

**Relocation Study  
for  
Public Works Operations  
Linden Yards and the Impound Lot  
for the  
Bassets Creek Redevelopment Plan**

**Executive Summary**

**PURPOSE:**

The City of Minneapolis Impound Lot and Linden Yards Sites are currently located in the Bassett Creek Valley (BCV) area (see Figure 1 – Location Map and Figure 2 – Detailed Location Map) that is being proposed for re-development by the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED).

The Public Works Department (with the Police Department and CPED) was given the task of identifying program needs of the impacted City operations within the BCV area, analyze those areas affected by redevelopment, and explore potential new business models related to relocation of the Impound Lot and Linden Yards. This report is intended to update and supplement the original “Appraisals, Relocation and Operations Analysis of the Impound Lot, Concrete Crushing, and Linden Yards Operations Storage Report” submitted to City Council in March of 2001 (see Attachment A - 2001 Operational Analysis).

Ryan Companies was selected by CPED through an RFP process for the commercial and residential re-development of the BCV area. The City Council directed CPED and Ryan Co. to prepare information and budgetary costs estimates in regards to development of the BCV area in preparation for a final City Council briefing in 2009.

**EXISTING CITY SERVICES:**

Impound Lot: The Impound Lot site and facilities serve three primary functions: 1) General Impounding (Illegal parking, abandoned vehicles, snow emergencies, street sweeping, etc.) 2) Police Impounding (Traffic violations and vehicles being held for evidence for potential criminal prosecution), and 3) Forensic Evidence collection and processing associated with Police impounded vehicles.

Linden Yards (West): The western half of the Linden Yards site serves as a central construction materials storage yard for various Department of PW Maintenance and Construction Divisions. Linden Yards West is also utilized for parking of impound vehicles in a snow emergencies.

Linden Yards (East): The eastern half of the Linden Yards site is utilized for recycling of concrete that is utilized as base material for new roadway construction.

## **PREMISE:**

This study was conducted with the idea that the multiple City of Minneapolis functions, located at the two Sites in the BCV area, will be relocated within one (1) to five (5) years.

The phasing for development of the BCV as proposed by CPED indicates that the first area impacted would be Linden Yards. This property is directly adjacent to Interstate Highway 394 and is assumed to have high value and marketability for redevelopment. The first phase of development would affect Linden Yards (West) (see Figure 3 – West/East Linden Yards). This area is defined as that portion of Linden Yards directly west of the proposed Van White Memorial Boulevard alignment. The second phase of the proposed development would impact Linden Yards (East) thus the remaining portion of Linden Yards, east of Van White Memorial Boulevard. The final phase of development would impact the Impound Lot east of Van White Memorial Boulevard. While the remaining portion of the Impound Lot, west of Van White Memorial Boulevard is proposed as dedicated park space.

## **ASSUMPTIONS:**

The functions of the Impound Lot and Linden Yards provide valuable services to the City and its residents, and it is assumed that the City will stay in these lines of business for the foreseeable future.

It is also assumed that the cost of relocation will be offset by the sale of the existing City properties and be detailed in the development plan. Operating departments will not be asked to finance any of the relocation costs. Additionally, any increases in operating costs associated with operating in new business models (such as multiple locations) will be addressed in the development plan. Increases in vehicle impounding costs to the public as a result of development, relocation, and/or reorganization, were not considered as part of this report.

## **OPPORTUNITIES:**

In examining the business requirements of the various operations at the Impound Lot and Linden Yards, PW staff looked at deficiencies in our current operations, industry best practices, strategic planning for space use efficiency, and technology improvements to business systems that allow for the use of less land and improving services to the public. In addition, opportunities for alternative business models to the various operations were considered while studying program needs, including consolidations with other City operations, and exploring partnerships with other Municipalities.

## **CHALLENGES:**

Many of same challenges are the same as they were in 2001, such as zoning requirements limit relocation options, the costs associated with relocation, and the potential for higher long term operating costs.

