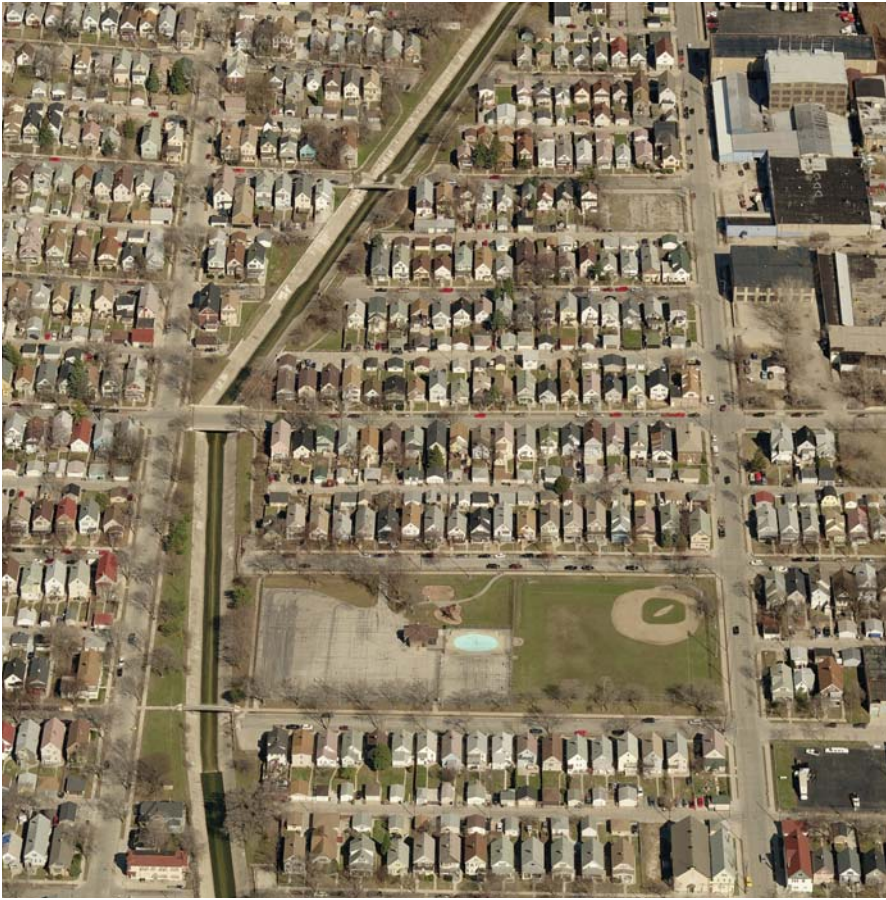




## 2.1 CONTEXT



*Aerial oblique photo of KK corridor looking east showing Modrzejewski Playground and Harrison and Cleveland Avenues (photo courtesy of MMSD)*

The project study area is a dense urban neighborhood strategically located near downtown Milwaukee. The neighborhood is also readily accessible from Interstate 94/43. These conditions benefit the neighborhood in that density and access provide a solid customer base for neighborhood retail, offer a range of housing choices, and provides a basis for pedestrian usage throughout the neighborhood. The Kinnickinnic River Corridor Neighborhood Plan area is bounded by Lincoln Ave to the North, Interstate 94/43 to the east, Oklahoma Ave to the south and S. 27th St to the west. The

area is composed of portions of three city neighborhoods: Lincoln Village, Polonia, and Forest Hill Homes. The neighborhood includes significant landmarks including the Basilica of St. Josaphat on the east side of the project area and Forest Home Cemetery to the west.

The area is served by a grid of streets that create a residential rectangular block pattern with blocks oriented with the long dimension running north/south. Two major east/west arterials, Lincoln and Oklahoma Avenues carry heavier vehicular traffic levels and provide access to the neighborhood as well as convey city through traffic. These streets also contain commercial businesses which serve the neighborhood. Sixth Street bounds the eastern edge of the planning area and is a major arterial which links the area to the downtown and to other city neighborhoods. The bridge that spans the Kinnickinnic River at 6th Street is being replaced as part of a project separate from this planning study (see Section 1.4). Other significant north/south streets include S. 13th and S. 16th Streets. Thirteenth Street is a neighborhood arterial, providing access through the middle of the study area and serving as the location for various commercial establishments. A railroad corridor passes through the neighborhood, bridged at S. 6th St, S. 9th Pl, S. 13th St, and S. 16th St. The corridor effectively divides the neighborhood, due to the limited number of crossings.

The neighborhood offers a variety of transportation options. Public transit serves the neighborhood along several main corridors. Major bus lines travel along Lincoln, Oklahoma, Windlake, 6th, and 16th Streets. Most residential areas are thus within a reasonable walking distance of public transit. Bicycles are accommodated along the Oak Leaf Trail, which travels down Manitoba Street. Access to Interstate 94/43 occurs at Morgan and Becher.

Several large parks provide open space and recreational activities for neighborhood residents, including Kosciuszko Park, Pulaski Park, Baran Park, and the Kinnickinnic Recreation Area. Smaller facilities, including Modrzejewski Playground and several school playgrounds provide more localized opportunities for activities. The river corridor itself is currently not an amenity for the neighborhood, although residents noted that the portion of the river that runs adjacent to Harrison Street between 9th and 12th attracts dog walkers and some pedestrians.



