



Vulnerable Communities & Environmental Justice

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Goals

- Ground conversation in what “environmental justice” and intersections with watershed management
- Provide context around who is vulnerable and how you might use that information to consider equity in your work

Environmental Justice Definition - MPCA

Communities of color, Indigenous communities, and low-income communities have the **right to enjoy** a healthy environment and to **fair treatment** with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Principles of Environmental Justice:

- Ensure full and fair participation in policy and decision making
- Share equally in benefits
- Mitigate disproportionate adverse impacts

Resilience to acute hazards

The ability of a resident to respond determines whether a flood or other hazardous event is:

- An inconvenience
- A manageable problem
- A catastrophic event



Enjoy & Access - Today

The ability of a resident to enjoy and access water and natural resources in their neighborhood is a factor of:

- Past decisions, past investments, and past solutions that ignored (or largely ignored) equity considerations



Enjoy & Access - Future

The ability of our next generation of residents to enjoy and access water and natural resources in their neighborhood will be a factor of:

- Future decisions, future investments, and future solutions that consider equity and seek to achieve multiple benefits
- Balancing stormwater storage and conveyance with water quality goals

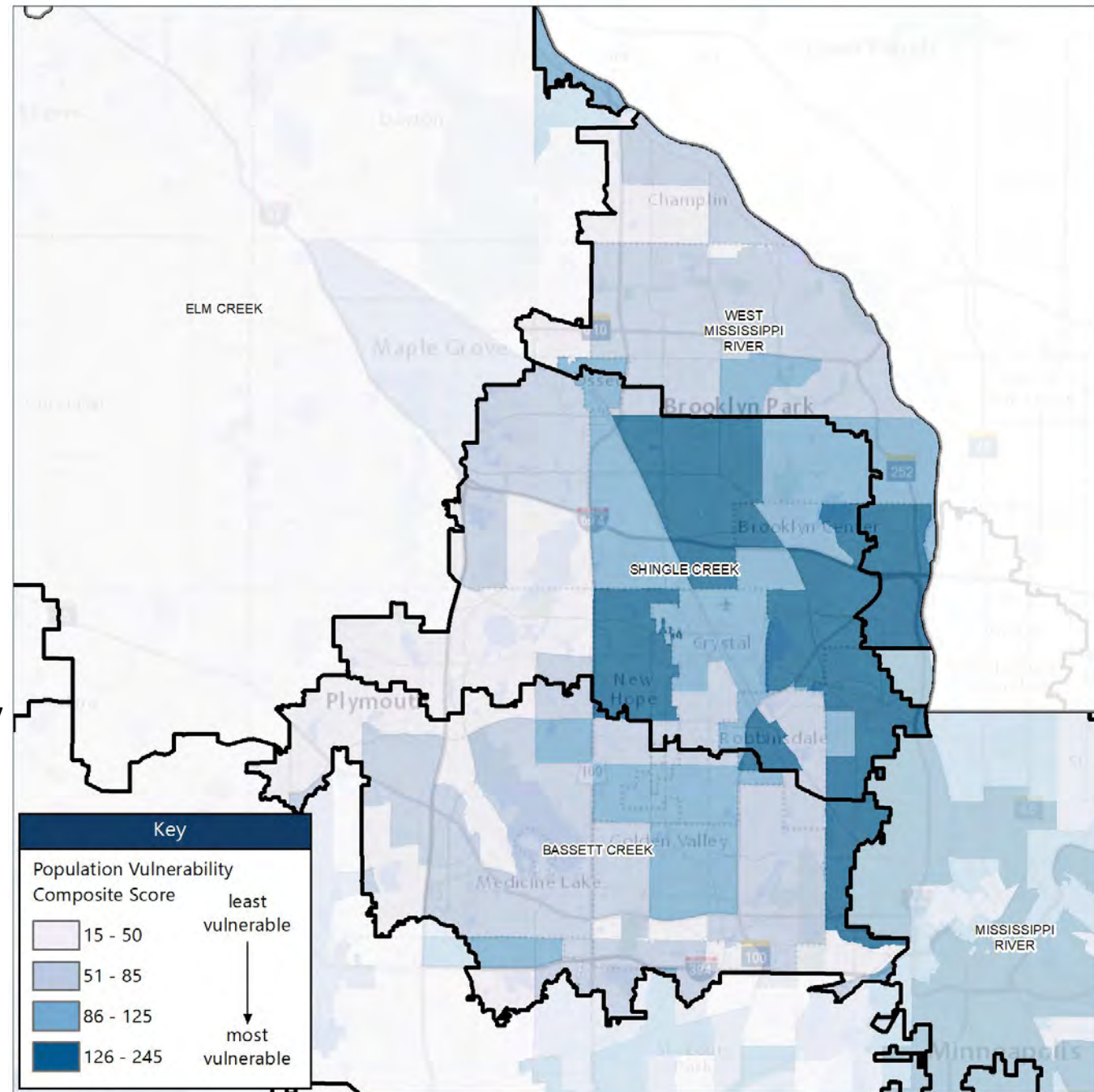


Who is most vulnerable to and where do they live?

Vulnerability scoring based on 14 variables within six categories: race, income, language, ability, health, and social status

Asthma hosp. rates
COPD hosp. rates
Households with no vehicle
Limited Engl. proficiency
Median household income
No high school degree
People of color
Population 5 and under

Population below 185%
poverty threshold
Population density
Population over 65
Population with any disability
Renter housing units
Unemployment rates

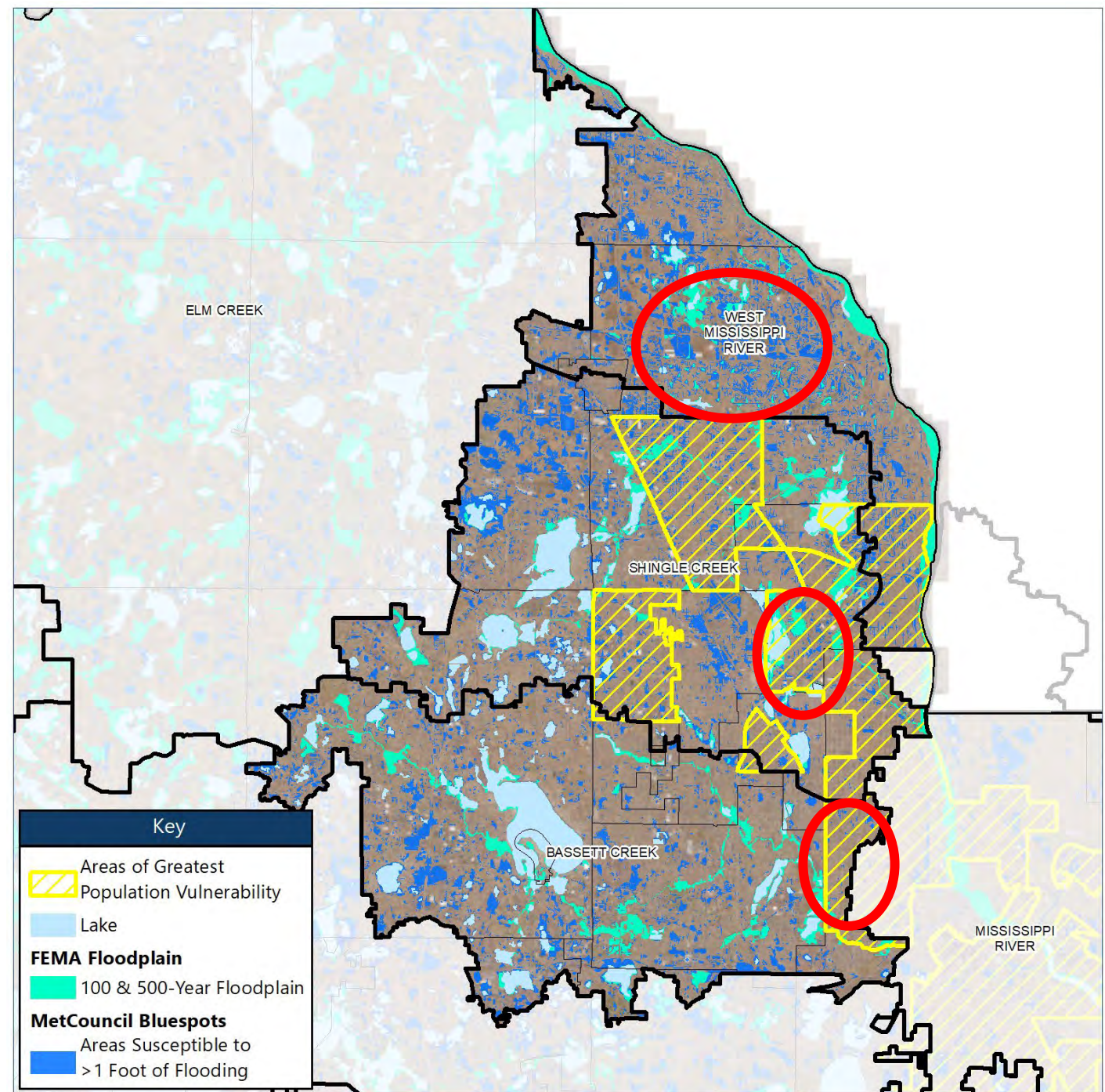


Where are vulnerable people likely to experience flooding?

