

Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program

...a program of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)

Vacant Land Assessment for Urban Agriculture in North Minneapolis

Prepared in partnership with
Afro Eco

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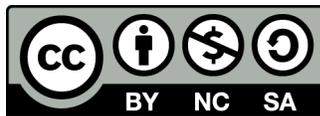
Center for Urban and
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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Executive Summary

Afro Eco exists to organize a new relationship between Pan African people and the land they inhabit. Food sovereignty in North Minneapolis is a more important issue now than ever. Struggles for food security matched with the overwhelming underutilization of land have led to the need for a study that informs organizers how to move forward in accessing the land for local food production.

In order to increase local food production in neighborhoods of North Minneapolis, vacant land owned by public entities was assessed for its suitability and feasibility for urban agriculture projects. Public entities include City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED), City of Minneapolis Public Works, Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA), Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), Hennepin County, Hennepin County Tax-Forfeited Land Program, and Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

The study began with an assessment of the public entities and their policies related to urban agriculture. Beginning with 20,635 parcels in North Minneapolis, parcels were eliminated from the suitability analysis for various reasons. A site analysis was performed on 620 parcels and 135 are highly recommended for urban agriculture projects. City of Minneapolis CPED owns the majority of those parcels. A significant amount of parcels are in Tax-Forfeiture, a process administered by Hennepin County.

Three key barriers exist in current public policy related to land access. These barriers hinder the utilization of publicly owned vacant lots for local food production. First, the importance to public entities of serving the public purpose prevents the use of lease agreements for market gardens. Second, development pressure in the urban core is seen in competition with urban agriculture and it prevents innovative partnerships. Third, the belief that urban agriculture is not the highest and best use of vacant land prevents significant growth in local food production.

Many dedicated individuals and groups are working hard to make progress toward a local, sustainable, empowering food system. It will not be an overnight success, rather a progression of successful projects that create a movement. This study highlights the suitability and feasibility of vacant lots in order to inform organizers in moving forward. This research will likely inform a North Minneapolis Urban Agriculture and Community Development Plan in the near future.

Purpose and Scope of Study

Afro Eco connects Pan African people to the land, to sustainable food production practices, to healthy living, to cultural knowledge, and to processes that improve the capacity to practice effective social, economic, cultural and ecologically sound cooperation. Gaining access to land for urban agriculture is an important aspect of Afro Eco's mission, particularly in neighborhoods of North Minneapolis.

In 2011, the Minneapolis City Council adopted the Urban Agriculture Policy Plan. As part of the plan, a consultant reviewed the City owned land inventory in order to make land well suited for urban agriculture available that was not desirable for development. The consultant, Community Attributes International, found Minneapolis had more than enough developable land, both public and privately owned, to accommodate forecasted population growth for at least the next twenty years. Both development and urban agriculture opportunities could be accommodated within this inventory. The study also found that there was a low demand and high surplus of land in much of North Minneapolis.



North Minneapolis comprises a very large portion of the city. There are thirteen primarily residential neighborhoods and two primarily industrial neighborhoods, show in the map to the left. There are over 20,000 parcels of land.

The foreclosure crisis hit this area hard. Since 2006, more than 6,000 foreclosures have occurred. While the rate of foreclosures has significantly decreased in recent years, it has contributed to the high surplus and low demand for land in these neighborhoods.

A tornado ripped through the heart of this area on May 22, 2011. Two people lost their lives and approximately 3,700 structures were damaged. Many structures have since been demolished, contributing to the significant amount of vacant lots.

Land ownership is constantly changing. Afro Eco and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota organized and funded research to inform an updated recommendation of the most feasible and suitable sites in North Minneapolis for gaining site control to pursue future urban agriculture opportunities. The focus of this assessment is on publicly owned vacant parcels. Public entities own a significant amount of the vacant parcels in this area. These entities are key partners in Afro Eco's mission of increasing local food production and connecting pan African people to the land.

Vacant buildings are also an important component to the discovery and development of new local food production, however that assessment is out of the scope of this study. Fortunately, the Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) worked with Carlson School of Management graduate students on a research project for the Northside Job Creation Team (NJCT) in the fall semester of 2013. Students looked at indoor urban agriculture as a job creation vehicle in North Minneapolis. UROC is also working with a research assistant on a Real Estate Mapping Project for the in spring 2014 that involves commercial and industrial uses.

Models of Urban Agriculture

In this report, urban agriculture is the term used to broadly describe local food production within the city limits. Community gardens are the most common form of urban agriculture found in the city currently. A list of existing community gardens can be accessed by contacting the staff at Gardening Matters, a local non-profit organization. Online listings can be found on their website as well as on the Minneapolis Homegrown website. Forty-five community gardens are listed in Gardening Matters' database for the North side, but only 25 gardening groups have given permission to share their location on the online map directory. There are likely more than 45 community gardens in North Minneapolis, but that is how many registered with Gardening Matters.

Community-supported agriculture (CSA) is another model of urban agriculture utilized in North Minneapolis. The McKinley Community CSA offers residents the opportunity to complete gardening work in exchange for food shares. Seasonal and weekly work share memberships are available. Those interested in this opportunity are encouraged to contact Dana Kuehn by email at dakue001@gmail.com or by phone at 612-588-7561.

Production-based plots, also called market gardens, are yet another model of urban agriculture. In this model, small enterprise urban farmers grow surpluses for their community to sell at farmers' markets and local restaurants. There are several great examples of this type of work in the Twin Cities. Cherry Flowers and Tim Page of Page & Flowers are farming on land owned by Sparc, a community development corporation, in St. Paul. They also repurposed a vacant gas station lot in North Minneapolis on Glenwood Avenue. Stone's Throw Urban Farm produces food on over 16 formerly vacant lots in South Minneapolis and the Frogtown neighborhood of St. Paul.

Methodology of Ownership Assessment

Retrieving accurately updated land ownership data was the first essential step in this research project. The data for this project was retrieved from the Metropolitan Council's MetroGIS regional parcel dataset. MetroGIS is a regional spatial data sharing collaboration between governments, academic institutions, non-profit organizations, and the business community of the Twin Cities metro area.

The dataset is assembled and distributed by the Metropolitan Council as a regional parcel dataset after each of the seven counties has submitted updated information. The dataset is updated quarterly and was last updated on October 23, 2013. Suspected errors within the data can be addressed by the contacting the person assigned for each individual county, which can be found on the MetroGIS website.

This dataset is available at no cost to governmental and academic organizations and interests. Individuals and organizations that do not qualify as such must contact the county or counties directly for access to the parcel data. There is a possibility that fees may be charged or a license may be required for access to the data. Because it is organized by parcel at a regional scale, it is a very large dataset. Each parcel is assigned a unique parcel identification number (PIN) along with information on location, ownership, taxation, acreage, legal descriptions, and land use. Some parcels contain additional information on homestead, landmarks, market value, special assessments, tax exempt status, school district, watershed district, open space, agriculture preserve status, and attributes of the structure located on the parcel.

The data was initially filtered to only Minneapolis parcels using Microsoft Excel. There are currently 129,438 parcels in the City of Minneapolis with 7,698 in vacancy status (vacant land, not vacant building). The data was further filtered to only parcels within North Minneapolis neighborhoods. This includes 20,635 parcels, of which 1,976 are designated as vacant. The majority of the vacant parcels in North Minneapolis, 1,044, are vacant residential parcels. There are 189 vacant industrial parcels, 84 vacant apartment parcels, and 659 vacant commercial parcels. However, there are practical limitations to this data. Nearly all of the land owned by Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board is designated as vacant commercial. Errors were also found in approximately fifteen lots owned by City of Minneapolis during the site assessment process, most likely due to very recent structure demolitions or errors in data entry. Also, filtering this data by owner is a time consuming task. There are many names for each public entity due to data entry inconsistencies. When filtering for Hennepin County, one must look for names such as, "County of Hennepin" and "Hennepin Co". The City of Minneapolis had nearly thirty unique values to include while filtering.

Minneapolis Land Ownership Summary

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Number of Parcels</i>
City of Minneapolis	129,438
All vacant parcels (includes park land)	7,698

North Minneapolis	20,635
All North Minneapolis Vacant	1,976
Vacant Commercial	659
Vacant Residential	1,044
Vacant Industrial	189
Vacant Apartment	84

Due to some data inconsistency in the designation as “vacant”, it was important to take time to compare this data to a recent aerial image of the city to prevent unnecessary site assessments. There are several sources for aerial photography of the City, also called orthoimagery.

