



## **City of Burnsville's 50th Anniversary**

**Burnsville's Early History as an  
Incorporated City**

# The Battle for Black Dog



THE BLOOMINGTON

## SUN-suburbanite

VOL. 14 NO. 34 THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 1961 52 PAGES National Foreign Countries PRICE 10c 800 Lincoln Ave. Bloomington, Wisconsin THURSDAY, AUG. 24, 1961

State's Largest Weekly

### Black Dog Becomes Part Of Bloomington City Will Seek Merger With Burnsville

#### BURNSVILLE

#### Some Lovely Smokestacks

#### NSP'S BLACK DOG

A group of Bloomington administrative officials, headed by Mayor Ray Gustafson, met with the leaders of Wisconsin's largest weekly newspaper, the Sun-Suburbanite, last night to discuss the city's plan to merge with Burnsville.

The group also will discuss the city's plan to merge with Burnsville, a town of 10,000 people, and to acquire the Black Dog power plant.

The city would be Bloomington and Burnsville's 25 square miles would be part of it.

Bloomington, which joined with the village and village after its city council Tuesday for the first time in plan to include 100% of the Black Dog plant within its boundaries.

Legal machinery for merger of the two cities is under way in Madison, and a preliminary plan is being prepared for the city council to be held in Burnsville in the next few days. The plan is to merge with Burnsville in the next few days.

When the plan is approved, the city council will hold a public hearing on the plan. The plan is to merge with Burnsville in the next few days.

Following these discussions, the city council will hold a public hearing on the plan.

No actual district changes are proposed. The consolidation would affect only the tax jurisdiction.

Annexing a \$15,000 loan, average tax in the merged city would rise to \$27 annually for all urban services, the benefit points out.

If combined, the community would have some \$100,000 in

debt, the fourth highest total in the state. In an area of 80 square miles larger than either Minneapolis or St. Paul.

In addition, the consolidated city would have a strong economic base, "one that could become the strongest of any in the metropolitan area by 1965."

The merger presented three specific examples of how people residing in Burnsville will benefit from the proposed consolidation:

1. Slow removal of growth to keep down city and school district taxes.

2. Installation of a fully equipped fire station, including fire insurance rates.

3. Complete police coverage for adults.

4. Excellent recreation program for adults and children alike.

5. Comprehensive building controls and inspection.

6. Comprehensive health services.

7. Efficiently organized, non-partisan council-manager government.

8. Low costs for all services.

9. A complete water, sewer, storm sewer, drainage and road plan laid out for the entire area, starting with its present development for the most economical system.

In ending up its plan, the council concludes that "there is little doubt that the merger is in the best interests of the community."

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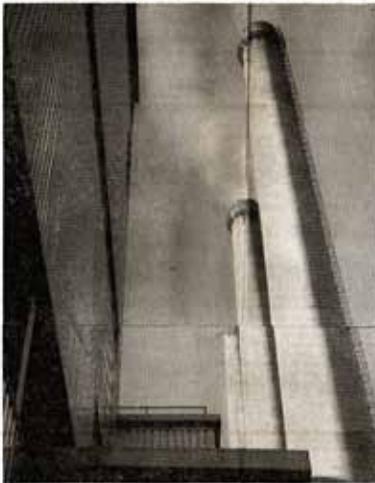
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THESE STACKS STAND looking toward the city of the Black Dog plant, immediately south of the Wisconsin river, and

Bloomington added the use of the Black Dog plant to its inventory Tuesday—and a cost \$100,000,000 in its total property value.

The city did it by acquiring Burnsville. Power's ag- gressive Black Dog plant.

All a special meeting Tuesday approved the merger of Bloomington and Burnsville. The city did it by acquiring Burnsville. Power's ag- gressive Black Dog plant.

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to the Black Dog plant. The plant was, and remains, a part of Burnsville. The city did it by acquiring Burnsville. Power's ag- gressive Black Dog plant.

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#### Black Dog: How It Affects You

Here is how the acquisition of Black Dog will affect the average taxpayer with a \$12,000 home.

The present taxes for municipal services now run about \$72 a year under the 10 and 10% rule. This has been reduced to 22 mills, but the present municipal taxes will be \$22.

Present assessments for street lighting and maintenance will add another \$16-\$18 annually to the tax bill. The annual tax saving on a \$12,000 home then, will come to about \$15 a year.

The same home will pay about \$10 to street and sewer assessments, as well as the cost of the Black Dog acquisition will be to the sewer and water assessment charges to be paid.

As a byproduct of the acquisition, the city has prepared and sent to the state municipal commission a proposal to merge Bloomington with neighboring Burnsville.