The potential relocation of the Impound Lot and Linden Yards operations is a complicated task. Finding suitable sites for the various operations, which are properly zoned (Industrial, I2, and I3) is difficult. The City of Minneapolis zoning code covering Crushing Operations requires a site that is zoned I3. The Impound Lot and Linden Yards functions require either I2 zoning. Available industrial properties within the City are limited, with property zoned I3 generally located along rail corridors in far northeast or far south Minneapolis. In almost all cases the acquisition of a suitable I3 zoned site would require the relocation of an existing private business, resulting in increased acquisition costs.

Desirable sites need to be on major transportation networks suitable for heavy trucks, tow trucks and public transportation (Impound Lot) Possible sites must allow for compliance with current building codes, including landscaping and stormwater regulations, which require additional space and infrastructure that is not part of current operations. Sites will require different levels of security and fenced perimeters while also attempting to manage visual blight.

A major concern to the City, as a result the BCV Development, is the potential increase of ongoing operating costs. The centralized location of the Impound Lot and Linden Yards allows the City to realize significant transportation efficiencies. The Department of Public Works (PW) and the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) do not currently have funding for relocation or reorganization of any functions currently located in the BCV area. There are also no budgetary allowances for possible increased operational costs that may be a result of the BCV development. City Departments affected by the BCV development have the expectation “of being made whole” throughout the process of development, while not incurring any considerable budgetary loss.

### **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:**

In addition to the proposed re-development of the BCV by CPED (and Ryan Co.) the area is also affected by proposals for the Cedar Lake Bike Trail and the proposed alignment of the Southwest Commuter Rail line. The Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRRA) has expressed some interest in the BCV property for future rail car storage. Unfortunately, at this point, further information regarding the bike trail, rail alignment, or location for rail car storage is unknown.

### **SUMMARY:**

The conclusion of this study is that the existing City services located in the BCV area can be relocated, reorganized and improved.

The Impound Lot was studied, with the premise that new sites that are properly configured provided opportunities for business improvements to use less land, improve the working conditions for staff, to serve the public in a more efficient and hospitable manner, and to manage the visual blight. However a new site, or multiple sites, may use less land but may also ultimately cost more to operate. Many of same challenges are the same as they were in 2001, such as zoning requirements limit relocation options, the costs associated with relocation, and the potential for higher long term operating costs. However opportunities for improved business models were

openly considered. If relocated, in addition to being properly zoned, sites will need to be on public transportation routes.

