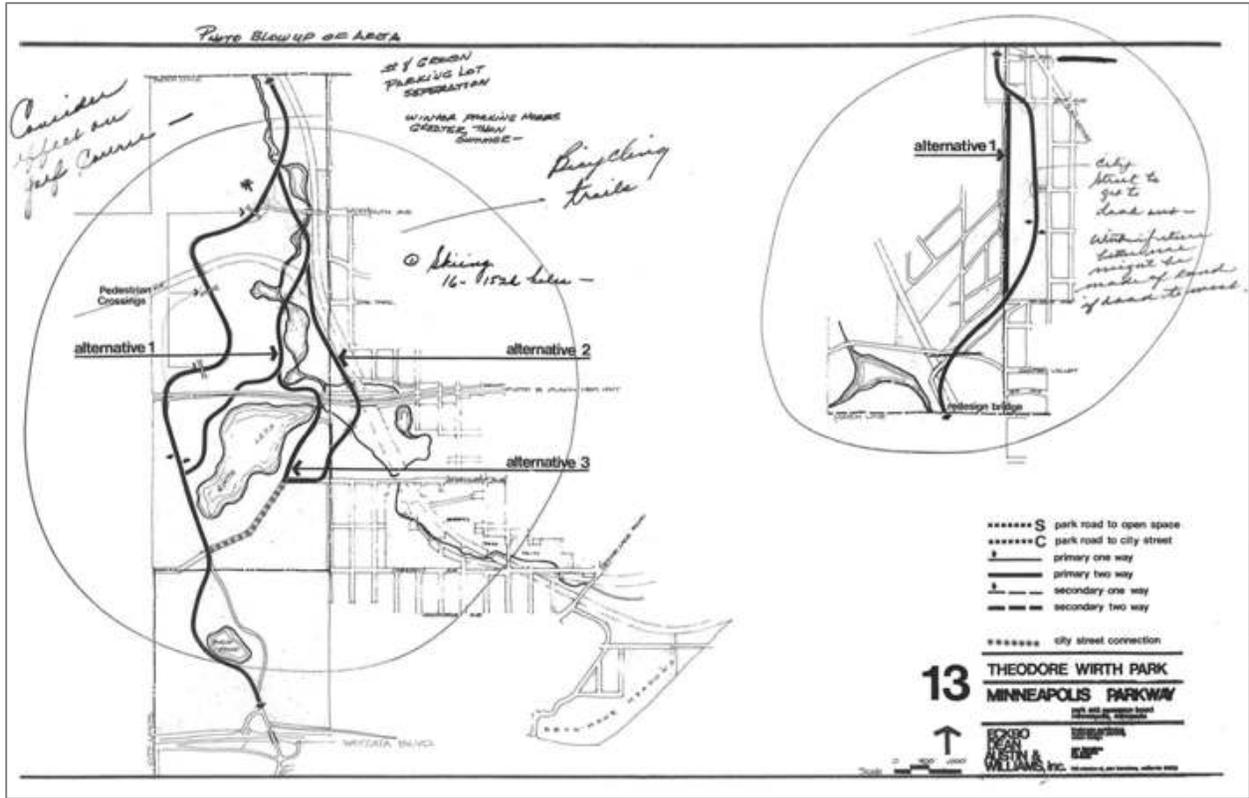


Figure 12. Theodore Wirth Park plan prepared by Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams (Eckbo et al. 1971:3.3-3.4).

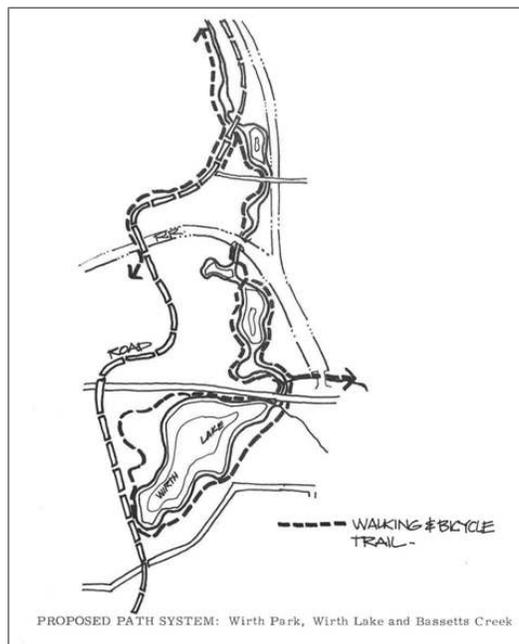


Figure 13. Proposed Path System: Wirth Park, Wirth Lake and Bassett Creek (Eckbo et al. 1971:3.76).

Beginning in 1972, the Citizen's Parkway Committee worked with the local landscape architecture firm InterDesign and engineers at BRW to implement the Eckbo Plan. As a result, Theodore Wirth Parkway

was narrowed from 32 feet to 24 feet, parking bays were installed in 1973, and separated paved bicycle and pedestrian paths were installed along the parkway in the 1970s (Roise, et al. 2012:7.53, Pearson 2002:22). Rose-chip sealed pavement was also introduced throughout the Grand Rounds to bring consistency to the parkway system. Naming conventions helped create unity by replacing all of the existing street suffixes with the term “parkway.”

Also as part of the implementation of the Eckbo Plan a series of other small-scale elements were introduced to Theodore Wirth Park and the Grand Rounds including: dark rectangular wood bollards with chains to guide traffic; low rustic wood signage; lighting; and new picnic tables and benches (Pearson 2008d; Pearson 2002; Roise, et al. 2012). While these elements were not specified in the Eckbo Plan as a concept or design typology given the broader nature of the plan, they represent the more detailed level of design that was done to implement the overall intent of the Eckbo Plan. Uniform types of wood railings and bollard-and-chain railings were developed by InterDesign in the 1970s (Roise et al. 2012:7.9). The signage package was designed by prominent graphic designer and founder of InterDesign Peter Seitz, and introduced to the Grand Rounds in the early 1970s (Mathis 2014:68). Cube-style lighting was also introduced throughout the Grand Rounds to bring consistency to the parkway system; cross-armed light standards were installed at intersections. These lights were designed by Alfred French of InterDesign and featured a slender, approximately 10-foot tall standard with a transparent cube. The new light standards were installed along Theodore Wirth Parkway in 1972 (Pearson 2002:17). New picnic tables composed of wood planks and metal support posts were also introduced to Theodore Wirth Park in the 1970s (Pearson 2002:16). However, this picnic table style is not consistent with the aesthetic of other furnishings developed by InterDesign. By 1970, a play area and extensive landscaping were added to Wirth Lake Beach (MPRB 2010:30-31). Exact installation dates for all features were not indicated in the research completed for this cultural landscape study.

Following the 1971 Eckbo Plan, a *Long Range Improvement Plan* was completed for Theodore Wirth Park in 1980 (MPRB 1980). The goal of the plan was stated as follows, “The thrust of long-range planning for Wirth Park is thus to improve environmental conditions, identify and provide access to resources, and develop continuity between a variety of recreational experiences and locations. Use of the park should fan out from the beach/picnic area to the walks and natural observation areas in all directions, continuing across Highway 55 in an undisturbed manner” (MPRB 2010:8). The 1980 *Long Range Improvement Plan* was a basis for developing the most current plan for Theodore Wirth Park, titled *Theodore Wirth Regional Park Master Plan* (“2015 Master Plan”).

As indicated by the report prepared by MPRB, titled, *Analysis and Historical Review Wirth Lake Area Plan 2010*, more contemporary development of Theodore Wirth Park from the 1980s forward focused on adding more trails, paths, and active recreation opportunities, and on ecological restoration of prairie and bog communities (MPRB 2010). Sand volleyball courts were added west of the beach house by 1997. The beach house was reconstructed in 2005 and a curved wall near the beach was added (MPRB2010:30). A new play area was constructed north of the Wirth Lake Beach House in 2010 (MPRB 2010:30-31) and other notable site and parking improvements were completed in 2012, including the construction of three pergolas and two boardwalks, completing a full walking trail around Wirth Lake. Also, the Luce Line Regional Trail was constructed through Theodore Wirth Park in the 1990s. In 1976, the State of

Minnesota acquired 63 miles of the Electric Short Line Railway "Luce Line"/Union Pacific Golden Valley (UPGV) Railroad ("Luce Line") railroad ROW between Plymouth and Cosmos, Minnesota, removed the railroad ties and tracks, and established the Luce Line Regional Trail. This trail today extends nearly to Hutchinson (Wiltberger et al. 2003; Luce Line Trail 2012). The 10 miles of the Luce Line between Plymouth and downtown Minneapolis remains an active rail corridor today (HE-GVC-055 [Golden Valley Segment], HE-MPC-9800 [Minneapolis Segment]; not previously evaluated as a contributing or non-contributing resource to the GRHD; not eligible for NRHP listing); the Luce Line Regional Trail extends from Plymouth into Minneapolis through Theodore Wirth Park on a paved path that somewhat parallels the active rail corridor. The trail through Theodore Wirth Park was constructed in two phases: first, east of and including segments of the parkway in the 1990s; and second, through the Back 40 connecting the parkway to Ottawa Ave North west of Theodore Wirth Parkway (MPRB 2010:29; Personal Communication, Andrea Weber, Project Manager, MPRB, July 7, 2015).

Restoration of the Quaking Bog and prairies began in the 1980s and was completed by 1995. After the park was designated as a National Scenic Byway in 1998, additional signage was added in 1999 to unify and call attention to the parkway system. This program introduced a new design vocabulary, including horizontal wood signs that identify parks, parkways, and various park elements; four-sided, pyramidal hip-roofed, wood-frame information kiosks; and painted, metal directional signposts at major intersections (Roise et al. 2012:7.11). The new signage system was installed throughout the Minneapolis park system, in addition to the Grand Rounds, and replaced earlier 1970s-era signage, though some of that remains in the park (Roise et al. 2012:7.11, Mathis 2014:68; Personal Communication, Andrea Weber, Project Manager, MPRB, July 7, 2015).

### 3.3 Historical Significance

Theodore Wirth Park is a contributing element to the previously determined eligible GRHD that is currently being nominated to the NRHP. The documented period of significance for the Grand Rounds is 1884 to 1942 (Roise et al. 2012:1.4-1.5). Improvements made in accordance with plans by Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams in the early 1970s are currently being evaluated to determine if they possess exceptional significance under National Register criteria, which would possibly extend the period of significance to the mid-1970s. The draft NRHP nomination identifies the significance of the GRHD under Criterion A, in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation as a nationally significant example of urban park development in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries; and under Criterion C, in the area of Landscape Architecture as the most comprehensive design by, and crowning achievement of, nationally prominent landscape architect Horace William Shaler Cleveland (1814-1900) and as the most important work by nationally prominent landscape architect and park professional Theodore Wirth (1863-1949).

Additionally, *Theodore Wirth Parkway and Theodore Wirth Park: An Assessment of Significance*, recommends the park and parkway as individually eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A, for their influence on the development of the city of Minneapolis; Criterion B, as an important product of a locally significant individual, William Berry, and a nationally significant individual, Theodore Wirth; and Criterion C, as an example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century parkway design and as a reflection of a significant trend in landscape architecture, namely the evolution of the country park in an urban environment and the use

of aggressive park planning to anticipate the needs of the city, the concept for which was first developed by nationally prominent landscape architect H. W. S. Cleveland, and further expanded and extended by Wirth; and as a representation of key periods in the evolution of American landscape architecture (Pearson 2002:7-8). The period of significance for the park and parkway is recommended as 1889 through 1952 (Pearson 2002:8). This previous assessment also found that these resources maintain their historic integrity (Pearson 2002:23). However, the MnSHPO has not officially concurred with these findings (Personal Communication, Denis Gardner, National Register Historian, MnSHPO, May 4, 2015). A majority of the resources within Theodore Wirth Park have not been previously evaluated to determine their individual eligibility for listing in the NRHP.

For the purposes of this study, the Study Area includes Theodore Wirth Park and the resources within it that are contributing elements to the GRHD, which is eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation, and under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture. While the period of significance for the GRHD is 1884 to 1942, this study reflects the current evaluation that considers expanding the period of significance to 1975, to account for improvements made in accordance with the Eckbo Plan. Although the individual eligibility for Theodore Wirth Park has not been concurred with by the MnSHPO, resources examined as part of the individual eligibility evaluation of the park are included in this study to identify if they are contributing to the GRHD.

## 4.0 VIEWSHED ANALYSIS

A viewshed analysis was conducted to identify areas within the Study Area, focused on Theodore Wirth Park, where the proposed BLRT project is visible and may have the potential to cause visual impacts. The presence of LRT infrastructure may alter the characteristics of a historic property by changing the character of the property's use or physical features that contribute to the property and/or its setting, or by introducing visual elements that otherwise diminish aspects of its integrity that qualify it for inclusion in the NRHP. The BLRT alignment will be located on the east side of Theodore Wirth Park, within the existing ROW of the Osseo Branch Line, and will include project elements such as overhead catenary wires, support poles, lighting, and stations, including vertical circulation structures at Golden Valley Road and Plymouth Avenue. The current Golden Valley Road Bridge would be modified to accommodate the BLRT stations. The Plymouth Avenue Bridge would be replaced. A park and ride lot may also be constructed at Golden Valley Road. Additionally, a bridge would need to be replaced at Highway 55 to accommodate the BLRT's transition from Theodore Wirth Park to Highway 55. Freight tracks will be shifted west and an access road will be added. Vegetation in the corridor will be removed and a segment of the creek will be relocated. Furthermore, potential floodplain mitigation may also be required in the vicinity of the park. These project elements may directly alter or be visible from Theodore Wirth Park. Furthermore, there may be additional project elements yet to be determined that may also affect Theodore Wirth Park and/or its setting.

Current project plans and typical sections of the project from the *Bottineau Transit Line Draft Environmental Impact Statement* were referenced for a basic understanding of the project elements to inform the analysis of potential viewsheds within the Study Area (FTA and Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority 2014). Adjacent utility structures, fencing, and buildings aided in conceptualizing the visibility of project elements.

Areas of visibility to the proposed BLRT project from within the Study Area were documented as part of this analysis. Visibility of the project may change with the season due to the vegetative cover of deciduous plants and trees. Therefore, field survey was conducted on April 15 and April 20, when no snow was present and prior to full leaf-out of deciduous species, in an effort to observe potential viewsheds when the lowest level of natural obstructions would exist during the timeframe of this study. Viewsheds of the project are described according to the relative presence of any obstructions (natural or built) that may exist within the line of sight to the project and the overall range of visibility that may be available (as defined by the cardinal [north, east, south, west] and intercardinal [northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest] directions) where a direct line of sight to the project may exist. Table 1 defines the terms used to describe visibility according to the relative levels of obstructions present.

Table 1. Terms Used to Describe Visibility

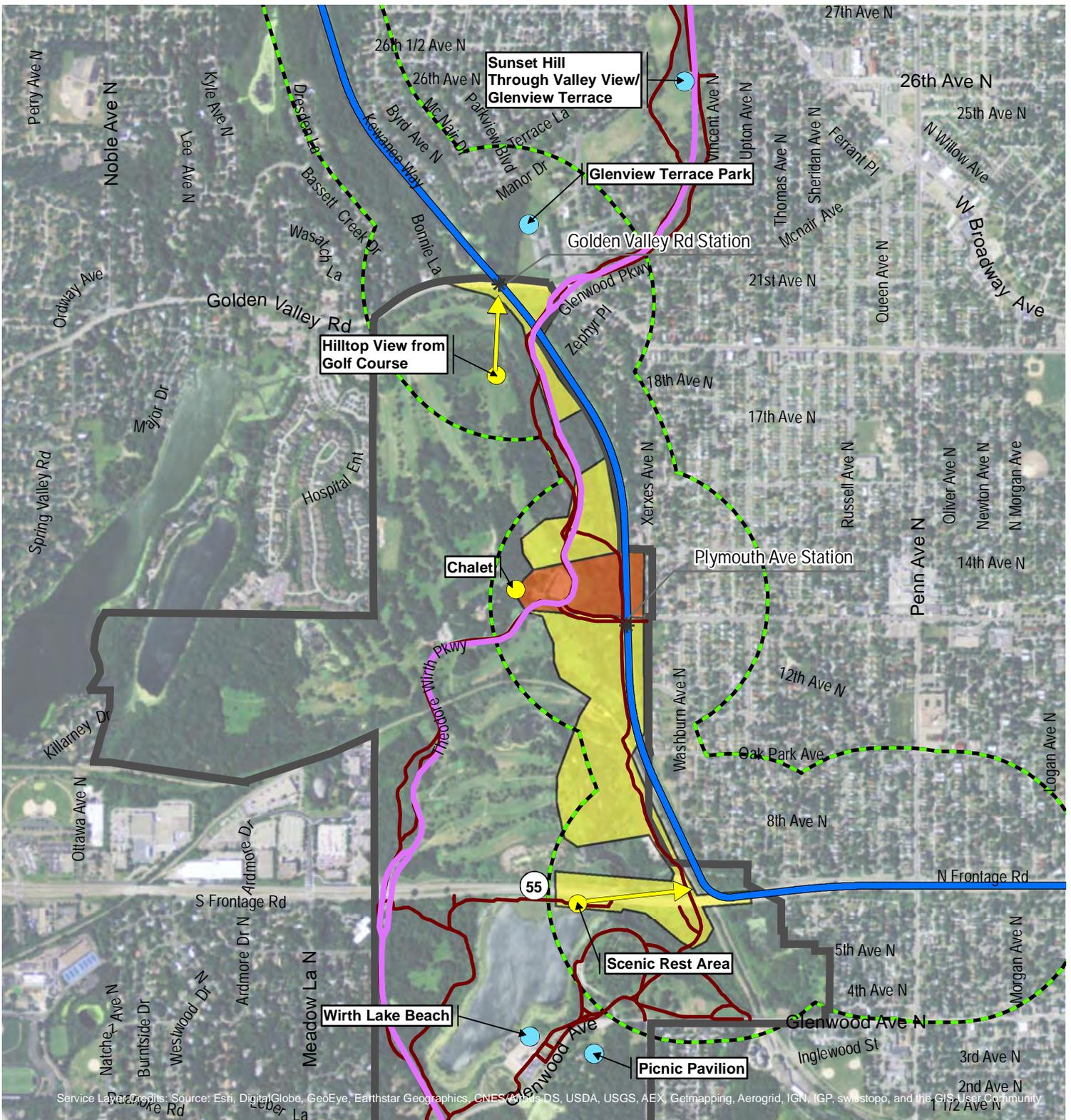
Term	Definition
High / Highly	Little to no obstructions (covering less than 50 percent of the cone of vision) exists while facing any given direction.
Fair / Fairly	Partial obstructions (covering approximately 50 percent of the cone of vision) exist while facing any given direction.
Limited	Obstructions covering more than 50 percent of the cone of vision exist while facing any given direction.

The MPRB and MnDOT CRU identified the following specific vantage points for assessment at the start of the study (Figures 14A and 14B):

- Sunset Hill through Valley View/Glenview Terrace Park
- Valley View/Glenview Terrace Park
- Along Theodore Wirth Parkway
- Theodore Wirth Chalet & Clubhouse

Several additional vantage points outside of the APE were also examined, including Wirth Lake Beach, the Picnic Pavilion, hilltop locations within the golf course, and a scenic rest spot on Wirth Lake (see Figure 14A). These locations include areas of higher elevation and other areas with more expansive, but more distant views that have the potential to include views to the project. However, during fieldwork it was determined that the Wirth Lake Beach and the Picnic Pavilion vantage points had no visibility to the BLRT project due to distance from the project and intervening vegetation. Fair visibility was found to exist from one hilltop location on the golf course, while high visibility of the project was found from the scenic rest spot on Wirth Lake. The regional trail that parallels the Osseo Branch Line, where the proposed BLRT project alignment would be located, was also documented as part of this analysis and found to have high visibility to the project with little to no obstructions along the trail. The location of this trail, which is within the existing APE, is shown on Figure 14A.

Figure 14A identifies the viewsheds and vantage points that were examined, and depicts the viewshed areas – the broad areas within the Study Area from where the project will be visible. Orange shading indicates the full viewshed of the project from the Chalet, and yellow shading indicates all other areas with project visibility. Figure 14B provides a key to the photograph locations and directions included as Figures 15-24, depicting visibility within the Theodore Wirth Parkway viewshed and the Theodore Wirth Chalet & Clubhouse viewshed. A limited portion of the Theodore Wirth Golf Course (approximately 5.5 acres) outside of the current APE was found to have visibility to the project and is included in the yellow shaded area (Figure 14A). FTA/MnDOT CRU will need to determine if the APE should be revised to include this area. Vantage points represent specific locations that were examined to determine if they have views to the project. Light blue dots indicate where a vantage point was examined and no views to the project exist; yellow dots indicate where a vantage point was tested and views to the project do exist.