MnGeo’s Geospatial Image Service provides versatile access to Minnesota air photos using a Web Map Service (WMS). This service allows the user to use this data without downloading and storing it on a hard drive. It is most often used in the ArcGIS software platform. However, the large dataset was found to be outdated in comparison to Google Earth aerial imagery.



Example of orthoimagery

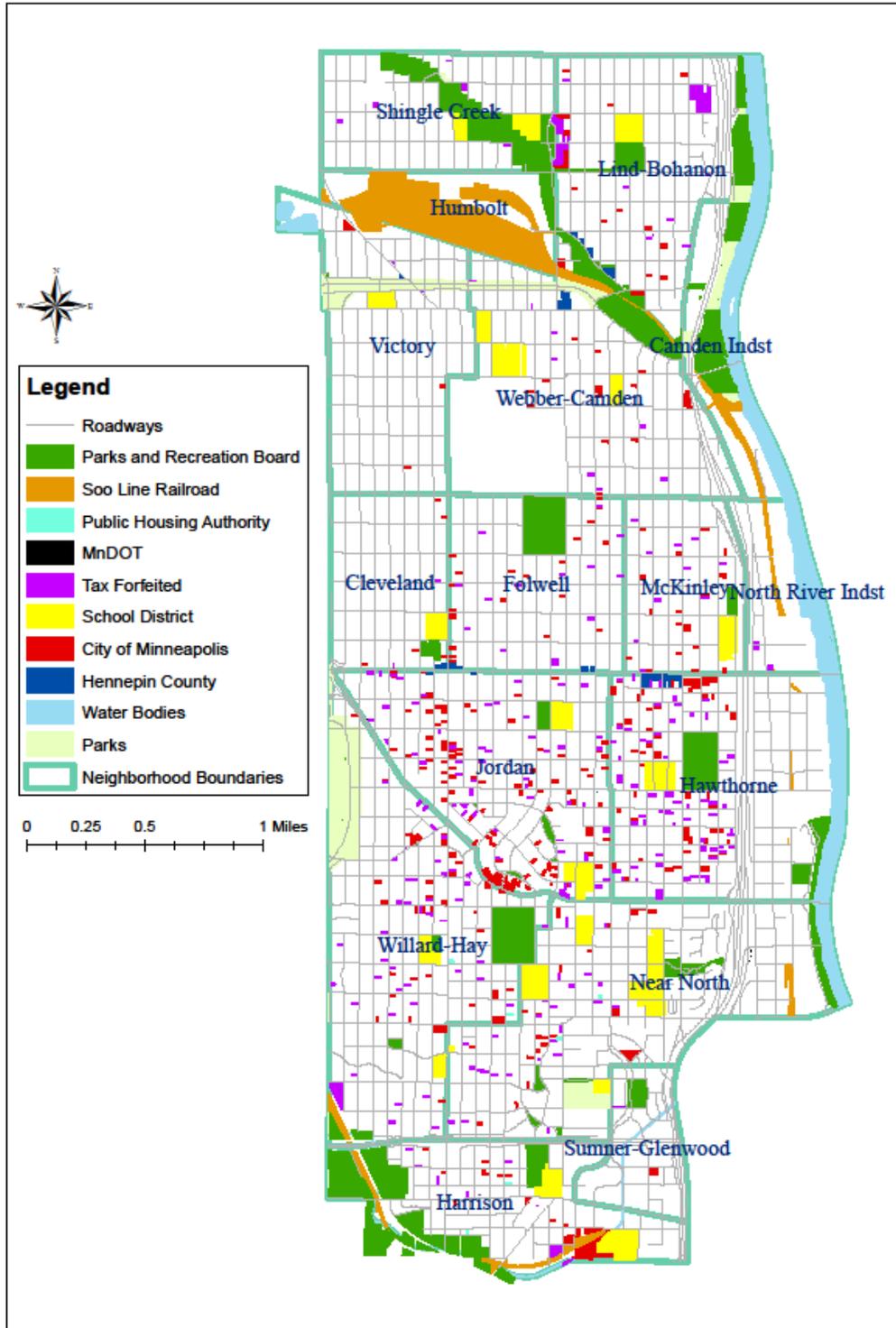
Other publicly owned parcels were excluded from the study if development is planned for that parcel. Some upcoming development projects include West Broadway Crescent, Capri Block redevelopment (proposals under review), Heritage Park, and Humboldt Greenway. Parcels along West Broadway Avenue were excluded from the site analysis stage due to development pressures and pollution concerns.

Site analysis was performed on 620 parcels owned by six public entities including City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED), Hennepin County, Hennepin County Tax-Forfeited Land, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA), and City of Minneapolis Public Works Department. Site analysis was not performed on parcels owned by Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB), Minneapolis Public Schools District (MPS), or the Miscellaneous parcels owned by the City of Minneapolis. The reasoning for that is highlighted in the next section.

Public Land Ownership

The following map was created for the Sustainable Food Lab that took place on November 22, 2013. While the Soo Line Railroad land is not public and will not be assessed in this study, it was included in the map because of its significant presence of ownership in the area. For the same reason, the Minneapolis Public School District and the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board parcels were included even though those sites were not individually analyzed. In the map, the two departments of City of Minneapolis, Public Works and Community Planning and Economic Development, were not mapped separately because there is only one parcel owned by Public Works that is a truly vacant parcel in the traditional sense. All of the other vacant parcels owned by Public Works are right of way (ROW). Since this map is very large and colorful, it was useful to simplify it as City of Minneapolis in general.

Vacant Parcels of Land Owned by Public Entities North Minneapolis, November 2013



Data Sources: City of Minneapolis Parcel Data, Minnesota Geospatial Image Service, Tiger Files (2013)
Map Created By Emily Goellner, Research Assistant with CURA and AfroEco

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The following table provides a summary of land ownership by all nine public entities.

Ownership Summary for North Minneapolis (occupied and vacant)

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Number of Parcels</i>
City of Minneapolis CPED	524
City of Minneapolis Public Works	271
Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA)	302
Other City Owned Parcels/Miscellaneous	14
Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB)	125
Minneapolis Public Schools/School District/School Board (MPS)	47
Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)	215
Hennepin County	42
Hennepin County Tax-Forfeited Land	325

City of Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED)

City of Minneapolis CPED owns the largest amount of vacant parcels in comparison with the other public entities studied in this report. CPED has over 200 employees working within four divisions: Long Range Planning, Housing Development and Policy, Economic Development and Policy, and Development Services. The following table gives a summary of CPED ownership. It is important to note that the City of Minneapolis Urban Agriculture Policy Plan was lead by CPED staff and a significant amount of work has been completed to implement its recommendations.

Ownership Summary for North Minneapolis

<i>Ownership Description</i>	<i>Number of Parcels</i>
City of Minneapolis CPED owned parcels	524
City of Minneapolis CPED owned parcels currently for sale	194
City of Minneapolis CPED owned parcels for existing gardens	17
City of Minneapolis CPED owned parcels for potential gardens	29
City of Minneapolis CPED Green Homes North (utilizes vacant lots)	23

The Community Garden Pilot Program was launched in March 2010 as an initiative to compliment the Urban Agriculture Policy Plan. Five leases were implemented in the first year and there are currently fourteen community garden leases throughout the city. Five are in North Minneapolis on Dupont Avenue, Golden Valley Road, 31st Avenue, Logan Avenue, and Emerson Avenue North. There are five lots currently available in North, which are listed on the Minneapolis Homegrown website:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/sustainability/homegrown/WCMS1P-102747>.

CPED gets several inquiries from individuals and groups seeking leases to grow produce for profit. Market gardens are not allowed under the conditions of the leases. The multiple inquiries suggest that there is a need for a different type of lease agreement for market gardens. It is possible to grow surpluses of food for the community while preserving the public purpose of the land in a manner similar to community gardens. However, it is a new model that would require adequate planning, monitoring, and evaluation.



Recently, twenty-nine additional parcels have been made available for community garden leases. The properties are within the path of the 2011 tornado. Minneapolis City Council Members wanted to fill empty lots in those neighborhoods with an interim use. The gardens will not be permanent and the plan is that someday they will be developed. While the parcels chosen for the Pilot program were not likely to be developed, the parcels chosen for this purpose are highly developable parcels. Some of the parcels are also currently for sale by CPED, so

there is a risk that a buyer could purchase the land while a community garden is establishing itself.

More information about the CPED community garden program can be found on the Homegrown Minneapolis website and the sites are listed and mapped in the appendix of this report. Jane Shey and Kaye Anderson at City of Minneapolis are the best points of contact for questions.