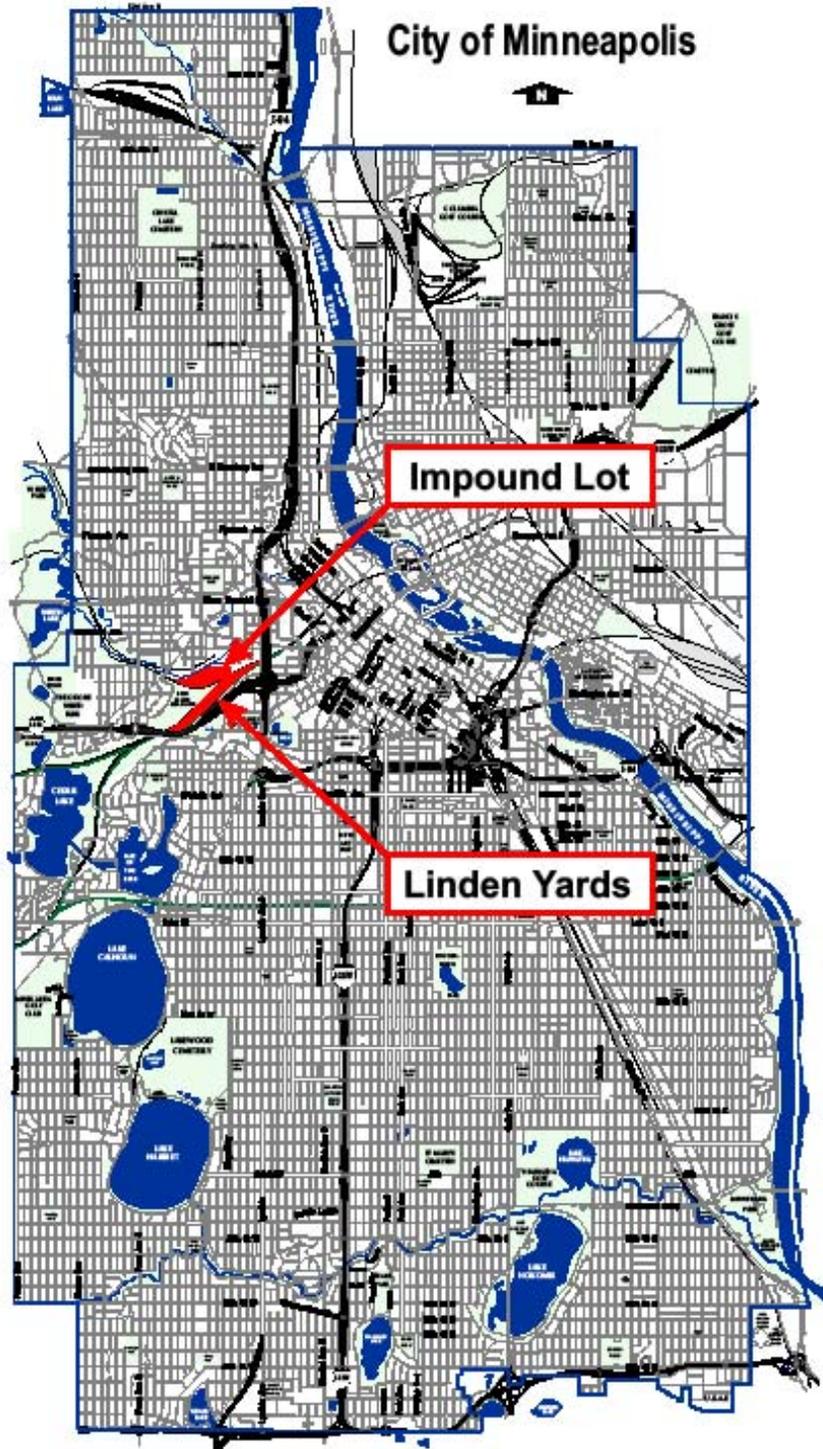
Using less land by towing fewer vehicles was also discussed. There are several strategies that can be pursued but any significant reduction would require a significant change in operations associated with snow plowing and available parking during snow events.

Impound Lot Relocation Options: Six (6) different Relocation Options were considered and studied (to some extent). A single centralized site and centralized management structure is preferred by the Public Works and Police Department as this option does not add to existing operating costs. This option is the most difficult to find a suitable site due to the size of the site needed. If this option can't be accommodated, and multiple sites are needed, both departments prefer the option that combined the long term Police holds with a newly acquired Property and Evidence warehouse facility and site (included in the 2010 to 2014 Capital Improvement Program). This option leverages the existing staff of the Police Department. This option provides better potential for usable sites and the additional operating costs of separate sites is significantly less than other multiple site options.

Relocation Options for Linden Yards: The central location, convenience and flexibility of a single site that Linden Yards has provided Public Works departments is advantageous but not required.

The land used for construction materials stored on Linden Yards West can be significantly reduced in size, relocated to multiple smaller sites, and even be nomadic or lease a portion of the space as needed. New sites must be strategically located to reduce transport costs. It is also desirable for Public Works to implement an Inventory Management System for all on-site storage materials.

The size of the current Linden Yards East site has allowed for the crushing to be done in a single cycle during winter months. The function could operate on a smaller site with small volumes of material processed at a time with several crushing cycles throughout the year. A smaller, properly zoned site can work but any site under 5 acres is not recommended to meet the City's needs (large volume). Discontinuing the service and acquiring aggregate material from private sources was also studied. The net result would be an increase in costs for trucking and paying retail prices for the aggregate that total an estimated \$600,000 per year.