Such a merger would provide a substantial community of some 110,000 people, the largest in the state.

At the same time, the city would be able to provide a stronger effort to provide the services to be provided.

Then after a year of administrative and financial study, the city's staff and several representatives of the Black Dog will likely be part of Bloomington.

The city did it by acquiring Burnsville. Power's ag- gressive Black Dog plant.

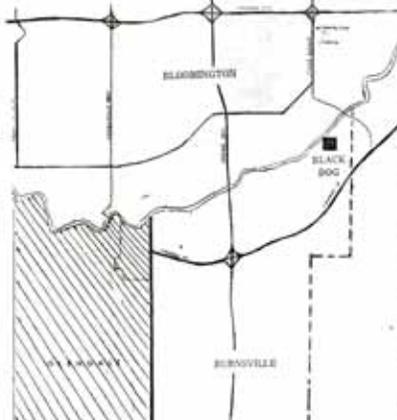
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OUTLINES ABOVE in proposed city boundary, if and when Bloomington and Burnsville consolidate (see page 47). The shaded area would be about 80 square miles, larger than either Minneapolis or St. Paul.

On Aug. 23, 1961, Township of Burnsville residents learned that their neighbor to the north – the City of Bloomington – had voted to annex the township's largest source of tax revenue, the Black Dog Power Plant.



# DAKOTA COUNTY TRIBUNE

Published at Farmington, "The Gateway to the Twin Cities"

DAKOTA COUNTY TRIBUNE

AUGUST 31, 1961

CROWD jammed into the Burnsville town hall Wednesday night to hear how Blackdog power plant had suddenly become the property of the Bloomington city to the north. Another mass meeting was planned for Wednesday night of this week at the Burnsville school.

Two days later, nearly 500 Burnsville residents flocked to the town hall to protest what many described as a "land grab" that would have a significant negative impact on Burnsville, and northern Dakota County.



PLAINTIVE POSTER carried by a Burnsville woman expresses a current lament of residents in the Dakota county township. Hearings will be held on the proposed merger of Bloomington and Burnsville the week of Oct. 9.



Upper Midwest News

THE MINNEAPOLIS STAR

THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 1961

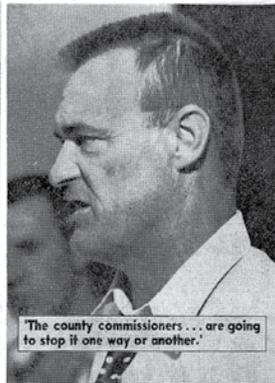
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PART OF CROWD THAT JAMMED BURNVILLE HALL TO PROTEST ANNEXATION

**Burnsville 'Burns'** The pictures above were taken Wednesday night at the town hall in Burnsville after the folks

had heard that Bloomington, their neighbor to the north, had annexed the Black Dog power plant and that action had started to annex the remainder of Burnsville. Among



The county commissioners... are going to stop it one way or another.

CLYDE RYBERG HAD A WORD TO SAY . . .

the speakers at the meeting were Wallace Day, town board chairman, and Clyde Ryberg, Dakota county planning director, Roger Richardson, another member of the town board, and Jerome Aiken, a county commis-

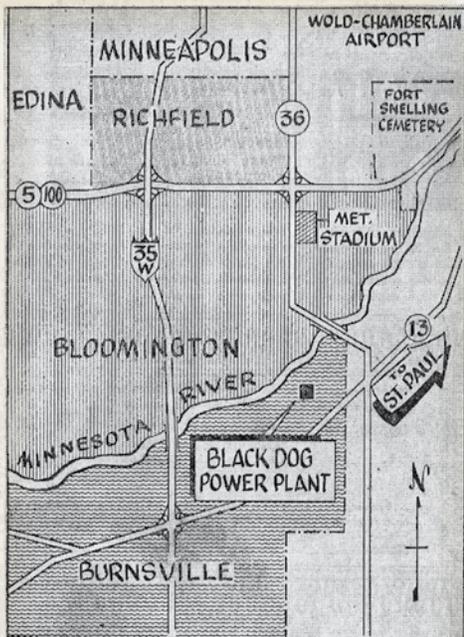


'In the first place it's illegal; secondly we think it's immoral and thirdly we think it's too fattening for Bloomington.'

. . . AND SO DID WALLACE DAY

Star Photos by Bob Schrakn sloner, also spoke briefly. After an hour Day said the board originally planned a private meeting to discuss possible legal action with attorneys.

Over the next two-and-a-half years, the "Battle for Black Dog" waged on in courtrooms - until April 1964, when the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled in favor of Burnsville. Two months later, Burnsville officially became an incorporated City (referred to as the Village of Burnsville at the time).