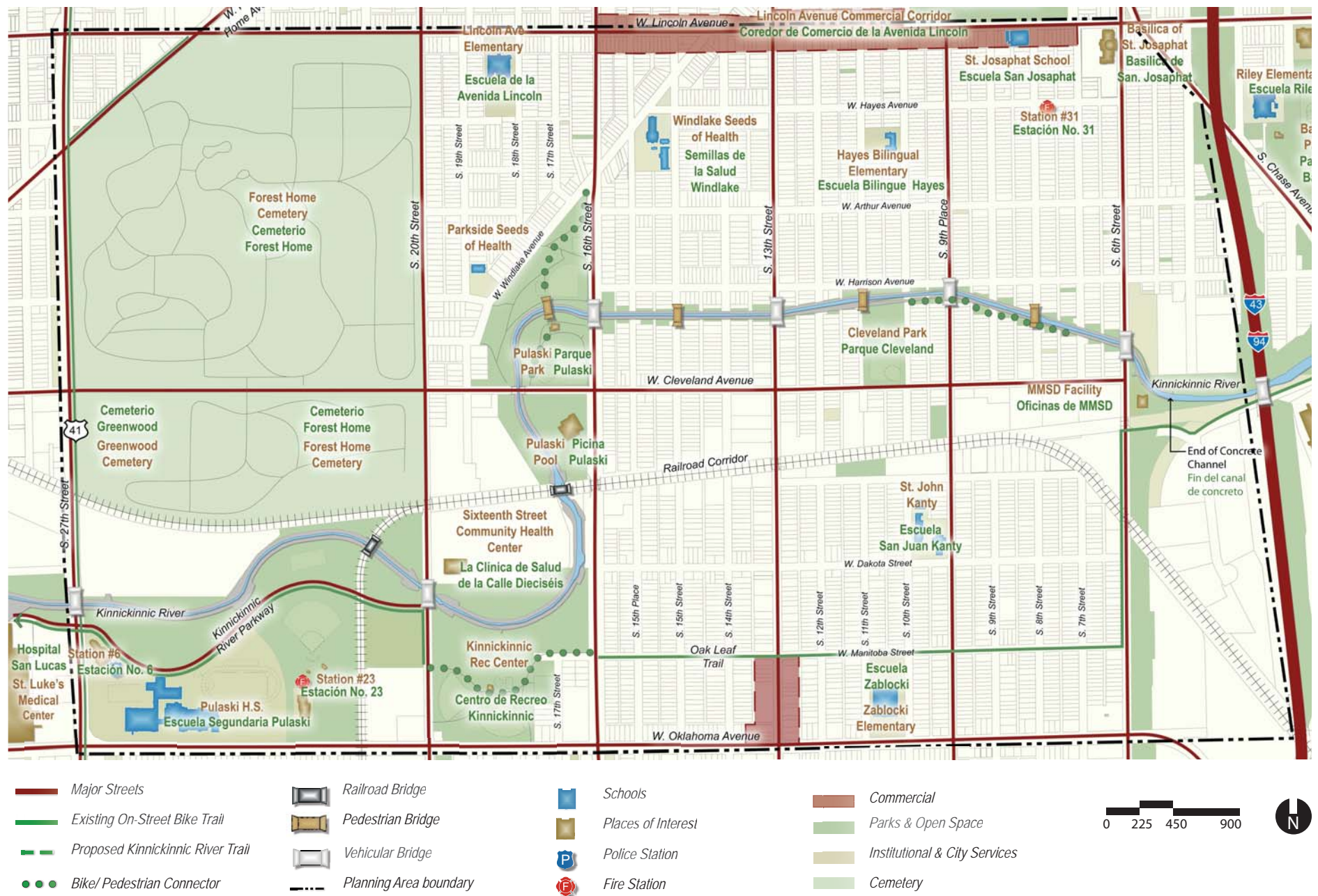


Figure 2-1. KK Corridor Neighborhood Planning Area



*Example of a business on Lincoln Avenue*



*The KK River, looking west from the (former) S. 7th St bridge in 1960, one year prior to the concrete channel installation (photo courtesy of MMSD)*

## **A. Historical/Cultural Context**

The neighborhood has a rich history with many ethnicities represented in the population and as evidenced in the mix of shops, restaurants, and cultural institutions present throughout the neighborhood. The area was originally settled by the Poles and other Eastern Europeans during the late 1800's and descendants of these settlers still populate the neighborhood today. In the past few decades arrivals from Latin America have joined the population, along with Middle Easterners, Asians, North American Indians, and African Americans. The mix of cultures gives the neighborhood a unique and vital pulse. Cultural facilities, such as St. Josaphat Basilica and Kosciuszko Park are city landmarks and represent the history and values of the population. Businesses along Lincoln Avenue range from Mexican bakeries to Polish shops including many ethnic restaurants. The Old South Side Farmers Market at Kosciuszko Park is another well-known neighborhood attraction. As of the last census (2000), approximately 40 percent of the neighborhood population is of Hispanic origin (as reported by a UW-Milwaukee study on the corridor).

## **B. The KK Watershed**

The KK watershed is the most urbanized watershed in the Milwaukee area, and includes parts of Milwaukee, Cudahy, Greenfield, St. Francis, West Allis and West Milwaukee. The watershed is the area's most densely populated, with approximately 152,000 people living within its boundaries and 93 percent of the watershed devoted to urban use.

The KK is an 8-mile stretch of river reaching from the headwaters near S. 60th St and Cleveland Ave and emptying into Milwaukee's Inner Harbor and Lake Michigan. The approximately 25-square-mile watershed contains 25 miles of perennial streams and seven ponds. The main tributary to the KK mainstem is Wilson Park Creek, which joins the KK at St. Luke's Hospital. The KK watershed map is shown in Figure 2-3.

## **C. Flood Management**

Flooding has plagued the KK corridor for decades. The primary purpose behind channelizing and lining the river with concrete in the early 1960's was for flood conveyance. At the time, conveyance goals were met; however almost 40 years later the channel no longer has the capacity to safely convey the one percent probability floodwaters from its highly developed watershed. Inundation of the dense residential neighborhood between S. 6th and S. 16th Streets by flood waters overtopping the KK banks in recent years has resulted in many homes near the river being damaged. Several



drownings have occurred as well. The river is “flashy” in nature, with rapid increases in flood discharges and depths, which leaves little opportunity for warning occupants of flood-prone areas and poses safety risks.