There are several vacant lots currently for sale by CPED. The vacant lot list is available on the CPED website and it is updated frequently. It was last updated on October 21, 2013. The lots are meant to be for housing. Prospective buyers are required to submit a design proposal that must be approved by Minneapolis City Council. The City has the right to refuse any and all proposals received.

Many lots owned by CPED are not yet for sale, but the Housing Development and Policy division of CPED aims to sell those lots in the future. Administrative work must be completed before those lots are added to the vacant lot list for purchase.

There is also a vacant lot list made for the Green Homes North program in which properties for sale are characterized as low, medium, or high priority. Those determinations inform the decision for sites chosen for Green Homes North. Lots designated as high priority are under a memo of understanding between the City of Minneapolis and the Hennepin County Tax Forfeited Land program. Lots designated with high priority will not be good lots to pursue for urban agriculture because the City and County are interested in selling those lots for development in the near future.

Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA)

The mission of the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA) is to promote and deliver quality, well-managed homes to a diverse low-income population. With partners, MPHA contributes to the well-being of the individuals, families and community they serve. While only 32 of the 302 parcels owned by MPHA are designated vacant, there may be underutilized land adjacent to structures for urban agriculture. Residents of MPHA buildings are able to garden where possible, pending approval from management and resident council. The MPHA does not have a specific policy for community gardening. The MPHA has potential to be a meaningful partner in making land available for urban agriculture.

City of Minneapolis Department of Public Works

Public Works employees design, build, operate and maintain the City's infrastructure including roads, bikeways, street lights, recyclables, solid waste, bridges, hydrants, water service connections, street signs, sanitary tunnels, manholes, storm pipes, and more. Public Works does not lease land, so it will be very difficult to acquire site control on their vacant parcels.

According to the data, there are 257 vacant parcels. After comparing that data to an aerial image, it was clear that only one parcel had potential for urban agriculture projects. Most of the vacant parcels are impervious.

<i>Land Use Designation according to MetroGIS Regional Parcel Dataset</i>	<i>Number of Parcels</i>
Commercial	7
Industrial	7
Vacant Land - Commercial	215
Vacant Land - Industrial	10
Vacant Land - Residential	32
Total Number of Parcels	271

The Public Works does not offer a lease agreement for community gardens, but are still involved with the CPED community gardening program by providing a lease agreement for fire hydrant usage.

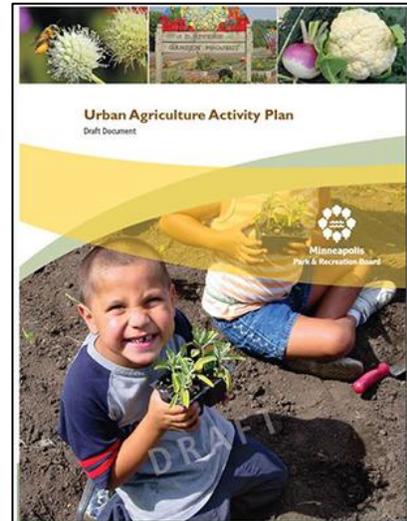
Seasonal permits for fire hydrant usage are available to neighborhood organizations from City of Minneapolis Water Works Permit Office. More information can be found by calling (612) 673-2865.

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB)

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) aims to permanently preserve, protect, maintain, improve, and enhance the City's natural resources, parkland, and recreational opportunities for current and future generations. MPRB provides places and recreation opportunities for all people to gather, celebrate, contemplate, and engage in activities that promote health, well being, community, and the environment. They own a significant amount of parcels throughout the city and support community gardening in two distinct ways. First, MPRB offers community gardening groups the opportunity to enter into a lease agreement on Tax-Forfeited land. MPRB can gain ownership of tax-forfeited properties at a nominal fee from the original government agency in ownership after forfeiture occurs, often Hennepin County or City of Minneapolis. The Common Ground Community Garden is an example of this type of agreement in the Shingle Creek neighborhood of North Minneapolis. If the site is abandoned by the community gardening group, MPRB will hold the land for one year before selling or

converting the site to another use. The sites chosen for this agreement do not need to be adjacent to existing park land. It is important to note that neighborhood approval of the community gardening site will be necessary when planning this type of agreement.

Second, MPRB supports urban agriculture activities by working to establish a policy and set of procedures to allow the presence of community gardens in neighborhood parks. A map of neighborhood and regional parks within North Minneapolis is included in the appendix of this report. The land use policy for regional parks in Minneapolis does not consider urban agriculture as the highest and best use of park land. More information on the policy can be found on the Metropolitan Council's website: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/Parks/Planning/Parks-Policy-Plan.aspx>. The policy, called the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan, is updated every four years.



These two strategies as well as additional strategies can be found in the draft of the MPRB Urban Agriculture Activity Plan. It is in public review and comment period between November 6, 2013 and December 31, 2013. It can be found online at: <http://www.minneapolisparcs.org/>

Tax-Forfeited Land

Parcels enter into Tax-Forfeiture when delinquent property taxes are not paid by the owner after the period of redemption expires. The Tax-Forfeited land program through Hennepin County aims to make tax-forfeited properties taxable and productive again through a series of procedures and policies. After a property enters into Tax-Forfeiture, a classification process takes place to determine whether the land will remain in public ownership or if it will be returned to private ownership. Once the land is classified as "Conservation" or "Non-Conservation", the parcels are sold to a government entity, sold to an adjacent owner in an auction, sold in public auction, or sold over the counter at Hennepin County Government Center. The next public auction will take place in Late February or Early March of 2014 and several properties will be listed from North Minneapolis. Currently, between 800 and 1,000 properties in Hennepin County are pending forfeiture. It is standard that around 75% of pending properties are redeemed by the current owner or another individual. In 2011, there were 255 foreclosures in the County and there were 214 in 2012. Because of the transitional nature of these parcels, they could be excellent candidates for urban agriculture projects. Of the 325 Tax-Forfeited parcels in North Minneapolis, 198 are vacant.

Since 1983, temporary garden rental permits have been available through the Hennepin County Taxpayer Services Department. As part of the agreement, gardeners agree that the permit is subject to revocation thirty days after the sale of the property to another owner.

Hennepin County

The mission of Hennepin County is to enhance the health, safety and quality of life of residents and communities in a respectful, efficient, and fiscally responsible way. There are vacant 34 parcels owned by Hennepin County. After an analysis using an aerial imagery, only 29 had potential for urban agriculture. The other 5 parcels were impervious.

<i>Land Use Designation</i>	<i>Number of Parcels</i>
Apartment	1
Commercial	6
Double Bungalow	1
Vacant Land - Apartment	1
Vacant Land - Commercial	17
Vacant Land - Industrial	2
Vacant Land - Residential	14
Number of Vacant Parcels	34
Total Number of Parcels	42

Most likely, Hennepin County purchased the vacant parcels for future development opportunities. Some of the regional parcel dataset information eludes to this. In the case that development is not planned, surplus land and buildings can be sold by sealed bids, requests for proposals, online auctions, and live auctions. There is no lease agreement option at this time. More information can be found on Hennepin County's website: <http://www.hennepin.us/residents/property/property-sales-auctions>

Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) owns 215 parcels in North Minneapolis. However, these parcels are not suitable for urban agriculture for several reasons. First, 206 of the 215 parcels are 0 acres in size. The remaining lots were impervious except for one, which was included in the site analysis process.

MnDOT's Office of Land Management is responsible for the right of way acquisition process. Right of way refers to a strip of land that is used as a transportation corridor. MnDOT sells surplus properties on a regular basis. All properties and structures are sold by sealed bid or auction.

Minneapolis School District (MPS)

Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) promises an inspirational education experience in a safe, welcoming environment for all diverse learners to acquire the tools and skills necessary to confidently engage in the global community. There are over 5,000 staff members serving 71 schools. There are 16 schools in North Minneapolis. A table with detailed parcel information is included in the appendix.

MPS does not own parcels that are completely vacant or underutilized. However, there is often space for gardening on the large lots owned by MPS. While MPS does not have a policy in place regarding community gardening, individual schools can develop a plan for their grounds that includes community gardening. The school and volunteers must develop a site plan and list of plants to be reviewed by the Facilities Department and the Department of Environmental Health and Safety. There is a great opportunity to involve students in the such projects. A great example of this type of partnership can be found at Lind Community Garden, which is located on the property of Jenny Lind Elementary School.