Source: MNDOT; City of Minneapolis; 106 Group

Map Produced by 106 Group 8/26/2015

**Blue Line Extension LRT (BLRT)  
Theodore Wirth Regional Park  
Cultural Landscape Study  
Minneapolis and Golden Valley, Minnesota**

0 320 Meters  
0 840 Feet

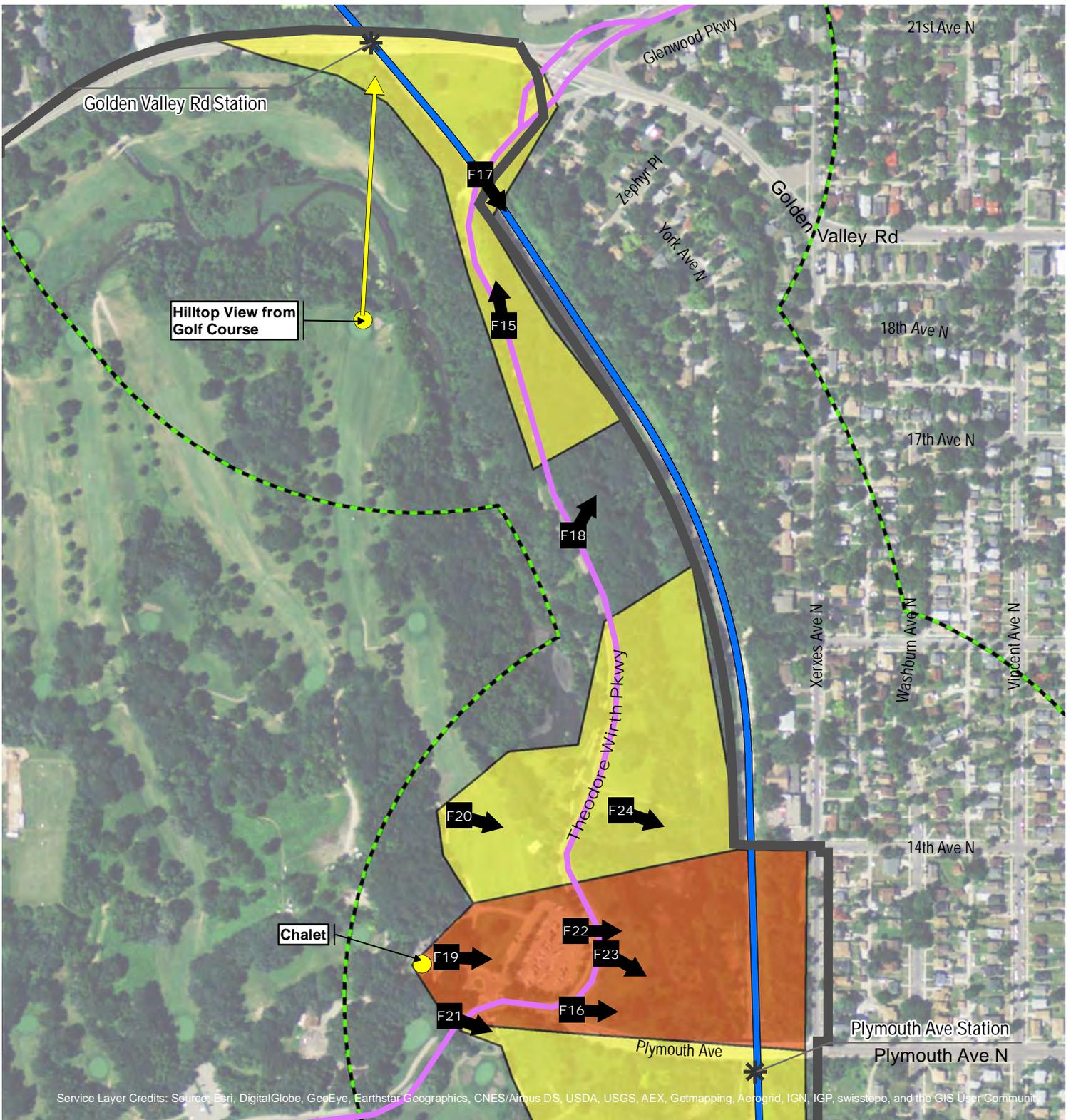
1:16,000



- Proposed Alignment
- \* Proposed Station
- Architecture/History Area of Potential Effect
- Study Area
- Theodore Wirth Pkwy (HE-GVC-00082)
- Regional and Paved Trail

- Viewshed Analysis**
- Viewshed of Project
  - Chalet Viewshed of Project
  - Vantage Point with View of Project
  - Other Vantage Point with No View of Project

Figure 14A



Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Source: MnDOT; 106 Group

Map Produced by 106 Group 8/26/2015

**Blue Line Extension LRT (BLRT)  
Theodore Wirth Regional Park  
Cultural Landscape Study  
Minneapolis and Golden Valley, Minnesota**

**Theodore Wirth Parkway & Chalet Viewshed Photograph Locations**

- Proposed Alignment
- Proposed Station
- Architecture/History Area of Potential Effect
- Study Area
- Theodore Wirth Pkwy (HE-GVC-00082)
- Viewshed of Project
- Chalet Viewshed of Project
- Vantage Point with View of Project
- Photograph Location/Direction (Label refers to figure in report)

0 100 Meters  
0 280 Feet  
1:5,318



Figure 14B

Overall, visibility to the project is significantly influenced by topography and vegetation density. Vegetation density varies by season according to the degree of leaf-out on deciduous plants. However, the density of branches, particularly among understory brush in the wooded areas, as well as the density of evergreen vegetation, still has potential to obstruct views to the BLRT project throughout the full calendar year. Each of the vantage points examined and viewsheds of the project identified is discussed further below.

## 4.1 Viewsheds to Proposed BLRT Project

The project will be visible from most of the segment of Theodore Wirth Parkway between Golden Valley Road and Plymouth Avenue, with the exception of a limited area (roughly between 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue North and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue North) where vegetation is dense and the existing track is located at a lower elevation than the parkway. The project will be highly visible from the Chalet and its northern hillside, from Bridge L9327, and the picnic and archery areas east of the Chalet. For the most part, the project will not be visible from the golf course areas north of 14th Avenue due to topography and vegetation density. Only one hilltop location in the Theodore Wirth Golf Course has a view of the proposed Golden Valley Road station where vegetation is sparse. From Plymouth Avenue south to the Luce Line tracks, the project has fair visibility with only partial obstructions along the east side of the golf course. The adjacent regional trail located east of Bassett Creek has high visibility to the project with little to no obstruction (see Figure 14A illustrating the location of this trail within the yellow shading areas where viewsheds to the proposed BLRT project exist). The vicinity of the project where Highway 55 crosses Bassett Creek is highly visible from a scenic rest area on Wirth Lake; however, it is not visible from Picnic Ground No. 4 due to the dense vegetation and rolling hills in that area.

Two other defined views to the project were identified during survey work that fall outside of the other viewsheds identified: a hilltop location on the golf course (looking north) and a scenic rest area along the boardwalk at Wirth Lake (looking east).

### 4.1.1 THEODORE WIRTH PARKWAY VIEWSHED

The project will be fairly visible (see Table 1 for definitions; see Figures 14A and 14B), with only partial obstructions, along most of the parkway north of 14th Avenue North and south of Bridge 27678, which carries Theodore Wirth Parkway over the Osseo Branch Line tracks (Figure 15). Historically-significant, design-intended views of the park exist along this portion of the Theodore Wirth Parkway viewshed at the southbound entrance to Theodore Wirth Park after crossing Bridge 27678. The design intent and significance of this historic view is discussed further under Section 5.2.5 Views/Vistas in the APE and Viewsheds. This portion of the Theodore Wirth Parkway Viewshed has direct visibility facing east towards the proposed alignment. The project will be highly visible with little to no obstruction and a 180-degree range at Bridge 27678 (Figure 16). The project will also be highly visible with little to no obstruction in the vicinity of the Chalet and intersection with Plymouth Avenue (Figure 17). This area has direct visibility within a roughly 90-degree range facing northeast, east, and southeast. A limited area of no visibility exists where vegetation is most dense and the track is at a lower elevation than the roadway (Figure 18). This area is located roughly between 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue North and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue North.



Figure 15. Theodore Wirth Parkway, near Zephyr Place, facing north (project visibility highlighted).



Figure 16. Theodore Wirth Parkway south of Golden Valley Road, over the Osseo Branch Line tracks (Bridge 27678), facing southeast. Existing track and utility infrastructure dominant the current view.



*Figure 17. Intersection of Theodore Wirth Parkway and Plymouth Avenue, facing east.*



*Figure 18. Lack of visibility along Theodore Wirth Parkway, between 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue North and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, facing northeast.*

#### 4.1.2 THEODORE WIRTH CHALET & CLUBHOUSE VIEWSHED

The Chalet (also currently known as the Theodore Wirth Chalet & Clubhouse), as well as adjacent areas around the building including the patio and nearby benches (orange shading in Figure 14A), have high visibility (see Table 1 for definitions; see Figures 14A and 14B) to the project with few obstructions and a roughly 90-degree range facing northeast, east and southeast (Figure 19). The tracks and Bridge 6247 at Plymouth Avenue are also highly visible from the winter recreation hillside north of the building, facing east and southeast (Figure 20), from the footbridge over the parkway facing northeast and southeast (but not east due to vegetation) (Figure 21), and from the parking lot in front of the Chalet and adjacent picnic and archery areas at roughly a 90-degree range facing northeast, east, and southeast (Figures 22-24).



*Figure 19. View from Chalet patio, facing east (project visibility highlighted).*



Figure 20. View from winter recreation area, facing southeast (project visibility highlighted).



Figure 21. View from footbridge at Chalet, facing southeast (project visibility highlighted).



*Figure 22. View from parking lot, facing east (project visibility highlighted).*



*Figure 23. View from archery range, facing southeast (project visibility highlighted).*



Figure 24. View from picnic area located east of Bridge L9327, facing southeast (project visibility highlighted).

#### 4.1.3 VIEWSHED FROM HILLTOP LOCATION ON GOLF COURSE

Bridge 27591 carrying Golden Valley Road over the Osseo Branch Line tracks has limited visibility (see Table 1 for definitions; see Figure 14A) from a hilltop point located southeast of the 11th green (Figure 25). A direct view to the project is only visible looking north through a clearing in the wooded areas.



Figure 25. Hilltop view from golf course at 11th green, facing north (project visibility highlighted).

#### 4.1.4 VIEWSHED FROM SCENIC REST AREA ON WIRTH LAKE

Bridge 27237 at Highway 55 is highly visible (see Table 1 for definitions; see Figure 14A) from benches at a scenic rest area on Wirth Lake, and the bridge is also highly visible from the approach to/from these benches along the boardwalk (Figure 26). Direct views to the project are located east of this vantage point where there are no obstructions.



Figure 26. View near scenic rest area on Wirth Lake, facing east towards Bridge 27237, carrying Highway 55 over Bassett Creek, Osseo Branch Line tracks, and Luce Line tracks (project visibility highlighted).

#### 4.1.5 VIEWSHEDS OF THE BLRT PROJECT COMPARED TO THE APE

The viewshed analysis found that the current APE captures all of the viewsheds in the Study Area except for one area in Theodore Wirth Golf Course. North of Highway 55, there is additional visibility to the project where the land is flat and vegetation is sparser (Figure 27). The area is approximately 400 feet west of the current APE boundary at its furthest point and encompasses roughly 5.5 acres outside of the current 225 acres of the APE located within Theodore Wirth Park (Figure 14A). Direct project visibility is available facing east where the project is highly visible with little to no obstruction along the proposed alignment. FTA/MnDOT CRU will need to determine if the APE should be revised to include this area.



Figure 27. View from the 6<sup>th</sup> green on Theodore Wirth Golf Course, facing east (project visibility highlighted).

## 4.2 Vantage Points without Views to the Proposed BLRT Project

### 4.2.1 SUNSET HILL (NO VISIBILITY)

This view was long advocated by Theodore Wirth but never fully realized due to delays in park land acquisition. The full viewshed from Sunset Hill at 26th Avenue North was intended to encompass more land to the south and west than is currently preserved by Valley View /Glenview Terrace parks. The full viewshed was also intended to encompass the full western expansion contemplated for Theodore Wirth Park, inclusive of Twin and Sweeney lakes (MBPC 1921:78-79, MBPC 1923:40). The current extent of parkland and its orientation, as well as adjacent development and dense vegetation in the southwestern corner of Glenview Park, do not afford any views of Theodore Wirth Park or the BLRT project area from Sunset Hill (Figure 28).



*Figure 28. Current view from Sunset Hill, facing southwest. Development is in the line of sight between Sunset Hill and Theodore Wirth Park on the left; forested areas on the right form a buffer between Glenview Terrace Park and Bassett Creek.*

#### **4.2.2 VALLEY VIEW/GLENVIEW TERRACE PARK (NO VISIBILITY)**

While this park is located adjacent to the alignment and just across Golden Valley Road from Theodore Wirth Park, it has no direct view of the project and only limited views of Theodore Wirth Park due to dense vegetation and topography (Figure 29). The dense forested area to the southwest does not have any paths and is not intended to be used for recreation; it functions more as a buffer. The location of a church and school further limit the line of sight to Theodore Wirth Park from Sunset Hill and through Valley View/Glenview Terrace Park. Nearing the southern boundary of Glenview Terrace Park looking directly south, limited views of the prairie and tree tops on the land sloping down towards the golf course become available. Neither Golden Valley Road nor the bridge is visible due to the rolling topography of the park and dense vegetation to the southwest.



*Figure 29. View from Valley View/Glenview Terrace, west of tennis courts, facing south.*

## 5.0 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

### 5.1 Summary and Overview

Cultural landscapes represent human interaction with the environment, including its natural features and the evidence of how humans have occupied, developed, used and shaped the landscape to suit human needs. The NPS identifies four general types of cultural landscapes as follows: historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes (NPS 1995). Theodore Wirth Park is a historic designed landscape. The NPS defines historic designed landscapes as follows:

*A landscape that was consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, engineer, or horticulturist according to design principles, or an amateur gardener working in a recognized style or tradition. The landscape may be associated with a significant person, trend, or event in landscape architecture; or illustrate an important development in the theory and practice of landscape architecture. Aesthetic values play a significant role in designed landscapes. Examples include parks, campuses, and estates (NPS 1995).*

Landscapes are defined by spatial organization and land patterns, features, and materials. The NPS defines landscape features as physical units that are part of the existing character of a landscape, can be managed as individual elements, and are identified as contributing or non-contributing to the historical significance of the landscape (NPS 2009:26). Specifically, *National Register Bulletin 18, How to Evaluate and Nominate Historic Designed Landscapes*, identifies the following list of features to consider:

- Existing topography and grading
- Natural features
- Bodies of water (natural and man-made)
- Land uses
- Circulation systems
- Spatial relationships and orientations
- Views and vistas into and out of the landscape
- Vegetation
- Buildings
- Structures
- Landscape dividers such as walls, fences, and hedges
- Drainage and engineering structures
- Site furnishings and small scale elements
- Lighting (fixtures, and the use of natural and artificial light)
- Signs
- Sculptures and other works of art (NPS 1993:3-4)

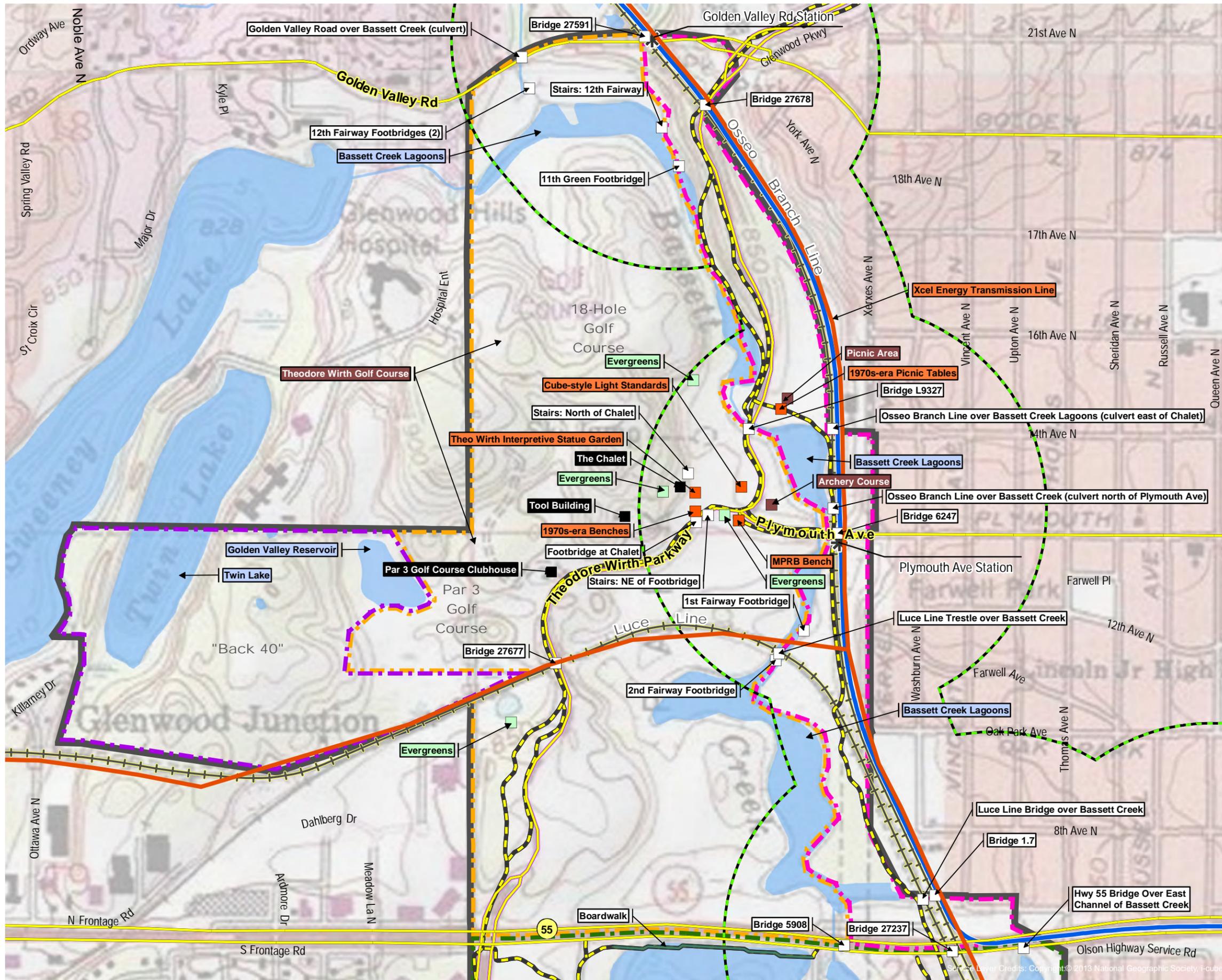
All of these features may not be present, or equally prominent, within all landscapes. Additionally, while individual features may exist as small scale-objects or as broader forms and patterns, each feature contributes to the character and identity of the whole, and in most cases, should not be viewed in isolation. Spatial organization and land patterns should be assessed first, and individual features should be assessed within context of the whole (NPS 1995).

While landscape features can be contributing or non-contributing to a cultural landscape, not all may be counted individually within an NRHP nomination under the guidance of *Bulletin 16, How to Complete the National Register Form* (NPS 1997:17). Elements such as topography, vegetation, and views and vistas, which are mentioned in the draft NRHP nomination but do not have separate inventory forms, are an important part of the cultural landscape of Theodore Wirth Park, within the Study Area, and are included in this study. The draft NRHP nomination for the GRHD states that major resources are included in the count of contributing and noncontributing resources, and that the district also includes numerous minor features and small-scale elements (i.e., signage and lighting) that are not counted as separate resources but mentioned in the nomination (Roise et al. 2012:7.1). Minor features and small-scale elements are discussed in this cultural landscape study as character-defining features. The potential for those features located within the APE and viewsheds to be contributing resources is also identified.

Theodore Wirth Park (HE-GVC00081; portion is contributing to the GRHD; individual NRHP-eligibility undetermined by MnSHPO) is a component of the Theodore Wirth Segment of the GRHD. This segment extends from the intersection of Lowry Avenue North and Theodore Wirth Parkway, south of Victory Memorial Parkway, to Wayzata Boulevard and the bridge over Interstate 394, north of Cedar Lake Parkway. It includes the full extent of Theodore Wirth Parkway (HE-GVC-0082; contributing; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously evaluated) north of Golden Valley Road and within Theodore Wirth Park; Valley View Park, which extends to the southwest from Sunset Hill on Theodore Wirth Parkway; and Theodore Wirth Park (Roise et al. 2012:7.50). Theodore Wirth Parkway links Theodore Wirth Park to the larger GRHD, with the Chain of Lakes Segment to the south and Victory Memorial Segment to the north.

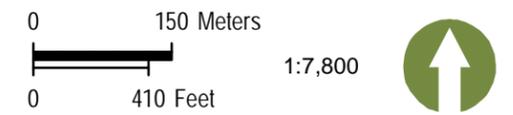
Theodore Wirth Park extends from Interstate 394 on the south, to Golden Valley Road on the north, and from France Avenue North/Sweeney Lake on the west, to Xerxes Avenue North on the east (Figures 30A and 30B). Within Theodore Wirth Park, Highway 55 is a strong east-west divider, bisecting the park into north and south components. The northern half is largely occupied by golf courses, including the original 18-hole Glenview (Theodore Wirth) Golf Course and the Par 3 Golf Course (HE-GVC-00097 and HE-GVC-00087), and nature/recreation areas. The southern half is largely occupied by the Wirth Lake and Wirth Lake Beach (where the Wirth Lake Beach House is located), picnic areas (including the Picnic Pavilion south of Glenwood Avenue), and nature/recreation areas, including the Quaking Bog, Birch Pond, and the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden.

Blue Line Extension LRT (BLRT)  
Theodore Wirth Regional Park  
Cultural Landscape Study  
Minneapolis and Golden Valley, Minnesota



- Proposed Alignment
- ✱ Proposed Station
- Architecture/History Area of Potential Effect
- ▭ Study Area
- Areas Within Park
- ▭ Golf Courses
- ▭ East Side
- ▭ Back 40
- ▭ South of Hwy 55
- Character-defining Features\*
- ▭ Water
- ▭ Land Use
- Circulation: Roadway
- Circulation: Railroad Corridor
- Circulation: Regional and Paved Trail\*\*
- ▭ Vegetation
- ▭ Building Feature
- ▭ Structure
- ▭ Site Furnishing and/or Small Scale Element\*\*\*
- Transmission Line

\* Primary categories for character-defining features are identified. See Section 5.2 for discussion of other categories.  
 \*\* Trails indicated may not constitute all park trails.  
 \*\*\* Features shown include previously inventoried features within the entire park and features that appear to be contributing within the APE/Viewsheds. Additional small scale features are discussed under Section 5.2.9.



Character-defining Features Within Study Area - North Half

Figure 30A

*Figure 30B. Character-Defining Features within Park - South Half.*

Note: Figure 30B Contains sensitive archaeological information and is not available to the public.

The most prominent character-defining features of Theodore Wirth Park include its topography and grading, water features, land uses, circulation systems, and vegetation. Other landscape features that contribute to the design and use of the park include its buildings, structures, and small scale elements (e.g. benches, picnic tables, and memorials). Figures 30A and 30B provide an overview of these character-defining features discussed in the following sections.

Within the southern half of the park, nature/recreation areas are concentrated south of Glenwood Avenue, while more formally-designated recreation spaces and activities are located to the north of Glenwood Avenue; however nature/recreation areas intentionally extend along all edges of the park. Theodore Wirth Parkway runs north-south along a circuitous route. The Osseo Branch Line (HE-RRD-002; not previously evaluated as a contributing or non-contributing resource to the GRHD; individually NRHP-eligible) forms a hard eastern boundary. The Luce Line (HE-GVC-055 [Golden Valley Segment], HE-MPC-9800[Minneapolis Segment]; not previously evaluated as a contributing or non-contributing resource to the GRHD; not eligible for NRHP listing) segments the golf course area by curving in an east-west direction roughly at the westerly extension of Oak Park Avenue North. Paved and natural surface trails traverse all portions of the park (see Figure 30A).