**Figure 1: Location Map**

# Linden Yards Site Plan

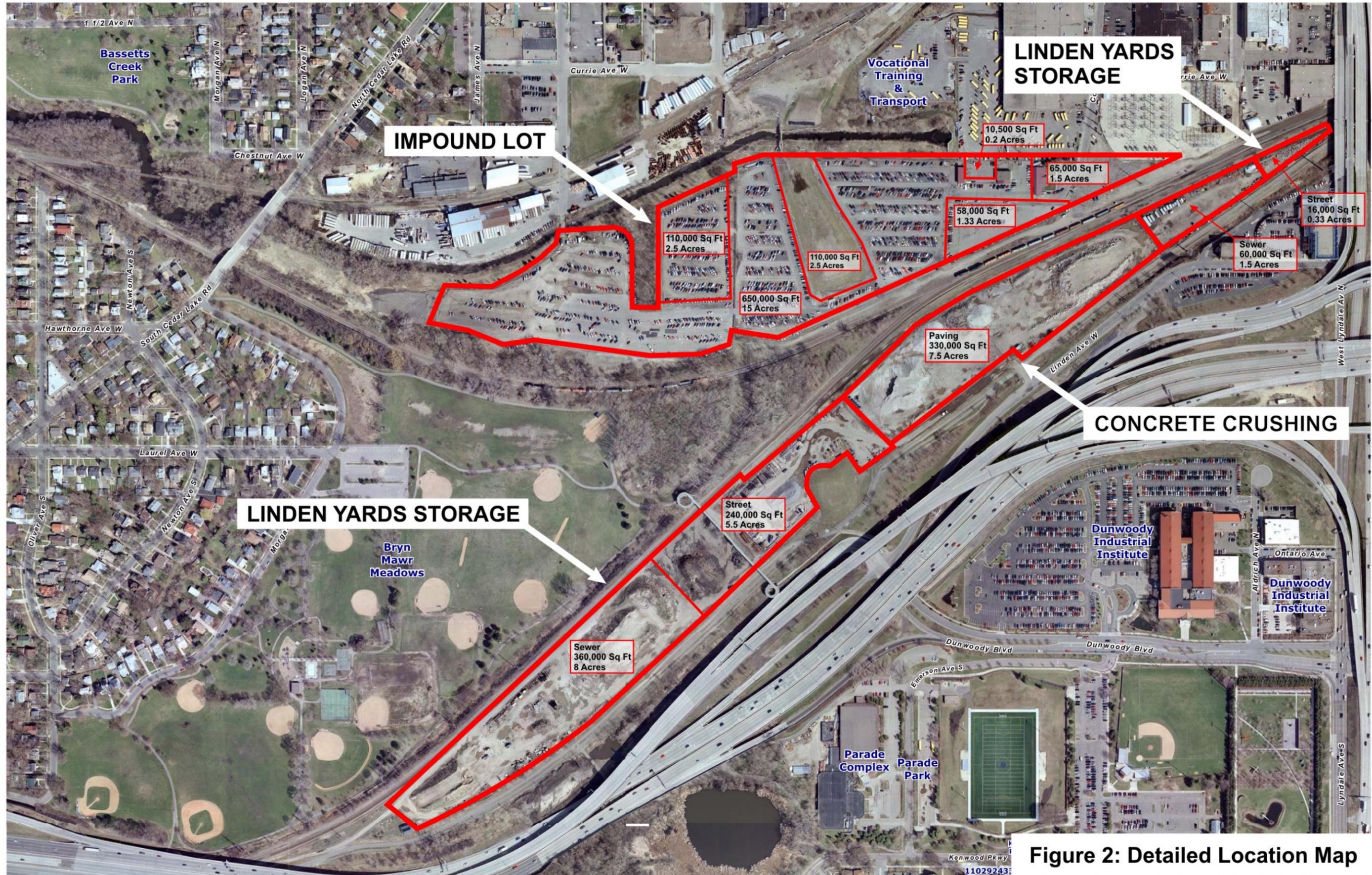


Figure 2: Detailed Location Map