SITES OWNED BY MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN NORTH MINNEAPOLIS

- Bethune Community
- Cityview Community School
- Elizabeth Hall International
- Hamilton Elementary School (closed)
- Hmong International Academy at Jordan Park
- Jenny Lind Elementary School
- Loring Community School
- Lucey Craft Laney at Cleveland Park
- Minneapolis College Preparatory School
- Minneapolis Nutrition Center
- Minneapolis Public Schools Headquarters
- Nellie Stone Johnson
- North High School
- Olson Middle School
- Patrick Henry High School
- Riverbend Education Center
- Shingle Creek Elementary School (closed)
- Transportation Services
- Urban League Academy Elementary School
- W.I.S.E. Charter School

Private Land

There are various issues related to utilizing vacant public land for urban agriculture as opposed to privately owned land. First, public entities must ensure that land in their ownership is serving the public appropriately. It is possible for profit-making market gardens to serve the public in an appropriate way, but it is a new model and requires changes in standard policies and procedures for public entities. Also, pressure to increase population density and development is seen to be in competition with urban agriculture. However, the Minneapolis land inventory by Community Attributes International showed otherwise. Lastly, the belief that urban agriculture is not the highest and best use of land in an urban setting is a barrier to extensive local food production in this area. The public entities highlighted above have made efforts to accommodate the desire for increased food production, but changes to these traditional policies take extensive time and effort.

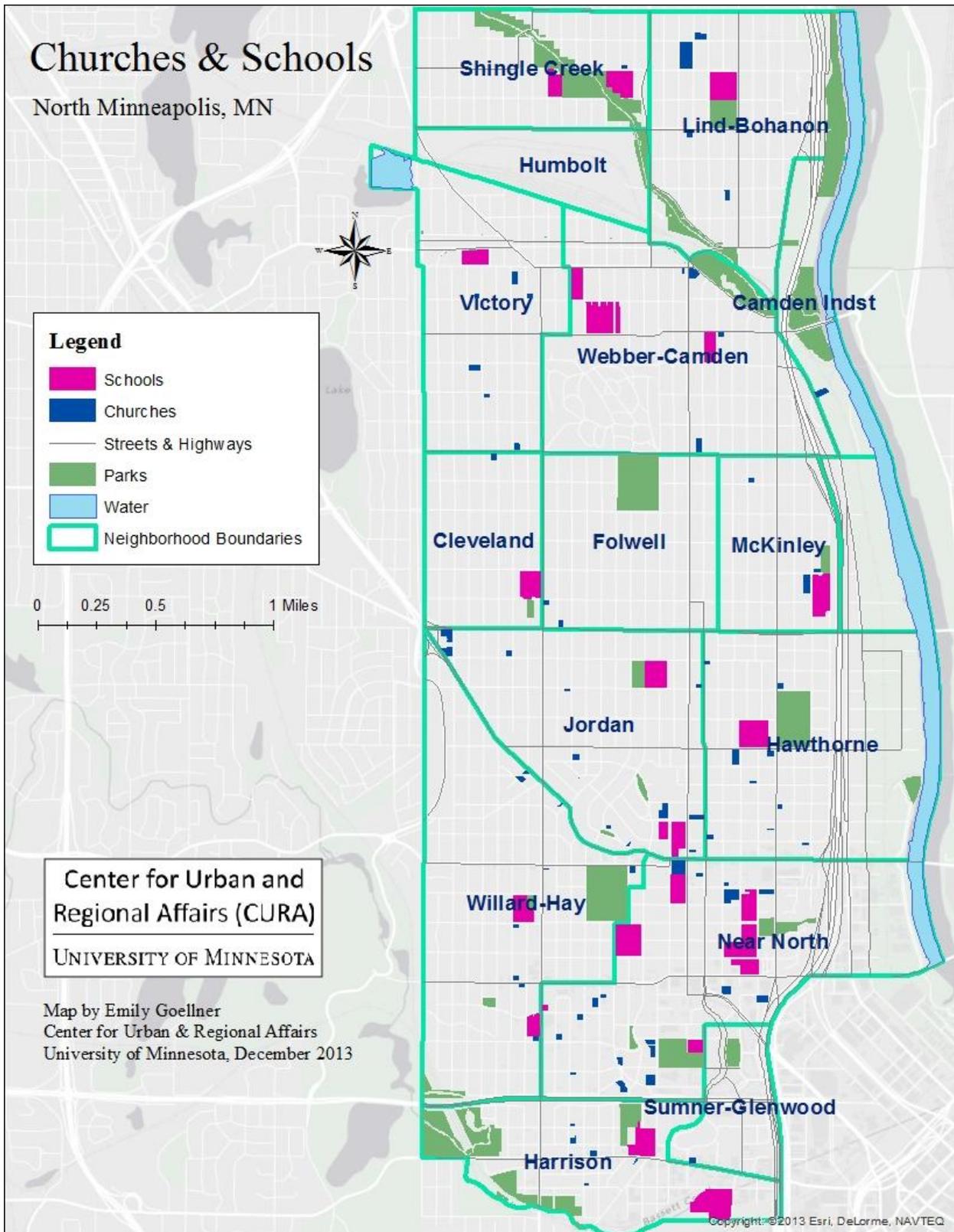


Neighbors can contact the owner of a vacant parcel by researching the Property Information on Hennepin County’s website. With approval from the neighborhood residents, a garden could be established.

Churches and places of worship are places where community comes together for a common purpose. Many community gardens exist on these types of properties.

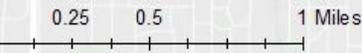
Churches & Schools

North Minneapolis, MN



Legend

- Schools
- Churches
- Streets & Highways
- Parks
- Water
- Neighborhood Boundaries



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Map by Emily Goellner
Center for Urban & Regional Affairs
University of Minnesota, December 2013

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Methodology of Site Analysis

After filtering out parcels from the study that were impervious, not actually vacant, or slated for upcoming development, 620 parcels were analyzed. Some parcels were not designated as vacant in the data but were included because there was suspicion that the lots were truly vacant. Because of limited time for the study, land owned by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and Minneapolis Public Schools was not analyzed on a site-by-site basis. Only one site owned by City of Minneapolis Public Works was analyzed. Of the 620 lots analyzed, 31 are owned by Hennepin County, 18 are owned by MPHA, and 20 are owned by MnDOT. Most of the 621 parcels analyzed are owned by CPED or within the Tax-Forfeiture land program, with 380 and 171 analyzed respectively.

When analyzing each site, six key factors were addressed. The table below describes the factors used in the analysis with the identifiers used for each factor.

Factor in Site Analysis	Explanation of Factor	Identifiers
Sunlight	Great sunlight is preferred. Those with okay and poor sunlight were only given a high suitability ranking if several other factors were excellent.	Great, Good, Okay, Poor
Proximity to Fire Hydrant	Fire Hydrants on site are preferred. Those with a hydrant across the street can still be rated with high suitability.	Across Street, On Same Side of Street, On Site
Lot size	Sites smaller than 15 feet in width were not considered.	Too Small, Small, Adequate
Slope	Sites with a severe slope that were also too small were not favored in the suitability ranking.	Too Sloped, Adequate
Corner Lots	Corner lots are preferred because access is better and disturbance to immediate neighbors is mitigated. Mid-block lots were still eligible for a high suitability ranking.	Corner, Non-Corner
Proximity to Other Vacant Publicly Owned Lots	A conglomeration of lots was preferred so that more food production can occur. Conglomerated lots with okay sun were still eligible for a high suitability rating.	Conglomeration, Single

As shown in the map on page 16, lots were analyzed in every residential neighborhood, with the majority found in the Jordan and Hawthorne neighborhoods.