THE above map, taken from the St. Paul Dispatch, shows what happened when the "All-American" city of Bloomington hopped across the Minnesota river Wednesday and annexed the 159-acre tract containing the Black Dog plant of Northern States Power Co. It also invited the township of Burnsville to join with Bloomington to make up the largest municipality — in area — in Minnesota.

# St. Paul Dispatch

ST. PAUL, MINN., THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 1961 TWENTY-ONE

## Burnsvillians 'Burned' Over Black Dog Move

By ROBERT WILLIAMS  
Staff Writer

Residents in Burnsville township today were burning over Bloomington's annexation of their tax-rich Black Dog power plant.

Charges of "land grab" and "pressure politics" rose from township residents as they prepared to fight the annexation, which came in a surprise announcement Wednesday. Bloomington added on the 159-acre plant at the request of Northern States Power Co., then launched an immediate campaign to merge the remainder of Burnsville with Bloomington.

Within hours after the announcement signs proclaiming, "Never will we join Bloomington" appeared at the service station, tap room and grocery store at Lynrose corners in Burnsville.

The corner, traditionally bellweather of public sentiment, is owned by Francis Popohn, who said he gave up his tavern in Bloomington in 1957 to escape high taxes.

"Most of the people that have been in here today are just plain mad about the an-

nexation," Popohn said. "This thing came as a huge shock. There seems to be nothing sound behind it."

### The Law Says . . .

Bloomington's annexation of the Black Dog plant is made under a provision in the law that allows a municipality to annex up to 200 acres of unincorporated territory adjoining it with the consent of the property owner. If Burnsville township had been incorporated as a village the annexation could not have been made unless the village gave its consent in an election.

"I'm in favor of joining Bloomington if they have the Black Dog plant," said Mrs. Larry Wemheld, who with her husband operates the Valley View motel near hwy. 13 and 35 W.

"Many people moved here from Bloomington, Richfield or the Twin Cities for tax relief. Now we seem to be caught in a land and tax grab."

The weekly Minnesota Valley Review in its lead editorial today said Bloomington "has pulled off the biggest land swindle since Peter Minnet brought Manhattan Island for \$24 — we've been robbed of the largest industry in our area; we are being asked to give up our local government for the role of satellite with no chance of representation under the present Bloomington charter, and offered a share of a huge debt load."

Sentiment appears to be against the move among the oldtimers as well as the newcomers to Burnsville. Enous and Martin Gallaher, bachelors who live on

a farm settled by their grandfather 103 years ago, said "if they take the plant they might as well take the whole township because taxes will be so high. But we'll vote against it and so will the rest of the oldtimers."

The Gallahers said they now pay \$239 a year taxes on their 246-acre farm at Fairview and Lyndale.

Speaking in favor of the annexation, however, was Woodrow Keljik, a Minneapolis resident, who works for Unique Sales Co., real estate firm representing Millman Brothers' Timberland Knoll acres, where 113 new homes are being built.

"The merger of Bloomington and Burnsville will be very favorable for real estate sales," Keljik said. "It would increase the taxes on a \$15,000 home by only about \$15 a year. For this people would be getting all the services of the state's fourth largest city."

"I have no particular objection to joining Bloomington if taxes are fair. I know we have to have taxes but they should be reasonable," she said.

Sidney Johnson rents a small farm at hwy. 13 and Nicollet. "I lived in Bloomington for 10 years and moved here to get out of the city. If they annex the township, I'll move out still farther. I don't see how the merger would benefit Bloomington or Burnsville."

"Bloomington will come over here and start putting in things and the taxes will go up like any other place," said Mrs. L. R. Sheppard of Timberland drive.

"We moved here from Bloomington to escape the rotten school situation. I don't



BURNSVILLE BURNS—Staff Photo.



"The board's petition questions the legality of the annexation because the township is now under study by the municipal commission for possible incorporation as a municipality. Northern States Power Co. said it requested the annexation because "Bloomington has convinced us that it has strong economic base upon which to build. We like the city's proposal to establish citizens' task forces in both communities to study this merger and we do not plan to oppose this proposed consolidation."