The 2015 Master Plan indicates that remnants of native plant communities exist throughout the park, including bogs, prairie, oak forest and oak savanna. Two bog areas are located south of Glenwood Avenue, including the Quaking Bog west of Theodore Wirth Parkway, and another smaller bog within the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden (see Figure 30B). Several small prairie restoration areas exist at the far northern and southern edges of the park, as well as within the “Back 40” area (west of the Par 3 Golf Course) and north of Glenwood Avenue (see Figure 30A). Additionally, wet prairie areas are located throughout the Theodore Wirth Golf Course between its fairways. Native oak forest and savanna communities are primarily located north of Plymouth Avenue, and south of Glenwood Avenue (MPRB 2015:6-7). Bassett Creek runs in a north-south direction along the eastern edge of the park, from Glenwood Avenue to Golden Valley Road. A series of lagoons constructed by the CWA, CCC, and WPA were formed along its route as an enhancement to the golf course (see Figure 30A).

For the purposes of this study, and to facilitate discussion of the character-defining features, the Study Area was divided into the following four areas:

- Golf Course;
- East Side;
- Back 40 (west of golf courses and north of Highway 55); and
- South of Highway 55 (see Figures 30A and 30B).

The **Golf Course Area** accounts for approximately 36 percent of the area in Theodore Wirth Park and is characterized by its quiet recreational uses, including golf and winter recreation. Its topography is hillier to the north with wooded areas interspersed between the fairways. Bassett Creek is also a character-defining feature. The nature/recreation areas of Bassett Creek, which act as an important buffer for Theodore Wirth Park, offer recreation features such as trails and fishing opportunities.

The **East Side** comprises a narrow portion of the Study Area east of the golf courses and north of Highway 55. Bassett Creek borders this area as an important nature/recreation area. The East Side also contains several circulation routes, including: Theodore Wirth Parkway, the Osseo Branch Line, and a regional park trail that runs parallel to the Osseo Branch Line roughly between Highway 55 and Oak Park Avenue North. The portion of this area that is located north of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue contains steep slopes, ridges, and more dense oak forest areas, while the portion south of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue is more level and contains wetlands and sparse, second-growth forest vegetation.

The **Back 40** (west of the golf courses and north of Highway 55) is another small area mainly comprising what is commonly referred to as the “Back 40” area of the park. It is roughly defined by the Luce Line on the south, the isthmus between Sweeney and Twin Lakes on the west, the Regency Hospital and Hidden Oaks residential neighborhood on the north, and the Par 3 Golf Course on the east. This area was part of the last major acquisition of parkland in 1957. It contains a portion of Twin and Sweeney Lakes, more dense oak forest vegetation, and a small area of restored prairie vegetation.

The area **South of Highway 55** is the largest, oldest, and most diverse area, accounting for approximately 45 percent of the area in Theodore Wirth Park. It contains the remainder of the Study Area within Theodore Wirth Park. Its major features include Wirth Lake and Wirth Lake Beach (where the Wirth Lake Beach House is located), the Picnic Pavilion, the Quaking Bog, the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden, and the southernmost lagoon that is a feature of the Bassett Creek Lagoons.

The following subsections of this report are organized to provide:

- A general description of the character-defining features in each of these four areas of the Study Area (Section 5.1.1 to Section 5.1.4);
- More detailed descriptions of the character-defining landscape features located within the APE and viewsheds (Section 5.2); and
- Identification of contributing features within the APE and viewsheds (Section 5.4).

The following information is noted for features that have been previously inventoried and evaluated, either as part of the current draft NRHP nomination for the GRHD or as part of previous studies: MnSHPO inventory numbers, construction dates, current contributing or non-contributing status from the draft NRHP nomination for the GRHD, and individual eligibility for listing in the NRHP for features with previous determinations by MnSHPO. This information is noted in the text below and summarized for all features in Appendix A.

Since MnSHPO has determined that the GRHD and its associated resources, as identified in the draft NRHP nomination, are eligible for listing in the NRHP, the draft nomination has been relied upon as a basis for identifying contributing and non-contributing features within the currently documented period of significance (ending in 1942) for the purposes of Section 106 compliance. Features post-dating 1942 are further documented through this cultural landscape study. Features outside of the current period of significance (ending in 1942) and identified as non-contributing in the draft NRHP nomination may now be contributing within the potential extended period of significance. These features are noted across the Study Area and are discussed in more detail within the APE and viewshed discussion in Section 5.4

Contributing Features within the APE and Viewsheds. Additionally, features that have been individually determined eligible or not-eligible for the NRHP are identified.

### **5.1.1 GOLF COURSE AREA**

This area encompasses 273.1 acres (110.5 hectares) of the Study Area and is primarily devoted to active golf course uses (Figures 31-32; also see Figure 30A). Its major components include: the original 18-hole Theodore Wirth Golf Course (HE-GVC-00097; contributing; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) constructed 1916-1937; the Par 3 Golf Course (HE-GVC-00087; non-contributing in the draft NRHP nomination, but falls within the potential extension of the period of significance to 1975; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) constructed in 1961; and the winter recreation area (an additional land use within the two golf courses) (see Figure 30A). Its topography features steep slopes and ridges, rolling hills, and flat lowland areas. Grading was completed as part of the golf course construction, siting of the 1919-1922 Chalet (HE-GVC-00015; contributing to the GRHD; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined), and routing of Theodore Wirth Parkway (HE-GVC-00082; contributing; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) constructed from 1891-1921. Bassett Creek and its engineered lagoons (HE-GVC-00089; contributing to the GRHD; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) run the entire eastern and northern lengths of this area; the lagoons date from 1922 to 1934. Bassett Creek roughly forms an eastern boundary to this area, except for the portion between Farwell Avenue and Bridge L9327 (HE-GVC-00050; contributing to the GRHD; individually NRHP-eligible) where it curves beyond the area dedicated to Theodore Wirth Golf Course. While the original 18-hole golf course was developed in the late 1910s, the Par 3 Golf Course was not developed until the early 1960s after that land was acquired for park use (MPRB 2010:27).

The winter recreation area is an additional land use within the Theodore Wirth Golf Course and Par 3 Golf Course areas and offers the following recreation activities: cross-country skiing, snowboarding, snow tubing, snowshoeing, and skijoring. A snowboard park is located behind the Chalet. Tubing occurs on the 10<sup>th</sup> fairway hill with towropes available for assistance. Snowboarding occurs in the vicinity of the 17<sup>th</sup> Green on the 18-hole course (Personal Communication, Adam Arvidson, Interim Director of Strategic Planning, MPRB, July 9, 2015). Snowshoeing occurs on the off-road cycling trails west of Theodore Wirth Parkway, at the Par 3 Golf Course and “Back 40” areas. Ski trails are also located throughout the golf course.



*Figure 31. Representative photograph of Golf Course Area, facing west.*



*Figure 32. Representative photograph of Golf Course Area, facing northwest.*

Hard boundaries are formed by major roadways north and south of the Golf Course Area, including Golden Valley Road to the north and Highway 55 to the south. Theodore Wirth Parkway runs mostly along the eastern edge of this area; however, it begins at the far western side of the area where it crosses Highway 55, until it hits the Luce Line tracks (HE-GVC-055; not previously determined a contributing or non-contributing feature to the GRHD; not-eligible for NRHP listing), where it turns northeast until it reaches Plymouth Avenue and continues north to Golden Valley Road. The Luce Line tracks also traverse

this area. The segment between Minneapolis and Hutchinson was constructed between 1909 and 1916 (106 Group 2012d). Additionally, Plymouth Avenue provides a scenic eastern approach to the Chalet.

The Chalet (HE-GVC-00015; contributing to the GRHD; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) is the most prominent building within this area, as well as within Theodore Wirth Park as a whole. The Tool Building (HE-GVC-00086; contributing to the GRHD; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined), located southwest of the Chalet, was constructed in 1930 and designed to reflect the architectural style of the Chalet (Pearson 2008h). The 1960s Par 3 Golf Course Clubhouse (HE-GVC-00085; historic name “Par 3 Short Course Clubhouse”; non-contributing but subject to review if period of significance is extended to 1975; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) was also constructed southwest of the Tool Building for the Par 3 Golf Course. Other structures located in the Golf Course Area include: Bridge L9327 (HE-GVC-00050; contributing to the GRHD; individually NRHP-eligible) constructed in 1940 and also designed to reflect the Chalet with its stone facing; the Luce Line Trestle over Bassett Creek bridge (HE-GVC-376; not previously determined as a contributing feature to the GRHD; individually not-eligible for NRHP-listing); and the Luce Line over Bassett Creek bridge (HE-MPC-5285; not previously determined as a contributing feature to the GRHD; individually not-eligible for NRHP listing) constructed ca. 1913. Several footbridges (not previously inventoried or evaluated) are also located throughout the golf course, allowing players to pass over Bassett Creek multiple times and once over Theodore Wirth Parkway near the Chalet. The Theodore Wirth Interpretive Statue Garden (HE-GVC-00098; non-contributing; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) was installed in 2004 and is located in front of the Chalet. Three sets of newer wooden and concrete steps are set into hillside areas near the Chalet and in the far northern section of the golf course. A variety of small scale elements, including benches, picnic tables, signage, and lighting, are located throughout the area dating to various eras.

The Golf Course Area is largely covered by managed turf grass; however, portions of wet prairie, oak forest and second growth mixed forest (containing a mix of non-native volunteer and planted species that do not resemble known native plant communities and mostly developed from areas previously cleared for human use) are interspersed throughout the course (MPRB 2015:6.8). The hills to the west of the Chalet and much of the winter recreation area are also wooded. A variety of evergreen tree groupings are located throughout the course. Groupings of evergreen plants near the Chalet, along Plymouth Avenue, and within the winter recreation area are in keeping with Wirth’s original design intent for the park.

### **5.1.2 EAST SIDE AREA**

This area is a narrow, linear, north-south strip of land located north of Highway 55 and east of the golf courses (Figures 33-34; also see Figure 30A). Bassett Creek is the approximate boundary between this area and the Golf Course Area. The area north of Highway 55 and east of the Golf Courses encompasses approximately 71.5 acres (28.5 hectares) of the Study Area. The segment of Theodore Wirth Parkway located northeast of the Chalet runs along a ridge between Bassett Creek and the Osseo Branch Line tracks (HE-RRD-002; individually NRHP-eligible). The Osseo Branch Line was constructed in 1881. Remnants of native oak forest communities are present, as well as a small portion of restored prairie near the intersection of Golden Valley Road and Theodore Wirth Parkway. MPRB staff have indicated that the woodland on the western edge of the Osseo Branch Line corridor near the proposed Golden Valley station

contains high-quality, old growth oaks (Personal Communication, Bruce Chamberlain, Assistant Superintendent for Planning, MPRB, September 24, 2013). These native communities are punctuated with various species of evergreen trees, likely intended as additional screening around the park perimeter and in keeping with the historic design intent of Theodore Wirth Park. Chestnut trees have also been identified along the slope adjacent to the Osseo Branch Line (Personal Communication, Andrea Weber, Project Manager, MPRB, July 7, 2015).



*Figure 33. Representative photograph of East Side Area, facing northwest.*



*Figure 34. Representative photograph of East Side Area, facing west.*

Several paved trails for walking and biking, as well as unpaved unauthorized trails, are located in this area. A total of 12 railroad-related and road-related bridges are located in this area. These bridges are summarized in Table 2 below. Among this total, the bridges that are located within the APE and viewsheds are detailed further in Section 5.2.8 Structures in the APE and Viewsheds. The bridges that have been previously inventoried as part of the draft NRHP nomination, or individually as part of the statewide survey of historic properties on file at MnSHPO, are included in Appendix A.

Table 2. Summary of Bridges Located in the East Side Area

Inventory No.	Bridge No.	Contributing/Non-Contributing Status (C/NC)	Individual NRHP-Eligibility
<b>ROAD-RELATED BRIDGES</b>			
HE-GVC-00049	6247	NC	Not Eligible
HE-GVC-00050	L9327	C	Eligible
HE-GVC-00091	27678	NC	Not Previously Determined
Not Available	27591	Not Previously Determined	Not Previously Determined
HE-GVC-00056	5908	NC	Not Previously Determined
HE-MPC-5287	27237	NC	Not Eligible
HE-MPC-5288	Highway 55 Bridge over East Branch of Bassett Creek	Not Previously Determined	Not Eligible
<b>RAILROAD-RELATED BRIDGES</b>			
Not Available	Not Available (culvert carrying Osseo Branch Line over Bassett Creek, north of Plymouth Ave.)	Not Previously Determined	Not Previously Determined
Not Available	Not Available (culvert carrying Osseo Branch Line over Bassett Creek, east of Chalet)	Not Previously Determined	Not Previously Determined
HE-GVC-376	Not Available	Not Previously Determined	Not Eligible
HE-MPC-5285	Not Available	Not Previously Determined	Not Eligible
HE-MPC-5286	1.7	Not Previously Determined	Not Eligible

Small areas of land are reserved for picnicking and for archery north of Plymouth Avenue. Areas south of Plymouth Avenue are largely unmanaged wetlands. A well-used regional trail runs adjacent to the Osseo Branch Line tracks with a small segment crossing railroad ROW. The pavement is deteriorated in multiple segments, including areas with standing water. An unmarked rail crossing is located roughly at

Oak Park Avenue North and does not have any barriers to access or crossing. This part of the park has been used as a natural buffer along the edge of the park, first shown in the 1914 plans, and was indicated as a nature area in the 1980 *Long Range Improvement Plan*. The trail adjacent to the Osseo Branch Line is currently planned as a natural area trail in the 2015 Master Plan (Personal Communication, Andrea Weber, Project Manager, MPRB, July 7, 2015).

### 5.1.3 BACK 40 AREA

This area encompasses approximately 77.7 acres (31.4 hectares) of the Study Area (see Figure 30A). Acquired in 1957, this area is part of the remaining tract of land originally identified by Theodore Wirth in 1922 (along with land for the Par 3 Golf Course in the Golf Course Area) that would have included all of Sweeney and Twin lakes (Figures 35-36). Hard edges are formed by the Luce Line tracks to the south, while a residential development is located to the north. This area currently takes in the southern half of Twin Lake and the isthmus between Sweeney and Twin Lakes, as well as a section of the Sweeney Lake shore. It is generally characterized by rolling topography and remnants of native oak forest and savanna communities, as well as maple-basswood forest, restored prairie, and small forested wetlands (MPRB 2015). Paved trails and designed natural surface trails run through this area. The Golden Valley Reservoir is located in the northeastern corner of this area.

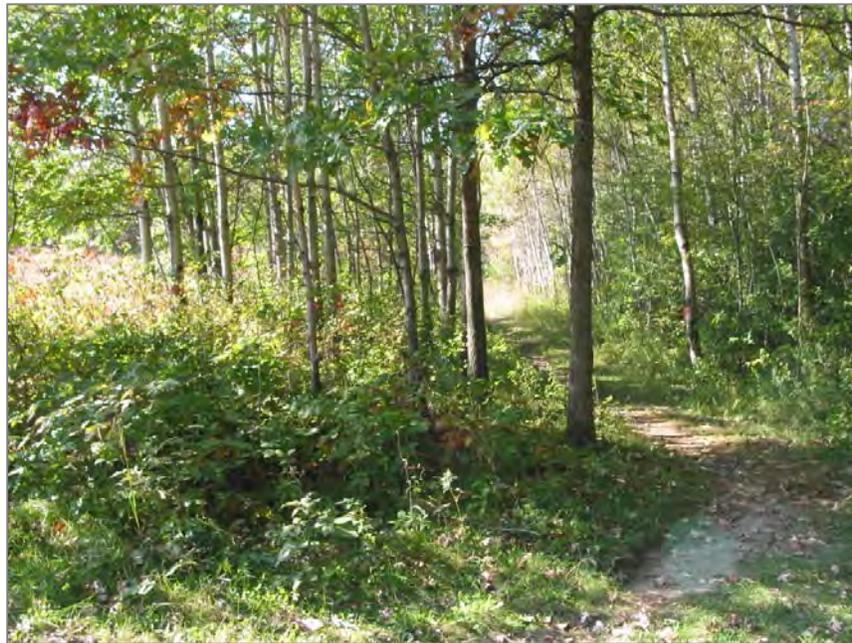


Figure 35. Representative photograph of Back 40 Area (MPRB 2015).



Figure 36. Representative photograph of Back 40 Area (MPRB 2015).

#### 5.1.4 SOUTH OF HIGHWAY 55 AREA

This area comprises the oldest portion of the park and contains the greatest diversity in land uses and vegetation (See Figure 30B). It is also the largest area of the Study Area, encompassing approximately 345.6 acres (139.9 hectares). Its northern and southern boundaries are defined by major roadways, including Highway 55 to the north and Interstate-394 to the South. Glenwood Avenue runs loosely east-west in the middle of this area and Theodore Wirth Parkway runs north-south throughout this entire area. Bridge 27607 (HE-MPC-01907; non-contributing to the GRHD; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) carries Glenwood Avenue over Bassett Creek, the Osseo Branch Line and the Minneapolis Segment of the Luce Line (HE-MPC-9800; not previously determined a contributing or non-contributing resource to the GRHD; individually not eligible for NRHP listing). Just north of Glenwood Avenue, Bridge 1.4 (not previously inventoried or evaluated) carries the Osseo Branch Line over Bassett Creek. North of Glenwood Avenue, this area extends roughly from the extension of France Avenue North on the west to Sheridan Avenue North on the east. South of Glenwood Avenue, this area extends roughly from France Avenue South to Xerxes Avenue South. Land north of Glenwood Avenue has comparatively flatter topography, while land to the south is characterized by rolling hills, steep slopes and ridges, and areas of high-quality native vegetation. Wirth Lake (HE-GVC-00094; contributing; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) is a central feature of this area that is located south of Highway 55 and north of Glenwood Avenue. Land immediately east of Wirth Lake is occupied by formally-designated recreation areas.

Wirth Lake Beach (HE-GVC-00093; contributing; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) features the 2004 Wirth Lake Beach House (HE-GVC-00092; non-contributing; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined), volleyball courts, a basketball court, picnic tables and shelters, a seating area beneath a pergola, playground equipment, and a parking lot (Figure 37). Wirth Lake Beach was also historically the site of the Aqua Follies Aquatennial Celebration (non-extant). The

JD Rivers' Children's Garden occupies a small portion of land located north of Glenwood Avenue near Vincent Avenue North.<sup>1</sup> Two picnic areas are located east of Wirth Lake: Picnic Ground No. 4 (not previously inventoried or evaluated as a separate feature within Theodore Wirth Park) north of Glenwood Avenue and the 1930 Picnic Pavilion (HE-GVC-00083; contributing; NRHP eligibility not previously determined) south of Glenwood Avenue (Figure 38). Picnic tables, benches, a sand box, and grills are sited on the hilly area in Picnic Ground No. 4. Immediately south of Wirth Lake and Wirth Lake Beach, additional picnic tables are sited at the northern foot and along the northern slope of a hill leading up to the Picnic Pavilion. The hilltop location of the pavilion affords scenic views of Wirth Lake and Wirth Lake Beach to the west, forested areas to the northeast, and hilly, forested areas to the south. The 1937 Glenwood Line Streetcar Shelter (HE-GVC-00100; contributing; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) and streetcar line corridor are also located at the northern foot of this hill, adjacent to Glenwood Avenue (Figure 39).



*Figure 37. Wirth Beach, facing east.*

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<sup>1</sup> The name, "JD Rivers' Children's Garden," is stated here as indicated by the MPRB on their website, [https://www.minneapolisiparks.org/parks\\_\\_destinations/gardens\\_\\_bird\\_sanctuaries/jd\\_rivers\\_childrens\\_garden/](https://www.minneapolisiparks.org/parks__destinations/gardens__bird_sanctuaries/jd_rivers_childrens_garden/).



*Figure 38. Picnic Pavilion (northeast elevation), facing southwest.*



*Figure 39. Glenwood Streetcar Shelter, facing east.*

Land west of the lake was historically occupied by the Park Board Nursery (and previously the Keegan-Schell Farmstead [21HE0405; not previously determined a contributing or non-contributing feature to the GRHD; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined]) that supplied much of the designed vegetation for the park. It still contains a few remnants of cultivated plants and a root cellar, and now is largely restored prairie. Generally, areas south of Glenwood Avenue excluding the Picnic Pavilion and picnic areas are more ‘natural.’ The Quaking Bog (HE-MPC-01906; contributing; individual NRHP-

eligibility not previously determined) and Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden (HE-GVC-05098; contributing; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined), located outside of the APE and viewsheds identified for this project, comprise approximately 20 acres (8.1 hectares) and represent some of the greatest biodiversity in the area (Figures 40 and 41). The 1970 Martha E. Crone Visitor's Shelter (HE-MPC-01899; non-contributing, but subject to review if the period of significance is extended to 1975; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) is located in the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden. Vegetation in the outlying areas is largely characterized as oak forest and oak savanna communities. Birch Pond (HE-MPC-01898; contributing; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) is another prominent water feature in the area South of Highway 55, located east of the Quaking Bog and southwest of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden, and east of Theodore Wirth Parkway. It is the smallest water feature in Theodore Wirth Park, at two acres, whereas the Bassett Creek Lagoons are 38 acres combined.



*Figure 40. Entrance to Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden, facing east (modern gateway).*



Figure 41. Quaking Bog, facing west (MPRB 2015).

Remnants of the 1917 Loring Cascade (HE-GVC-00099; non-contributing; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) and Great Medicine Spring are located at the southwestern corner of Wirth Lake, near the intersection of Glenwood Avenue and Theodore Wirth Parkway (MPRB 2015:5.7,5.10). The 1958 Finnish-American Monument (HE-GVC-00095; non-contributing but subject to review if the period of significance is extended to 1975; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) stands in the center of Picnic Ground No. 4. The 1921 Victory Memorial Drive Boulder (HE-MPC-01910; contributing; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) is located at the southern entrance to Theodore Wirth Park, where it intersects with Interstate-394. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The stretch of Theodore Wirth Parkway south of Glenwood Avenue contains the largest concentration of original evergreen plantings from Wirth's design, located roughly between I-394 and Glenwood Avenue (Pearson 2002:10). Historic (pre-1942) evergreen plantings have also been identified west of Theodore Wirth Parkway and south of the Luce Line in the 2015 Master Plan (MPRB 2015:5.7). Topography in this area is the most varied including rolling hills primarily southeast and northwest of the intersection of Glenwood Avenue and Theodore Wirth Parkway, as well as flatter areas around Wirth Lake.