As the concrete channel approaches the end of its effective design life, the need for a solution that would safely convey floodwaters through the neighborhood while reestablishing aquatic and terrestrial habitat opportunities has become increasingly apparent.

MMSD began working with their consultant, Hey & Associates, in 2007 to evaluate engineering alternatives for replacement of the concrete lining. During that same time period, SEWRPC began to update the region’s flood models to reflect more current monitoring data. This resulted in an increase in flows through the KK corridor and an expanded floodplain (see Figure 2-4).

Hey used the new SEWRPC flows to model the KK corridor in their engineering evaluations. The full-range of engineering alternatives that were considered for flood management in this stretch of the KK included the following:

- **Do Nothing:** The “Do Nothing” approach has been considered as an option, but given the nature of the crumbling concrete channel and the flooding and safety issues facing the neighborhood, this is not a desirable outcome. MMSD would still be required to make incremental repairs to the existing concrete channel under this scenario, and the long term structural viability of the channel would not be ensured. At some point the scope and scale of the repairs may approach channel replacement, and WDNR has indicated they would not be likely to permit replacement of the channel with new concrete lining. Another negative outcome of the do-nothing scenario is that the new SEWRPC floodplain would eventually be incorporated into regulatory floodmaps with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and homeowners in the regulated floodplain would be required to purchase flood insurance to obtain loans or maintain existing mortgages and have other restrictions imposed upon them. This requirement could force some to not be able to obtain loans or be able to afford to own or renovate their home.



Figure 2-3. Kinnickinnic River Watershed Map

- **Upstream Storage:** To reduce flows and minimize flooding in the critical residential zone between 6th and 16th Streets, the team looked at potential areas for temporary storage of floodwaters upstream. They concluded that there were insufficient storage opportunities to significantly reduce peak flows through the target area and eliminate the need to widen the channel downstream.
- **Diversion:** The team evaluated the potential for a high-flow diversion pipe that would reduce the amount of water passing through the critical zone. This was determined to be cost prohibitive as the size of the infrastructure that would be required to convey such high flows would make it very expensive.
- **Rectangular Channel:** The team evaluated using a 60-foot wide concrete channel with 9-foot high vertical concrete side walls that would fit within the existing river corridor but provide additional flood capacity due to rectangular shape and the elevated floodwalls.

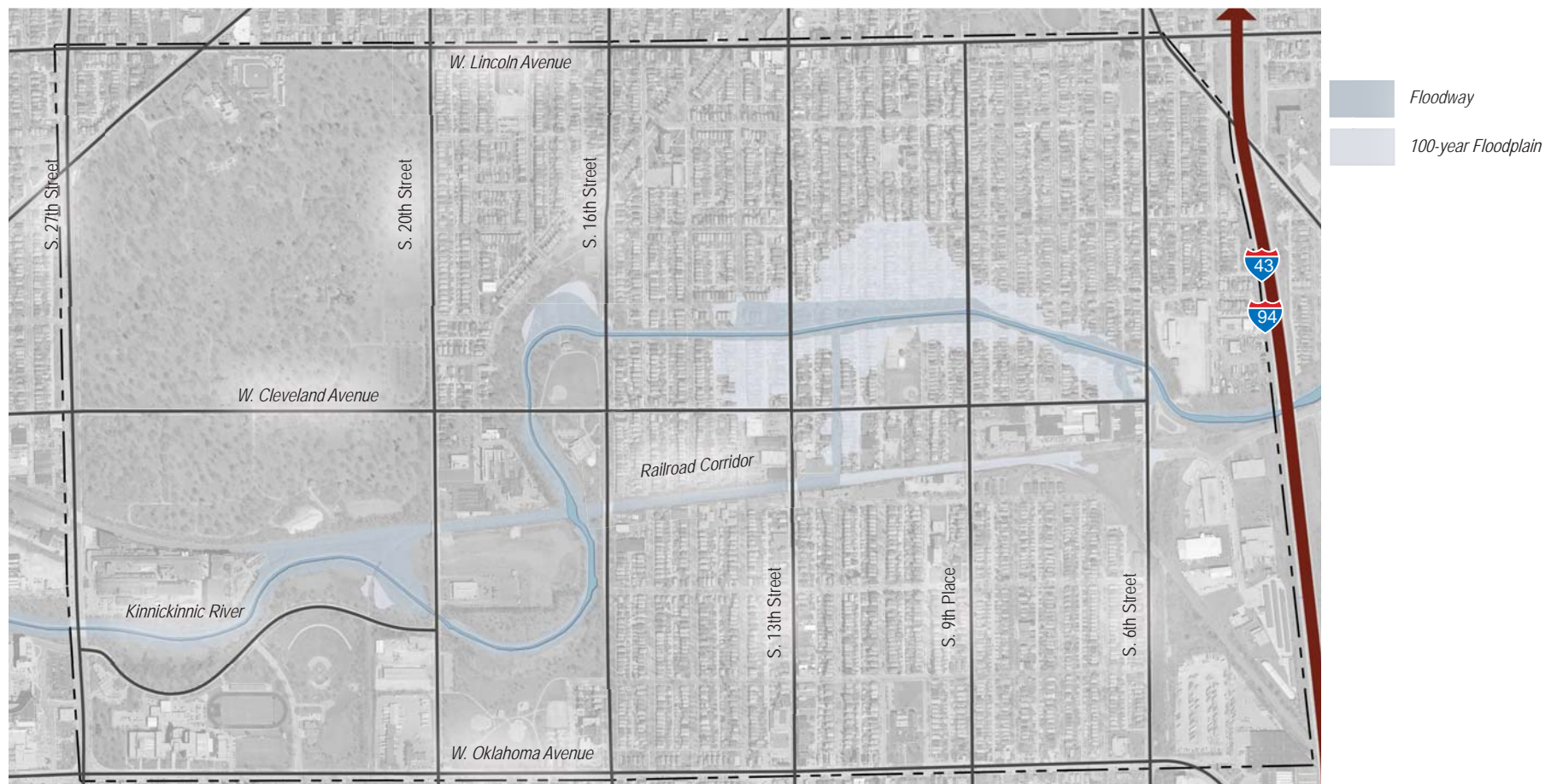


Figure 2-4. Existing one-percent probability (100-year) floodplain, as mapped by SEWRPC (2009).