# 38665

## STATE OF MINNESOTA In Supreme Court

TOWN OF BURNSVILLE, Dakota County, Minnesota; and WALLACE DAY, CHARLES FISCHER, ROGER RICHARDSON, individually and as members of the Town Board of the Town of Burnsville; and HELEN DRANGSTVEI,

Plaintiffs-Respondents,

vs.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON; GORDON MIKLETHUN, as Mayor of the City of Bloomington; CARL ONISCHUK, as Auditor of Dakota County, Minnesota; A. A. MATSCH, as Treasurer of Dakota County, Minnesota; THOMAS MALLERY, as Assessor of Dakota County, Minnesota; HENRY G. GACKSTETTER, as Commissioner of Dakota County, Minnesota; JEROME AKIN, as Commissioner of Dakota County, Minnesota; RAY DRISCOLL, as Commissioner of Dakota County, Minnesota; L. W. WACHTLER, as Commissioner of Dakota County, Minnesota; and JOHN SPEEL, as Commissioner of Dakota County, Minnesota,

Defendants-Appellants.

### BRIEF OF RESPONDENTS

GRANNIS & GRANNIS  
F. J. Schult Building  
South St. Paul, Minnesota  
DAVID L. GRANNIS, JR.  
VANCE B. GRANNIS, JR.  
Attorneys for Respondents

# Burnsville Will Fight, Throngs Protest Grabbing Of Black Dog



1961



PIONEER PRESS FILE PHOTO

The Burnsville Township board of commissioners met in August 1961 to map strategy to deal with Bloomington's attempt to annex 160 acres from Burnsville Township, acquiring a large chunk of the river valley and Northern States Power's Black Dog Power Plant in the process. The plant was providing 75 percent of the township's tax base. The civic groups were formed to stop Bloomington's actions.

# Early City Government

Having won the Supreme Court Battle for Black Dog, Burnsville residents voted on June 17, 1964, and the Village officially incorporated the next day.

Becoming an incorporated City meant developing an official City Government.

## Burnsville Village Government Gets Busier, More Complex



BURNSVILLE VILLAGE personnel at work at the village hall. They are from left: Fran Gaston, assessment clerk; Charles Christensen, assessor; Evelyn Kjos, secretary; Sivert Hendrickson, building inspector; John Hiebert, plumbing and heating inspector; Joe Connelly, sewer and water maintenance man; Ralph Ackerman, sewer and water supervisor; Audrey Kalmoe, receptionist-secretary and Arlene Sykes, clerk-typist.



THE PLANNING COMMISSION in the village is made up of seven men appointed by the council to serve three year rotating terms. They meet twice monthly on the second and last meeting from left: Carlton E. Coats, Gordon Hackman, Charles McDonald, John D. Vars and Richard Brooks. Not pictured are chairman Donald Lodge and David Pomeranke.



THE COUNCIL of the village of Burnsville at a recent council meeting is from left: Deanne Anderson, council secretary, Clerk Michael O'Connor, Trustee Warren Kelly, Mayor Roger Richardson, Trustees Ray Connelly and Charles Wahlberg. The council meets the first and third Monday of each month at the village hall. The members of the council are also active on various working committees in village government.

Pictured above are members of Burnsville's Village Council after the November election of 1964. Not pictured is trustee William Dolan, who was elected to the first Village Council after incorporation in July 1964, but was defeated by Wahlberg in the November election. Patrick McInnis became Burnsville's first City Manager in 1965.

**Burnsville's original Town Hall was located on County Road 5 in the Ames Construction Building. In 1967, a new Village Hall (pictured below) was built at 1313 E. Highway 13 (the current location of Eden Baptist Church). The current City Hall and Police Station at 100 Civic Center Parkway was completed in 1989.**



## **You Win a Pony!**

**During the 1965 Dakota County Fair, young James Gergen (center) was the lucky recipient of a new pony – simply by holding a ticket that corresponded with the number on the float on which the pony was riding!**

**Presenting the pony is then Minnesota Governor Karl Rolvaag (left), and Burnsville's first Mayor Roger Richardson (right).**





# Burnsville Aerial - 1964

# Early Public Safety

With growth came a need for police and fire service.



In July 1964, former Minneapolis Police Inspector Ed Farrell was hired as Chief to start the new City's Police Department.





**A photo of the 1967 Burnsville Police Department.**

**Front Row: Vic Anderson, Mimi Christenson, Ed Farrell (Chief)**

**Back Row: Paul Anselmin,  
Rich Radermacher, Mike DuMoulin,  
Jay Butler, Dean Brown, Leon Cheney,  
Don Love, Ken Bentfield, Ace Goodspeed,  
Tom Ludford**

# BURNSVILLE

APRIL 25, 1968

Burnsville Office Telephone 890-2530

DAKOTA COUNTY TRIBUNE

## Burnsville Firemen Sworn In . . .



SWEARING-IN ceremony for the new Burnsville fire department was held Wednesday of last week. At right, Clerk Leslie Anderson administers oath for the charter members of the Burnsville fire department which is now taking training. The fire-fighting equipment will arrive later this year. Firemen present for the ceremony Wednesday were, from left, Bob Michael, Jack Martin, Ed Giles, Sievert Hendrickson, Stan Lexcold, Ralph Brown, Jim Gibbish, Joe Connelly, Bob Berube, and John Hiebert.