## 5.2 Character-Defining Features in the APE and Viewsheds

The current BLRT APE encompasses the eastern side of the park, primarily lying north of Highway 55 (see Figure 1). Since the proposed alignment runs in a north-south direction between Golden Valley Road and Highway 55, and curves eastward at Highway 55, its route does not traverse the southern half of the park; however, a limited portion of the park located south of Highway 55 falls within the current APE. Therefore, the current APE primarily encompasses features described within the East Side in Section 5.1, and also includes features described in a *portion* of the Golf Course Area and the area South of Highway 55; it *does not* include any features described within the Back 40 Area. As a result of field survey, the current APE was also found to capture all of the viewsheds to the project except for a 5.5-acre area in Theodore Wirth Golf Course located north of Highway 55. Since the extent of this area is limited and does not contain any additional features than those that are located within the APE, the discussion of character-defining features within the APE and viewsheds pertains to the same set of landscape features.

Character-defining features define the overall physical quality of the landscape in terms of its current and historic features. More intensive level survey was completed to document character-defining features within the APE and identified viewsheds where the project is visible from within the Study Area. Prominent landscape features in the APE and viewsheds include topography, water features, vegetation, golf course and picnic area land uses, circulation systems, the Chalet, and several bridges. Other landscape features present within the APE and viewsheds include views related to the original design intent of the park, small-scale elements, and lighting. One archaeological resource is also present within the APE representing the Germania Brewery (21HE407; contributing status to the GRHD undetermined; individually NRHP-eligible). Character-defining features within the APE and viewsheds are described below as a baseline for identifying contributing and non-contributing features within the APE and viewsheds for the proposed BLRT project.

### 5.2.1 TOPOGRAPHY IN THE APE AND VIEWSHEDS

Topography was shaped by natural geographic processes over thousands of years, and altered more recently by grading and design (see Figures 30A and 30B showing contour lines). Wirth recognized the scenic value of the contours, wooded hills and Bassett Creek Valley as a great opportunity to develop an extensive natural park. Theodore Wirth Parkway was designed to follow the natural topography modeling the scenic pleasure drives of country parks (Figure 42). Wirth described how the roadway should feature easy curves following the foot of wooded hills and gradually rising to narrow oak covered ridges (MBPC 1911:103). He also remarked in the Annual Report for the year 1921 that the Chalet "is happily located on the side of a wooded hill" (MBPC 1922:71). Most of the land contours in Theodore Wirth Park, including the steep slopes, ridges and valleys, have been shaped by natural processes, while grading was necessary for construction of the golf course, Chalet, bridges, and route of Theodore Wirth Parkway.



Figure 42. Ascending north on Theodore Wirth Parkway along a ridge (past Bridge L9327), facing north.

### 5.2.2 BODIES OF WATER / WATER FEATURES IN THE APE AND VIEWSHEDS

Bassett Creek Lagoons and Wirth Lake are the primary water features located within the APE and viewsheds (see Figures 30A and 30B). Approximately 13% of Wirth Lake is located within the APE and viewsheds. Wirth Lake and Bassett Creek are natural features that have been transformed into designed landscape features by dredging and fill activities; the lagoons are an entirely man-made design feature. When the lagoons were created, sediment was dredged from Bassett Creek and used for grading the golf course (MPRB 2015:6.4). The design of the lagoons significantly altered Bassett Creek's natural course to create a scenic amenity and develop more suitable land for the golf course. Excavation work for the lagoons was first begun by CWA crews in the fall of 1933 and continued by the CCC in 1935 (Wirth 2002:105). Wirth's *Map of Projected Development of a System of Lagoons in Glenwood Park* contained seven lagoons along the creek's segment between Golden Valley Road and Highway 55 (MBPC 1936:110a). The completed lagoons reclaimed 65 acres of swampland and 35 acres of wasteland (MBPC 1937:121). Today, the lagoons cover seven acres of the Study Area and include two additional lagoons located south of Highway 55. Bassett Creek runs 2.5 miles through the Study Area. The current layout and form of these features is largely similar to Wirth's 1937 plan, with the exception that two of the lagoons north of Highway 55 exist more in the form of wetlands than water bodies, and the two additional lagoons located south of Highway 55 exist (Figure 43). Wirth Lake is a prominent and central character-defining feature of the park (Figure 44). Wirth Lake and Bassett Creek Lagoons have been previously evaluated and identified as contributing features to the GRHD (Roise et al. 2012; MPRB 2015).



*Figure 43. Bassett Creek and "Lagoon N," as indicated in Wirth's 1937 plan, facing northwest.*



*Figure 44. Wirth Lake from Picnic Ground No. 4, facing west.*

### **5.2.3 LAND USE IN THE APE AND VIEWSHEDS**

Theodore Wirth Golf Course is the predominant land use north of Highway 55 (Figure 45; also see Figure 30A). Other land uses present include the winter recreation area located on the hills of the golf course that are both north and west of the Chalet within the APE and viewsheds, and a smaller picnic area and archery area east of the Chalet. Theodore Wirth Golf Course and the winter recreation area have been

previously evaluated and identified as contributing resources to the GRHD (Roise et al. 2012, MPRB 2015).

Winter recreation has been highly popular at Theodore Wirth Park since its original acquisition. While the types of winter sports have evolved over the years, the park's large acreage, alpine character, and rolling topography provide excellent grounds for a variety of activities (Figure 46). Historically, these activities have been concentrated on the slopes of the golf course located to the west and north of the Chalet. A snowboard park is located west of the Chalet while tubing occurs on the 10th fairway north of the Chalet. Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing trails extend across the entire park.



*Figure 45. Theodore Wirth Golf Course, view toward the 14th and 15th fairways, facing south.*



*Figure 46. Winter recreation area along the 10th fairway, facing north.*

Picnic Ground No. 4, located east of Wirth Lake, is the predominant land use south of Highway 55 within the APE and viewsheds (see Figure 30B). Picnic Ground No. 4 has a pastoral character created by the rolling hills, picturesque groupings of trees, and expansive views across the lake (Figure 47). The JD Rivers' Children's Garden located to the southeast provides a venue for MPRB youth gardening programs and art projects. While the site is small, it has high visibility from Glenwood Avenue and exhibits an artistic, vernacular appearance. The garden is a more contemporary feature of the park, established in 1982 (Personal Communication, MaryLynn Pulscher, MPRB, July 8, 2015). Wirth Lake offers a fishing dock on the eastern shore of the lake, and west of Picnic Ground No. 4 (see Figure 30B). Swimming areas at Wirth Beach are visible from the picnic grounds, but do not lie within the APE or viewsheds. A floating boardwalk across Wirth Lake offers benches where expansive views of the lake to the south and the golf course to the north can be appreciated.



Figure 47. Picnic Ground No. 4, showing WPA picnic benches and evergreen plantings, facing south.

Major recreational activities throughout the APE and viewsheds include disc golfing, geocaching, orienteering, environmental programming, weddings and special events, fishing, walking, hiking, trail running, bicycling, off-road cycling, non-motorized boating, gardening, picnicking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, skijoring, snow tubing and sledding, swimming, sand volleyball (MPRB 2015).

## 5.2.4 CIRCULATION SYSTEMS IN THE APE AND VIEWSHEDS

### 5.2.4.1 Roads

Vehicular circulation systems define the northern and southern boundaries of the park, and traverse the park in both north-south and east-west directions. The two major roadways within the APE and viewsheds include Highway 55 and Golden Valley Road. Early plans for Theodore Wirth Park show alternatives for Highway 55 (originally 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue North) by-pass routes around the natural northern shore of Wirth Lake. The highway runs in an east-west direction, forming a major division in the park, and was widened to four lanes in the 1950s (Figure 48). Highway 55, currently known as Olson Memorial Highway, is classified as a principal arterial roadway with average annual daily traffic counts of 26,000 in 2007, the most recent year for which data is available (Metropolitan Council 2015, MnDOT 2015). Golden Valley Road (originally 19th Avenue North) forms the northern boundary of the park. It is classified as minor augmentor roadway with average annual daily traffic counts of 8,300 in 2007, the most recent year for which data is available (Metropolitan Council 2015, MnDOT 2015). Glenwood Avenue runs east-west through the park providing access to Wirth Lake and Picnic Ground No. 4. Theodore Wirth Parkway has been previously evaluated and identified as a contributing resource to the GRHD (Roise et al. 2012, MPRB 2015).



Figure 48. Highway 55 from boardwalk on Wirth Lake, facing north.

Theodore Wirth Parkway followed the model of parkways across the Grand Rounds, first being graded and covered in gravel, and later paved as auto traffic increased (Figure 49). Originally constructed between 1911 and 1915, it provided a major access point through the park and linked it to the larger park system. Eckbo improvements in the early 1970s narrowed Theodore Wirth Parkway from 34 feet to 24 feet, installed a parking bay and concrete curbs, installed paved bicycle and pedestrian paths, and introduced rose-chip sealed pavement to create unity within the Grand Rounds system. The MPRB has begun re-introducing this pavement to the parkway system in 2014. Its current route follows the alignment from historical plans and aerial photographs, except where it intersects with Plymouth Avenue.

The current location and design of the parking lot at the Chalet has been altered in comparison to historical plans and photographs. The parking lot was first shown as a smaller area located east of Plymouth Avenue in the *Map of Projected Development of a System of Lagoons in Glenwood Park*, and appears as a similar size and in a similar location in aerial photographs from 1945 through 1971 (MBPC 1937:110, ASCS 1945, ASCS 1971). The expansion likely required modification of the intersection between Theodore Wirth Parkway and Plymouth Avenue, since historical aerial photographs indicate that Theodore Wirth Parkway was later shifted south (ASCS 1971, ASCS 1979). MPRB staff have indicated that the parking lot expansion and rerouting of Theodore Wirth Parkway occurred roughly between 1969 and 1979 (Personal Communication, Adam Arvidson, Interim Director of Strategic Planning, MPRB, July 1, 2015). However, the re-alignment of this intersection and parking lot reconfiguration were not indicated in the Eckbo Plan. Therefore, the current parking lot does not appear to be a historic feature. MPRB staff indicated that, during the same timeframe, the approach to the Chalet was altered. The entry walk was changed from a straight approach with stairs and hedges, to the current curved walk as an accessibility improvement, and the patio stairs were closed (Personal Communication, Adam Arvidson, Interim Director of Strategic Planning, MPRB, July 1, 2015). The extension of Plymouth Avenue by 1922 was an important gateway into the park that Wirth considered an integral component of the Grand Rounds

system. It provides a scenic eastern approach to the Chalet at the midpoint of the Theodore Wirth Golf Course (Figure 50). The roadway follows its historic alignment, except for the intersection with Theodore Wirth Parkway, and is surrounded by a wooded area near Bridge 6247 (HE-GVC-00049; non-contributing to the GRHD; not eligible for individual NRHP listing). The bridge deck, railings, and light fixtures of Bridge 6247 were reconstructed in 2006; the style of the railings and fixtures are modern and are dissimilar in appearance to the historic structure. Plymouth Avenue and Bridge 6247 are discussed further in Section 5.4.1.2.



*Figure 49. Theodore Wirth Parkway at Bridge L9327, facing northwest.*



*Figure 50. Plymouth Avenue approach to the Chalet, facing west.*

#### **5.2.4.2 Railroads**

Two railroad lines traverse the park and impact its spatial organization. The Osseo Branch Line (HE-RRD-002; not previously identified as a contributing feature to the GRHD; individually NRHP-eligible) forms a hard eastern boundary which likely followed existing topography. This railroad line is comprised of a single track mainline that rests on a raised bed of granite ballast. The tracks are comprised of wood ties with jointed steel rails. The Osseo Branch Line has an approximately 100-foot ROW. North of Glenwood Avenue, the Osseo Branch Line enters Theodore Wirth Park and travels through a wooded area. Just north of Glenwood Avenue, the line is carried over Bassett Creek by the Osseo Branch Line Bridge No. 1.4 (not previously inventoried or evaluated), which is a double concrete culvert/pipe built in 1943 that replaced an earlier wood trestle. Approximately 350 feet to the north, the line crosses Bassett Creek on Osseo Branch Line Bridge No. 1.7 (HE-MPC-5286; not previously determined as a contributing features to the GRHD; not eligible for individual NRHP listing), which is a four-span, reinforced concrete deck bridge built in 1914. Approximately 600 feet up the line, near the intersection of Xerxes and Eighth Avenues North, the Osseo Branch Line runs parallel with the Luce Line at MW Junction (installed 1915). Just north of MW Junction, the Luce Line curves and heads west into Golden Valley (HE-GVC-055). The Osseo Branch Line then passes over a wetland area on a raised roadbed of riprap. After curving north, the line enters a long forested cut through Theodore Wirth Park until it reaches Golden Valley Road (106 Group 2012c).

North of Glenwood Avenue the Minneapolis Segment of the Luce Line (HE-MPC-9800; not previously determined as a contributing feature to the GRHD; not eligible for individual NRHP listing) enters Theodore Wirth Park and travels through a wooded area. Additionally, the tracks cross the east channel of Bassett Creek at Bridge 1.4. Approximately 350 feet to the north, the line crosses Bassett Creek on the Luce Line Bridge over Bassett Creek (HE-MPC-5285; not previously determined as a contributing or non-contributing feature to the GRHD; not eligible for individual NRHP listing) that is now mostly covered by fill. About 1,000 feet up the line at Mile Post 1.7, near the intersection of Xerxes and Eighth Avenues North, the Golden Valley Segment of the Luce Line interchanges with the Osseo Branch Line at MW Junction in Theodore Wirth Park. The junction is comprised of a crossover track between the two lines. At the west end of the junction the Luce Line leaves Minneapolis and enters Golden Valley (HE-GVC-055; not previously determined as a contributing feature to the GRHD; not eligible for individual NRHP listing), where it effectively segments Theodore Wirth Golf Course. The railroad tracks consist of steel rails with wood ties set in ballast on a raised roadbed (106 Group 2012d). The current ROW width ranges from 80 feet to 150 feet along its course through Theodore Wirth Park. The tracks cross Bassett Creek Lagoons at a second point on the Luce Line Trestle over Bassett Creek (HE-GVC-376; not previously determined contributing or non-contributing to the GRHD; not eligible for individual NRHP listing).

#### **5.2.4.3 Paths and Trails**

A paved bicycle and pedestrian path (in some areas combined, and in others, separated) runs adjacent to the full length of Theodore Wirth Parkway from Golden Valley Road to I-394. This pathway was recommended in Eckbo's 1971 plan. Another paved trail runs along the creek and the Osseo Branch Line tracks through areas adjacent to lagoons and wetlands. The location and alignment of this route are similar to recommendations contained in the Eckbo's 1971 plan. The trail begins at Highway 55 and ends

at the picnic area located east of Bridge L9327. However, it does not contain a grade-separated crossing at the tracks as recommended in the Eckbo Plan. All-season, earthen off-road pedestrian and bike trails are also available mostly west of the parkway in nature/recreation areas. Portions of groomed ski trails traversing Theodore Wirth Golf Course lie within the APE and viewsheds. These trails accommodate classic and skate-style cross-country skiing and connect up to regional trails extending through Golden Valley and the Chain of Lakes (MPRB 2015:4.7). Figure 51 shows an example of paved pathways. Rogue pedestrian pathways have also been formed through repeated usage, which are unauthorized by MPRB and will be closed in the future (Figure 52). No paths or trails have been previously identified as contributing resources to the GRHD; however, a formal evaluation of the pathways related to the Eckbo Plan has not been completed yet. It appears these pathways would be contributing features, as discussed further in Section 5.4 Contributing Features in the APE and Viewsheds.



*Figure 51. Example of paved pathway along Bassett Creek, facing south.*

Pedestrian paths existed throughout the park's history and are documented in historical plans and aerial photographs. A series of paths were already present in the park when Wirth developed his 1914 plan. However, the alignment of current paths located in the APE and viewsheds does not follow the alignment of these trails in most locations. A review of historic plans and aerial photographs indicates that select segments near Picnic Ground No. 4 appear to follow the alignment of pathways that were either shown in the 1914 plan, or were installed within the potential extended period of significance through 1975. These segments appear to be contributing features to the GRHD and are discussed further under Section 5.4 Contributing Features Within the APE and Viewsheds.



*Figure 52. Example of unpaved paths through restored prairie, at Theodore Wirth Parkway and Golden Valley Road, facing west.*

### **5.2.5 VIEWS AND VISTAS IN THE APE AND VIEWSHEDS**

The Theodore Wirth Segment of the GRHD – inclusive of Sunset Hill, Valley View/Glenview Terrace Park, Theodore Wirth Parkway, and Theodore Wirth Park – was intentionally designed to capture scenic views afforded by the rolling topography. Historical photographs depict several vantage points where visitors would gather at the edges of bridle paths and atop high points of the golf course to view the extents of the park and city beyond (Figure 53). Additionally, the Chalet was sited on a hillside at the intersection of Plymouth Avenue and Theodore Wirth Parkway, with the alignment of these roads offering scenic views while approaching the Chalet. The southbound approach to Theodore Wirth Parkway at Golden Valley Road was routed to take advantage of the natural contours and scenic views of Theodore Wirth Park and the countryside beyond to the west. Wirth remarked about the picturesque views that this section of the parkway could offer by winding along the ridge (MBPC 1911:103; MBPC 1913:60). These views are limited by the dense woody vegetation that is currently present.



*Figure 53. Observing views from bridle path (location unspecified). Original caption states, “Taking a Look at the City. Glenwood Bridle-path” (MBPC 1913:60).*

The vista from Sunset Hill, located northeast of Theodore Wirth Park at the intersection of Theodore Wirth Parkway and 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, was long advocated by Theodore Wirth. However, his vision was never fully realized. Early MBPC annual reports indicate that both the land leading up to Sunset Hill and the western extent of Theodore Wirth Park was intended to be more expansive and allow for a greater linkage between these two resources (Figure 54). Wirth warned in several reports about the pressing need to reserve land in both locations from future development (Figures 55 and 56). However, delays in acquiring this land limited the physical connectivity and extent of views that were later available. While scenic views can still be appreciated from Sunset Hill, Theodore Wirth Park is not within its visual extent.

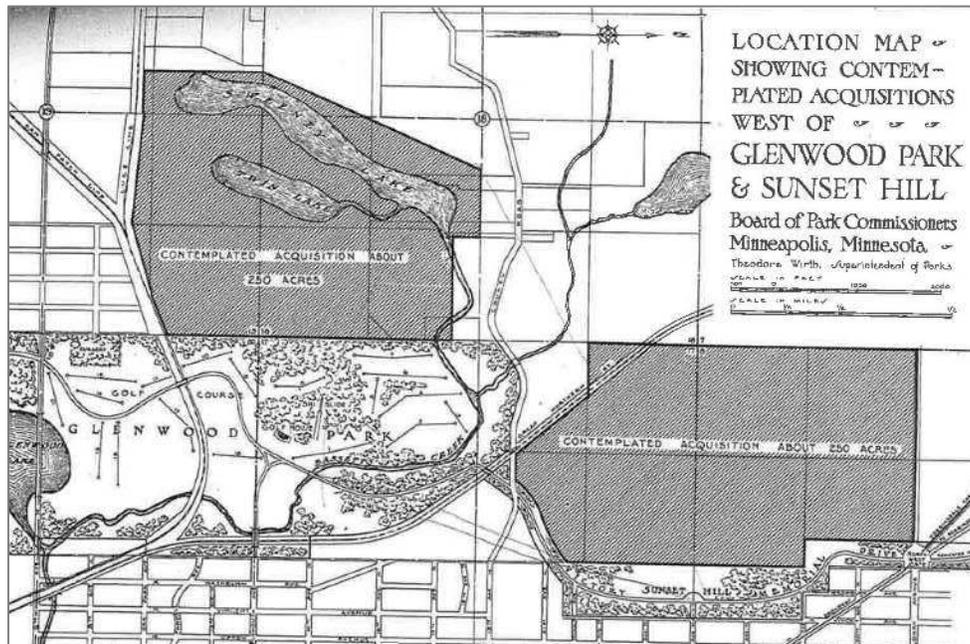
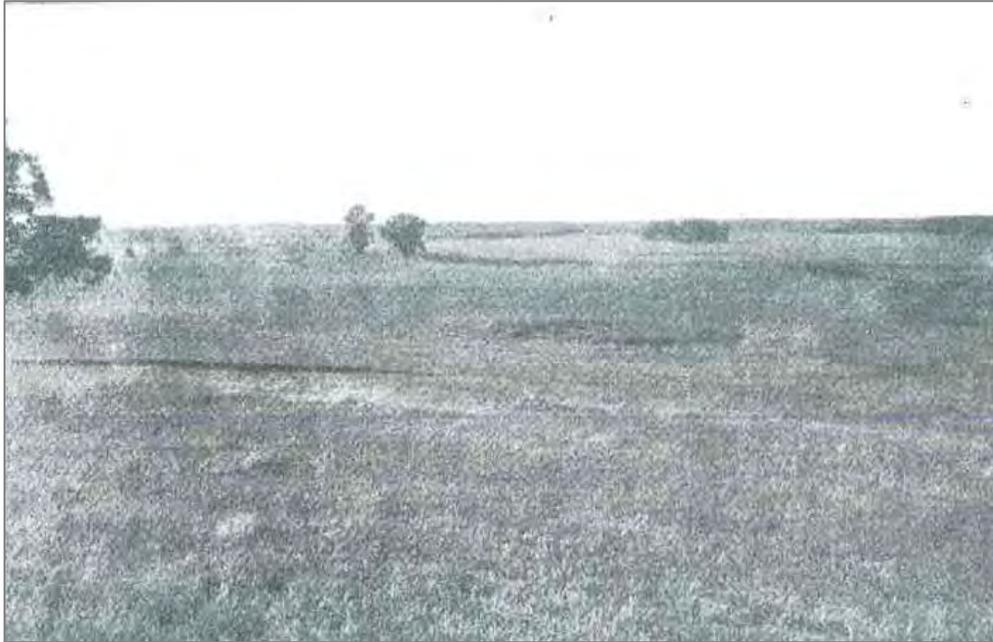


Figure 54. Location Map Showing Platted Acquisitions West of Glenwood Park & Sunset Hill, “contemplated acquisitions” labeled on map include about 250 acres west of the park and about 250 acres west of the parkway at Sunset Hill (MBPC 1923:40).