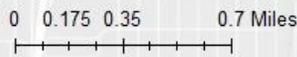
Site Assessments Completed for Study

North Minneapolis, MN
Fall 2013



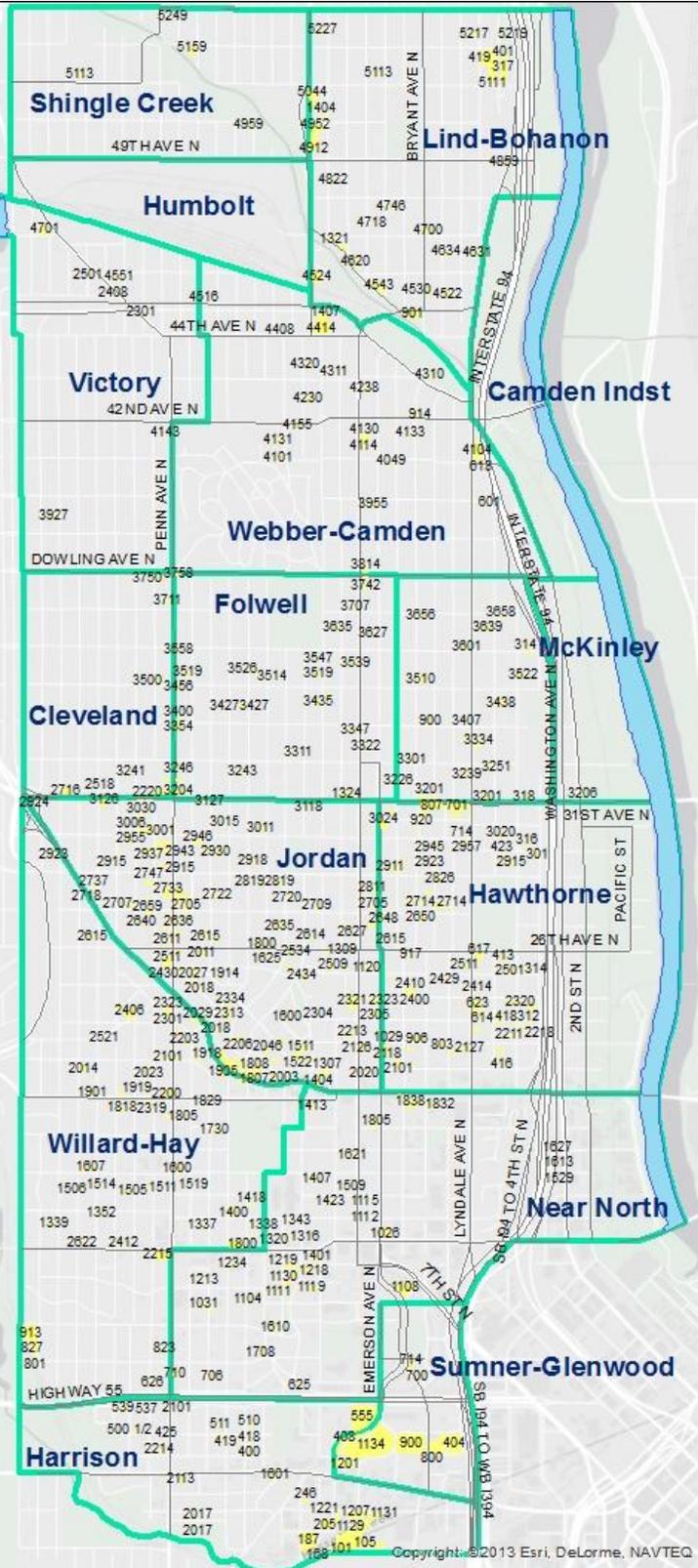
Legend

- Parcels Assessed for this Study
- Streets & Highways
- Water
- Neighborhood Boundaries



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University of Minnesota, December 2013



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There are many other factors that would be useful to assess. Due to limited time, the most basic factors were chosen in order to efficiently analyze over 600 parcels. From this point, interested parties can further assess the 135 lots ranked with high priority for urban agriculture opportunities. Soil testing will be important and can be completed through the University of Minnesota Soil Testing Laboratory. A regular test includes total organic matter, phosphorus, potassium, pH – lime requirement, and texture estimate for \$17.00. A lead test is \$16.00 and a soluble salts test is \$7.00. Additional tests for sulfur, nitrate, and other elements are also available. Historical property records could be indicative of the types of pollution that may or may not be in the soil, which can be found by contacting City of Minneapolis Development Review. This website is a good starting point: http://www.minneapolismn.gov/mdr/permits/mdr_permits_records.

Results of Site Analysis

After using the site analysis factors listed above, the list of parcels was narrowed to 279 high priority parcels, 92 medium priority parcels, 34 low priority parcels, and 215 not suitable for urban agriculture. To further narrow the list, properties currently for sale by CPED for housing development were eliminated as well as tax forfeited properties that would not be available for sale or auction. The Tax-Forfeited properties eliminated from the high suitability list were pending in a private sale. Other Tax-Forfeited properties would have been excluded earlier in the study, but it took longer than expected to understand the feasibility of gaining site control of those parcels. Therefore, all of those properties were included in the site analysis until further information could be obtained. Ultimately, 135 parcels were identified as high priority. They are found in the following four maps. The first map shows all of the high priority parcels in all neighborhoods of North Minneapolis. The next three maps include different sections of North Minneapolis in order to show more detail. A list of properties can also be found in the appendix. Of the 135 highly suitable lots, 88 are owned by CPED, 8 by Hennepin County, 1 by Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, 36 are Tax-Forfeited Land, and 2 owned by MnDOT.

Ownership Summary of High-Priority Parcels

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Number of Parcels</i>
CPED	88
MPHA	1
Hennepin County	8
Tax-Forfeited Land	36
MnDOT	2

Parcels of high suitability are found in nearly every neighborhood of North Minneapolis. There are many properties along Penn Avenue North. In 2014, Hennepin County Community Works will be working on an intensive community engagement and planning process for the Penn Avenue transit corridor in collaboration with Metro Transit, City of Minneapolis, and others. This could be a great opportunity for residents to engage with decision-makers on issues of land access for urban agriculture. More information

can be found at <http://www.hennepin.us/penn>.

Many highly suitable parcels are also found along Shingle Creek on triangle shaped parcels with excellent sunlight. This could be a great opportunity for local food production.

Most Suitable Vacant Parcels for Urban Gardening Owned by Public Entities

North Minneapolis, MN
December 2013



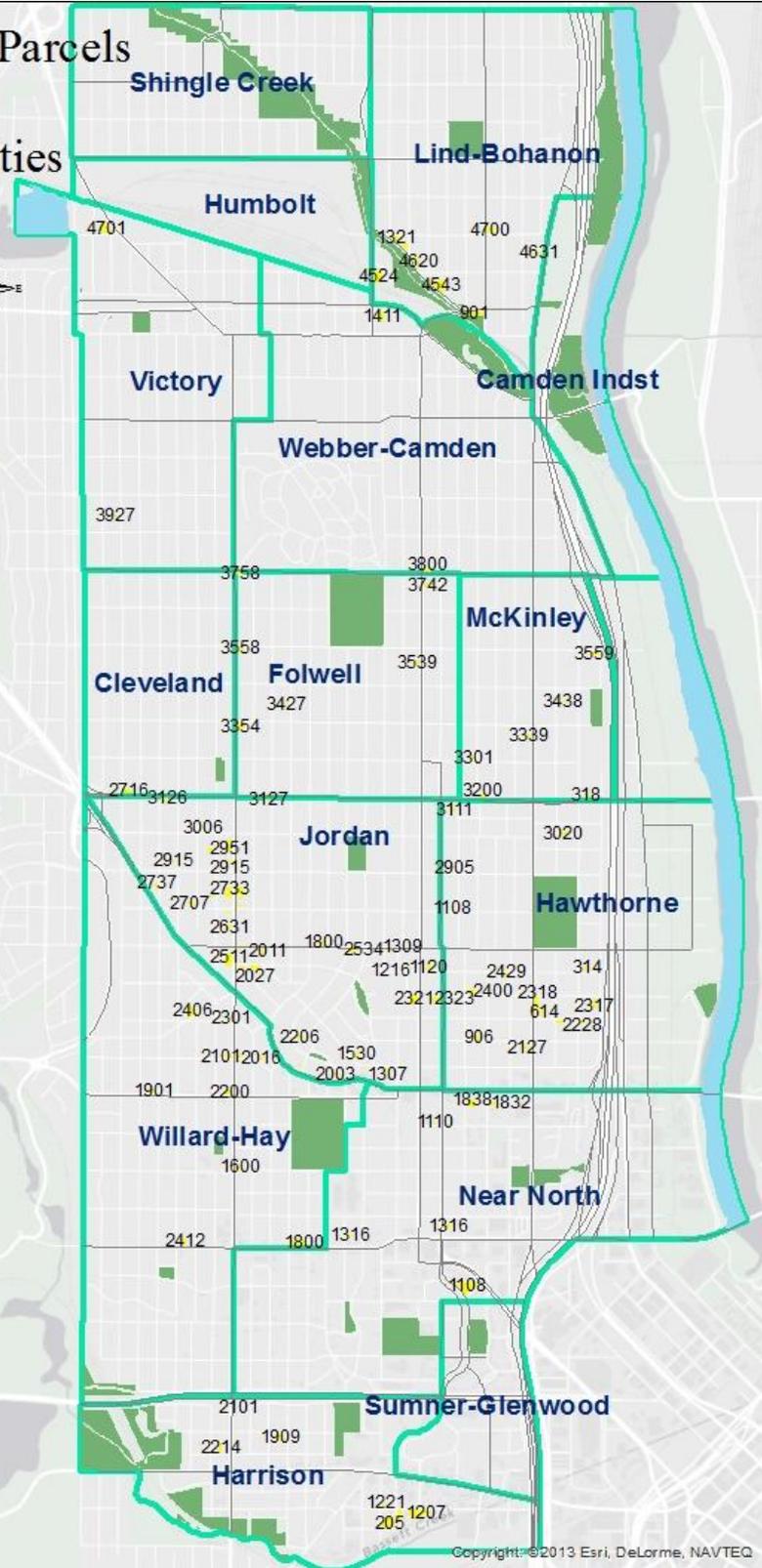
Legend

- Most Suitable Parcels
- Streets & Highways
- Parks
- Water
- Neighborhood Boundaries

