

Bassett Creek Nature Area

Location: 2130 Zane Avenue

Nature Area Size: 7.61 Acres

Description

Bassett Creek Nature Area is a medium sized nature area that is centrally located, and provides a great connection between neighborhoods and commercial areas. It is located between residential neighborhoods on the north end near Vale Crest Road and Zane Avenue, and commercial areas on the south end along Duluth Street. The west side of the park abuts residential homes, while the east side is adjacent to a Minnesota Department of Transportation truck station and an office building.

While the nature area is not considered large, it provides an important function by serving as a natural corridor along Bassett Creek, which is one of the primary features within the nature area. The adjacent uplands contain numerous specimen oak trees, and are a great example of the historic hardwood forests that were present in Golden Valley prior to settlement.

The Bassett Creek Nature Area is separated by Bassett Creek, which flows from south to north through the nature area. It is Bassett Creek Nature Area's primary feature. Much of the Bassett Creek shoreline has been stabilized for erosion control. A storm water pond is partially located within the park on the north side. This pond treats water from Vale Crest Road prior to discharge into Bassett Creek. Access at the north side of the nature area is from Vale Crest Road or Zane Avenue. From Duluth Street, the park can be entered through a single trail and stairway. At the top of the stairway, the trail splits into an upper and lower segment, which joins at the north side to make small loop. The lower trail segment provides several vantage points in close proximity of the creek. The upper trail takes a higher path along the wooded area, and has views of the nature area, but also runs along a fenced property line. A picnic area is present on the northwest side of the park, and contains regularly mowed lawn and a few park amenities including as waste receptacle, picnic table, and educational sign. Bassett Creek separates the picnic area from the rest of the Nature Area.

Forest and Woodlands

The majority of Bassett Creek Nature Area is wooded. Along Bassett Creek, the woods are floodplain forest, dominated by mature box elder, silver maple, green ash, and American elm

trees. The eastern half of the park is located in a natural bluff, which is dominated by several very old bur oak trees, and other native hardwoods. The top of the bluff area is sparser, but also contains about 50% cover of native and nonnative hardwoods. The western portion of the park contains a number of large oak trees, and may also be part of an oak savanna along the edge of the historic floodplain.

Buckthorn is prevalent along the bluff, and up to the edges of the creek, but is generally composed of younger individuals, and is at a relatively low density.

Aquatic Resources

Bassett Creek flows through the park, and is visible from numerous vantage points. The creek has been protected with a combination of stone and native vegetation to provide bank stability and erosion control. The channel also splits within the nature area to provide a small hardwood swamp island.

Wetlands

There is wetland along Bassett Creek, which is composed of a wooded swamp as part of the floodplain. The wetland floods during storm events, and is also near the water table, which assists in inhibiting buckthorn establishment. On the north side of the park, near the picnic area, there is an area that lacks trees and has developed into a shrub swamp. This is a moderate quality area for the composition of the vegetation, but it provides for diversity in habitat, and the dense shrubs protect the banks and slow down flows during flood events.

Prairie and Grassland

In addition to the wooded portions of the park, there are areas of prairie on the north side, associated with the creek and a berm around the storm water pond. The areas were planted recently and are currently being managed and maintained by a native landscaping company to ensure their success.

The eastern portion of the park, at the top of the bluff, contains approximately 50% cover by mixed grassland species, approximately half is composed of native species.

Invasive Species

Within the nature area, the woods include a large percentage of common buckthorn, particularly on the slopes along Bassett Creek. Buckthorn density has increased since the 2004 inventory.

Reed canary grass is also present along the creek, but is mixed with native species, and is limited due to shading from large trees and shrubs.

Table 5.3 Invasive Species Cover Percent Change 2003-2013			
Description	%Cover2003	% Cover 2013	% Change
Common Buckthorn	30	50	+20

Site Recommendations

Natural Resources

Manage buckthorn (high priority)

Buckthorn is prevalent along the east bank of the creek and within the wooded areas. It is a relatively young age of buckthorn, but numerous small individuals are present. The native understory remains present, which provides an opportunity for both management of buckthorn, and encouragement of a native assemblage which is discourage buckthorn establishment.