Surface water impacts are determined by how much and how quickly precipitation falls and by water's ability to be drained into either soils or the stormwater network

Implications

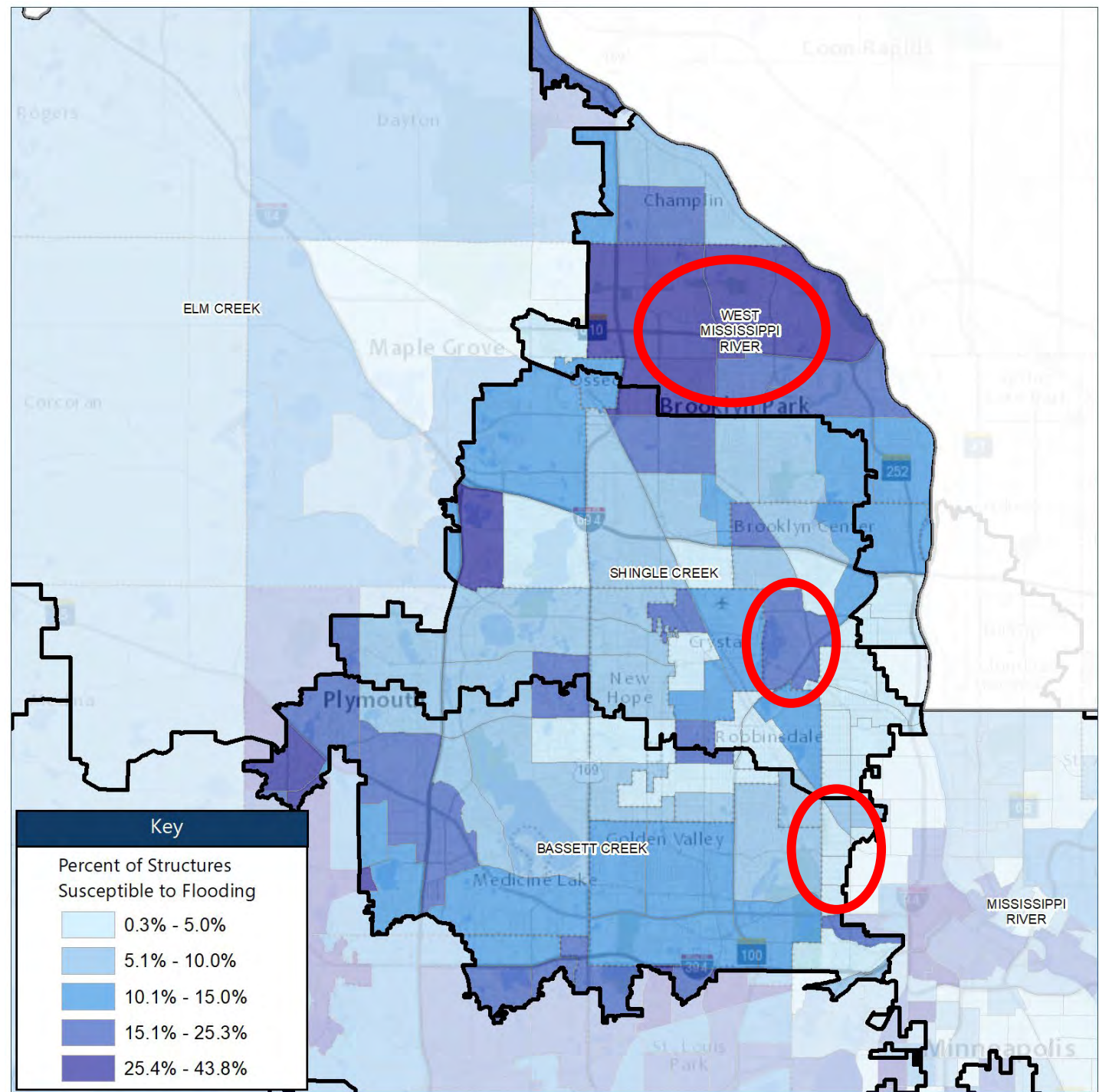
- Analysis needed that considers the engineered stormwater network that drains surface water and better account for soil infiltration



Where are structures that might be susceptible to flooding?