**Until 1968, Burnsville's fire service was provided by the Savage volunteer Fire Department.**

**As the need for fire protection grew, Burnsville began the experiment of a "Public Safety Department," in which members were trained in both police and fire protection.**





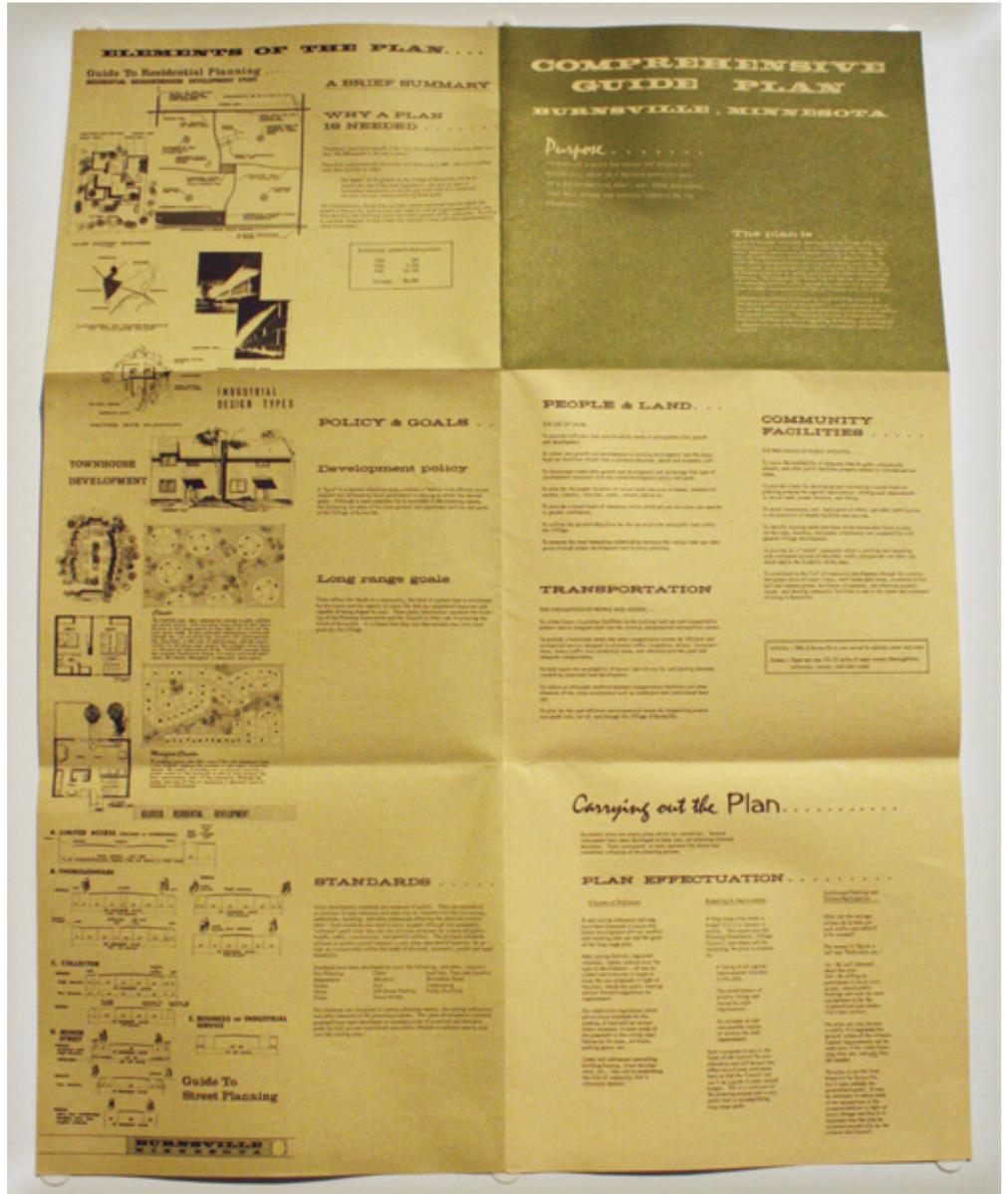
**Public Safety Officers worked rotating shifts between police and fire work. Rather than typical uniforms, officers wore dark blue blazers, shirts, ties and French blue pants!**

**The experiment lasted for 13 years, until the Public Safety Department was separated into individual Police and Fire Departments in 1981.**



# Early Business & Development

As a new and rapidly growing City, Burnsville's first City Councils made planning for the future a high priority. The 1965 Comprehensive Guide Plan called for new zoning maps to prepare for future growth, regulations on subdivisions, laws regarding street development and utilities, a long-range budget plan and active citizen participation.