*Figure 55. Historic views from Sunset Hill. Original caption states, "The fine view over the open country obtained from Sunset Hill, Victory Memorial Drive, Glenwood-Camden Parkway and 26th Avenue North" (MBPC 1921:78).*



*Figure 56. Simulation of development impacts on views from Sunset Hill. Original caption states, "The above fine view will be destroyed, if a suburban residential district is permitted to occupy land adjacent to parkway" (MBPC 1921:79).*

Several prominent views are located throughout the APE. Hilltop locations within the golf course and winter recreation area afford views of the surrounding rolling topography, woodlands, and Bassett Creek valley. Views and vistas were incorporated into the historic design intent for Theodore Wirth Park. Similar expansive views can be appreciated from high points in the golf course today (Figures 57 and 58).

Expansive views of Wirth Lake can also be appreciated from Picnic Ground No. 4 and from the boardwalk along Highway 55 along the northern edge of the Lake (Figure 59).



*Figure 57. Expansive hilltop view in golf course, near the 11<sup>th</sup> green, facing northeast.*



*Figure 58. Expansive hilltop view at winter recreation area, north of the Chalet along 10<sup>th</sup> fairway, facing south.*



*Figure 59. View of Wirth Lake from Picnic Ground No. 4, facing west.*

### **5.2.6 VEGETATION IN THE APE AND VIEWSHEDS**

Soils created by glacial activity supported the establishment of several native plant communities covering the APE and viewsheds, including oak savanna and wet prairie communities (Figure 60). Oak savannas progressed into oak woodlands following European settlement and fire suppression in the area. Oak woodlands largely occupy the steep slopes east of the golf course and partially extend into the un-manicured grounds of the course. Interspersed wide-spreading oak canopies are remnants from the prior savanna community. Patches of second growth forest exist around the lagoons located north of the Luce Line tracks, and in the areas south of Highway 55 and east of Wirth Lake (MPRB 2015:6.7). Wet prairie areas still exist in lower elevations throughout the golf course. As indicated by interpretive signage installed by the MPRB, prairie restoration areas have recently been established at the far northeastern corner of the park, near the intersection of Golden Valley Road and Theodore Wirth Parkway, and near the JD Rivers' Children's Garden located north of Glenwood Avenue. MPRB staff have indicated that the woodland on the western edge of the Osseo Branch Line corridor near the proposed Golden Valley station contains high-quality, old growth oaks (Personal Communication, Bruce Chamberlain, Assistant Superintendent for Planning, MPRB, September 24, 2013). Chestnut trees have also been identified along the slope adjacent to the Osseo Branch Line (Personal Communication, Andrea Weber, Project Manager, MPRB, July 7, 2015).

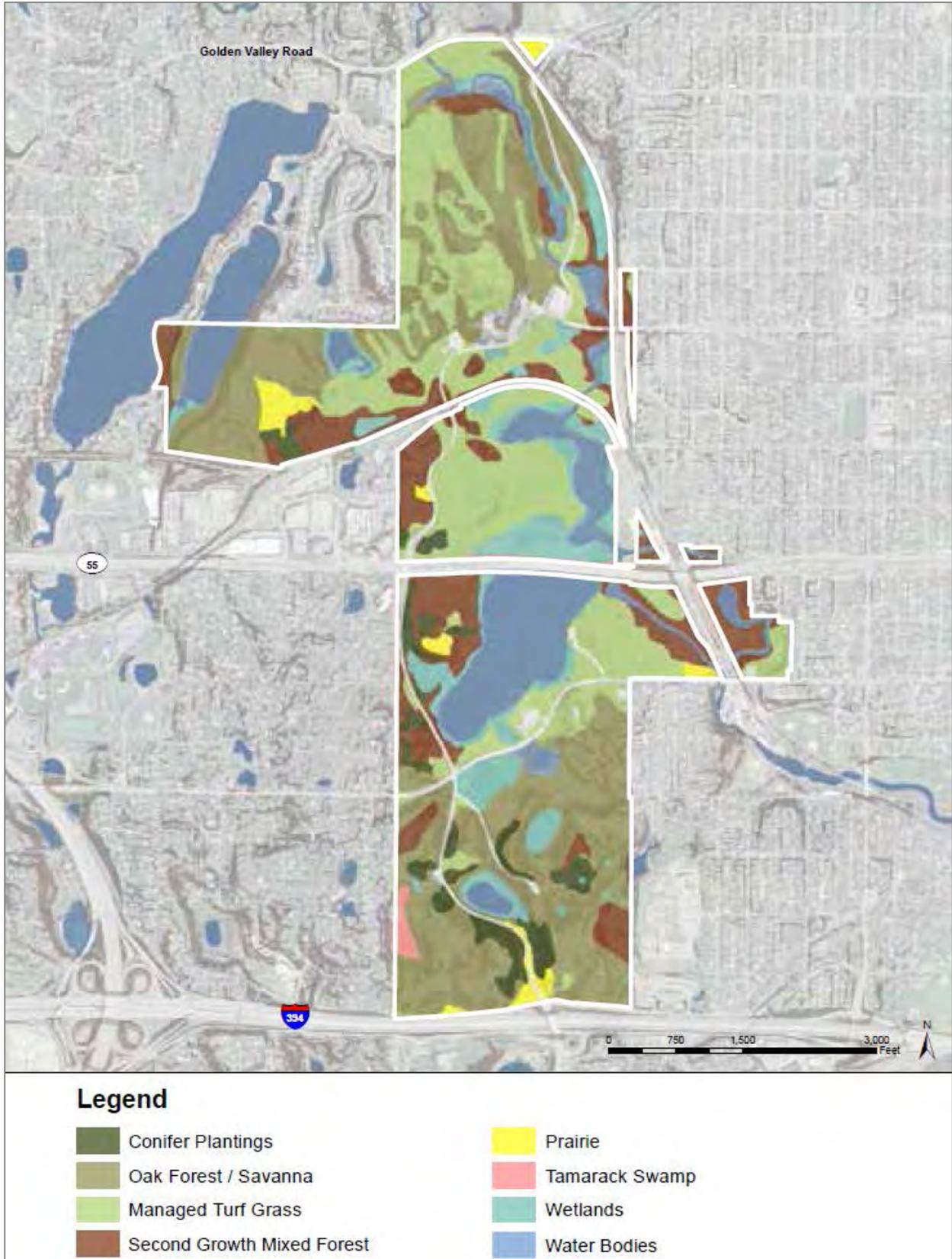


Figure 60. Vegetation Communities in Theodore Wirth Park (MPRB 2015:6.7)

While Wirth remarked positively about the wooded hills of the park, some of his earliest projects consisted of managing density for design and vegetative health reasons. Historical photographs of areas throughout the park generally depict less dense areas of natural vegetation than are present today (Figure 61).



*Figure 61. Historic view of golf course showing lower density in trees and sparse undergrowth (MHS 1936).*

Evergreen trees and shrubs are a signature design feature of Wirth's original plans. Several groupings exist along the parkway, surrounding the Chalet, throughout the golf course, at Picnic Ground No. 4, and interspersed within the wooded areas near Golden Valley Road. These groupings are composed of many different species and vary in height and density. Overall, the addition of these plantings helped to overcome what Wirth considered a lack of coniferous growth, provide greenery during the winter, create a buffer at park edges (some of these plantings are still evident along the north side of Theodore Wirth Parkway near Golden Valley Road), and create the Alpine design character he envisioned for the park. Over the decades, Wirth gradually transformed the native oak woodlands by adding thousands of evergreens across the entire extent of the park. For the most part, locations and species were not specified. However, the overall transformation is evident in historical plans and photographs (Figures 62-64; also see Figures 6 and 11).



*Figure 62. Young evergreen plantings taking root (unknown location in the park) (MHS 1923).*



*Figure 63. Evergreen plantings on the golf course southeast of the Chalet, facing west.*



*Figure 64. Evergreen plantings near the winter recreation area (Plymouth Avenue in background), facing southeast.*

In addition to evergreen plantings, other vegetative design features include the turf grass for the golf course and picnic areas, and over 5,000 shrubs and 1,000 deciduous tree plantings recorded by Wirth. While the golf course was originally laid out in the late 1910s, it was not sodded until 1935 as part of the Federal Relief work performed by the WPA. Two major losses of vegetation have been documented during the period of significance, including a major windstorm in 1925 impacting 3,200 trees and a prolonged drought in the 1930s impacting many of the oak trees (Pearson 2002). MPRB staff have indicated that WPA reports record large-scale plantings shortly afterwards in 1937, 1940, and 1941 that included trees, evergreens, and shrubs along the parkway and in the Theodore Wirth Golf Course. More recently, MPRB completed substantial replanting following vegetation loss from a tornado that occurred in 2011 (Personal Communication, Adam Arvidson, Interim Director of Strategic Planning, MPRB, July 1, 2015).

The JD Rivers' Children's Garden is a recent addition to the park, established in 1982, north of Glenwood Avenue. Prior use of the site commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Minneapolis Grain Exchange in 1981 set the stage for its development as a youth garden. Wheat and sunflowers were planted as part of the commemoration, which allowed a traditional harvesting demonstration and plant materials for youth programs. J. D. and Ada Rivers promoted the subsequent use of the site as a children's garden. The area contains garden plots for vegetables, herbs, fruit, and flowers that are assigned to youth participating in summer programs (MPRB n.d.). A restored prairie area is also located east of the garden plots and contains interpretive signage about the plant community.

While evergreen plantings are a predominant character-defining feature across the park, the only specific, known areas where historic, pre-1975 plants currently exist, based on previous studies and historical research conducted for this cultural landscape study, are located outside of the APE and viewsheds. Based on comparisons between current and historical aerial photographs, the vegetation in the APE and

viewsheds is currently far more dense and wide-spanning than depicted in historical aerial photographs through 1971 (ASCS 1937; ASCS 1971). Second growth forests and volunteer plants have overtaken much of the land around the lagoons, and the land between Theodore Wirth Parkway and the Osseo Branch Line tracks. The realignment of the intersection between Theodore Wirth Parkway and Plymouth Avenue, the expansion of the parking lot, and the addition of a turn-around in front of the Chalet have altered historic vegetation patterns around the Chalet (ASCS 1971). Deciduous trees at the center of Picnic Ground No. 4 appear consistent with vegetation present in historical photographs. However, on the whole, the vegetation in this area is currently denser and more wide-spread than historic patterns. This change appears to be created by both a larger quantity of plants, and larger sizes of matured plants. Evergreen species that are currently present are not depicted in historical aerial photographs through 1971 (ASCS 1937, 1971). MPRB staff have indicated that the white pines in Picnic Ground No. 4 were planted approximately during the late-1990s to 2000s (Personal Communication, Adam Arvidson, Interim Director of Strategic Planning, MPRB, July 1, 2015).

### **5.2.7 BUILDINGS IN THE APE AND VIEWSHEDS**

The Chalet is the only building located in the APE and viewsheds. It is the centerpiece of the golf course and one of the strongest character-defining features in the park reflecting Wirth's original design intent. The exterior of the building retains its original appearance as depicted in early perspective drawings (Figure 65; also see Figure 5). The two-story building is set into the base of a hill, faced in rough-cut Saint Cloud granite and dark-stained clapboards and wood panels, and has a projecting front section set below a broached gable roof with overhanging eaves on large stepped brackets. Gabled wings with overhanging eaves extend on the north and south sides (Pearson 2008h). The Chalet has been previously evaluated and identified as a contributing resource the GRHD (Roise et al. 2012, MPRB 2015).



*Figure 65. Theodore Wirth Chalet, facing west.*

### 5.2.8 STRUCTURES IN THE APE AND VIEWSHEDS

Since Bassett Creek and two railroad lines are located within the APE and viewsheds, a total of 15 vehicular and railroad bridges in Study Area are located within the APE. Table 3 below summarizes the bridges located within the APE and viewsheds; each is also discussed separately in the following subsections. Additionally, seven footbridges are located throughout within the APE and viewsheds, including six within Theodore Wirth Golf Course and one over the west/main channel of Bassett Creek south of Hwy 55 (see Table 4).

Table 3. Bridges Located within the APE and Viewsheds

Inventory No.	Bridge No.	Location	Contributing/ Non-Contributing (C/NC)	Individual NRHP- Eligibility
<b>ROAD-RELATED BRIDGES</b>				
HE-GVC-00049	6247	Plymouth Avenue over Osseo Branch Line	NC (based on 2013 re-evaluation)	Not Eligible
HE-GVC-00050	L9327	Theodore Wirth Parkway over Bassett Creek	C	Eligible
HE-GVC-00091	27678	Theodore Wirth Parkway over Osseo Branch Line Tracks near Golden Valley Road	NC	Not Previously Determined
HE-MPC-01907	27607	Glenwood Avenue over Bassett Creek, Osseo Branch Line and Luce Line	NC	Not Previously Determined
HE-MPC-5287	27237	Highway 55 over Bassett Creek, Osseo Branch Line and Luce Line	Not Previously Determined	Not Eligible
HE-GVC-00056	5908	Highway 55 over Bassett Creek	NC	Not Previously Determined
HE-MPC-5288	Not Available	Highway 55 over East Channel of Bassett Creek	Not Previously Determined	Not Eligible
Not Available	27591	Golden Valley Road over Osseo Branch Line	Not Previously Determined	Not Previously Determined
Not Available	Not Available	Golden Valley Road over Bassett Creek (culvert)	Not Previously Determined	Not Previously Determined
<b>RAILROAD-RELATED BRIDGES</b>				
HE-GVC-376	Not Available	Luce Line Trestle over Bassett Creek	Not Previously Determined	Not Eligible
HE-MPC-5285	Not Available	Luce Line Bridge over Bassett Creek	Not Previously Determined	Not Eligible

Inventory No.	Bridge No.	Location	Contributing/ Non-Contributing (C/NC)	Individual NRHP- Eligibility
HE-MPC-5286	1.7	Osseo Branch Line over east channel of Bassett Creek	Not Previously Determined	Not Eligible
Not Available	Not Available	Osseo Branch Line over Bassett Creek (culvert east of Chalet)	Not Previously Determined	Not Previously Determined
Not Available	1.4	Osseo Branch Line over East Branch of Bassett Creek (south of Highway 55)	Not Previously Determined	Not Previously Determined
Not Available	Not Available	Osseo Branch Line over Bassett Creek Lagoons (culvert north of Plymouth Ave)	Not Previously Determined	Not Previously Determined

#### 5.2.8.1 **Bridge No. 6247**

The Plymouth Avenue Bridge (Bridge 6247; HE-MPC-0049; non-contributing to the GRHD; not eligible for individual NRHP listing) was constructed in 1930 to replace a timber pile bridge required to extend Plymouth Avenue into the park (Figure 66). The six-span, reinforced-concrete slab bridge was substantially renovated in 2006 but still retains its distinctive arched concrete piers. The bridge appears similar at track level and from the Bassett Creek Trail as seen in historical photographs after its construction (Figure 67). Concrete embankments were added shortly afterwards in 1933 to prevent continued settling of the fill (MBPC 1934:66). However, from road grade the historical integrity of the bridge has been substantially compromised by the modern deck, railing, and light fixtures. Bridge 6247 was previously determined eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C for its design and identified as a contributing feature to the GRHD. However, this determination was later reversed after the 2006 renovation due to a loss of design integrity (MnDOT 2013). Bridge No. 6247 and the broader route of Plymouth Avenue are discussed further under Section 5.4 Contributing Features in the APE and Viewsheds.

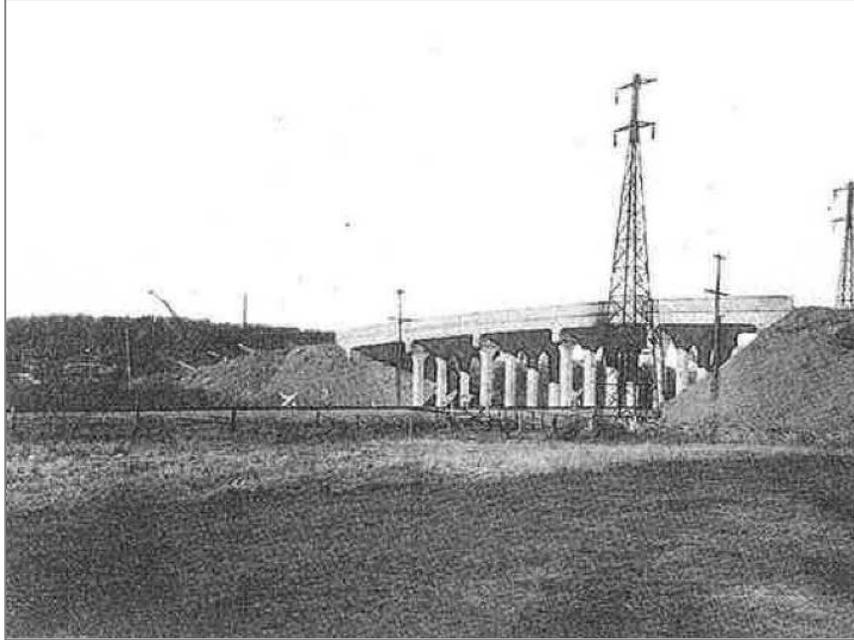


Figure 66. Historic view of Bridge 6247 after its construction in 1930 (MBPC 1931:100).



Figure 67. Current view of Bridge 6247 (Plymouth Avenue over Osseo Branch Line tracks and Bassett Creek), facing north.

### **5.2.8.2 Bridge No. L9327**

Bridge L9327 (HE-GVC-00050; contributing to the GRHD; individually NRHP-eligible) was constructed in 1940 with WPA labor using similar stone facing to the Chalet to replace an unsightly concrete and steel bridge crossing Bassett Creek. The arched, ridged-frame, concrete culvert bridge has an eighteen-foot span and is faced in Saint Cloud seam-faced granite. The barrel arch measures fifty feet wide. The abutments are monolithic and U-shaped. Stone piers with stone copings form the railings (Pearson 2008c) (Figure 68). The bridge carries two lanes of vehicular traffic bracketed with sidewalks on each side; however, only the west sidewalk is connected to the current trail system. Bridge L9327 has been determined eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C as an excellent example of an ornamental park bridge (Hess n.d.). This bridge has been previously evaluated and determined as a contributing resource to the GRHD (Roise et al. 2012, MPRB 2015). Cobblestone riprap was added to the abutments in 2014-15 as part of an erosion repair project (Personal Communication, Andrea Weber, Project Manager, MPRB, July 7, 2015).



*Figure 68. Bridge L9327 (Theodore Wirth Parkway over Bassett Creek), facing northwest.*

### **5.2.8.3 Bridge No. 27678**

Theodore Wirth Parkway is bridged at one other location within the APE near Golden Valley Road (Bridge 27678 [HE-GVC-00091; non-contributing to the GRHD; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined]) where it crosses over the Osseo Branch Line tracks. This four-span concrete, curved structure was built between 1988 and 1991 (Figure 69). The deck is edged by a metal picket railing. The straight wing walls are faced with granite and the two piers have concrete columns (Pearson 2008n). The contemporary bridge design does not reference historic features in the park (Roise et al. 2012, MPRB 2014).



*Figure 69. Bridge 27678, facing southeast.*

#### **5.2.8.4 Bridge No. 27607**

Bridge 27607 (HE-GVC-01907; non-contributing to the GRHD; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined) carries Glenwood Avenue over the Osseo Branch Line and Luce Line tracks (Figure 70). The five-span, pre-cast concrete channel-beam structure was built in 1982. Two concrete piers with cylindrical concrete columns support the concrete deck. The deck carries two lanes of vehicular traffic and sidewalks on both sides of the roadway. Low concrete parapets topped by modern metal poles form the railings (Atwood 2009c) (Roise et al. 2012, MPRB 2014).



*Figure 70. Bridge 27607, facing southeast.*

#### 5.2.8.5 **Bridge No. 5908**

Bridge 5908 (HE-GVC-00056; not contributing to the GRHD; individual NRHP-eligibility not previously determined), constructed in 1947 and altered in 1988, carries Highway 55 over Bassett Creek (Figure 71). It is composed of a two-span concrete box culvert with exterior cell walls that form the wing walls projecting into the lagoon. The culverts allow water flow between Wirth Lake to the west and Bassett Creek via the lagoon located to the south of this structure. An additional small, stone culvert serves as an outlet for Wirth Lake into the lagoon (Figure 72) (Roise et al. 2012, MPRB 2015).



*Figure 71. Current view of Bridge 5908, facing north.*



*Figure 72. Stone culvert between Wirth Lake and Bassett Creek, facing northwest.*

#### **5.2.8.6 Highway 55 over East Channel of Bassett Creek**

The Highway 55 Bridge over the East Channel of Bassett Creek (HE-MPC-5288; not previously determined as contributing or non-contributing to the GRHD; individually not eligible for NRHP listing), constructed ca. 1920, is only partially visible and has been covered by fill for Highway 55 construction. The visible portion on the north side consists of a rock face ashlar stone wall, corrugated circular metal pipe covered by a metal grate, and limestone wingwalls at each end of the ashlar wall. Portions of the ashlar wall are covered by a concrete parge coat. There is no visible culvert entering Bassett Creek on the south side (Figure 73).



*Figure 73. Highway 55 over East Channel of Bassett Creek (facing southeast).*

#### **5.2.8.7 Bridge No. 27237**

Bridge 27237 (HE-MPC-5287; non-contributing feature to the GRHD; individually not-eligible for NRHP listing), constructed in 1984, carries Highway 55 over the Osseo Branch Line and Luce Line railroad tracks. This continuous reinforced concrete slab bridge was constructed in 1984 as a replacement to an earlier structure during a major highway rebuilding (Figure 74).



*Figure 74. Bridge 27237, facing northeast.*

**5.2.8.8 Bridge No. 27591**

Bridge 27591 (not previously inventoried or evaluated) was recently constructed in 2001, replacing an earlier bridge carrying Golden Valley Road over the Osseo Branch Line railroad tracks (National Bridges 2015) (Figure 75). This bridge is a three-span, pre-stressed concrete stringer deck bridge.



*Figure 75. Bridge 27591, facing northeast.*

#### **5.2.8.9 Golden Valley Road over Bassett Creek**

A large, metal culvert (not previously inventoried or evaluated) carries Golden Valley Road over Bassett Creek. It is set into a low concrete face wall that is surrounded by stone riprap on the eastern and western banks of the river (Figure 76). This culvert appears to date to approximately 1957 based on historic aerial photographs (ASCS 1957).