The channel as proposed would have had extremely high velocities and no habitat or water quality improvements and would have posed more of a threat to the safety of nearby residents. Because of the negative environmental impacts and safety concerns associated with this option, representatives from the WDNR indicated this alternative would not be permissible. Because of the above concerns, and since the alternative did not meet project objectives other than flood conveyance, this option was eliminated for consideration.

- Widening (but not deepening) the channel:** In order to avoid a large combined sewer pipe that crosses under the river channel at 8th Street, the team considered keeping the river bottom elevation as it is now while widening the channel to a width of approximately 250 feet (from its existing 60 feet). The additional impacts to properties in the corridor created by such a wide channel was enough to eliminate this alternative in favor of one that widens and deepens the channel, which would require the relocation of the combined sewer.

- Widening and Deepening the Channel:** The Hey team came up with two alternative engineering cross-sections for the channel between S. 6th and S. 16th Streets which would both widen and deepen the existing channel and use natural materials; one with vegetated sloped banks (trapezoidal) and one with terraced overbanks consisting of short walls. Either alternative would have a cobble stone low-flow channel. Both alternatives are still in consideration and served as the basis of design for all of the neighborhood planning recommendations to follow. These sections are shown in Figure 2-5, along with the eliminated concrete channel alternative.

The final outcome of the flood management strategy will likely include a combination of bridge replacements and modifications, property acquisitions, and widening and deepening the channel.

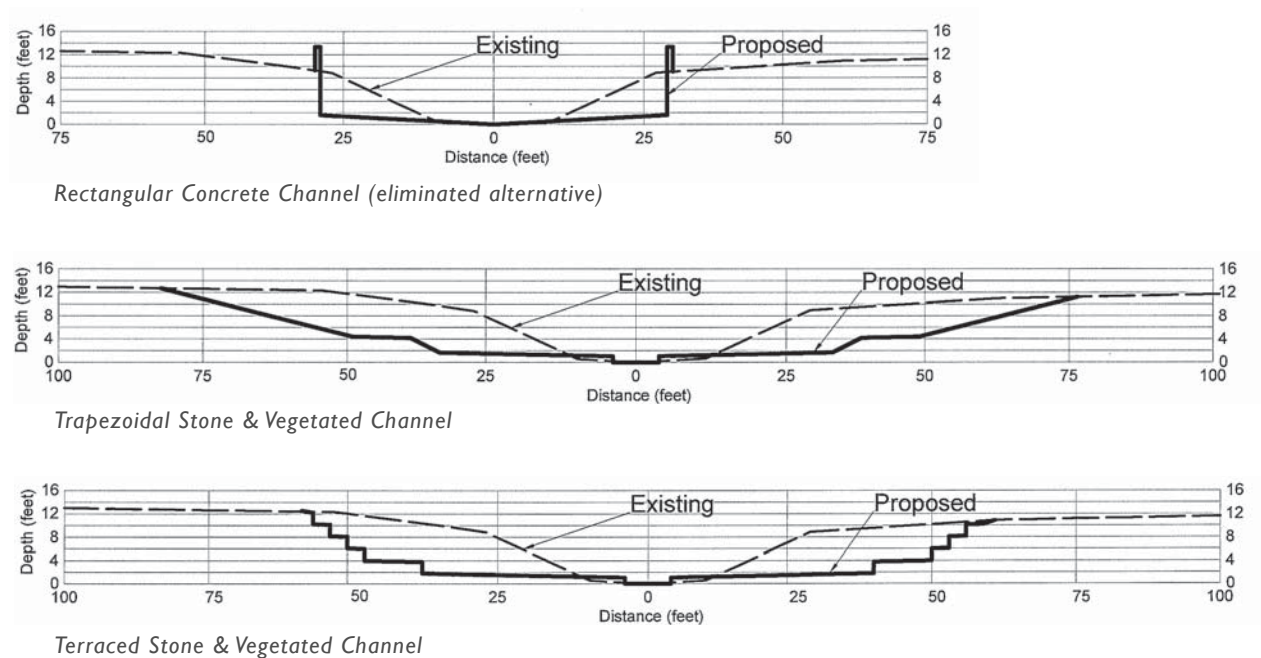


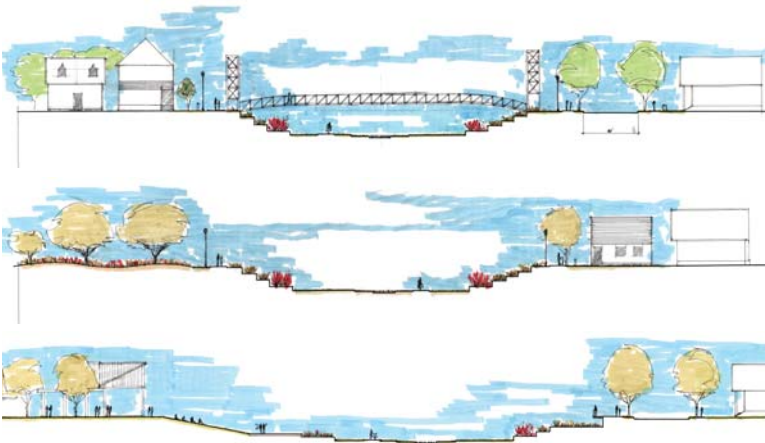
Figure 2-5. Engineering cross-sections considered by the Hey/MMSD Team for flood conveyance between S. 6th and S. 16th Streets.