# West Linden Yards / East Linden Yards

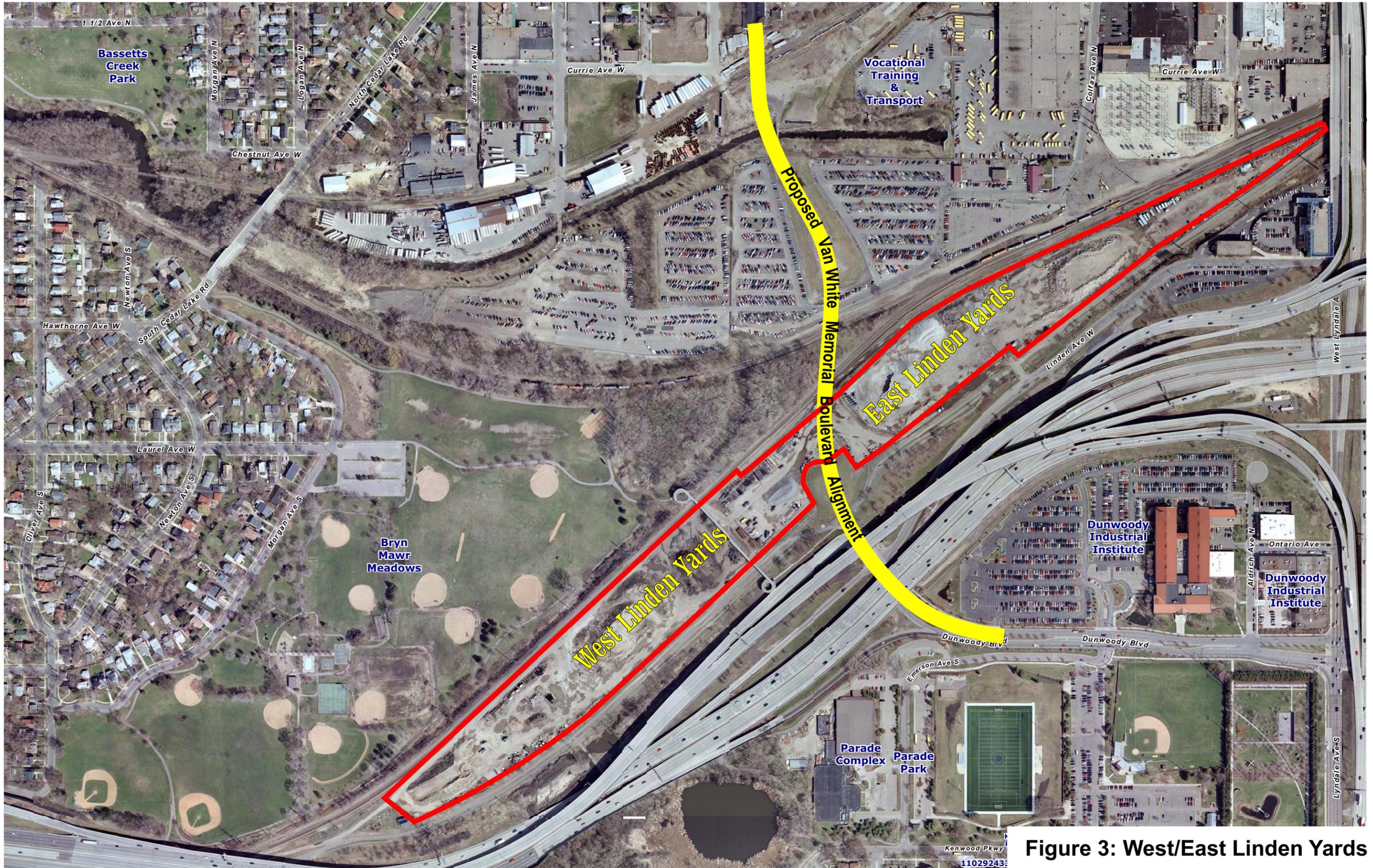


Figure 3: West/East Linden Yards