*Figure 76. Culvert at Golden Valley Road, facing north.*

#### **5.2.8.10 Luce Line Bridges over Bassett Creek**

The Luce Line Trestle over Bassett Creek (HE-GVC-376; not previously determined as a contributing or non-contributing feature to the GRHD; not eligible for individual NRHP listing) is located in the golf course, south of Plymouth Avenue. During field survey, it was found that the wooden trestle bridge was substantially altered in 2013 (106 Group 2012b). The original five-span bridge now only has three spans. The superstructure has been replaced with a metal girder, two of the wooden bents have been removed and the other two have been reinforced with concrete, and the wooden abutments have been replaced with concrete (Figure 77). Cobblestone riprap was placed along the creek banks under the bridge in 2014-15 (Personal Communication, Andrea Weber, Project Manager, MPRB, July 7, 2015).



*Figure 77. Current view of Luce Line Trestle over Bassett Creek, facing east.*

The Luce Line Bridge over Bassett Creek (HE-MPC-5285; not previously determined as a contributing or non-contributing feature to the GRHD; not eligible for individual NRHP listing) is only a partially visible structure that has been covered with fill. This bridge carries the Luce Line over the main channel and east channel of Bassett Creek (Figure 78, foreground). Much of the original creek channel has been in filled. The Luce Line over Bassett Creek bridge currently appears to only consist of a corrugated metal culvert (replaced in 2009) that passes under the stone ballast on the east side of the tracks (Personal Communication, Andrea Weber, Project Manager, MPRB, July 7, 2015).



*Figure 78. Luce Line over Bassett Creek (foreground) and Bridge 1.7 (background), facing southeast.*

#### **5.2.8.11 Osseo Branch Line Bridges and Culverts**

Bridge 1.7 (HE-GVC-5286; not previously determined a contributing or non-contributing feature to the GRHD; not eligible for individual NRHP listing) is a four-span, 16-foot concrete slab bridge with reinforced concrete abutments and angled wing walls carrying the Osseo Branch Line over Bassett Creek. Two corrugated steel pipe culverts are also located under the bridge and secured by ballast fill (see Figure 78, background). It is also only partially visible and has been covered with fill for Bassett Creek.

Additionally, a concrete box culvert surrounded by a limestone wall (not previously inventoried or evaluated) is located west of the Osseo Branch Line tracks and north of Plymouth Avenue. It appears to carry the Osseo Branch Line and an adjacent trail to the west over the Bassett Creek Lagoons. This structure appears to date to approximately 1945 based on historical aerial photographs (Figure 79) (ASCS 1945).



*Figure 79. Concrete box and stone wall culvert north of Plymouth Avenue, facing east.*

North of Glenwood Avenue, Bridge 1.4 (not previously inventoried or evaluated) carries the Osseo Branch Line over the eastern branch of Bassett Creek (Figure 80). It is a double concrete culvert/pipe structure dating to 1943 (106 Group 2012c).



*Figure 80. Osseo Branch Line Bridge 1.4, facing east.*

A metal pipe culvert (not previously inventoried or evaluated) is located immediately north of Bridge 6247 at Plymouth Avenue that carries the Osseo Branch Line over Bassett Creek (Figure 81).



*Figure 81. Metal pipe culvert north of Plymouth Avenue, facing east.*

### 5.2.8.12 Footbridges

A total of seven footbridges are located in the APE and viewsheds, including six footbridges located throughout Theodore Wirth Golf Course and one footbridge located east of Picnic Ground No. 4. Table 4 summarizes these bridges according to their location, span type, and materials. None of these bridges have been previously inventoried or evaluated as contributing or non-contributing resources, or as individual resources. All of the creek bridges had cobblestone riprap placed under them in 2014-15 (Personal Communication, Andrea Weber, Project Manager, MPRB, July 7, 2015).

Table 4. Footbridges in the APE and Viewsheds

Location	Span Type (Arched/Flat)	Materials
12 <sup>th</sup> Fairway (NW; 1 of 2 in pair)	Flat	Wood, Metal & Concrete
12 <sup>th</sup> Fairway (SE; 2 of 2 in pair)	Arched	Wood
11 <sup>th</sup> Green	Arched	Wood
Chalet	Arched	Wood
1 <sup>st</sup> Fairway	Arched	Wood & Metal
2 <sup>nd</sup> Fairway	Flat	Wood, Metal & Concrete
East of Picnic Ground No. 4	Arched	Wood & Metal

These arched and flat single-span bridges carry pathways across Bassett Creek and Theodore Wirth Parkway. Three of the six bridges in the golf course are fully constructed of wood, while the others are constructed in combinations of wood, metal, and concrete (Figures 82 and 83). The bridge crossing Theodore Wirth Parkway south of the Chalet was recommended in Eckbo's 1971 plan, although it does not appear in aerial photographs until 1991 (Eckbo et. el. 1971:3.73-3.74) (Figure 84). A pair of footbridges is located at the far northwestern section of the golf course; the southeast bridge of this pair is wider, more contemporary, and appears to be added as a more suitable structure for golf carts. The footbridge located outside of the golf course at the east channel of Bassett Creek is constructed in a combination of wood and metal.



*Figure 82. Example of wood and metal footbridge at the east of Picnic Ground No. 4, facing southeast.*



*Figure 83. Example of concrete, wood and metal footbridge at Theodore Wirth Golf Course, facing northwest.*



*Figure 84. Footbridge over Theodore Wirth Parkway, facing southeast.*

Other structures present within the APE include a boat launch (currently closed and planned to be removed in the future), fishing dock, and boardwalk at Wirth Lake. The boat launch area is an asphalt apron, accessed through a parking lot at Picnic Ground No. 4, and is marked with metal posts, chains, and signage (Figure 85). The fishing dock is a moveable, T-shaped structure with a wood board deck and wood railings (Figure 86). The boardwalk at Wirth Lake is a linear, metal structure that runs parallel to Highway 55 and has two covered rest areas with benches (Figure 87). Wooden stairs have also been set into the slopes of the golf course at two locations (along the 12th fairway, and the 9th fairway adjacent to the footbridge over Theodore Wirth Parkway). Concrete and wooden stairs lead from the Chalet up the hillside to the winter recreation and maintenance areas (Figure 88).



*Figure 85. Boat launch area, facing west (the boat launch is currently closed).*



*Figure 86. View to fishing dock, facing south.*



*Figure 87. Boardwalk, facing east.*



*Figure 88. Concrete and wood stairs at Chalet, facing southwest.*

## 5.2.9 SITE FURNISHINGS AND SMALL SCALE ELEMENTS IN THE APE AND VIEWSHEDS

A variety of small-scale features are present within the APE and viewsheds, including fences and bollards, furnishings, memorials, winter recreation equipment, utilities, lighting, and signage. According to NRHP guidelines for counting features as contributing or non-contributing, some of these small-scale elements have not been previously evaluated as part of the draft NRHP nomination for the GRHD. However, many are discussed in the draft NRHP nomination. Where available, the status for the currently-documented period of significance (through 1942) is noted. The potential for contributing features between 1942 and 1975 is also discussed below.

### 5.2.9.1 Fences & Bollards

As a public park, most of the borders in Theodore Wirth Park are unfenced, except for golf course areas on the northern edge of the park. These areas are fenced off with a chain link fence from adjacent unpaved trails and adjacent residential development. A contemporary black metal picket fence runs along portions of Theodore Wirth Parkway north of Bridge L9327 (Figure 89). Wooden split rail fencing is also located along a portion of the parkway, roughly between the Chalet and Tool Building, and along the southern edge of Glenwood Avenue (Figure 90). Based on its materials and design, the fence appears to post-date 1975. MPRB staff have indicated that current fencing along Theodore Wirth Parkway was installed more recently, and outside of the potential extended period of significance (Personal Communication, Adam Arvidson, Interim Director of Strategic Planning, MPRB, July 1, 2015). These features have not been previously evaluated, but appear to post-date the potential extended period of significance to 1975 and therefore do not appear to be contributing features.



Figure 89. Metal fencing along Theodore Wirth Parkway at higher elevations north of Bridge L9327, facing southwest.



*Figure 90. Wooden split rail fencing along Theodore Wirth Parkway, south of the Chalet near the 18th green, facing southwest.*

### **5.2.9.2 Benches**

Numerous benches are located throughout the golf course and near the Chalet. Additional benches are located along pathways throughout the park. Three principal style variations exist: wood planks supported by metal posts; wood slats set into exposed-aggregate concrete supports; and wooden bench seats without back supports. While the draft NRHP nomination discusses benches, none of these benches have been previously evaluated or determined as contributing features to the GRHD.

The wooden plank and metal post benches are very basic and utilitarian in appearance, with some variations among the form and color of supports. Based on their materials and design, these benches appear to post-date 1975. This style exists throughout the golf course at the start of each hole, and along paved paths south of Highway 55. Several of these benches are also located in front of the Chalet (Figure 91). The benches include single- and double-seat forms. MPRB staff have indicated that the benches located in Theodore Wirth Park are typically added during construction projects, and that the front-nine portion of the golf course was recently rehabilitated in 1992 (Personal Communication, Adam Arvidson, Interim Director of Strategic Planning, MPRB, July 1, 2015). More substantial wooden slat and exposed aggregate concrete benches exist near the footbridge southeast of the Chalet and in Picnic Ground No. 4 (Figure 92). These also include single- and double-seat forms. This style was first introduced in the 1930s and is still in production (Pearson 2002:16). They can be found throughout the parkway system. Based on the color of the concrete and wood, the single-seat bench near the Chalet appears to be more recent while the double-seat bench facing Plymouth Avenue appears to be older and potentially pre-dates 1975. The single-seat form in Picnic Ground No. 4 appears to post-date 1975. The bench at Plymouth Avenue appears to be a contributing feature (see Figure 30A). The all-wooden benches with no back supports are notably more blocky and darker in color than other benches. Several of these benches are surrounded by bollard and chain fencing reflective of the 1970s period and appear to be contributing features (Figure

93). This bench style is only located in front of the Chalet; however, it mimics the set of picnic benches located east of Bridge L9327 (described below). These furnishings were not specified in the Eckbo Plan, although they appear similar to the fencing developed by InterDesign in the 1970s. MPRB staff are not aware of any benches that were designed by Alfred French (Personal Communication, Adam Arvidson, Interim Director of Strategic Planning, MPRB, July 1, 2015). These benches also have not been indicated as the work of InterDesign or Alfred French in previous studies (Roise et al. 2012, Pearson 2002, Mathis 2014).



*Figure 91. Example utilitarian bench style in front of the Chalet, typical throughout the golf course, facing northwest.*



Figure 92. Example wooden slat and exposed-aggregate concrete bench at Picnic Ground No. 4, facing north.



Figure 93. 1970s-style seating area with bollard-and-chain surround at the Chalet, facing south.

### **5.2.9.3 Picnic Tables & Other Furnishings**

Picnic tables are located in five areas within the APE: in front of the Chalet; east of Bridge L9327; at the archery range; at Picnic Ground No. 4; and near the JD Rivers' Children's Garden (see Figure 30A and 30B). Several design variations exist as described below. The WPA benches and 1970s-era wood benches appear to date within the extended period of significance, while the other variations appear to post-date

1975. None of the picnic tables have been previously evaluated and determined as contributing features to the GRHD.

Circular, green metal tables with four seats, and hexagonal tables with six seats, are located in front of the Chalet (Figures 94 and 95). The hexagonal set appears to be formed by composite materials giving the appearance of wood with metal supports. Based on their design and materials, these picnic tables appear to post-date 1975. MPRB staff have indicated these two styles are more recent and date to the reconstruction of the parking and re-alignment of Theodore Wirth Parkway, which occurred roughly between 1969 and 1979 (Personal Communication, Adam Arvidson, Interim Director of Strategic Planning, MPRB, July 1, 2015). The WPA constructed concrete picnic tables in Picnic Grounds No. 4 (Figure 96). These tables are stamped with “WPA 1939” on the seats. While the WPA picnic tables have not previously been determined as contributing resources to the GRHD, it appears that they have potential as contributing features as discussed further under Section 5.4 Contributing Features in the APE and Viewsheds. Rectangular wooden picnic tables with rounded metal supports are located east of Bridge L9327, at the archery range, and in Picnic Ground No. 4 and near JD Rivers’ Children’s Garden (Figure 97). This style dates to the 1970s (Pearson 2002:16). All-wooden, rectangular picnic tables are located west of the JD Rivers’ Children’s Garden and east of the archery range and appear to post-date 1975 (Figure 98). MPRB staff have indicated that this style is more recent, dating approximately to when the garden was developed between 1981 and 1982 (Personal Communication, Adam Arvidson, Interim Director of Strategic Planning, MPRB, July 1, 2015). MPRB staff have also indicated these benches are from inside of the Picnic Pavilion and are not intended as landscape furnishings (Personal Communication, Andrea Weber, Project Manager, MPRB, July 9, 2015). The all-wooden tables located east of Bridge L9327 are notably more blocky and darker in color than others in the APE (Figure 99). They are similar in style to the benches located southeast of the Chalet with a bollard-and-chain surround. These tables were not specified in the Eckbo Plan in concept or as a design typology, but appear to have been installed concurrently with improvements from the plan. MPRB staff are not aware of any picnic tables that were designed by Alfred French (Personal Communication, Adam Arvidson, Interim Director of Strategic Planning, MPRB, July 1, 2015). These picnic tables have also not been indicated as the work of InterDesign or Alfred French in previous studies (Roise et al. 2012, Pearson 2002, Mathis 2014).



*Figure 94. Circular, green metal picnic tables at Chalet, facing north.*



*Figure 95. Hexagonal, composite material picnic tables at Chalet, facing southwest.*



*Figure 96. WPA tables benches at Picnic Ground No. 4, facing southwest.*



*Figure 97. Example wooded picnic table with rounded metal supports, facing west.*



*Figure 98. Example all-wooden rectangular picnic tables (note these belong inside of the Picnic Pavilion and are not intended as a landscape furnishing), facing northeast.*



*Figure 99. 1970s-style picnic tables located east of Chalet, facing east (note similarities to benches at Chalet).*

Other furnishings in Picnic Ground No. 4 include trash cans, signage, grills, a water pump, and a WPA concrete sandbox. The WPA also built a low stone wall surrounding the water pump that is set within a hillside slope located east of the parking lot. Several metal grills and trash cans are located throughout the grounds that appear to post-date 1975 based on their materials and design. The JD Rivers' Children's

Garden features a variety of furnishings, including pergolas and other structures to support plant cultivation, numerous garden ornaments, and community art projects (Figure 100). The JD Rivers' Children's Garden was developed in 1982, and therefore, its features post-date 1975 and would not be contributing features to the GRHD.



*Figure 100. JD Rivers' Children's Garden, facing northeast.*

#### **5.2.9.4 Memorials**

The Finnish-American Monument (HE-GVC-00095; non-contributing but subject to review if period of significance is extended; individual NRHP eligibility not previously determined), constructed to commemorate the large Finnish community traditionally located in the Harrison Neighborhood, is located at the center of Picnic Ground No. 4 (Figure 101). The large, rectangular, granite slab monument, constructed in 1958, features a map of Finland on the west side and a map of Minnesota on the east side (Pearson 2008l). The Theodore Wirth Interpretive Statue Garden (HE-GVC-00098; non-contributing to the GRHD; not previously evaluated for NRHP eligibility) is a modern addition in front of the Chalet (Figure 102). The group of six, life-size statues was constructed in 2004. It features Theodore Wirth surrounded by children playing. Sculptor Bill Rains designed the statues using his grandchildren as models (Pearson 2008h).



*Figure 101. Finnish-American Monument, facing southeast.*



*Figure 102. Theodore Wirth Interpretive Statue Garden at the Chalet, facing southwest.*

The Finnish-American Monument has been previously evaluated and determined as non-contributing, which is likely due to its age that falls outside of the currently documented period of significance in the draft NRHP nomination ending in 1942 (Roise et al. 2012, MPRB 2014). Under the extended period of significance, it appears this feature has potential as a contributing feature as discussed further under Section 5.4 Contributing Features in the APE and Viewsheds.

### 5.2.9.5 Equipment & Utilities

Two large terminals and bullwheels for a tow rope are located on the 10<sup>th</sup> fairway of the 18-hole golf course north of the Chalet, supporting winter recreation activities (Figure 103). The drive bullwheel with the power source is located at the bottom of the hill and the return bullwheel is located at the top. This feature appears to post-date 1975 and therefore, appears to be non-contributing to the GRHD.



*Figure 103. Tow rope anchors at winter recreation area, facing northwest.*

Metal and exposed-aggregate concrete trash cans are located around the Chalet and throughout Picnic Ground No. 4 (Figures 104 and 105). Additionally, round wire-mesh trash cans are located adjacent to benches in front of the Chalet and throughout the golf course (Figure 106). MPRB staff have indicated that the trashcans present across Theodore Wirth Park are moveable and ubiquitous through the entire Minneapolis park system (Personal Communication, Adam Arvidson, Interim Director of Strategic Planning, MPRB, July 1, 2015). The metal trash cans do not readily appear to date within the extended period of significance (through 1975); however, the exposed-aggregate style on the Chalet patio does appear to date roughly within the 1970s based on its design and materials.

*Figure 104. Example of metal trash can at the Chalet, facing west.*



*Figure 105. Example of metal trash can at the Chalet, facing west.*



*Figure 106. Example of exposed aggregate trash can at the Chalet, facing northeast.*



*Figure 107. Example of wire mesh trash can on Theodore Wirth Golf Course, facing west.*

Various utility posts, structures, and boxes are located throughout the APE and viewsheds. These features appear to post-date 1975. A double circuit high voltage transmission line (HVTL) is the most prominent utility structure. The double circuit HVTL originates from the Aldrich Substation in Minneapolis and splits roughly at Farwell Avenue, where one circuit continues in a generally north-northwesterly direction paralleling the Osseo Branch Line to the Indiana Substation in Robbinsdale (HE-TRL-001; not previously determined a contributing or non-contributing feature to the GRHD; not eligible for individual NRHP listing), and the other circuit extends in a generally westerly direction roughly paralleling the Luce Line to the Bassett Creek Substation in Plymouth (not previously evaluated) (Figure 107) (Minnesota Geospatial Information Office 2008). A ca. 1950 Xcel Energy high voltage transmission line (HVTL) (HE-TRL-001; not previously determined a contributing or non-contributing feature to the GRHD; not eligible for individual NRHP listing) is the most prominent utility structure (Figure 107). The infrastructure is located on the west side of the Osseo Branch Line railroad corridor to Lowry Avenue, and the east side of freight rail corridor south of Lowry Avenue (FTA 2014:251). The HVTL is comprised of three transmission wires and support tower structures that are spaced at approximately 350 foot intervals. The towers are constructed of bolted angle iron and rest on concrete piers. They have four legs with angle iron lateral and cross braces. The towers are comprised of seven panels surmounted by gusset plates on all sides where the legs meet. Above the gusset plates is a steel truss. There is a ladder comprised of bolts on the northwest leg of the tower. The structures have two simple truss cross arms that support the wires using ceramic insulators. One cross arm is mounted just above the gusset plates and the other is near the top of the tower (Kellerhals et al. 2012:51; 106 Group 2012e).



*Figure 108. Visibility of Xcel Energy transmission line infrastructure at Theodore Wirth Golf Course, facing south.*

#### **5.2.9.6 Lighting**

Lighting was first implemented throughout Theodore Wirth Park and Theodore Wirth Parkway roughly between 1910 when the city began experimenting with gas lights and 1933 when the old standards were replaced with electric lights (Pearson 2002:16). The Eckbo plan called for a comprehensive guide and master plan to guide the selection of lighting fixtures and their placement (Eckbo et al. 1971:6.05). The transparent cube standard was designed by Alfred French of InterDesign (Pearson 2002:7.11). These standards were installed throughout the Grand Rounds as part of implementing the Eckbo Plan. Within the APE and viewsheds, these lighting standards are located in the parking lot of the Chalet (Figure 108). Additional large-scale, utilitarian standards consisting of floodlights mounted on wooden posts are located throughout the winter recreation area (Figure 109). Contemporary fixtures were mounted onto the Plymouth Avenue bridge after its remodel in 2006 (Bridge 6247) (Figure 110). Other contemporary fixtures were installed as replacements along the parkways and reflect earlier styles (Figure 111). These were installed throughout the parkway in the early-2000s as replacements to the cube standards, which were difficult to maintain (Roise et al. 2012). The new standards are characterized by a tall, fluted standard with a curved cross-arm supporting a bell-shaped cover.



*Figure 109. Example of 1970s post and cube light standard at the Chalet parking lot, facing west.*



*Figure 110. Example of large-scale, utilitarian lighting at winter recreation area, facing west.*



*Figure 111. Contemporary light standards on Bridge 6247, facing north.*



*Figure 112. Example of contemporary light standard reflective of 1930s ornamental style along Theodore Wirth Parkway, facing northwest.*

### **5.2.9.7 Signage**

Standard traffic signs, wayfinding and other signage are located throughout the APE and viewsheds (Figure 112). Wayfinding signage was introduced in the Grand Rounds as part of the Eckbo Plan, and later replaced by an updated signage program in 1999 when MPRB adopted the *Grand Rounds Scenic Byway Interpretive Master Plan* (Mathis 2014:68). While some of the original 1970s elements exist in Theodore Wirth Park, none are present within the APE and viewsheds. The signage program from 1999 included horizontal wood identification signs, wood-frame information kiosks, and painted metal information signposts at major intersections (Roise et al. 2012). Similar aesthetics were used in the kiosks and entrance signs to the parks and parkways between the 1970s-era design by Peter Seitz and the 1999 Scenic Byway Program. These similarities include the low, rustic, routed horizontal wood forms on the entrance signs, and the overall shape and scale of the kiosks. Changes appearing in the 1999 design include the addition of color along the roofline of pyramidal kiosks, and the addition of the address, interpretive panels, and maps. The text style of lettering also appears different between the 1970s version, which is taller, more angular and in all capital letters, and the 1999 version, which is shorter, more rounded, and includes lower-case lettering. None of the earlier 1970s signs were found in the APE and viewsheds during field survey.