## 2.2 OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS



*KK River near S. 14th Street (looking east)*



*Various alternative cross-sections evaluated for S. 6th to S. 16th Street corridor during the neighborhood planning process*

The following section describes the neighborhood opportunities identified by the planning team based on the feedback from the first phase of meetings, review of existing conditions, and the subsequent development of draft plan alternatives and concepts.

### A. River Corridor

To accommodate flood flows, the new corridor will need to be more than double its existing 60-foot width. This will likely impact properties and infrastructure on both sides of the existing channel. However, there is some flexibility in the alignment of the new channel, so several alternative alignments between S. 6th and S. 16th Streets were considered. Figure 2-6 shows the three corridor alignment alternatives that were considered as part of the neighborhood planning process.

Due to the narrowness of the existing corridor, there would be properties impacted in any of the three alignment alternatives. The recommended alignment would ideally impact the fewest number of properties and displace the fewest number of residents. Another major consideration was the impact to Harrison Avenue. In two of the three alternatives, the approximate existing river alignment was maintained, which would have displaced several blocks of Harrison Avenue, roughly between S. 13th and S. 8th Streets. These alternatives would have allowed an existing large City combined sewer to remain intact on the south bank of the channel. However, the street grid would be disrupted, and in Alternative 2, Harrison would be disconnected, forcing more traffic onto nearby east-west streets such as Arthur and Cleveland Avenues. Alternative 3 reconnected Harrison but in a new alignment, and would have required the most number of properties to be acquired and demolished.

The City DPW indicated that the utility infrastructure under Harrison Ave would be more difficult and costly to relocate than the sewer on the south bank. Also, the need to maintain Harrison Ave as a thorough-fare due to the high volumes of traffic would have made Alternative 2 the least desirable option. Alternative 2 was also undesirable to the City and local residents because of the creation of several more dead-end streets. Alternative 3 was less favored than Alternative 1 because of the disruption to the street grid and the increased number of properties that would be impacted.





Alternative 1 - Harrison Ave alignment is maintained, river corridor is pushed to the south between S. 12th and S. 9th Streets



Alternative 2 - River corridor follows existing alignment; Harrison Ave is interrupted by width of new river corridor; dead-ends created at S. 11th and S. 12 Streets



Alternative 3 - River corridor follows existing alignment; Harrison Ave is relocated to follow new river corridor

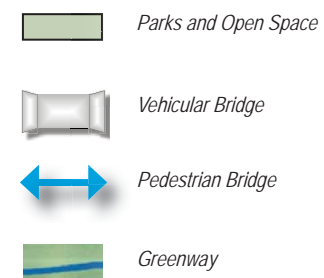


Figure 2-6. River corridor and Harrison Ave alignment alternatives considered during the neighborhood planning process



*Residential street in the neighborhood*



*Lincoln Village sign on S. 13th Street and Bay View marker on Chase Avenue bridge*

Alternative 1, which maintained Harrison Avenue's existing alignment by moving the river corridor to the south, ultimately received the most favorable responses from the public and the planning team. This alternative also proposed that Harrison Ave become a parkway drive running parallel to the new river greenway.

Upstream of S. 16th St, the river winds its way through Pulaski Park and the KK Recreation Area. This area, while valuable to the neighborhood, was less of a concern from the standpoint of property acquisitions, so this area was not studied in the same amount of detail as the area between S. 6th and S. 16th Streets.

The Urban Anthropology survey (see Sec. 1.2), conducted throughout spring and summer of 2009, asked residents of Lincoln Village what types of things they would like to see in the new river corridor greenway. The top vote-getters were community gardens, picnic areas, and bicycle paths. Fishing areas also received many votes. These amenities are consistent with the recommendations of this neighborhood plan, as discussed in Chapter 3. The questions and full results of the survey are provided in the Appendix.

## **B. Housing and Development Pattern**

As in many Milwaukee neighborhoods the housing and development patterns represent a classic urban configuration consisting of a gridiron street and block system punctuated by commercial arterials containing neighborhood commercial businesses. Neighborhood schools, churches, and other cultural institutions are located throughout the area.

Residential areas are comprised of mostly one and two family homes, with most built during the early decades of the 20th Century. Styles vary but are typical of those seen in many Milwaukee neighborhoods. Of particular note are the many Polish Flats in the area. Most homes feature front porches and entrances directly to the street. Current or former mixed-use structures occupy many corner sites in the neighborhood, featuring a commercial space on the ground floor and a residential flat on the upper floor.

On most blocks garages are to the rear of the lot, with access to an alley. There is a relatively consistent scale between structures, with building size and use changing near the commercial corridors along Lincoln, Oklahoma and 13th. Continuity of the street grid and the consistency of building scale give the neighborhood a cohesive feel, with the exception of the breaks to the urban fabric that occur as the result of the interruption of the railroad corridor and the river channel.

Housing stock is of mixed condition, as well-kept properties intermingle with structures in need of repair or update. Encouraging the rehabilitation and upkeep of properties is a