0 0.175 0.35 0.7 Miles

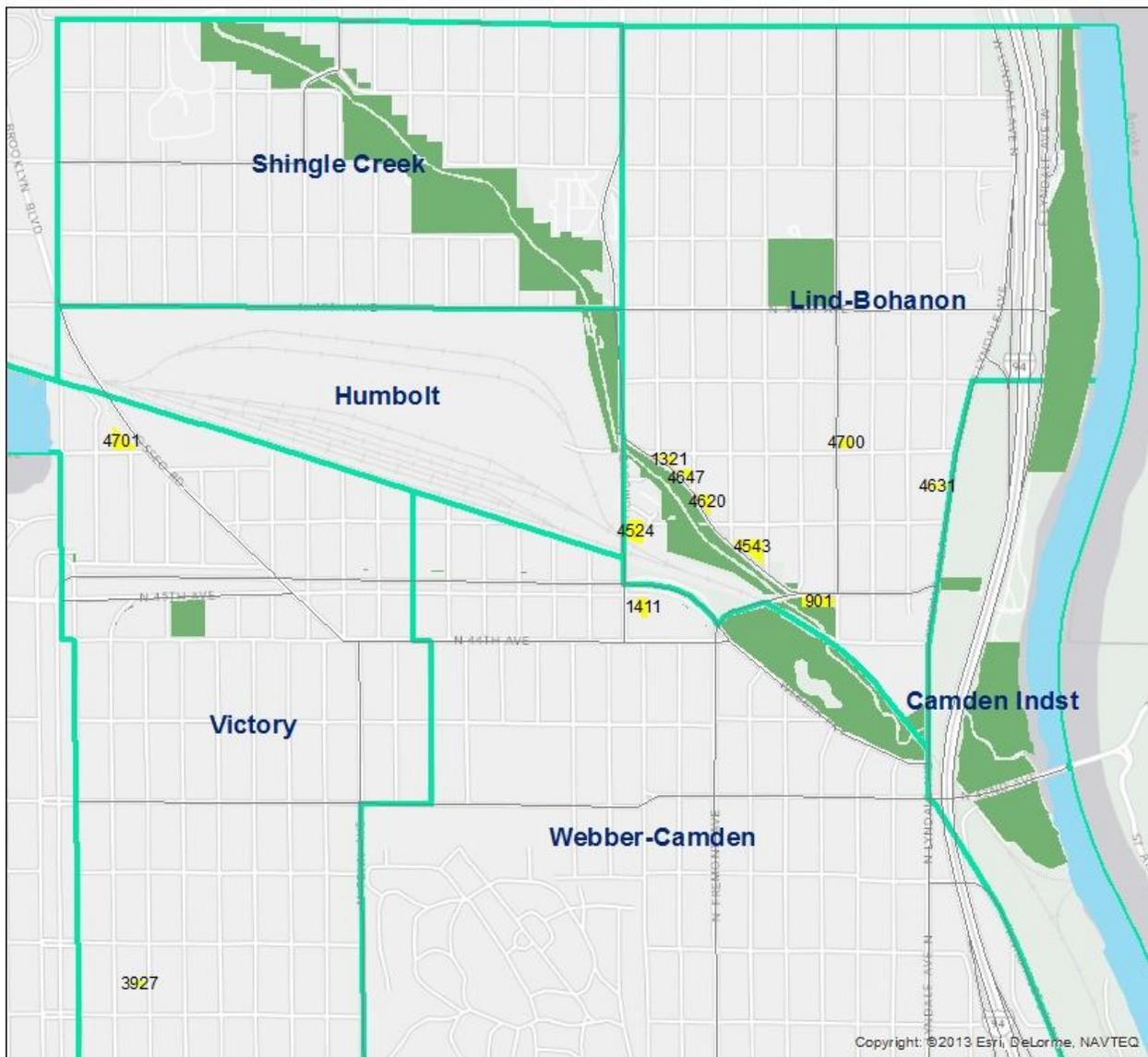
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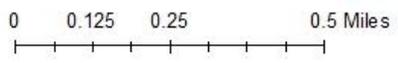
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Most Suitable Vacant Parcels for Urban Gardening North of Dowling Avenue - December 2013



Legend

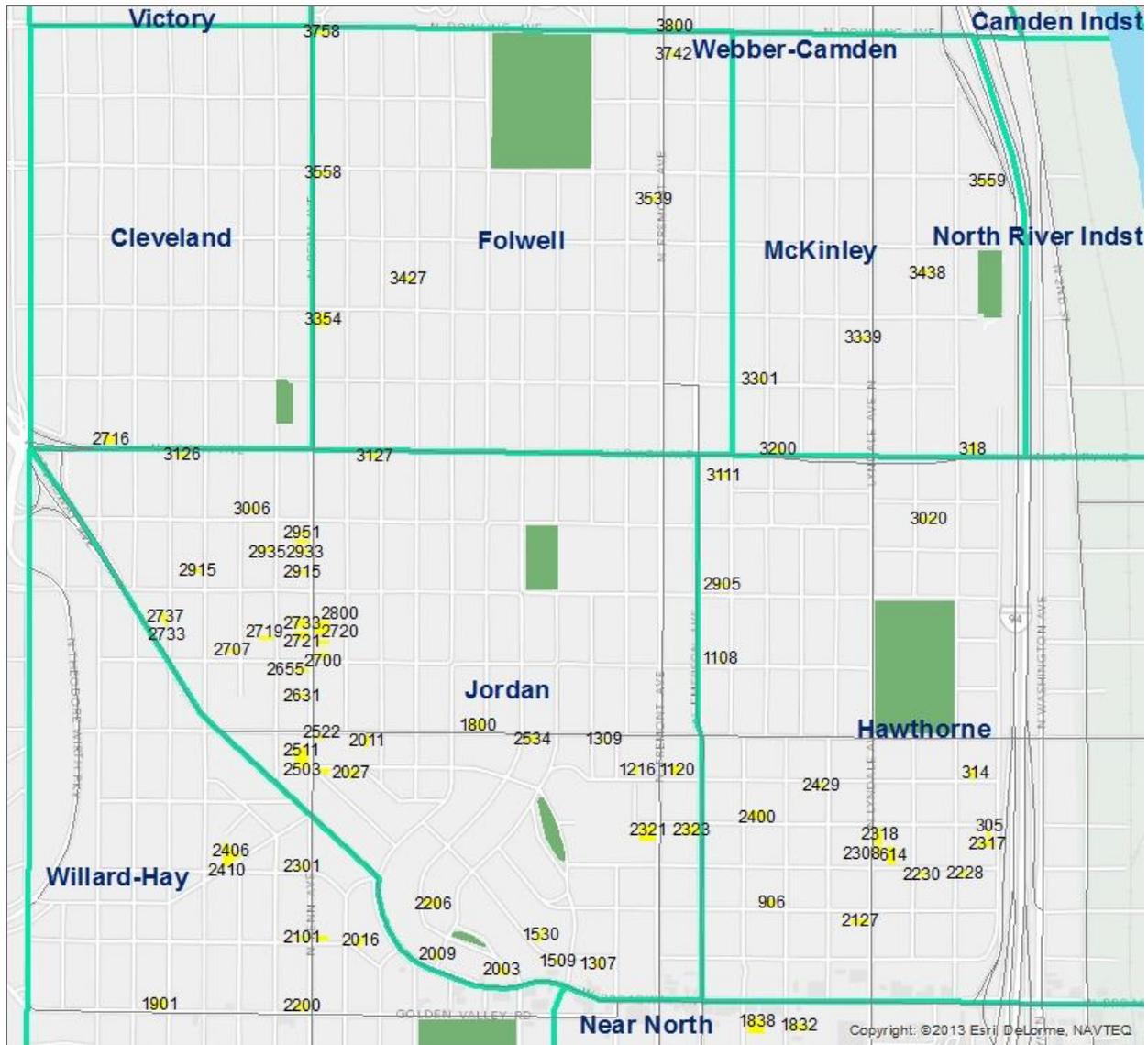
- Most Suitable Parcels
- Streets & Highways
- Parks
- Water
- Neighborhood Boundaries