Enhance the hardwood uplands (medium priority)

The wooded slope between the two trail levels contains numerous mature oak trees, and some younger desirable hardwoods. In conjunction with buckthorn removal, the hardwood uplands could be enhanced through selective removal and reestablishment of more desirable species. Currently, there is insufficient age structure to allow replacement of the largest trees when they die of natural causes. A balanced age class would ensure that this high quality wooded area remains healthy.

Stabilize erosion along bluff (Medium Priority)

Stormwater runoff and erosion along the wooded bluffs in the Nature Area have formed several small channels, some of which have been stabilized through placement of concrete. These areas can be stabilized by diverting the concentrated flows that are causing the erosion, and reestablishing and revegetating the slopes, which will also improve the visual appeal.

Reestablish oak savanna (low priority)

The southeast portion of the park, near the upper trail, contains an area that is a mixture of grassland and small hardwood trees. Several bur oak trees are present, but most of the trees

are of lesser quality. It is possible to remove some of the undesirable trees, and establish an area of prairie with fewer oak trees, and manage a small area of oak savanna.

Amenities

Install entry signs (high priority)

Bassett Creek Nature Area has no entry signs. Signs should be installed at each of the main entrances using approved style type. This would be particularly beneficial on the south side, as Duluth Street provides high visibility, even if access is limited.

Install pet waste disposal system (high priority)

Bassett Creek Nature Area should include waste disposal systems for their dogs; one at each main entry. This not only keeps the park clean and attractive but it helps to maintain the water quality of Bassett Creek.

Improve physical access (high priority)

One of the primary deficiencies of the Bassett Creek Nature Area is that it is not easily accessible from one side of Bassett Creek to the other and has an existing trail system that may limit use by people with disabilities. The trail system should be improved to allow greater user access. This may include rerouting the lower trail to avoid having to use the steep stairs, and allow greater opportunity to access the creek and the Nature Area. The City should continue to work with MnDOT to improve drainage and runoff into the Nature Area.

Improve visual access (high priority)

Another deficiency of the Bassett Creek Nature Area is that it is visible from only a few public areas, and is potentially overlooked due to lack of recognition that the area is there and public use is encouraged. More formal trailheads on the north side both from Zane Avenue and Vale Crest Road and from Duluth Street on the south side would help to make the nature area more visible. This can be done by installing entry signs and other trailhead amenities (See specific amenity options above.)

Upgrade bench (medium priority)

The bench within the nature area on the Duluth side of the nature area is functional but worn and should be replaced. An additional bench should be installed on the north side. Both should adhere with an approved bench style for nature areas. This would provide visual continuity

within the nature area system and also strengthen user distinction that Bassett Creek is a nature area versus a recreational park.

Install trash/recyclable receptacle (medium priority)

The trash receptacle is one of the first amenities viewed upon entering the nature area. As such, it should not only provide maintenance functionality and efficiency but should also be attractive and reflect the image of the Bassett Creek Nature Area. They should be located within the nature area; one on the north side on Zane Ave North and the other at Vale Crest Road and one at the Duluth Street Entry.

Install interpretive sign (low)

There are opportunities to educate the user on a number of topics including wildlife habitat, water quality protection of Bassett Creek and buckthorn removal and native woodland restoration.