Various other signage is located throughout the APE and viewsheds. An oblong metal sign marks the entrance to Picnic Grounds No. 4 (Figure 113). MPRB staff have indicated that this entrance sign appears to date to approximately the timeframe of WPA improvements (ca. 1938 to 1941) (Personal Communication, Adam Arvidson, Interim Director of Strategic Planning, MPRB, July 1, 2015). This sign appears to be contributing to the GRHD. Large-scale, wood signs mark the entrances to Theodore Wirth Park and the JD Rivers' Children's Garden on Glenwood Avenue; and Theodore Wirth Parkway at the intersection of Plymouth Avenue and the parkway (Figures 114 and 115). A large-scale, metal sign marks the entrance to the Theodore Wirth Golf Course at the Chalet (Figure 116). A small, metal sign is posted below a stop sign marking the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway at the intersection of Golden Valley Road and the parkway (Figure 117). Interpretive signage is also located at both prairie restoration areas within the APE (Figure 118). Aside from the signage at Picnic Ground No. 4, none of the other signage in the APE and viewsheds appears to date within the potential extended period of significance, and therefore, does not appear to be contributing features to the GRHD.



Figure 113. Example kiosk north of Bridge L9327 along Theodore Wirth Parkway and Bassett Creek, facing northwest.



Figure 114. Entrance Signage for Picnic Ground No. 4, facing northwest.



Figure 115. Entrance Signage for Theodore Wirth Park at Glenwood Avenue, facing west.



Figure 116. Entrance signage for JD Rivers' Children's Garden, facing northeast.





Figure 119. Example interpretive signage at prairie restoration area north of Glenwood Avenue, facing south.

### 5.2.10 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES IN THE APE AND VIEWSHEDS

One archaeological site is located within the APE representing the Germania Brewery (21-HE-0407; contributing status to the GRHD undetermined; individually NRHP-eligible) [REDACTED]. Theodore Wirth considered this feature undesirable for the park, and it was soon redeveloped once the land was acquired for park use (Wirth 2006:174). The Germania Brewery does not have a direct relationship to park planning and development, or the GRHD. It has not been previously evaluated or determined as a contributing resource to the GRHD. However, it has been previously determined eligible for the NRHP (Vermeer 2012).

## 5.3 Overall Integrity

The NPS guidelines define the integrity of cultural landscapes as the degree, on whole, to which the character-defining features that convey its historical significance are still present (NPS 2009:71). Since landscapes are dynamic spaces, change and evolution are integral to those resources. Therefore, integrity depends on the extent to which the general character of the historic period is evident, and the degree to which incompatible elements impact that character and are reversible. When the integrity of a specific feature may impact its status as a contributing feature, those conditions are specified in the sections below.

The integrity of the park, as a whole, has been previously documented by Hess, Roise and Company as part of the Grand Rounds NRHP draft nomination in 2012. Theodore Wirth Park and Theodore Wirth Parkway were found to retain their historic form and character. They were also found to retain good

integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association (Roise et al. 2012:7.52-7.53). Survey work for the BLRT project confirmed those conditions are still current, on whole.

## 5.4 Contributing Features in the APE and Viewsheds

Contributing and non-contributing features in Theodore Wirth Park have been previously inventoried as part of the draft NRHP nomination for the GRHD during the period of significance that is currently documented (1887-1942). The district is in the process of being evaluated by the MnSHPO and MPRB to determine if it possesses potential significance within the period of 1943 to the mid-1970s, related to improvements made in accordance with the 1971 Eckbo Plan. Character-defining features that date, or appear to date within the potential extended period of significance through 1975 are also discussed in this section. The draft NRHP nomination for the GRHD states that major resources are included in the count of contributing and noncontributing resources, and that the district also includes numerous minor features and small-scale elements (i.e., signage and lighting) that are not counted as separate resources but mentioned in the nomination (Roise et al. 2012:7.1). Minor features and small-scale elements are also addressed below as to whether they appear to contribute to the areas of significance for the GRHD. Additionally, this study documents larger landscape features, such as topography, views and vistas, and vegetation, that were not previously inventoried as part of the draft NRHP nomination but are character-defining features of the cultural landscape of Theodore Wirth Park.

In addition to the draft NRHP nomination, the 2015 Master Plan provides a cultural resources inventory that lists “potentially contributing” features that were built during the period of significance (1884-1942) and are “intact” from that period (MPRB 2015:5.5). The 2015 Master Plan also inventories post-1942 features. While these features are indicated as not “potentially contributing” in the 2015 Master Plan under the currently-documented period of significance, they are subject to review within the potential extended period of significance. The 2015 Master Plan states that an official determination of contributing features in Theodore Wirth Park had not been completed at the time the plan was published (MPRB 2014:5.5). This is likely due to the ongoing consultation between MnSHPO and MPRB as part of updating the draft NRHP nomination.

Most of the “potentially contributing” features inventoried in the 2015 Master Plan (13 out of 15) that are located within the APE and viewsheds are the same as those listed in the draft NRHP nomination. The 2015 Master Plan includes the following two additional features located within the APE and viewsheds: winter recreation area, an additional land use within the Theodore Wirth Golf Course; and Germania Brewery, an archaeological site. These features are discussed further in the sections below. Additionally, the 2015 Master Plan identifies Bridge 6247 at Plymouth Avenue as not “potentially contributing,” while the draft NRHP nomination lists it as contributing. This is due to a subsequent re-evaluation of Bridge 6247 in 2013, which is discussed further under Section 5.4.1.2.

### 5.4.1 CONTRIBUTING FEATURES IN THE APE AND VIEWSHEDS (PRE-1942 PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE)

The draft NRHP nomination lists a total of 30 contributing and non-contributing features to the GRHD within Theodore Wirth Park (Roise et al. 2012). Of these 30 total features, eight features identified as contributing are located within the APE and viewsheds for the BLRT project; however, one of these features (the Plymouth Avenue Bridge/Bridge 6247) has been subsequently evaluated and found to be non-contributing to the GRHD (see Section 5.4.1.2). These contributing resources reflect the currently documented period of significance (1887-1942), rather than the potential extended period through the mid-1970s that is under discussion. Table 5 below summarizes the contributing features identified in the draft NRHP nomination under the currently documented period of significance that are located within the APE and viewsheds (Figure 119A and 119B).

Table 5. Contributing Features from the Draft NRHP Nomination in the APE and Viewsheds (for the period of significance documented as 1884-1942)

Inventory No.	Major Feature
HE-GVC-00015	The Chalet
<i>HE-GVC-00049</i>	<i>Bridge No. 6247*</i>
HE-GVC-00050	Bridge No. L9327
HE-GVC-00081	Theodore Wirth Park
HE-GVC-00082	Theodore Wirth Parkway
HE-GVC-00089	Bassett Creek Lagoons
HE-GVC-00094	Wirth Lake
HE-GVC-00097	Theodore Wirth Golf Course**

\* The subsequent re-evaluation of this feature in 2013 is discussed in Section 5.4.1.2.

\*\*The winter recreation area inventoried in the 2015 Master Plan appears to be a supporting land use of the Theodore Wirth Golf Course, as discussed further in Section 5.4.3.

In addition to these eight features identified as contributing in the draft NRHP nomination, the 2015 Master Plan identifies two “potentially contributing” features that are located within the APE and viewsheds, and were not listed in the draft NRHP nomination (MPRB 2015:5.6-5.11). “Potentially contributing” features were identified as being built within the period of significance (through 1942) and still being intact. The 2015 Master Plan states that an official determination had not been completed at the time of publication (MPRB 2015:5.5).

The two additional features identified in the 2015 Master Plan as “potentially contributing” that are located within the APE and viewsheds include the winter recreation area land use and the Germania Brewery. The historical significance and integrity of these features were further documented to inform whether these features appear to be contributing features to the GRHD. Additionally, the 2015 Master Plan identifies the Plymouth Avenue Bridge (Bridge 6247) as non-contributing, which is contrary to the prior recommendation made in the draft NRHP nomination (MPRB 2015:5.8, Roise, et al. 2012). The subsequent re-evaluation of this feature in 2013 is discussed under Section 5.4.1.2.

The two railroad lines that cross through Theodore Wirth Park, the Luce Line and the Osseo Branch Line, as well as bridges associated with each line within the Study Area, are not addressed in the current draft NRHP nomination for the GRHD, but fall within the current period of significance for the GRHD (ending in 1942). The Luce Line (HE-GVC-055 [Golden Valley Segment] and HE-MPC-9800 [Minneapolis Segment]) and two associated bridges, Luce Line Trestle over Bassett Creek (HE-GVC-376) and Luce Line Bridge over Bassett Creek (HE-MPC-5285), have been previously determined not individually eligible for listing in the NRHP. However, neither the Luce Line nor the associated bridges are identified as either contributing or non-contributing in the draft NRHP nomination for the GRHD. Similarly, the Osseo Branch Line (HE-RRD-002) has been determined individually eligible for the NRHP, but was not identified as a contributing or non-contributing resource to GRHD in the draft NRHP nomination. One bridge associated with the Osseo Branch Line, Bridge 1.7 (HE-GVC-5286), has been previously determined to be non-contributing to the Osseo Branch Line and not individually eligible for listing in the NRHP; however, the bridge was also not identified as either a contributing or non-contributing resource to GRHD in the draft NRHP nomination. Both of these railroad lines and their associated bridges were constructed within the currently documented period of significance (1887-1942) for the GRHD. However, despite being constructed during this time period, neither railroad line, nor their associated bridges reflect the design intent of Theodore Wirth Park and are not related to the areas of significance for which the GRHD qualifies for listing in the NRHP. Therefore, the Luce Line and the Osseo Branch Line, along with the Luce Line Trestle over Bassett Creek, the Luce Line Bridge over Bassett Creek, and the Osseo Branch Line Bridge 1.7, appear to be non-contributing to the GRHD.

#### **5.4.1.1 Germania Brewery**

The Germania Brewery is identified as “potentially contributing” in the 2015 Master Plan. This feature was developed in 1887 prior to the acquisition of this portion of Theodore Wirth Park and was not intentionally incorporated into plans for the park or Grand Rounds system. It has been determined individually eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A as an industrial/recreation site associated with Germania Brewery and Criterion D for the information potential of the Germania Park, Gilbert Resort, and summer garden regarding the lifeways of Germanic peoples. However, it does not reflect the documented significance of the GRHD under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation, or Criterion C for Landscape Architecture (Vermeer 2012). Therefore, this feature appears to be non-contributing to the GRHD.

#### **5.4.1.2 Plymouth Avenue Bridge (Bridge 6247) / Plymouth Avenue**

Bridge 6247 carries Plymouth Avenue over the Osseo Branch Line and provides an eastern entrance to the park. It had been previously evaluated and determined to be a contributing feature to the GRHD (Roise et al. 2012). However, due to a substantial rehabilitation in 2006 that replaced the road deck and railings and added new light fixtures, the bridge retains poor historical integrity and was evaluated as part of MnDOT's Minnesota Phase 2 Local Historic Bridge Study in 2013 as not-individually eligible for NRHP-listing and non-contributing to the GRHD (Mead & Hunt, et al. 2015:A1).

The route of the Plymouth Avenue extension (roadway), which travels over the Plymouth Avenue Bridge, was first depicted in the *1914 General Plan for the Improvement of Glenwood Park* (MBPC 1915:94a). Theodore Wirth began advocating for the route in the MBPC Annual Report for 1916 as an integral component of the Grand Rounds system and a scenic approach to the Chalet (MBPC 1917:40). It is

featured consistently in subsequent historical plans for the park (MBPC 1917:41; MBPC 1918:38; MBPC 1921:75; MBPC 1927:96a). While the route would not receive final curbs and pavement until after the embankment for Bridge 6247 was stabilized in 1933, the route was in place several years prior to the construction of this bridge (MBPC 1922:71; MBPC 1934:66, Atwood 2009a).

The current alignment of Plymouth Avenue follows its historic alignment as depicted in historical plans and aerial photographs, except for its intersection with Theodore Wirth Parkway (ASCS 1937; ASCS 1971). The intersection was altered sometime between 1971 and 1979 (ASCS 1971; NETR 1979). However, the alteration was not depicted as part of the transportation recommendations in the Eckbo Plan (Eckbo et al. 1971:3.3-3.4; 3.76). The current roadway width measures between 35 feet and 50 feet (where a bus stop is located), which is not consistent with the parkway recommendations contained in the Eckbo Plan. Rose-chip sealed pavement is not visible on any portion of the roadway, as recommended by the Eckbo Plan for parkways within the Grand Rounds parkway system. The current alignment of this intersection extends Theodore Wirth Parkway south along the former alignment of Plymouth Avenue, and shifts the intersection of these roadways to the southeastern corner of the parking lot. As such, the length of Plymouth Avenue is shortened and the intersection is simplified from its historic Y-form with a center planting island to a basic T-form. This alteration somewhat compromises the integrity of design, workmanship and materials at the western end of the route. However, the route still retains its sense of direction and destination. Additionally, the 2006 rehabilitation of Bridge 6247 slightly compromises the integrity of feeling at the eastern end of the route. While the design of the above-deck elements are of a similar Classical Revival aesthetic as the original, the historic sense of the past is no longer conveyed by the bridge at road grade; the 2006 rehabilitation also slightly compromises the integrity of setting at the eastern end of the route since the bridge railings and contemporary lights no longer convey the full historic character of the physical environment at road grade. The wooded setting at Bridge 6247 depicted in historical aerial photographs and plans is still present today and contributes to the historic integrity of its setting at the eastern end (MBPC 1914:94a; MBPC 1917:41; MBPC 1927:96). The historic east-west orientation of Plymouth Avenue is maintained, as well as the historic north-south location of the alignment relative to the Chalet building. The historic function of Plymouth Avenue as an eastern approach to the Chalet is also maintained. Therefore, it retains good integrity of location and association.

Overall, although the Plymouth Avenue Bridge is not eligible for listing in the NRHP, either individually or as a contributing feature to the GRHD, Plymouth Avenue (roadway) retains sufficient integrity to convey its historical significance. While the integrity of the east and west connecting points of the route have been slightly compromised, the route, on whole, retains its sense of direction, destination, and overall setting as an eastern access route to Theodore Wirth Park, as well as its grading and views approaching the Chalet. Therefore, Plymouth Avenue appears to be a contributing feature to the GRHD (see Figure 119A).

#### **5.4.2 ADDITIONAL FEATURES IN THE APE AND VIEWSHEDS: 1943-1975**

This cultural landscape study also documented the following features within the APE and viewsheds based on their date of construction within the extended period of significance that is currently under evaluation, and their relationship to the areas of significance for which the GRHD is eligible for listing in

the NRHP: the Finnish-American Monument and features implemented in accordance with the Eckbo Plan. In addition, Bridge 5908 (HE-GVC-00056), which is currently identified as non-contributing in the draft NRHP nomination but falls within the extended period of significance, is also discussed. The overall presence of these features in relationship to Theodore Wirth Park and the GRHD, as a whole, and the integrity of the features were documented through research and field survey.

#### **5.4.2.1 Finnish-American Monument**

The Finnish-American Monument is currently indicated as non-contributing in the draft NRHP nomination due to its date of construction. This monument was constructed in 1958 at the center of Picnic Ground No. 4. It is similar in its commemorative nature, use of stone material, and ornamental value to other historical markers in the GRHD. Many of these historical markers are also recommended contributing resources to the historic district (Roise et al. 2012). The Finnish-American Monument maintains good integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It was constructed within the potential extended period of significance (assumed through 1975) that is currently under evaluation. Therefore, this monument appears to be contributing to the GRHD within the extended period of significance, under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture, for its ornamental value that is consistent with similar features across the historic district (see Figure 119B).

#### **5.4.2.2 Eckbo Plan and Related Features**

The Eckbo Plan focused on reinforcing the recreational qualities of the park and resolving transportation conflicts. The period of significance for the GRHD is currently documented as 1884 to 1942, although it is currently being evaluated to determine if it possesses significance within the period 1943 through the mid-1970s, reflecting the potential significance of improvements developed in accordance with the plan by Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams.

Circulation features implemented as a result of the Eckbo Plan appear to be contributing to the significance of the GRHD if this extended period is determined significant. Paved pedestrian and bicycle paths, and the pedestrian bridge over the parkway at the Chalet, were both recommended in the plan. The locations of the paths reflect the concept of a proposed “Bicycle Grand Rounds” stated in the plan. This pathway runs the entire length of the parkway that is located in the APE and viewsheds. The paved pathway west of Theodore Wirth Parkway retains good integrity of location, setting, association, and feeling. Integrity of design and materials is less clear since the intent of the plan was not design-focused. Overall, the paved pathway west of Theodore Wirth Parkway appears to convey the significance of the Eckbo Plan under Criterion A in Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation, and Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture for its association with Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams. Therefore, the paved pathway west of Theodore Wirth Parkway appears to be contributing, dependent on the final determination of the period of significance for the GRHD (see Figure 119A).

While the wooden footbridge at the Chalet is present at the location recommended in the Eckbo Plan, it does not appear in aerial photographs until 1991, which is outside of the period of significance under discussion. Therefore, the pedestrian bridge at the Chalet appears to be non-contributing to the GRHD.

The bicycle and pedestrian path parallel to the Osseo Branch Line tracks appears to be non-contributing to the GRHD. This path runs from Highway 55 to the picnic area located east of Bridge L9327. The location

of this path within railroad ROW, its discontinuous surfacing and lack of signage, and its at-grade intersection with the Luce Line tracks are not consistent with the intent of the Eckbo Plan to enhance recreational value and resolve transportation conflicts. Additionally, the plan depicted an underpass for the pedestrian and bicycle path at the Luce Line tracks that would alleviate the crossing conflict, which is not present. Historical aerial photographs between 1937 and 1979 show an old service road from Highway 55 to the Luce Line tracks existed roughly in the same alignment as the present-day trail; however, the service road did not cross the tracks (ASCS 1938; NETR 1979). The present day trail and crossing at the Luce Line tracks first appear in a 1991 aerial photograph (NETR 1991). The pathway does not appear to be implemented as a result of Eckbo Plan recommendations or any other historic plans for the Theodore Wirth Park within the extended period of significance through 1975. Therefore, the pathway adjacent to the Osseo Branch Line tracks on railroad ROW appears to be non-contributing to the GRHD.

Many of the small-scale features installed concurrently with circulation improvements recommended by the Eckbo Plan appear to be contributing. The cube-style lighting, designed by Alfred French to implement recommendations in the Eckbo Plan, appears to be contributing to the historic significance of the GRHD, if the Eckbo Plan improvements are determined to be significant (see Figure 119A). The blocky wood benches with the bollard-and-chain surrounds at the Chalet, and the picnic tables located east of the Chalet that exhibit a similar aesthetic, appear to date within the extended period of significance and support the continued recreational use of the park, as intended by the Eckbo Plan. Therefore, these features appear to have potential significance as improvements consistent with Eckbo Plan recommendations (see Figure 119A). These small-scale features support Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation as they enhance the overall function and use of the park. While these small-scale features do not maintain a strong or cohesive presence across Theodore Wirth Park, the aesthetic of light standards, picnic tables, and benches are unique and recognizable within the extended period of significance, and therefore appear to have significance under Criterion C. While the signage program developed by Peter Seitz appears to have historical significance, none of these features exist within the APE and viewsheds. Therefore, the signage present in the APE and viewsheds does not appear to be contributing to the GRHD.

#### **5.4.2.3 Bridge 5908**

Bridge 5908 is currently indicated as non-contributing in the draft NRHP nomination due to its date of construction. The bridge carries Highway 55 over Bassett Creek and was originally constructed in 1947, within the potential extended period of significance for the GRHD that is currently under discussion. However, the north end was rebuilt in 1987 (Pearson 2008q). In addition, its design and planning are not related to historic plans for park development and do not contribute to the areas of significance for the GRHD. Therefore, Bridge 5908 appears to be non-contributing to the GRHD.

#### **5.4.3 OTHER CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES IN THE APE AND VIEWSHEDS**

Additional information is provided on the winter recreation area land use, Picnic Ground No. 4 (including the WPA picnic tables and WPA-era entrance sign), paths south of Highway 55, and the exposed aggregate bench located along Plymouth Avenue below. These features have not been previously determined as contributing or non-contributing features to the GRHD (Roise et al. 2012, MPRB 2015).

These features have also not been previously inventoried as part of the statewide survey of historic properties on file at MnSHPO.

The winter recreation area land use is located within Theodore Wirth Golf Course. Theodore Wirth Golf Course has previously been determined as a contributing feature to the GRHD; however, the winter recreation area land use has not (Roise et al. 2012:137-138). The golf course has been used consistently throughout its history for winter recreation activities. Winter recreation is a historically significant land use within Theodore Wirth Golf Course that contributes to its entertainment/recreation value. However, winter recreation uses occur throughout the golf course and are not confined to a discrete area. Ski jumps were historically located on the 10<sup>th</sup> fairway and are currently non-extant; however, the 2015 Master Plan has indicated that below ground archaeological remains may exist (MPRB 2015:5.6). Since the presence of these remains has not been determined, and the location of other winter recreation activities is not precise, the winter recreation area land use currently appears to be a supporting land use within the Theodore Wirth Golf Course rather than a separate contributing or non-contributing feature of the GRHD (see Figure 119A).

Picnic Ground No. 4 was constructed by 1939 based on the WPA stamps in the concrete benches (see Figure 119B). While specific plans for the picnic area were not included in MBPC Annual Reports, the grounds exhibit the character-defining vegetation, topography, and views that relate to the original design intent for the park. When the land around Wirth Lake was acquired in 1907, Wirth described its condition as "the site of an old beer garden and resort of dubious character and reputation [that] had long been an eyesore and detriment to that section of the city" (Wirth 2006:174). Citizens had petitioned the MBPC to acquire the land, which was then developed into an attractive and popular picnic area according to Wirth. Its development as a scenic picnic area takes advantage of the natural topography and water features in the park. Picnic Ground No. 4 also has a clear relationship to adjacent picnic grounds south of Wirth Lake and south of Glenwood Avenue, and the Picnic Pavilion (located outside of Picnic Ground No. 4). The WPA constructed permanent concrete and metal post picnic tables that are set into the ground in Picnic Ground No. 4. These tables have a unique style that is not found in other areas of the park. Their quantity compared to other styles of picnic benches present in the area creates a strong presence. The stamps on the seats indicate these tables were constructed in 1939 by the WPA. These tables are notable evidence of the federal relief efforts that provided lasting utilities and recreational amenities throughout Theodore Wirth Park and the GRHD. Several other features are located in Picnic Ground No. 4 that appear to support the recreational use of the grounds, and are, or appear to be associated with the WPA: the oblong, metal entrance sign (see Figure 113); a cobblestone wall surrounding the water pump located east of the parking lot for Picnic Ground No. 4 constructed in 1940 by the WPA; and a concrete sandbox on one of the hilltops in Picnic Ground No. 4 constructed by the WPA.

