Osseo Branch Theme

Railroads shape the landscape: connecting agricultural areas with markets, influencing development, and establishing and linking cities and towns.

The Minneapolis & Northwestern (later called the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railroad, and then the Great Northern Railway) built this rail line, later known as the Osseo Branch, to link this rich agricultural area with markets.

Why was the Osseo Branch developed

The Osseo Branch was part of a larger railroad and railroad network

The Osseo Branch linked the area through which it passed with the nation

Technological advancements have influenced rail transportation over time: since the first railroads went through this corridor and up to the lightrail we take today.

Describe the technological advancements in rail transportation over time through contrasts between historic and modern day:

- Compare track design and materials: Rail, ties, and ballast
- Compare different forms/sizes of RR/LRT rolling stock: locomotives or boxcars from different eras, historic streetcar vs. LRV, etc.

Describe the people who worked on the railroads throughout this area, including railroad worker jobs.

- The Osseo Branch was built largely by immigrants (German, Swiss) due to local labor shortages

Railroads contributed to settlement/town building in the areas that it passed through; the beauty of the landscape inspired the founding of Robbinsdale. How the Minneapolis & Northwestern/Osseo Branch contributed to the development of towns

Describe how the Minneapolis & Northwestern/Osseo Branch contributed to the development of towns

- The need for fuel and "Maintenance of Way" (MOW) settlements created railroad jobs
- Established and promoted settlements created revenue sources, such as fostering industries that depended on access to railroad transportation

Describe how Robbinsdale was an anomaly in how towns were formed. Robbinsdale was founded after a passenger rail experience.

Many towns were settled along this line

People have moved through this area using different modes of transportation; what was once a trail, then the Osseo Branch, is now a light rail corridor.

Osseo Branch and light rail are / part of a very old transportation corridor that contributed to the settlement and development of the area by moving people and freight

- Native American trail
- Ox cart trail followed the Native American trail
- The Minneapolis & Northwestern (Osseo Branch) line was built parallel to the ox cart trail
- Ox cart trail became a road – "Bottineau Road"/"Bottineau Prairie Road"
- Road realigned in the 1930s and later became a highway (CSAH 81)
- LRT

The combination of good soil, and proximity to markets and efficient transportation enabled the region along the Osseo Branch to rise to national prominence in potato production.

Describe the agricultural transition from wheat monoculture. Potatoes became a valuable cash crop as the growing urban population of the late 1800s created a large demand.

Fertile, sandy soils was well-suited to potato cultivation and fostered development into a potato growing region by the 1880s.

Around 1900, Osseo became the central potato market and shipping point for area producers, and by the early 1900s it was the largest potato shipping point in the country.

Plymouth Ave.

Golden Valley Rd.

Robbinsdale

Bass Lake Rd.

63rd Ave.

Theodore Wirth's vision, inspiration, and principles are manifested in what Theodore Wirth Regional Park is today and have influenced park users since the 1910s.

Wirth's design contributions to the Minneapolis community.

- Advocate for playgrounds and created the first playground in Mpls
- Park accessibility - historically and today with LRT
- Wirth's 1914 comprehensive plan
  - Growing trend to include more active recreational areas
  - Later development of the Par 3 Golf Course and other active recreational features, such as walking and biking trails

Wirth the man

- His beliefs and values for parks
- His accomplishments as Superintendent

An enduring legacy continued through his descendants:

- Conrad L. (son) was director of the NPS and oversaw Mission 66
- Walter L. (son) was superintendent of parks in New Haven, CT, and later the regional park system in Salem
- Theodore J. (Ted, grandson) was a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects (FSALA) and designed many national and state parks

The Grand Round Historic District, including its parkways and Theodore Wirth Park, is a key part of the Minneapolis Park System and a significant historic resource.

Grand Rounds Historic District

- Describe this historic district – "Why this place matters"

Explain the phases, or eras, of Grand Rounds development

- Horace Cleveland'
- Theodore Wirth's development and expansion
- WPA improvements
- Garrett Eckbo plan additions/improvements

Grand Rounds Historic District Theme

The Theodore Wirth segment of the Grand Rounds is a key part of the Minneapolis Park System and the Grand Rounds Historic District.