Implications & uses:

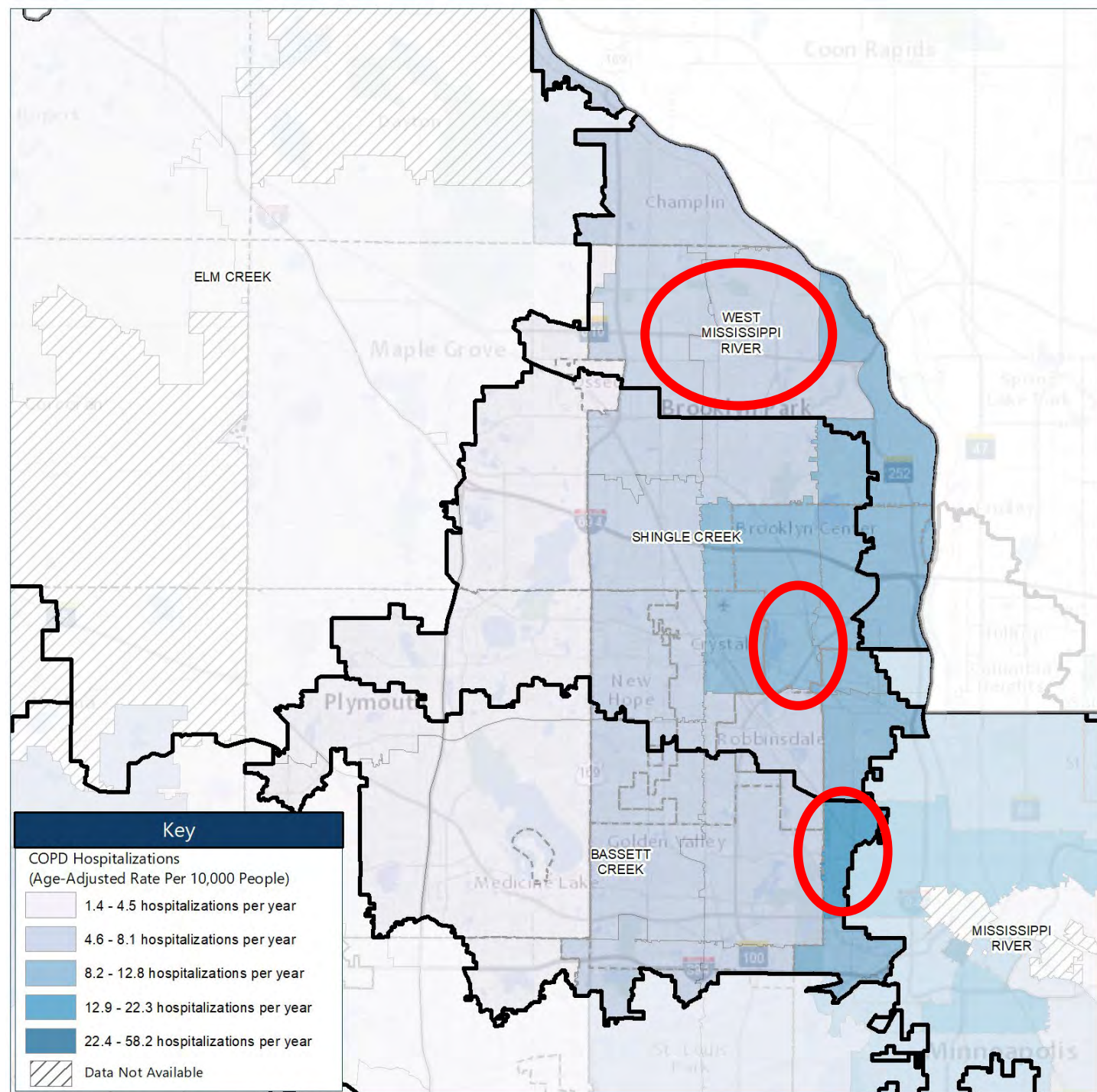
- Compare to vulnerable populations to identify places where structure flooding will be an inconvenience vs. a catastrophic event
- Can help inform strategies and interventions