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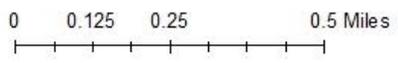
Map by Emily Goellner
Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
University of Minnesota, December 2013

Most Suitable Vacant Parcels for Urban Gardening Between Dowling Avenue & Golden Valley Road/West Broadway Avenue



Legend

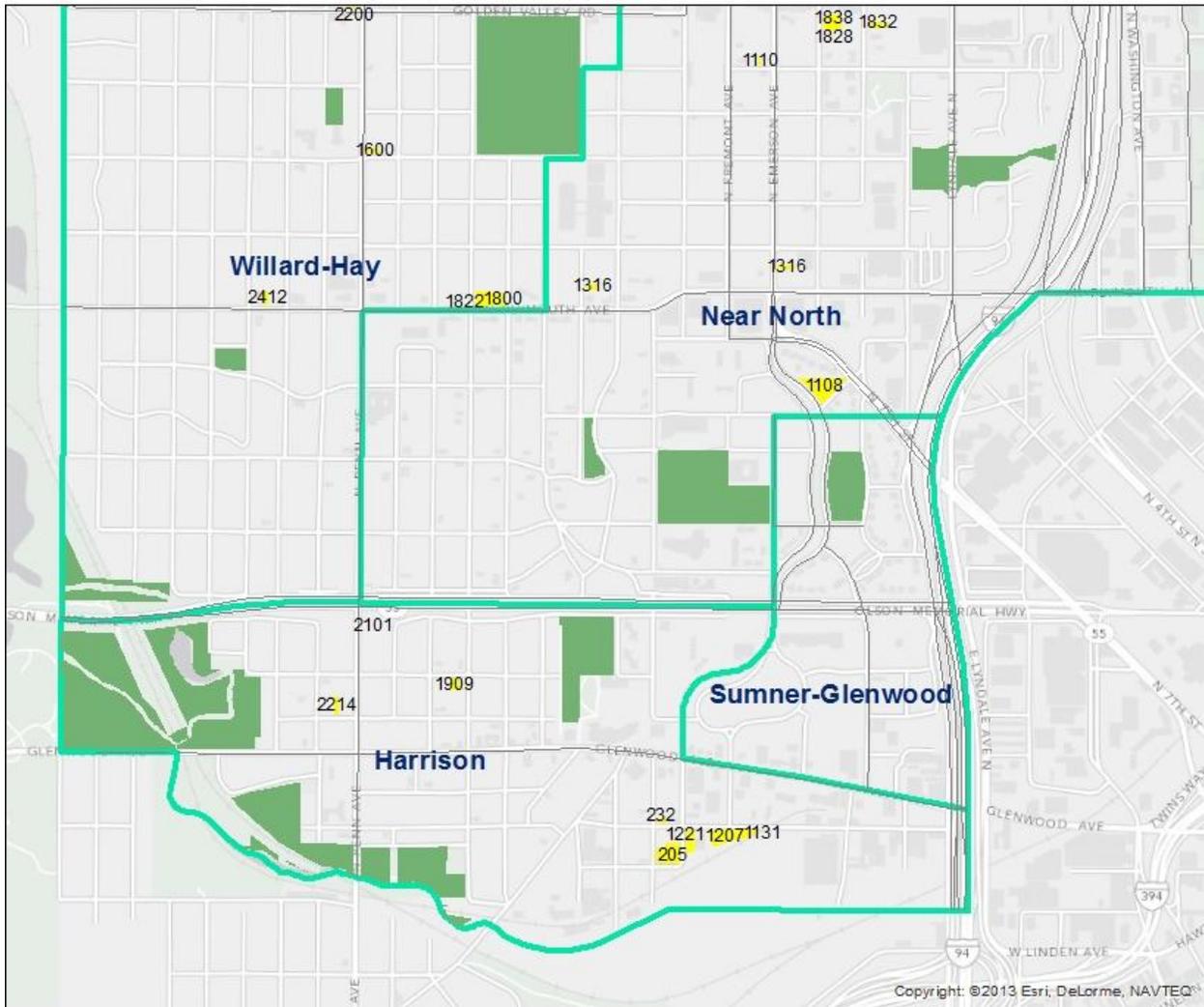
- Most Suitable Parcels
- Streets & Highways
- Parks
- Water
- Neighborhood Boundaries



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Map by Emily Goellner
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Most Suitable Vacant Parcels for Urban Gardening South of Golden Valley Road/West Broadway Avenue

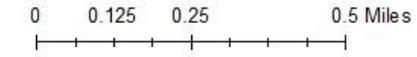


Legend

- Most Suitable Parcels
- Streets & Highways
- Parks
- Water
- Neighborhood Boundaries



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Map by Emily Goellner
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Key Recommendations

Further site analysis is recommended for the 135 highly suitable lots. As more physical research takes place, it will be important to meet with leaders and decision makers to discuss policies that are affecting work toward a local, sustainable, and empowering food system. These relationships will help to break down the barriers to local food production discussed in the report. Minneapolis City Councilors and other neighborhood leaders can advocate for urban agriculture as the highest and best use of land on these 135 high priority parcels. Neighborhood leaders can be found at Neighborhood Associations, local non-profit organizations, as business leaders, as staff at public entities discussed in this report, at the MPS Board of Education, and as other elected officials, to name a few. In building these relationships and promoting increased access to public land, it is recommended that advocates educate others on the study completed by Community Attributes International on the North Minneapolis land inventory completed for the City of Minneapolis Urban Agriculture Policy Plan. It illustrates the need for decision makers to see that urban agriculture and future housing development do not need to be viewed in competition with one another.

It is recommended that Afro Eco and its partners work with public entities to arrange lease agreements for market gardens in North Minneapolis in addition to the existing lease agreements for community gardens. Staff at public entities are concerned that market gardens do not fulfill the public purpose that the entity has established, so it will be important to research the best ways to ensure that market garden lease agreements can fulfill that purpose. Also, if ownership is preferred over leasing, land ownership opportunities may be available with the Twin Cities Agriculture Land Trust.

Partnering with local schools and churches to increase local food production is also recommended. There are 16 schools and dozens of churches in North Minneapolis that could provide excellent opportunities for partnership. There are numerous examples of such partnerships currently active throughout Minneapolis.