**Burnsville's population more than doubled from 8,054 in 1964, to 19,940 by 1970. This was due to ample open space available for both residential and commercial developments.**



## BURNSVILLE INDUSTRIES

The commercial and industrial firms at the left are identified below. They are a representative selection from among about 100 businesses located in Burnsville.

1. Full Color Corporation
2. River Ridge Office Building
3. Northwestern States Portland Cement
4. Burnsville Lumber Company
5. Leaf Construction Company
6. Polar Homes, Inc.
7. The Embassy Restaurant
8. Reese Associates, Inc.
9. Astleford, M. G., Co. Inc.
10. Northland Concrete Company
11. Burnsville Bowl
12. Minnesota Body & Equipment, Inc.
13. Medical Center
14. Jack's Restaurant — Park N Shop
15. Minnesota Valley Asphalt Plant and Construction Company
16. Burnsville Apartments
17. Twin City Liquid Feed, Inc.
18. Pan Coatings, Inc.
19. Northwestern Bell Telephone Co.
20. Manders Diesel Repair
21. LeHigh Portland Cement Co.
22. Burnsville Medical Center and Professional Building
23. Knox Lumber Co.
24. Abdallah Candies
25. Burnsville Office Park
26. Edward Kramer & Sons, Inc. Sand and Gravel
27. Martin Donely Camping Center
28. Herbies Warrior Club and Office Building
29. Reigger Roadways, Inc.

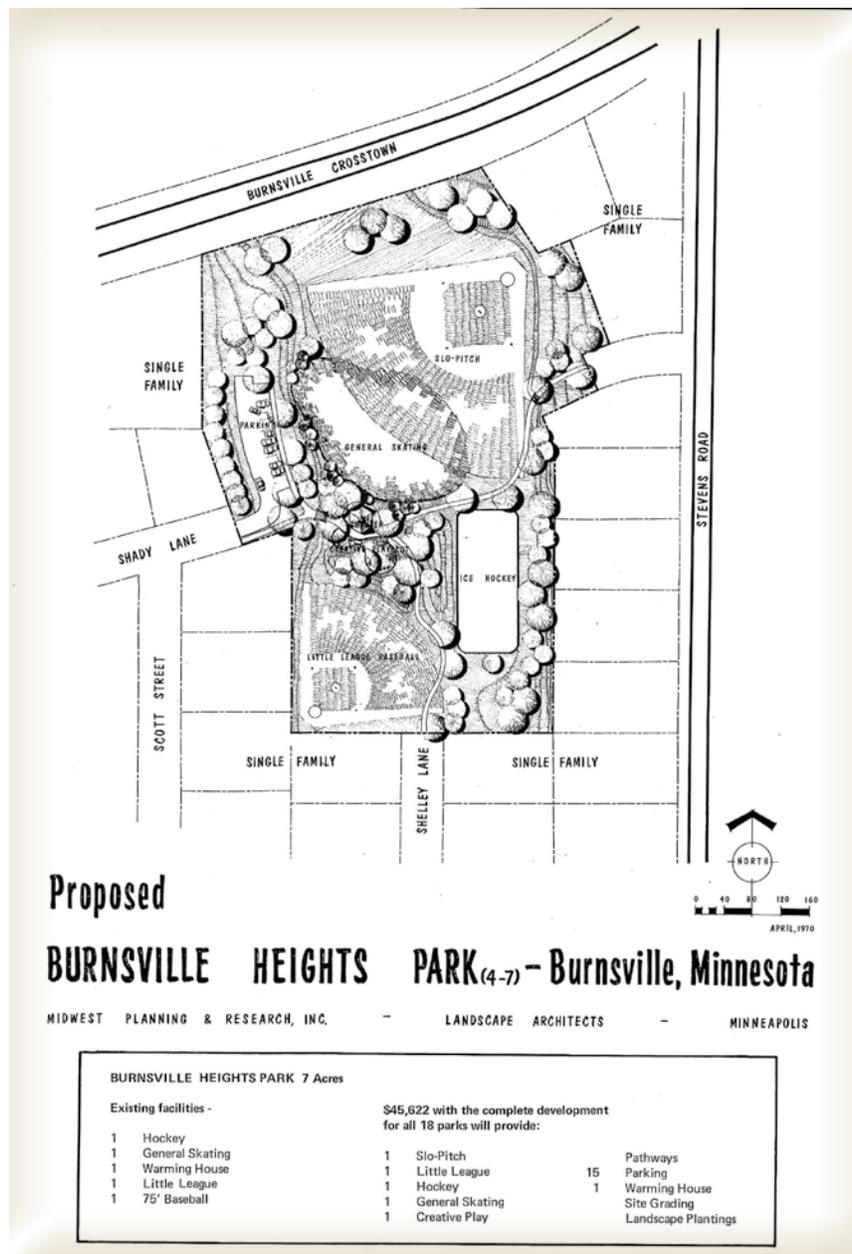
**Business also boomed in Burnsville in the 1960s – from the Valley Ridge Mall, the first shopping mall south of the river, to Abdallah Candies and Ames Construction, which still call Burnsville home – more than 100 businesses located in Burnsville by 1970.**