Table 5.4 Bassett Creek Nature Area Improvement Priorities

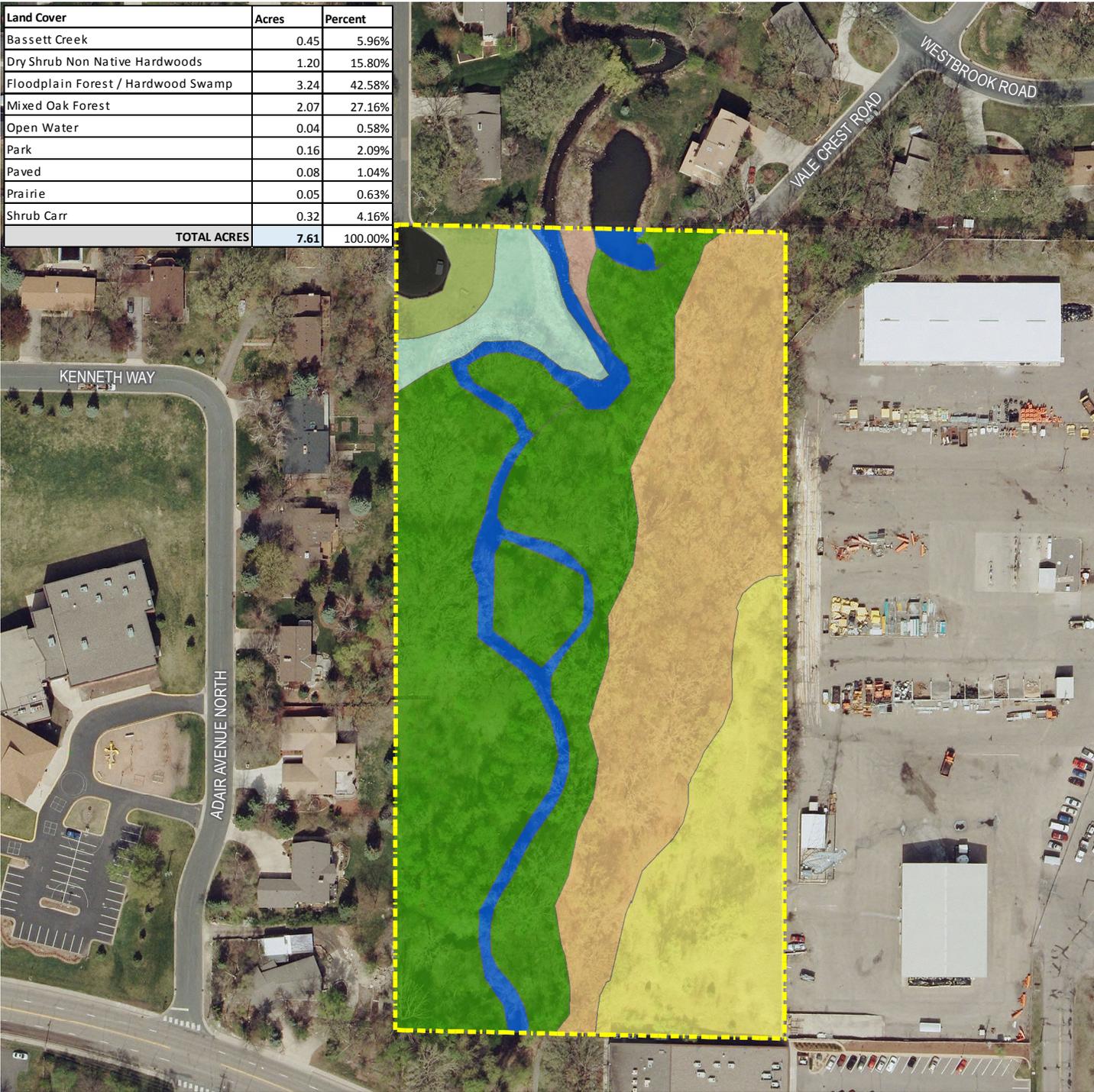
Priority (H, M, L)	Management Type	Description	Action	Qty	Unit	Unit Cost	Cost Opinion
High	Floodplain forest, and adjacent slopes	Mixed hardwoods	Remove/control buckthorn	5	Acre	\$2,000	\$10,000
Medium	Mixed hardwoods, east side	Forest health, diversity	Remove undesirable trees, establish mixed age-class of oak trees	4	Acre	\$2,500	\$10,000
Medium	Erosion Control	Restore eroded slope	Regrade erosional channels along the bluff and address concrete fill	0.10	Acre	\$20,000	\$2,000
Low	Forestry	Restore native community	Reestablish oak savanna	4	Acre	\$5,000	\$20,000
High	Amenity	Entry sign design continuity through nature area system and make nature area more visible to the public	Install signs at entry points	3	Each	\$5,000	\$15,000
High	Amenity/Trail Access	Improve physical access	Formalize public use of trail across LOGIS				NA