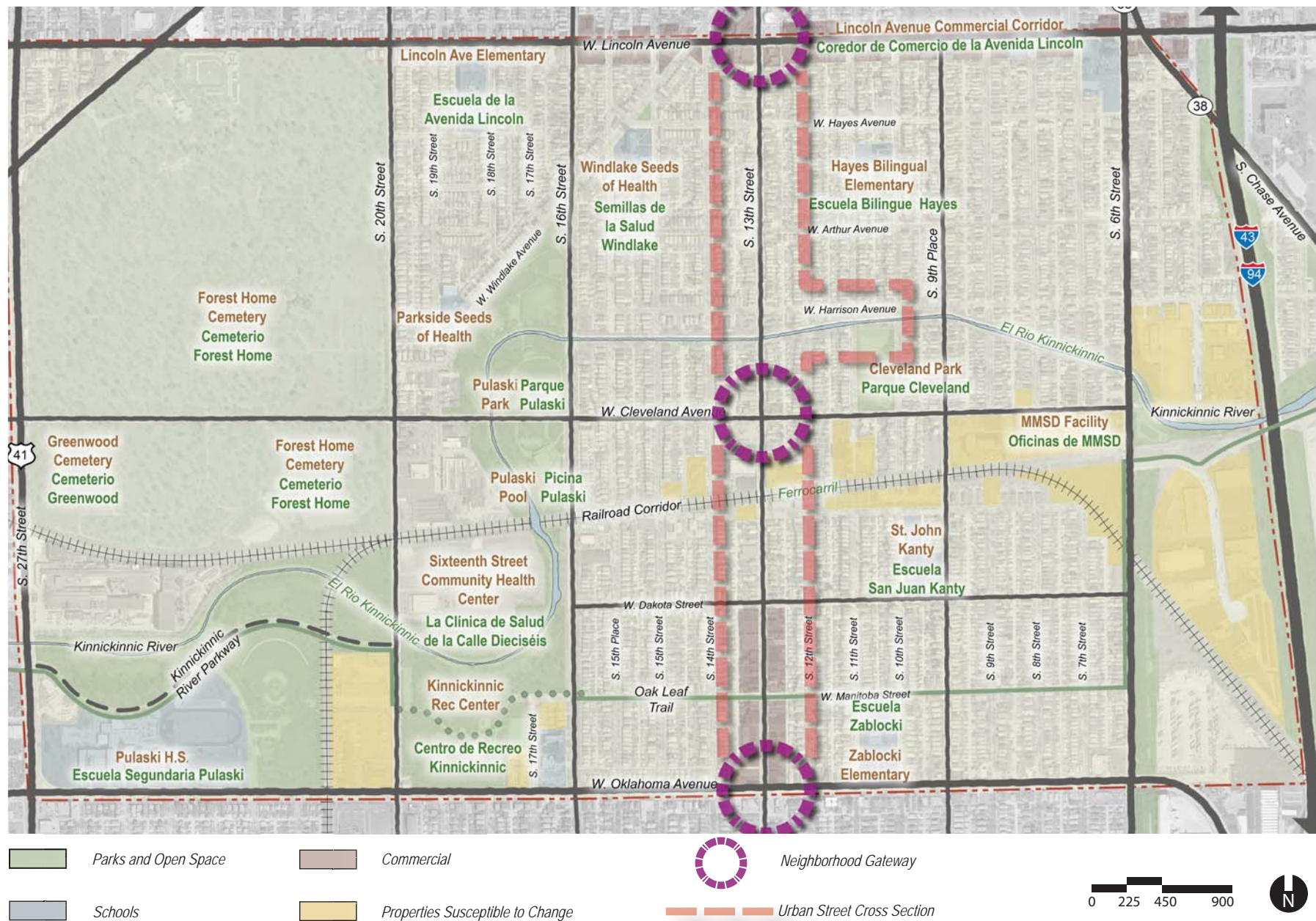


Figure 2-7. Redevelopment framework including properties susceptible to change, important commercial and residential connections.



*A residential street off of Cleveland Avenue*



*Under-utilized commercial/warehouse building on Cleveland Avenue*

continuing neighborhood issue. While no undeveloped land exists in the neighborhood, several industrial properties and underutilized sites could provide redevelopment opportunities for the construction on new urban housing.

This plan envisions the KK River becoming a major amenity for the area. The river corridor runs through the middle of the neighborhood and it has the potential to benefit many residential properties in terms of the added availability of recreational and open space amenities. The improved river environment also has the potential for increasing property values. Residential areas can also benefit from a “green streets” approach that can improve visual quality and pedestrian comfort on neighborhood streets, as outlined in Chapter 3 of this report.

Throughout the river rehabilitation and neighborhood planning processes, the TRC members have stressed the importance of ensuring that existing neighborhood residents benefit from the changes anticipated by the river rehabilitation project. This concern was the principal motivation for conducting the neighborhood planning process.

In order to maximize the benefits for the neighborhood a conceptual redevelopment and planning framework strategy is proposed for the neighborhood as indicated in Figure 2-7. The diagram indicates properties susceptible to change and priority areas for redevelopment activity, which may be new or rehabilitated construction.

One of the redevelopment areas is located along S. 13th St, between the river and Oklahoma Ave, which is envisioned as a potential neighborhood commercial street containing shops and services that serve the general neighborhood. Along this street potential neighborhood gateways (the dashed circles on the map) or activity nodes are indicated at the intersections of 13th and Lincoln and at 13th and Oklahoma marking the beginning and ending of what could become the neighborhood’s “main street.” A sense of gateway could be created by actual physical streetscape features that mark an entrance point or could consist of special building architecture elements. A gateway can also be created by a special activity oriented to pedestrians such as a sidewalk café or a pedestrian plaza or gathering area in these locations. Another node is suggested at the point where 13th Street crosses the KK River. This is the point where the trail and public space system associated with the river corridor meets up with the street and could be a location where special artwork, trail or nature signage, or small scale commercial retail activities (riverside café, bike shop, etc) could develop over time.

The other redevelopment sites indicated in Figure 2-7 (yellow areas within the red dashed line) are places where current uses may be expected to change over time due



to underutilization or obsolescence. There are existing residential areas adjacent to the redevelopment zones that are also included. These adjacent areas are envisioned as places where targeted efforts could be made to provide programs and funds to help property owners fix up existing homes. The importance of coupling both new property redevelopment and the rehabilitation of existing property is noted later in this document.

### C. Commercial Development

The neighborhood is served by several primary commercial corridors that bound or traverse the study area along Lincoln, Oklahoma and 13th. These corridors contain a mix of business types, some providing goods and services to the local trade area and others that, given their location along a busy traffic corridor, cater to a larger customer base. On-street parking is provided along the corridors while some businesses have small surface parking lots adjacent to the establishment.