COPD hospitalization rates

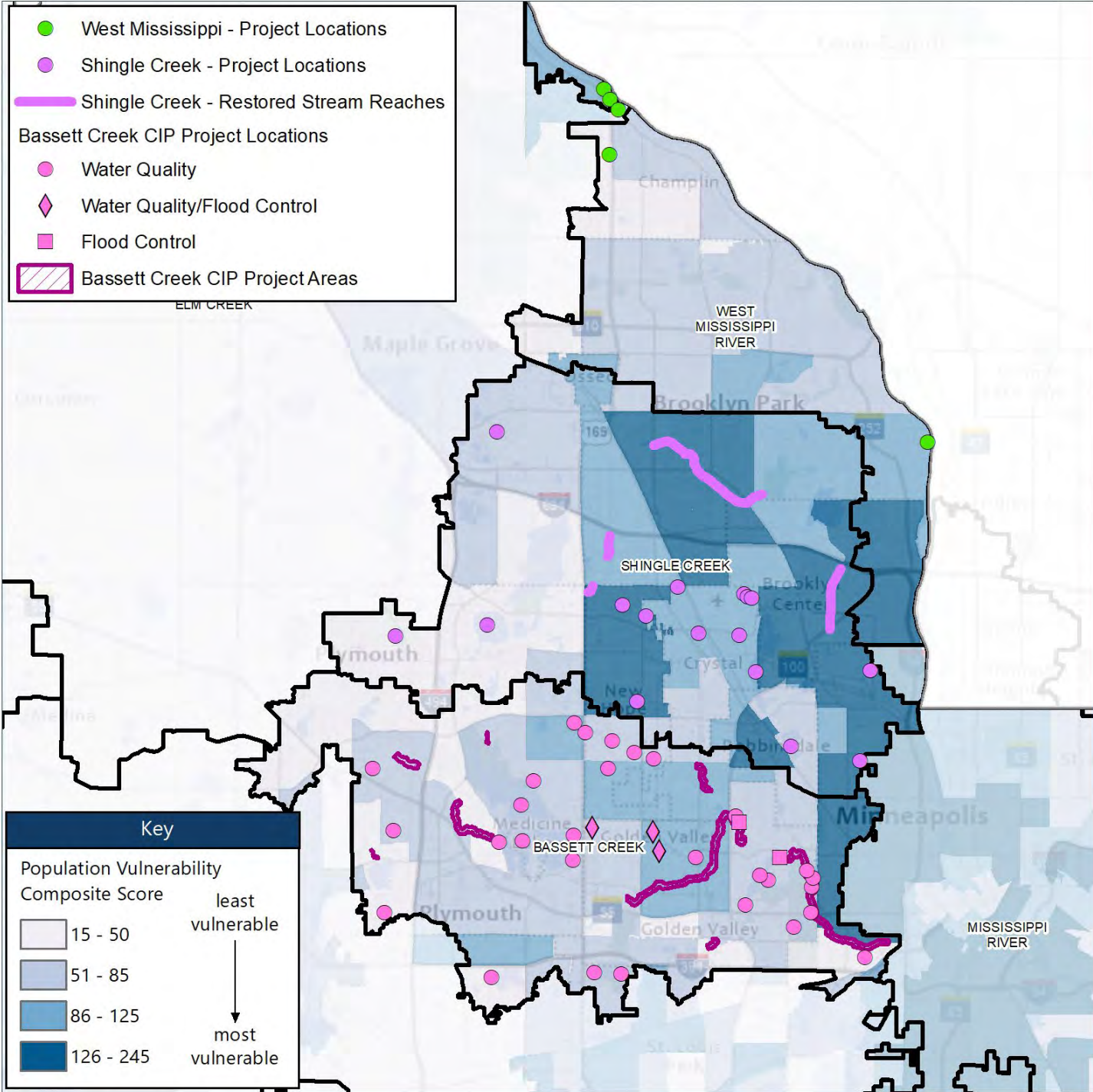
- COPD, the chronic inflammatory lung disease, is an indicator of poor air quality
- Air quality is most negatively impacted by transportation and business activities, but could watershed investments contribute to improving this metric?

Hennepin County



Capital Projects

- Past investments reflect priorities and opportunities
- Can provide insight into how equity could factor into future investments or where work is needed to create opportunities



Thank you!

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