			property at Duluth St entrance through easement/agreement				
High	Amenity/Trail Access	Improve physical access	Reroute lower trail, consider pavement improvements	500	Linear Feet	\$125	\$70,000*
Medium	Amenity	Natural resources education; design continuity throughout nature area system	Install additional interpretive sign along the creek	1	Each	*\$3,000	\$3,000
Medium	Amenity	Bench design continuity throughout nature area system	Install new benches along the trail at appropriate intervals or at key viewpoints	4	Each	\$1,500	\$6,000
Medium	Amenity	Trash/recyclable receptacle design continuity throughout nature area system	Install waste/ recyclable trash receptacle at entries	3	Each	\$2,000	\$6,000
Medium	Amenity	Pet waste disposal system at key access point	Install new pet waste disposal system	3	Each	\$600	\$1,800

*Does not include design fees



Land Cover	Acres	Percent
Bassett Creek	0.45	5.96%
Dry Shrub Non Native Hardwoods	1.20	15.80%
Floodplain Forest / Hardwood Swamp	3.24	42.58%
Mixed Oak Forest	2.07	27.16%
Open Water	0.04	0.58%
Park	0.16	2.09%
Paved	0.08	1.04%
Prairie	0.05	0.63%
Shrub Carr	0.32	4.16%
TOTAL ACRES	7.61	100.00%