Lincoln Avenue is the primary commercial center for the neighborhood. Stretching between 5th and 20th Streets, the Lincoln Village Business District is home to a collection of ethnic restaurants, specialty shops, and other unique businesses. The Lincoln Village Business Association is an active organization which oversees the operation and development of the district. The district is a Main Street Milwaukee and a Wisconsin Main Street community.

Oklahoma Avenue has some commercial development, primarily at block corners. Many of these are gas stations or auto related businesses. Businesses are interspersed with residences so there is not the same sense of a cohesive business district as found on Lincoln Avenue. Participants at public meetings mentioned that the levels and rate of traffic flow on Oklahoma tended to deter pedestrian access and comfort.

Thirteenth Street offers a collection of businesses concentrated primarily south of the river. Most businesses provide goods or services to the local neighborhood, including several taverns and restaurants. Concerns were raised during the public meetings regarding the number of bars and nature of some of the businesses, especially those featuring adult entertainment. The business corridor is conveniently located within the neighborhood as it is within walking distance of many residential areas. The portion of S. 13th St north of the river and south of Lincoln contains a few scattered businesses interspersed with mostly residential development. While there currently is no organized business association for the area, there has been some discussion in the community about such an effort.



*Businesses on Lincoln Avenue*



*Existing business corridor on S. 13th Street*



*Existing pedestrian bridge at a dead-end*



*Existing S. 9th Place vehicular bridge*

The neighborhood contains some industrial development located mostly between the rail corridor and Cleveland Avenue. Many of these uses appear to be in transition or decline and some of the properties could be considered potential sites for redevelopment.

## **D. Transportation and Circulation**

The neighborhood is served by a circulation grid that provides fairly easy access throughout the area, with a few notable exceptions. The street grid and alleys are interrupted at the river. Existing river crossings include four vehicular bridges and three pedestrian bridges between S. 6th St and S. 16th St. Alleys are also truncated at the river. While these dead-end conditions can allow for a quiet “cul-de-sac” character they also can become places where vandalism or crime can be a problem as there is a lack of access and surveillance by the general public and police. Three pedestrian bridges provide additional access at key points. Maintaining adequate north/south access across the river will be important as options for corridor modifications are considered. Quality visual design of new replacement bridges will be important, as these elements will become highly visible components of civic architecture in the area. There is also the potential to incorporate artwork or cultural/historical elements into the architecture of any newly designed bridges.

Bicycle circulation occurs in the neighborhood along city streets and sidewalks and along Manitoba Street, where the Oak Leaf Trail currently extends through the neighborhood. As the river corridor is re-imagined, there is the potential to incorporate additional bike trails within or along the green space. As the neighborhood becomes more bicycle-friendly consideration should be given for providing additional amenities such as bike racks, drinking fountains, and wayfinding signage to help improve usability and enjoyment of the bicycle system.

Due to the density and compactness of the neighborhood, pedestrian access is generally good. During public input sessions, residents indicated that many people do walk to local shops and public facilities. As noted earlier, north/south circulation is limited by the river corridor and also by the railroad line, which also has limited crossings. Crossing busy streets was mentioned as a problem, and traffic calming measures at key intersections should be considered for neighborhood improvements.

The neighborhood is served by public transit routes occurring along several major streets. As a lack of street parking was mentioned by residents during the planning process as a neighborhood concern, maintaining or increasing public transit access



and use by residents can be an important factor in reducing the need for auto use in the neighborhood. Consideration should be given for providing adequate bus shelters and other pedestrian amenities at key stops as a way to make the whole public transit experience more comfortable.

Residents mentioned several concerns regarding traffic and circulation in the neighborhood during the planning process. Excessive speeds reached by some drivers on east/west streets (Arthur, Harrison, Cleveland) was seen as a problem. Availability of street parking was also viewed as a problem.

## E. Parks and Open Space

The existing parks in the neighborhood most impacted by the new river rehabilitation include Robert J. Modrzejewski Playground (formerly Cleveland Park) and Pulaski Park and the adjacent Kinnickinnic Recreation Area. Other large area parks outside the planning area include Kosciuszko Park on Lincoln Avenue and Baran Park near Chase Avenue.

An inventory analysis map was prepared to identify areas of the neighborhood which are lacking public open space within a short walk or which are separated from a park by a barrier such as a major street or railroad corridor. Figure 2-9 shows the inventory map. Two principal areas were identified as lacking in park space: the southeast corner of the neighborhood near S. 6th St and Oklahoma Ave and the northeast corner near Lincoln Ave and S. 6th St. These parts of the neighborhood are greater than a 5-minute walk to Pulaski Park or Modrzejewski Playground, and are separated from other area parks by Lincoln Avenue to the north and S. 6th Street and S. Chase Ave on the east. Also, the lack of pedestrian crossings over the sunken railroad corridor make the south side of the neighborhood especially isolated from recreational opportunities. The dense neighborhood does not currently have a fabric of smaller neighborhood parks where children can play close to home. This leads many children to play in the streets.

The playgrounds associated with some of the nearby schools, such as Hayes Bilingual School, do not provide much green space. There is a general lack of green space outside of Pulaski Park and the private cemeteries in the neighborhood (which with their large trees and expansive green provide a visual break but are not accessible for active or passive recreation).

The existing bike trail that goes through the neighborhood is the Oak Leaf trail, operated by Milwaukee County Parks. The trail follows the KK Parkway between S.



*Children playing at the edge of the river bank*



*Play structure at Hayes Bilingual School*



Figure 2-9. Neighborhood park inventory analysis map



27th and S. 20th Streets, is briefly off the street through the KK Recreation Area, and then follows streets to the east. Many residents expressed an interest in providing off-street bike paths due to the safety issues associated with kids biking in the busy narrow streets. The City is currently planning to extend a new bike trail system, the KK River Trail, along the KK River from S. 6th St to the east along the south bank.

Several residents expressed concern that there are no good places in the neighborhood to walk or run dogs. The parks do not allow dogs and there are no alternatives nearby for people to take their dogs for outdoor recreation.