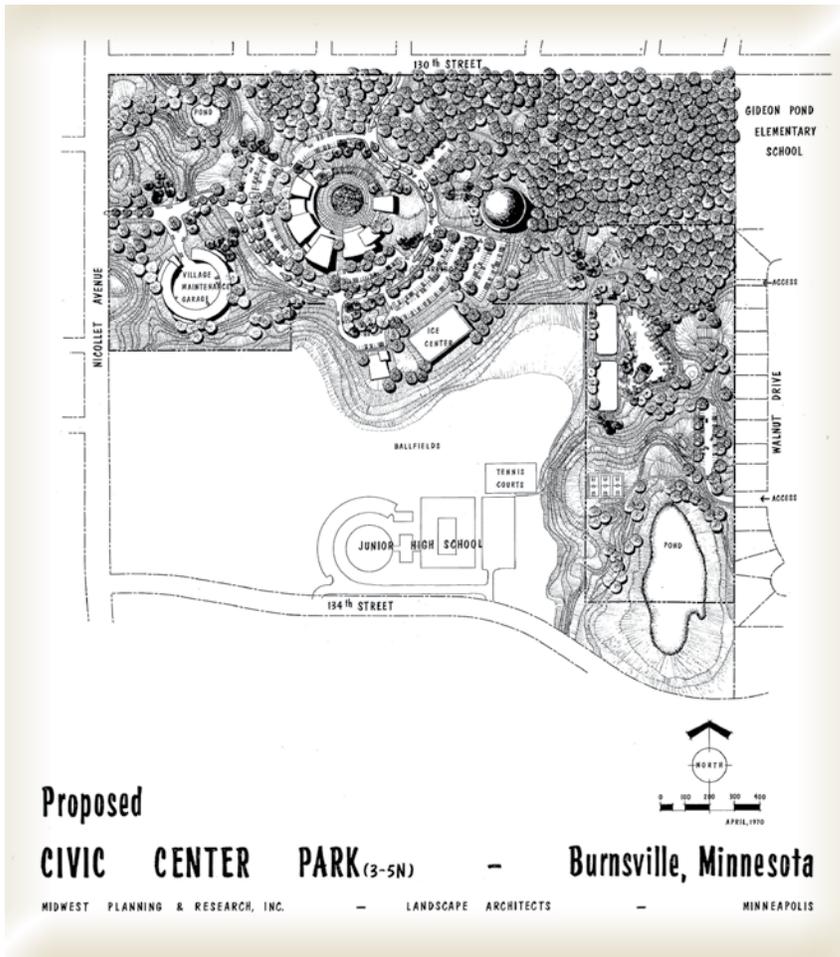
# **Valley Ridge Mall 1963**

# Early Parks

Burnsville's Park system expanded rapidly after incorporation. The first Park Commission was established in 1964, the same year as the first City Park (Heights Park, still in existence at 139th Street and Shelley Lane) was dedicated.



The first parks bond referendum vote took place in 1966. Voters approved \$585,000 for the purchasing and development of 822 acres of park land. An additional \$526,000 Federal Grant allowed the City to establish a number of parks people still enjoy today.



**THE PARK PLAN FOR BURNSVILLE**



Every person in Burnsville has some investment in the park area for this community as it stands today, and as it will be for the future. It is highly desirable that the total results add up to a proper environment for living, working, and enjoying leisure time.

To achieve this healthy environment, it is necessary now to have a comprehensive Park Plan. Such a plan will indicate exact areas for the various kinds of parks, allow for their financing and acquisition, and to general guide the community in its future development through the years to come. Individual home owners will then be better able to determine what the future holds for their home location. And developers can proceed with greater confidence in the future character of the surrounding community.