Legend

Nature Area Boundary

Land Cover

Bassett Creek

Open Water

Shrub Carr

Dry Shrub Non Native Hardwoods

Floodplain Forest / Hardwood Swamp

Mixed Oak Forest

Park

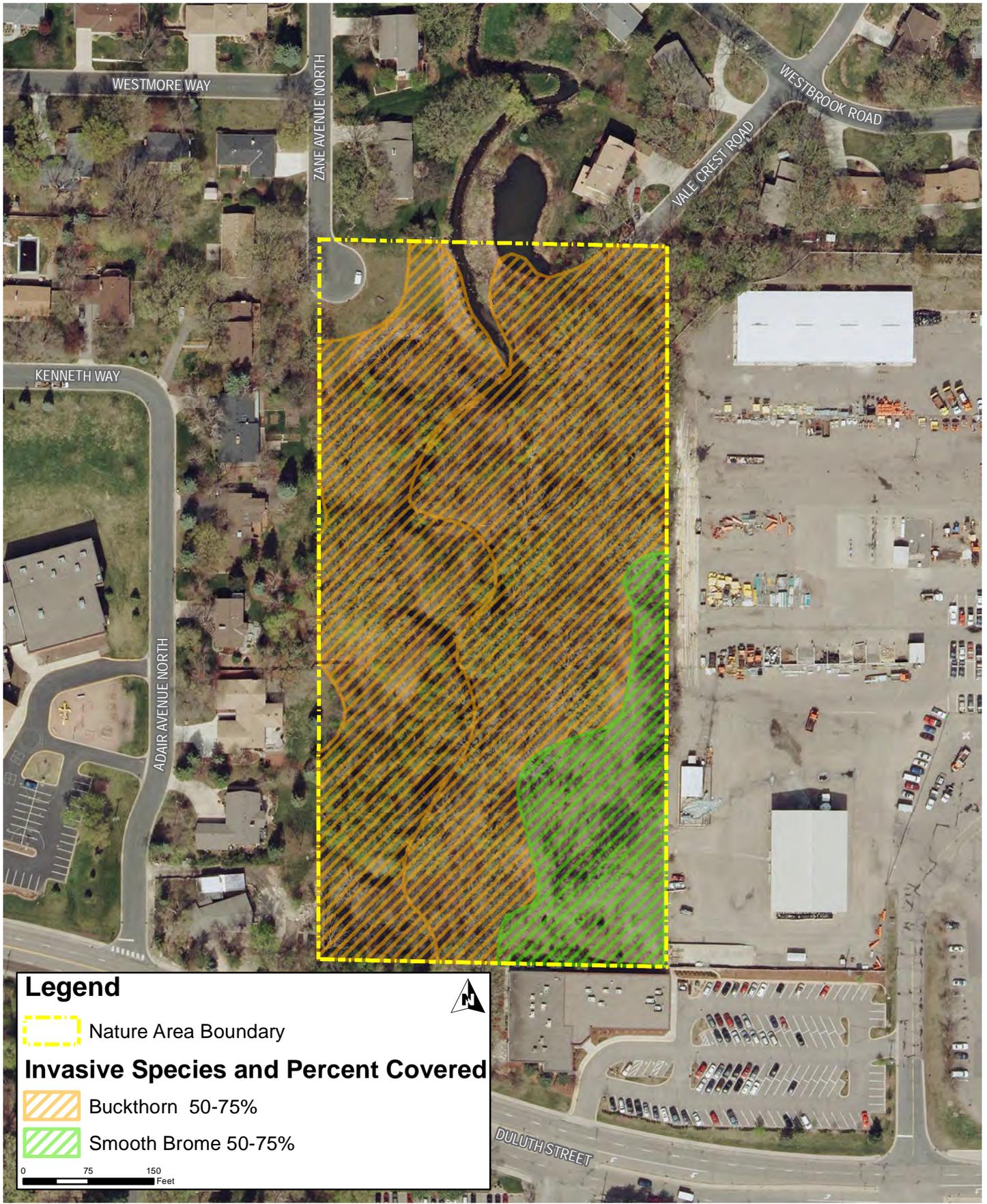
Paved

Prairie



Basset Creek Nature Area - Land Cover
Golden Valley Natural Resources Management Plan