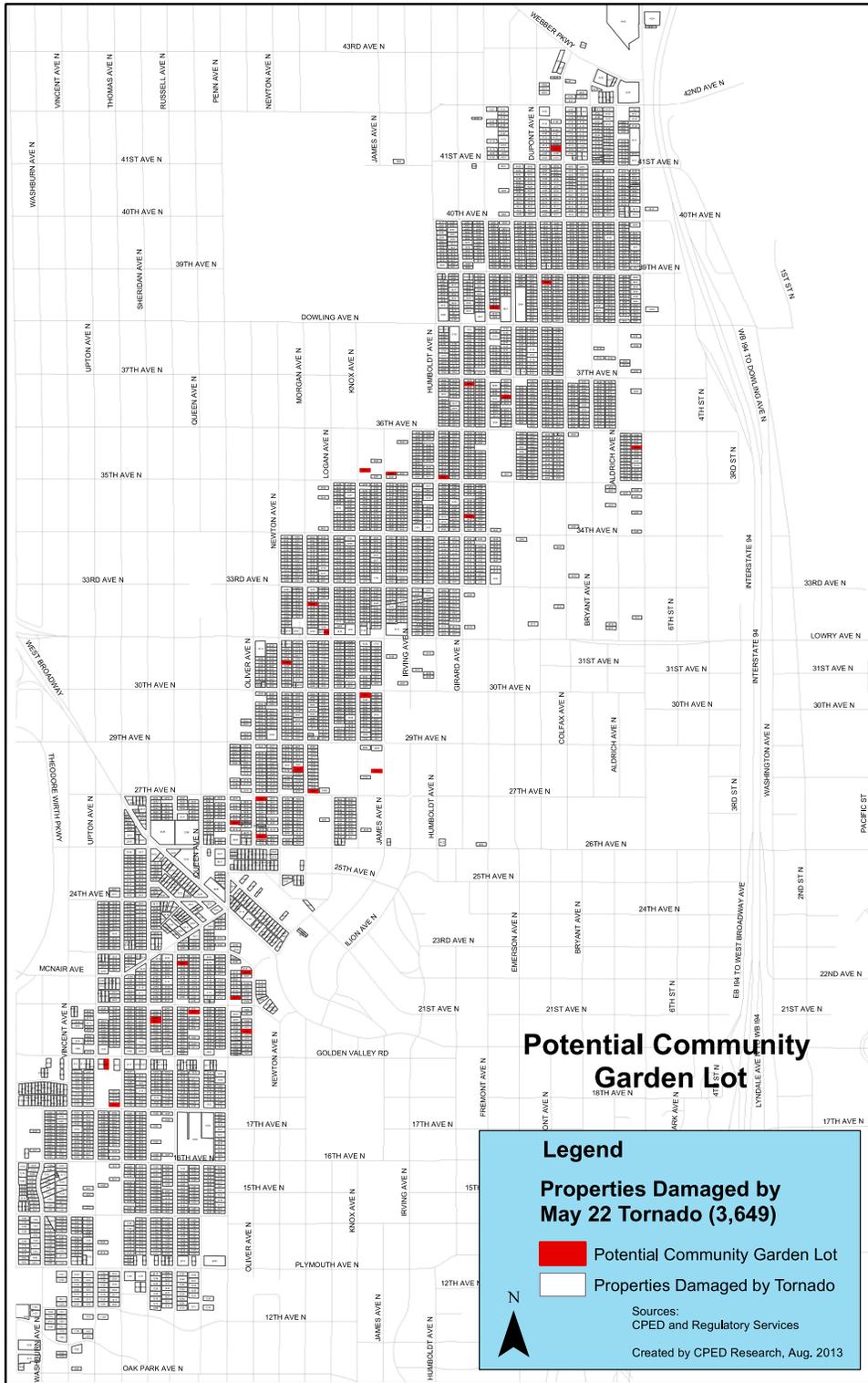
In conclusion, land access is an important issue for Afro Eco and its local partners. With a high amount of underutilized parcels in North Minneapolis that are suitable for urban agriculture projects, it is important to continue to build relationships and momentum around this issue. With the completion of this report, organizers can begin new conversations and continue ongoing conversations with the community about land access opportunities for local food production.

Appendix A – City of Minneapolis Community Garden Lease Program Additional Information

Figure A-1: Community Garden Lease Locations in City of Minneapolis

	PIN	Address
1	1702924420014	1701 THOMAS AVE N
2	1602924230124	1927 OLIVER AVE N
3	1702924140092	2014 SHERIDAN AVE N
4	1702924140093	2018 SHERIDAN AVE N
5	1702924140039	2027 QUEEN AVE N
6	1602924230080	2106 PENN AVE N
7	1602924230069	2211 OLIVER AVE N
8	1702924140196	2214 RUSSELL AVE N
9	0902924330205	2610 OLIVER AVE N
10	1702924420001	2621 GOLDEN VALLEY RD
11	0902924330224	2624 PENN AVE N
12	0902924330138	2654 OLIVER AVE N
13	0902924330062	2700 MORGAN AVE N
14	0902924330069	2727 MORGAN AVE N
15	0902924340144	2731 JAMES AVE N
16	0902924310202	2958 KNOX AVE N
17	0902924320146	3100 NEWTON AVE N
18	0902924230123	3203 LOGAN AVE N
19	0902924230132	3238 MORGAN AVE N
20	0902924120109	3418 GIRARD AVE N
21	0902924120046	3500 HUMBOLDT AVE N
22	0902924210017	3504 JAMES AVE N
23	0902924210149	3510 KNOX AVE N
24	0902924110114	3543 LYNDAL AVE N
25	0402924430174	3637 EMERSON AVE N
26	0402924430167	3654 GIRARD AVE N
27	0402924420198	3818 FREMONT AVE N
28	0402924410230	3850 DUPONT AVE N
29	0402924140231	4111 COLFAX AVE N

Figure A-2: Community Garden Lease Locations in City of Minneapolis



Appendix B – Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Additional Information

Figure B-1: Regional and Neighborhood Parks in Minneapolis



Appendix C – Results of Site Analysis

Table C-1: Highly Suitable Lots for Urban Agriculture Projects (135 parcels in North Minneapolis)

1110	18TH AVE N	1832	BRYANT AVE N	2206	JAMES AVE N	2717	PENN AVE N
1307	21ST AVE N	4700	BRYANT AVE N	2208	JAMES AVE N	2720	PENN AVE N
2016	21ST AVE N	3200	COLFAX AVE N	2534	JAMES AVE N	2721	PENN AVE N
2110	21ST AVE N	3301	COLFAX AVE N	318	LOWRY AVE N	2724	PENN AVE N
906	22ND AVE N	1828	DUPONT AVE N	318.5	LOWRY AVE N	2733	PENN AVE N
614	23RD AVE N	1832	DUPONT AVE N	2109	LOWRY AVE N	2800	PENN AVE N
618	23RD AVE N	1838	DUPONT AVE N	2716	LOWRY AVE N	2915	PENN AVE N
305	24TH AVE N	2400	DUPONT AVE N	2127	LYNDALE AVE N	2933	PENN AVE N
314	25TH AVE N	2404	DUPONT AVE N	2308	LYNDALE AVE N	2943	PENN AVE N
318	25TH AVE N	2905	DUPONT AVE N	2310	LYNDALE AVE N	2951	PENN AVE N
1120	25TH AVE N	3111	DUPONT AVE N	2316	LYNDALE AVE N	3354	PENN AVE N
1216	25TH AVE N	4543	DUPONT AVE N	2318	LYNDALE AVE N	3558	PENN AVE N
2027	25TH AVE N	1316	EMERSON AVE N	3339	LYNDALE AVE N	3758	PENN AVE N
1309	26TH AVE N	2323	EMERSON AVE N	4631	LYNDALE AVE N	1800	PLYMOUTH AVE N
1800	26TH AVE N	2317	FREMONT AVE N	2406	MCNAIR AVE	1806	PLYMOUTH AVE N
2011	26TH AVE N	2321	FREMONT AVE N	2410	MCNAIR AVE	1810	PLYMOUTH AVE N
1108	27TH AVE N	3539	FREMONT AVE N	1306	MORGAN AVE N	1810.5	PLYMOUTH AVE N
1131	2ND AVE N	3742	FREMONT AVE N	3427	MORGAN AVE N	1812	PLYMOUTH AVE N
1207	2ND AVE N	3800	FREMONT AVE N	3127	NEWTON AVE N	1822	PLYMOUTH AVE N
1221	2ND AVE N	4620	FREMONT AVE N	2101	OLSON MEMORIAL HWY	2412	PLYMOUTH AVE N
2317	3RD ST N	4647	FREMONT AVE N	1600	PENN AVE N	2719	QUEEN AVE N
3559	3RD ST N	205	GIRARD AVE N	2100	PENN AVE N	2935	QUEEN AVE N
901	45TH AVE N	2200	GOLDEN VALLEY RD	2101	PENN AVE N	2707	RUSSELL AVE N
1411	45TH AVE N	1509	HILLSIDE AVE	2301	PENN AVE N	3006	RUSSELL AVE N
1413	45TH AVE N	1530	HILLSIDE AVE	2425	PENN AVE N	2915	SHERIDAN AVE N
1321	47TH AVE N	210	HUMBOLDT AVE N	2430	PENN AVE N	1901	THOMAS AVE N
2214	4TH AVE N	214	HUMBOLDT AVE N	2503	PENN AVE N	2733	THOMAS AVE N
2228	4TH ST N	232	HUMBOLDT AVE N	2507	PENN AVE N	2737	THOMAS AVE N
1905	5TH AVE N	4524	HUMBOLDT AVE N	2511	PENN AVE N	3126	THOMAS AVE N
1909	5TH AVE N	2009	ILION AVE N	2522	PENN AVE N	1108	VAN WHITE MEM BLVD
2230	6TH ST N	1314	JAMES AVE N	2631	PENN AVE N	3927	VINCENT AVE N
3020	6TH ST N	1316	JAMES AVE N	2655	PENN AVE N	4701	VINCENT AVE N
3438	6TH ST N	2001	JAMES AVE N	2700	PENN AVE N		
2429	ALDRICH AVE N	2003	JAMES AVE N	2712	PENN AVE N		
1830	BRYANT AVE N						

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