Another desire expressed by residents was for space to introduce urban agriculture or community gardens.

### **MODRZEJEWSKI PLAYGROUND**

Modrzejewski Playground is owned and operated by MPS as a playground, and Hayes Bilingual School often uses it as an outdoor classroom. The existing park is surrounded by a large chain-link fence and for safety reasons is not connected to the concrete-lined river channel which abuts its north edge. The north half of the park is primarily asphalt, and many residents felt that this area is unattractive and underutilized.

The shelter at Modrzejewski Playground is in the center of the park and is not easily seen from the street, so it can be a hangout for gangs and illegal/dangerous activities. The building has restrooms and some storage used by the park programs but no other amenities or accessible areas.

The playground has a small splash pool and umbrella, a relatively new play structure, and nearby swings. According to the MPS facility staff, the splash pool gets a lot of use and is popular with neighborhood families. There are also basketball courts, which some neighbors have complained can be a gathering space for teenagers and after-dark activities as well as fights.

The baseball diamond and field on the south end of Modrzejewski Playground is primarily used by MPS programs for activities like kickball.

During the conceptual alternatives phase, the project team looked at several options for reconfiguring and reconnecting Modrzejewski Playground to the river as well as the neighborhood around it. The new greenway will provide a new opportunity for connection to the park space and open it up for educational and recreational opportunities that it previously lacked.



*Modrzejewski Playground asphalt area and shelter*



*Modrzejewski Playground swings*



*Three initial Modrzejewski Playground concepts with varying emphasis on recreation fields, natural spaces, and urban gathering spaces*

The property is lined with mature street trees which is an amenity that should be maintained. However, the area that is currently paved with asphalt does not provide valuable open space benefits.

The concepts looked at incorporating mixed-use ball fields which could accommodate both baseball and soccer as well as unprogrammed open space for playing frisbee or similar activities.

The team also considered public gathering spaces such as an outdoor classroom/informal amphitheater along the river bank, picnic areas, and plaza spaces for a farmer's market or local art fair.

Other potential amenities for the playground considered include natural areas with winding paths, enhanced/increased parking, an expanded spray park and playground, and a new relocated shelter.

A few residents, upon hearing of potential plans for an amphitheater, were concerned about noise levels in the park and the potential to attract too many people for concerts. This fear may have had something to do with the connotation of an amphitheater being a noisy place with amplified music rather than a gentle stepped slope where children could gather with their teachers on field trips and learn about the river or where a local ethnic dance group could perform.



## PULASKI PARK

Pulaski Park offers a wide expanse of open space in an otherwise dense neighborhood, with plenty of mature tree cover, rolling terrain, and a visual connection with the river. It also houses an indoor pool (Pulaski Pool), a softball field and mixed-used recreational fields, tennis and basketball courts, a playground, and winding walkways and paths. The major street running along the east side of Pulaski Park, S. 16th St, is a wide busy street with no continuous pedestrian path or sidewalk along the park side. The terrain in the park creates somewhat of a barrier between the park and S. 16th St in places.

The large flat multi-use ball/soccer field north of the river is bare of grass and consequently dusty, as the lawn is over-utilized and under-maintained. The tennis courts had no nets or broken nets on them at the time of this report in summer of 2009, and children were using them for playing baseball and other non-tennis-related activities.

The only pedestrian bridge that crosses the river in Pulaski Park is flanked on one side by a steep hill and stairs, and on one occasion we observed a family riding bikes down the stairs to the bridge to cross over.

Adjacent to the river is a good-sized playground and basketball courts. These amenities will likely need to be flood-proofed due to the potential need for additional flood storage.

Opportunities for improvement in Pulaski Park primarily relate to maintenance of facilities such as the tennis courts and recreation field, and better pedestrian and bicycle connections to and through the park. The flood management and river rehabilitation project MMSD is proposing will provide opportunity for better pedestrian and bicycle connections and access. It is also predicted to result in the need for a new pedestrian bridge.



*Pulaski Park pedestrian bridge with stairs leading to the softball field and service building*



*Pulaski Park mixed-use recreation field north of the river and tennis courts (on hill)*



*A family enjoying a picnic in the KK Recreation Area (the KK River is located behind the dense vegetation)*



*Existing asphalt trail along the KK Parkway*

## KINNICKINNIC RECREATION AREA AND PARKWAY

Also owned and operated by Milwaukee County, the nearby KK Recreation Area and KK Parkway provide additional green space and recreational facilities for the neighborhood and the greater area. Some of the same problems seen in Pulaski Park are evident in these areas due to lack of available funds for maintenance and improvements. The four tennis courts that reside near the KK Parkway sit empty and overgrown with no nets. The archery range also appears to be suffering from lack of maintenance.

The vegetation along the river's edge is so dense that someone walking in the KK Recreation Area would not know there is a river adjacent to the park. This wall of vegetation currently serves as a barrier between the park and the concrete-lined channel, and it poses an impediment to visual connection with the river.

Many long-time residents of the neighborhood expressed fond memories for the days before the river was channelized when there was a lagoon in the area behind Pulaski High School which included a waterfall and swimming hole. These residents felt strongly that the new rehabilitated river should include some semblance of that former lagoon.

The Oak Leaf Trail is located on the KK Parkway between S. 20th and S. 27th Streets. There is an opportunity to provide an off-street parallel trail for bicyclists and pedestrians in the land adjacent to the street that would allow for separation between vehicle traffic and bicycle/pedestrian traffic. There is currently a narrow asphalt trail along a portion of the Parkway which could be replaced with a wider mixed-use trail more suitable for commuters. The need for more off-street bike paths in the neighborhood was a comment expressed by a number of residents at the meetings.

The new river corridor through this parkway area will provide added benefits to the already green passive-recreation open area, and will create new opportunities for recreation associated with the river as well as river views which currently are obstructed by vegetation.