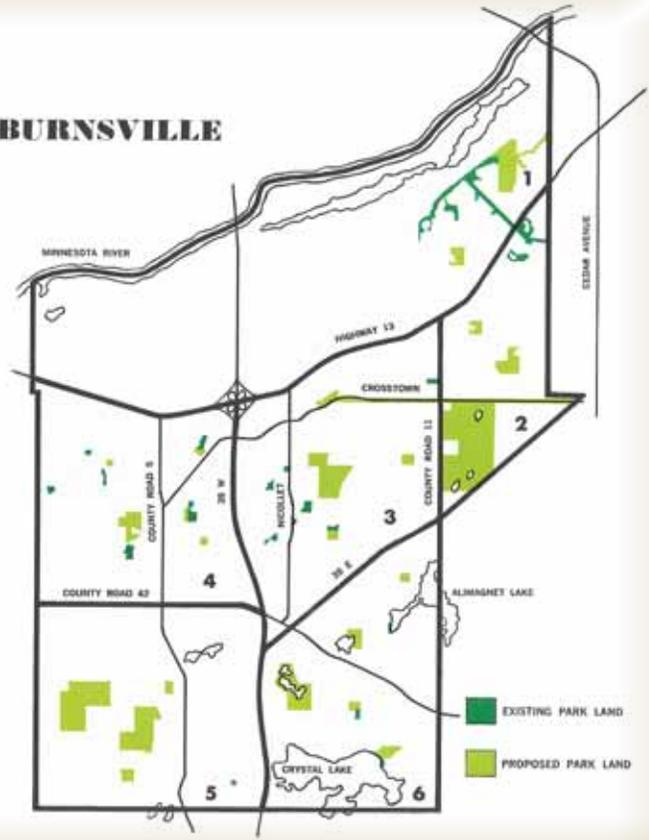
The Park Commission has recommended to the Council, that acquisition of 822 acres of land be planned.

This land would be divided into six major areas determined by the major thoroughfares, physical characteristics, and existing land use, and developed into open space

areas within walking distance of every home or potential home in the Village. The parks would be distributed among the six major areas according to need and land availability, with one major community park and a series of smaller neighborhood parks. (See map at right.)

At present, 130 acres are designated park lands in the Village - except for the Crystal Lake beach area land was all donated and most of it undeveloped or undevelopable. The figure of 822 acres was determined by using the standards set by the National Recreation Association. The NRA suggests a minimum standard of ten acres of park land for every 1,000 persons. (An ideal standard would be 20 acres per 1,000.) Population saturation of Burnsville is estimated ultimately at 23,000 people. This would require Village park land acreage to be a minimum of 810 acres.

Acquisition of 25 park areas is suggested. The map at right shows where these new areas would be located, and what land the Village holds for parks today.



In 1969, Burnsville commissioned an extensive Park System Analysis, and in 1970, voters approved bond sales for more than \$4 million for the purchase and development of more park land, the building of the Burnsville Ice Center, and the development of an 18-hole golf course (which never came to fruition.)

**25 NEW PARK AREAS** will offer varied recreational space for everyone!

The 522 acres of parkland recommended for acquisition by the Village Park Commission would be divided into 25 new park areas. These would include four general types:



**Playgrounds** — Activity areas for age group 5 to 12 years, with a minimum site of five to ten acres. It could include baseball diamonds and similar developments for this age level.



**Playfields** — Activity areas for older children and young adults, with minimum acreage recommended at 10 to 15 acres. It would include tennis courts, football fields, ice rinks, etc.



**Neighborhood Parks** — Facility for all age groups which provides space for passive through active recreation: picnic sites, play areas, hiking paths, etc... designed to serve residential neighborhood rather than the community at large.



**Community Park** — A large community park to provide a wide range of activities, such as swimming areas, an 18 hole golf course, archery ranges, casting pools, ski jumps, toboggan slides, nature trails, camp sites, etc. The extensive acreage would serve the entire village and become a focal point for such activities.



Here is a typical developed varied-recreation play area. Note the many activities that can be accommodated in the irregular land tract.

As part of the 1969 analysis, Burnsville’s “ultimate population” was estimated to reach 100,000. The City also revised its park plan to acquire 20 acres of parks for every 1,000 residents. While Burnsville never neared its 100,000 population mark, the City currently has more than 30 acres of parks (1,750 acres spanning 76 parks) of park land per 1,000 residents.



**An aerial photo of Keller Lake  
in the 1960s, which would become  
Burnsville's Lac Lavon Park.**