While the design, materials, and workmanship of Picnic Ground No. 4 are not well-documented historically, it has good integrity of location, setting, feeling and association conveying the historic planning and development intent of Theodore Wirth Park. While the benches show signs of deterioration, they have good integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Therefore, it appears that Picnic Ground No. 4 and the WPA picnic tables are contributing features to the GRHD, under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development and

Entertainment/Recreation (see Figure 119B). Within the land use area of Picnic Ground No. 4, the entrance sign, cobblestone wall surrounding the water pump, and concrete sandbox also appear to be contributing under Criterion A in the areas of Community Development and Planning and Entertainment/Recreation as they support the use of Picnic Ground No. 4.

Select segments of paved pathways located in the APE and viewsheds appear to follow the alignment of pathways either shown in Wirth's 1914 plan and/or were present in historic aerial photographs during the potential extended period of significance through 1975. These segments are located east of Wirth Lake, within or near Picnic Ground No. 4 (see Figure 119B). These pathways appear to contribute to the historical significance of the GRHD under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation and Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture, since they reflect circulation routes in Wirth's 1914 plan and support the overall use and enjoyment of Wirth Lake and Picnic Ground No. 4.

Additionally, one of the exposed-aggregate style benches located along Plymouth Avenue appears to date within the potential extended period of significance. This double-seat bench is located on the south side of Plymouth Avenue just west of the Route 7 southbound bus stop (see Figure 119A). Based on the style of the bench and aging of the wood and concrete, this bench appears to pre-date 1975. Overall, this style of bench was implemented across the parkway system beginning in the 1930s and is still currently manufactured and installed by MPRB today. While many of examples of this style are located throughout Theodore Wirth Park, this individual bench located near the Route 7 southbound bus stop along Plymouth Avenue appears to have been installed at an earlier date. This bench appears to contribute to the historical significance of the GRHD under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation since it supports the overall use and enjoyment of the park, and under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture since it reflects a distinctive style of furnishings that was developed for the parkway system and consistently implemented throughout its history.

Other character-defining features identified during field survey and described in Section 5.2 Character Defining Features in the APE and Viewsheds appear to be non-contributing to the GRHD. These features either date to outside of the period of significance or do not contribute to the areas of significance that the GRHD is eligible under and, therefore, 106 Group concurs with the remaining recommendations under the draft NRHP nomination. However, the following two features within the APE and viewsheds have been individually inventoried and determined individually eligible for listing in the NRHP: Germania Brewery (21HE0407) and the Osseo Branch Line (HE-RRD-002).

Table 6 summarizes the additional features in the APE and viewsheds that appear to be contributing to the GRHD based on the historical research and field survey completed for this cultural landscape study. A total of seven additional features were identified as a result of this cultural landscape study.

Table 6. Additional Features in the APE and Viewsheds that Appear to be Contributing

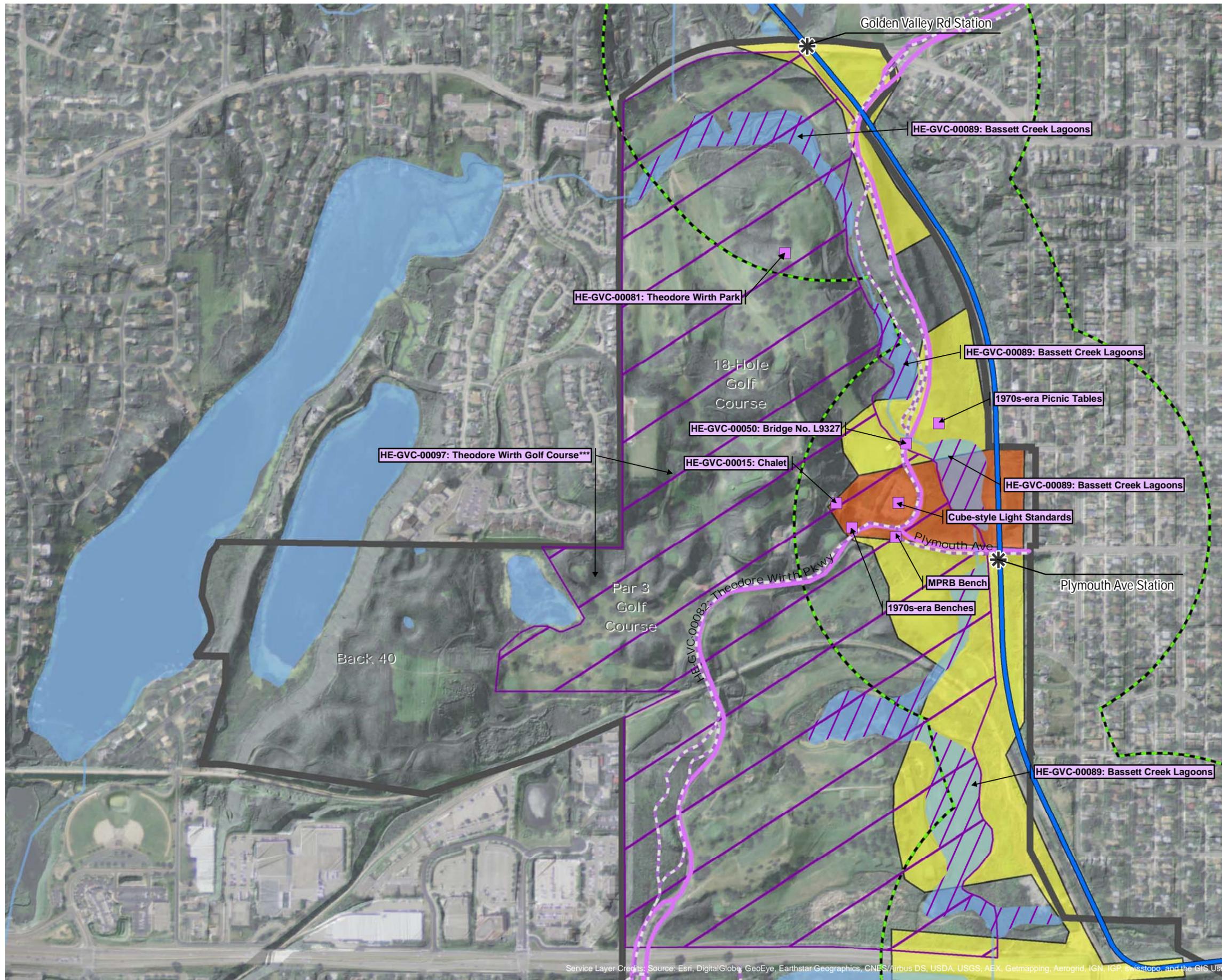
Inventory No.	Features within the APE and Viewsheds	Appear to be Contributing
HE-GVC-00095	Finnish-American Monument	Y
n/a	Picnic Ground No. 4 (including WPA Picnic Tables, WPA cobblestone wall, WPA concrete sandbox, and WPA-era entrance sign)	Y
n/a	Paved Pedestrian and Bicycle Path west of Theodore Wirth Parkway	Y
n/a	1970s-Era Small-Scale Features (cube style light standards; benches and picnic tables)	Y
n/a	Pathways south of Highway 55	Y
n/a	MPRB Exposed-Aggregate Bench (on Plymouth Avenue)	Y
n/a	Plymouth Avenue (route)	Y

Table 7 summarizes all of the features located within the APE and viewsheds that are currently determined, and appear to be contributing to the GRHD. In total, 14 features were identified as contributing features, that have either previously been determined as contributing or appear to be contributing based on the documentation completed for this cultural landscape study. The locations of these features are also depicted on Figures 119A and 119B.

Table 7. Summary: All Features in the APE and Viewsheds that are Determined or Appear to be Contributing

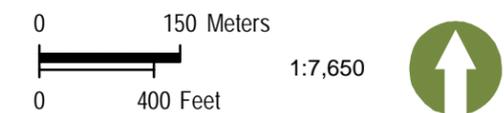
Inventory No.	Features within the APE and Viewsheds
HE-GVC-00015	The Chalet
HE-GVC-00050	Bridge No. L9327
HE-GVC-00081	Theodore Wirth Park
HE-GVC-00082	Theodore Wirth Parkway
HE-GVC-00089	Bassett Creek Lagoons
HE-GVC-00094	Wirth Lake
HE-GVC-00097	Theodore Wirth Golf Course
HE-GVC-00095	Finnish-American Monument
n/a	Picnic Ground No. 4 (including WPA Picnic Tables, WPA cobblestone wall, WPA concrete sandbox, and WPA-era entrance sign)
n/a	Paved Pedestrian and Bicycle Path west of Theodore Wirth Parkway
n/a	1970s-Era Small-Scale Features (cube style light standards; benches and picnic tables)
n/a	Pathways south of Highway 55
n/a	MPRB Exposed-Aggregate Bench (on Plymouth Avenue)
n/a	Plymouth Avenue (route)

Blue Line Extension LRT (BLRT)  
Theodore Wirth Regional Park  
Cultural Landscape Study  
Minneapolis and Golden Valley, Minnesota



- Proposed Alignment
  - Proposed Station
  - Architecture/History Area of Potential Effect
  - Study Area
  - Viewshed of Project
  - Chalet Viewshed of Project
- Contributing Features**
- Individual Feature Area within Theodore Wirth Park (See Label)\*
  - Feature Location (See Label)
  - Linear Feature (See Label)
  - Regional and Paved Trail\*\*

\* Individual feature areas do not include the full extent of Theodore Wirth Park.  
 \*\* Trails indicated may not constitute all park trails.  
 \*\*\* The area included on the current inventory form for the Theodore Wirth Golf Course includes the two golf courses and the Back 40. The area depicted here encompasses the approximate boundaries of only the two golf courses.

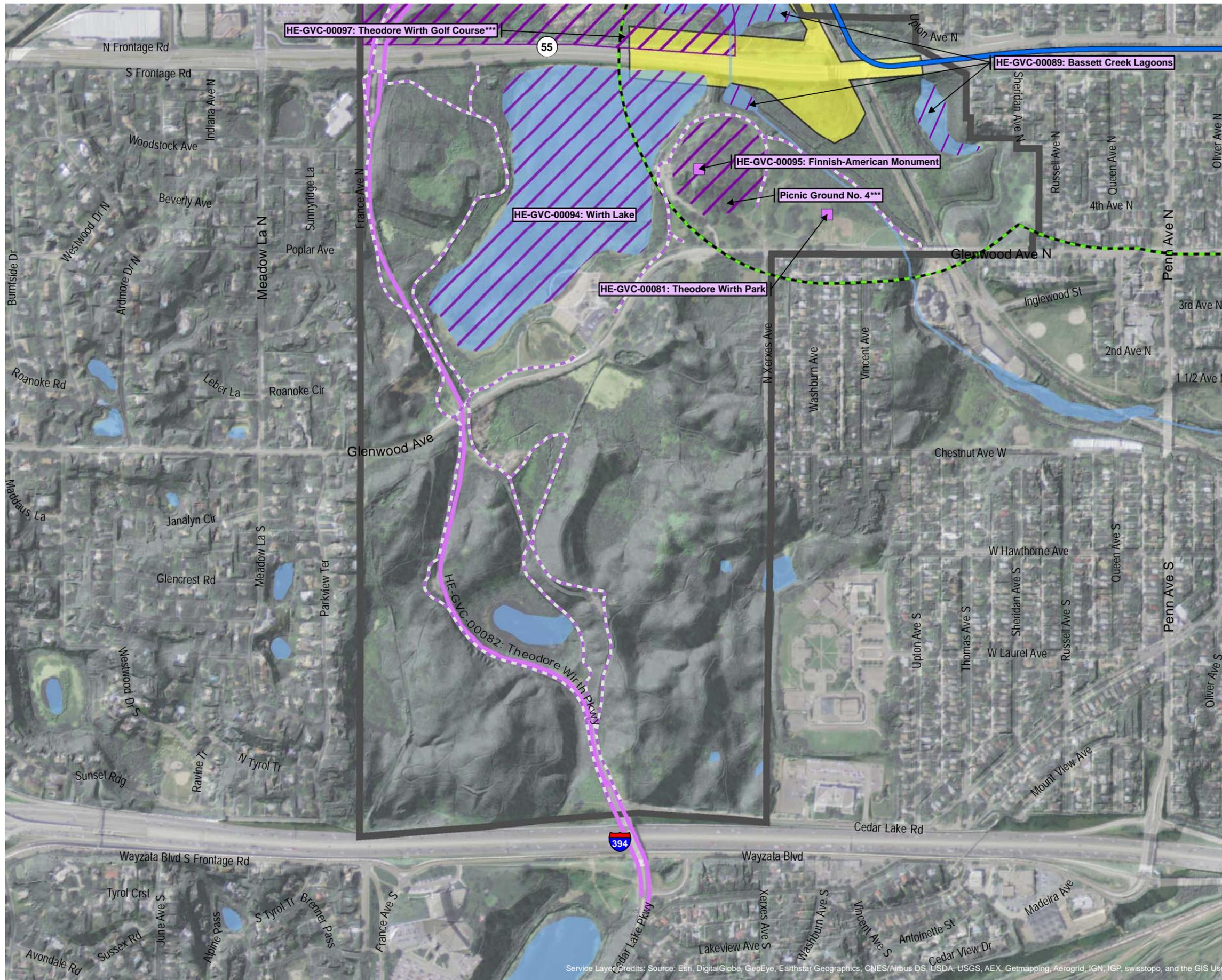


Contributing Features of Park within  
APE and Viewsheds - North Half

Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, Swisstopo, and the GIS User

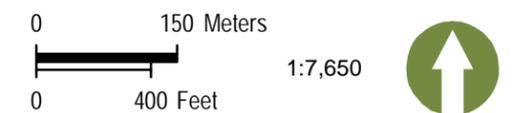
Figure 119A

Blue Line Extension LRT (BLRT)  
Theodore Wirth Regional Park  
Cultural Landscape Study  
Minneapolis and Golden Valley, Minnesota



- Proposed Alignment
- Architecture/History Area of Potential Effect
- Study Area
- Viewshed of Project
- Contributing Features**
- Individual Feature Area within Theodore Wirth Park (See Label)\*
- Feature Location (See Label)
- Linear Feature (See Label)
- Regional and Paved Trail\*\*

\* Individual feature areas do not include the full extent of Theodore Wirth Park.  
 \*\* Trails indicated may not constitute all park trails.  
 \*\*\*Includes  
 10-15 WPA Tables                      4-5 Other Tables  
 1 WPA-era Entrance Sign   2-3 Grills  
 1 Water Pump w/ WPA Cobblestone Wall  
 \*\*\*\*The area included on the current inventory form for the Theodore Wirth Golf Course includes the two golf courses and the Back 40. The area depicted here encompasses the approximate boundaries of only the two golf courses.



Contributing Features of Park within APE and Viewsheds - South Half

Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User

Figure 119B

## 6.0 SUMMARY

This cultural landscape study addresses Theodore Wirth Regional Park within the combined boundary from the draft NRHP nomination and the current park boundary (Study Area) and focuses more specifically on features located within the APE and viewsheds; it does not address other MPRB-owned properties or other historic resources that are located outside of the current Study Area. The specific purpose of this cultural landscape study includes the following:

- Provide a historic context for Theodore Wirth Park and document its developmental history to provide an understanding of the landscape features of the park (see Section 3).
- Identify viewsheds within Theodore Wirth Park where the BLRT project may be visible, including the four viewsheds specifically identified by the MPRB and MnDOT CRU, and identify any other viewsheds that may exist through field survey and comparing those areas to the current APE (see Section 4).
- Identify the physical characteristics of the landscape, including a broad overview across the entire park and specific details within the APE and viewsheds, using existing documents and field survey (see Sections 5.1 and 5.2).
- Identify contributing elements to the GRHD within the APE and viewsheds where properties may be affected by the proposed BLRT project (see Section 5.4).

Reconnaissance-level historical research, field survey, and documentation was completed for Theodore Wirth Park, as a whole, while more intensive-level historical research, field survey, and documentation was completed within the APE and viewshed areas. Field survey documented viewsheds to the proposed BLRT project from areas within Theodore Wirth Park, and identified the locations of character-defining and contributing resources.

Overall, the current APE was found to capture all of the viewsheds in the Study Area except for one area in Theodore Wirth Golf Course, located north of Highway 55, encompassing approximately 5.5 acres. A total of 14 features located within the APE and viewsheds have been previously determined or appear to be contributing features to the GRHD. These features were identified through research and field survey. As a result, these 14 features within the APE and viewsheds contribute, or appear to contribute to the historical significance of Theodore Wirth Park and the GRHD during the period of 1884 to 1975.

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APPENDIX A: ELIGIBILITY OF  
PROPERTIES WITHIN THEODORE  
WIRTH PARK IN MNSHPO INVENTORY  
(APRIL 2015)

Current Eligibility of Properties Located in Theodore Wirth Park within the MnSHPO Inventory

Feature (* Notes features in APE and Viewsheds)	Inventory No.	Draft NRHP Nomination Contributing/Non-Contributing Status (C/NC)	Individual NRHP Eligibility
Birch Pond I	21HE0342	Not Previously Determined	Not Previously Determined
Birch Pond II	21HE0343	Not Previously Determined	Not Previously Determined
Keegan/Schell Farmstead	21HE0405	Not Previously Determined	Not Previously Determined
Heckrich's Saloon	21HE0406	Not Previously Determined	Not Previously Determined
Germania Brewery*	21HE0407	Not Previously Determined ( <i>appears to be non-contributing to the GRHD</i> )	NRHP-Eligible
The Chalet*	HE-GVC-00015	C	Not Previously Determined
Bridge 6247 (Plymouth Ave. bridge)*	HE-GVC-00049	C ( <i>appears to be non-contributing based on 2013 re-evaluation</i> )	Not-Eligible
Bridge L9327 (WPA bridge)*	HE-GVC-00050	C	NRHP-Eligible
Bridge 5908*	HE-GVC-00056	NC ( <i>appears to be non-contributing to the GRHD within the potential extended period of significance</i> )	Not Previously Determined
Theodore Wirth Park*	HE-GVC-00081	C	Undetermined by SHPO
Theodore Wirth Parkway*	HE-GVC-00082	C	Not Previously Determined
Picnic Pavilion	HE-GVC-00083	C	Not Previously Determined
Par 3 Golf Course Clubhouse	HE-GVC-00085	NC	Not Previously Determined
Tool Building	HE-GVC-00086	C	Not Previously Determined
Par 3 Golf Course	HE-GVC-00087	NC	Not Previously Determined
Bassett Creek Lagoons*	HE-GVC-00089	C	Not Previously Determined

Feature (* Notes features in APE and Viewsheds)	Inventory No.	Draft NRHP Nomination Contributing/Non- Contributing Status (C/NC)	Individual NRHP Eligibility
Bridge 27678*	HE-GVC-00091	NC ( <i>appears to be non-contributing, outside of the potential extended period of significance</i> )	Not Previously Determined
Wirth Lake Beach House	HE-GVC-00092	NC	Not Previously Determined
Wirth Lake Beach	HE-GVC-00093	C	Not Previously Determined
Wirth Lake*	HE-GVC-00094	C	Not Previously Determined
Finnish-American Monument*	HE-GVC-00095	NC ( <i>appears to be contributing under potential extended period of significance</i> )	Not Previously Determined
Bridge 27677	HE-GVC-00096	NC	Not Previously Determined
Theodore Wirth Golf Course*	HE-GVC-00097	C	Not Previously Determined
Theo Wirth Interpretive Statue Garden*	HE-GVC-00098	NC ( <i>appears to be non-contributing, outside of the potential extended period of significance</i> )	Not Previously Determined
Loring Cascade	HE-GVC-00099	NC	Not Previously Determined
Glenwood Line Streetcar Shelter	HE-GVC-00100	C	Not Previously Determined
Luce Line (Golden Valley Segment)*	HE-GVC-055	Not Previously Determined ( <i>appears to be non-contributing to the GRHD</i> )	Not-Eligible
Luce Line Trestle over Bassett Creek*	HE-GVC-376	Not Previously Determined ( <i>appears to be non-contributing to the GRHD</i> )	Not-Eligible

Feature (* Notes features in APE and Viewsheds)	Inventory No.	Draft NRHP Nomination Contributing/Non- Contributing Status (C/NC)	Individual NRHP Eligibility
Birch Pond	HE-MPC-01898	C	Not Previously Determined
Martha E. Crone Visitors Shelter	HE-MPC-01899	NC	Not Previously Determined
Quaking Bog	HE-MPC-01906	C	Not Previously Determined
Bridge 27607*	HE-MPC-01907	NC ( <i>appears to be non-contributing, outside of the potential extended period of significance</i> )	Not Previously Determined
Victory Memorial Drive Boulder	HE-MPC-01910	C	Not Previously Determined
Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden	HE-MPC-05098	C	Not Previously Determined
Luce Line Bridge over Bassett Creek*	HE-MPC-5285	Not Previously Determined ( <i>appears to be non-contributing to the GRHD</i> )	Not-Eligible
Bridge 1.7*	HE-MPC-5286	Not Previously Determined ( <i>appears to be non-contributing to the GRHD</i> )	Not-Eligible
Bridge 27237*	HE-MPC-5287	Not Previously Determined ( <i>appears to be non-contributing, outside of the potential extended period of significance</i> )	Not-Eligible
Luce Line (Minneapolis Segment)*	HE-MPC-9800	Not Previously Determined ( <i>appears to be non-contributing to the GRHD</i> )	Not-Eligible

Feature (* Notes features in APE and Viewsheds)	Inventory No.	Draft NRHP Nomination Contributing/Non- Contributing Status (C/NC)	Individual NRHP Eligibility
Osseo Branch Line*	HE-RRD-002	Not Previously Determined ( <i>appears to be non- contributing to the GRHD</i> )	NRHP-Eligible
Xcel Energy Transmission Line*	HE-TRL-001	Not Previously Determined ( <i>appears to be non- contributing to the GRHD</i> )	Not-Eligible
Highway 55 over East Channel of Bassett Creek*	HE-MPC-5288	Not Previously Determined ( <i>appears to be non- contributing to the GRHD</i> )	Not-Eligible

## APPENDIX B: PROJECT PERSONNEL

# LIST OF PERSONNEL

**Principal-In-Charge**

Anne Ketz, M.A., RPA

**Project Manager**

Jennifer Bring, B.S.

**Principal Investigator**

Parisa Ford, M.S., AICP

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