FIGURE 5.8



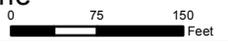


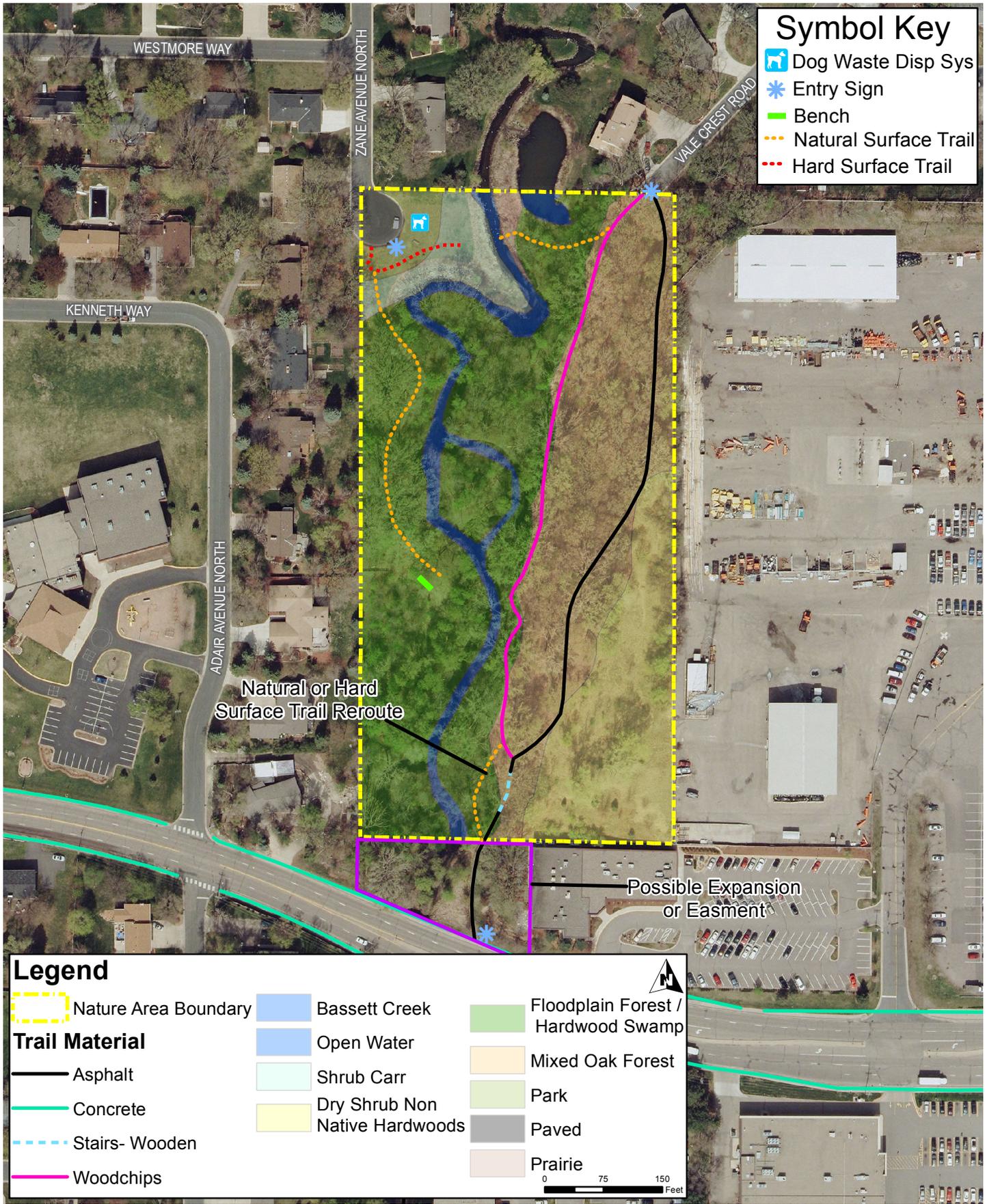
Symbol Key

- Pedestrian Access
- Educational Sign
- Bench
- Social Trail
- Picnic Table
- View
- Trash Receptable

Legend

Nature Area Boundary	Concrete Pavers	Land Cover	Floodplain Forest / Hardwood Swamp
Trail Material	Limestone	Bassett Creek	Mixed Oak Forest
Asphalt	Stairs	Open Water	Park
Boardwalk	Stairs- Wooden	Shrub Carr	Paved
Concrete	Woodchips	Dry Shrub Non Native Hardwoods	Prairie





Symbol Key

-  Dog Waste Disp Sys
-  Entry Sign
-  Bench
-  Natural Surface Trail
-  Hard Surface Trail

Legend

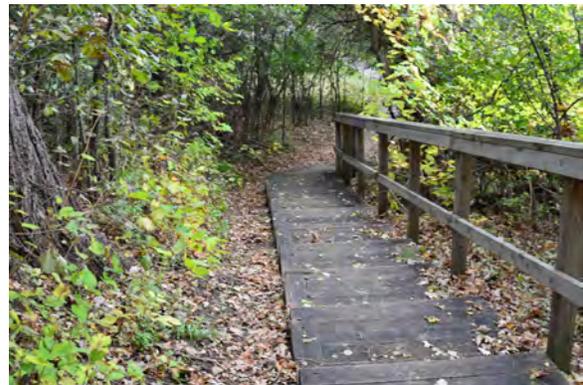
 Nature Area Boundary	 Bassett Creek	 Floodplain Forest / Hardwood Swamp
Trail Material	 Open Water	 Mixed Oak Forest
 Asphalt	 Shrub Carr	 Park
 Concrete	 Dry Shrub Non Native Hardwoods	 Paved
 Stairs- Wooden	 Prairie	
 Woodchips		

0 75 150 Feet

Bassett Creek Nature Area - Photographs



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