

Crystal - Metro Blue Line Extension STATION AREA PLAN UPDATE

September 2023



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose of Study	4
Use and Organization of the Document	6
Proposed Bass Lake Road Station	7
Redevelopment Analysis	10
Stakeholder Engagement	11

Chapter 2: Existing Conditions / Where are We Today?

Bass Lake Road Station Area Overview	14
Related Plans and Studies	18
Existing Conditions	
Land Use	22
Roadway Network	24
Transit	28
Pedestrian Network	30
Bicycle Network	32

Chapter 3: Proposed / Where are We Going?

Station Area Plan Update	34
Guiding Principles	
Projects Implemented from the 2016 Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan	35
Station Area Improvements	37
Pedestrian	
Bicycle Network	
Roadways	
Transit Connections	
Wayfinding and Signage	
Public Space	
Public Art	
Park-and-Ride / Drop-Off and Pick-Up Zone	
Streetscape Enhancements	45
Underpass Enhancements	47
Bright	
Safe	
Soften	
Activation/Destination	

Station Area Redevelopment Analysis	
Station Area Redevelopment Potential	50
Opportunity Sites	53
Tools to Support Transit Oriented Development at Station Area	65
Parking Management Strategies	
Parking Goals	66
Existing Parking Conditions	66
Station Area Parking Management Strategies	67
District Parking Approach	68
Travel Demand Management Plans	68
Implementation	69

Chapter 1 | Introduction

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Background

The METRO Blue Line Extension (BLRT) is planned as a light rail transit (LRT) line that would connect Target Field Station in Minneapolis to Oak Grove Station in Brooklyn Park. The BLRT originally planned to share right-of-way with Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad along portions of the alignment. After significant negotiation with BNSF, no agreement was reached and alternate routes were explored for the BLRT.

In June 2022, the Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County Board adopted a route recommendation for the BLRT. The new route will extend from Target Field Station along West Broadway Avenue in Minneapolis to Bottineau Blvd. in Crystal and Robbinsdale and West Broadway Avenue in Brooklyn Park. In Crystal, the BLRT would run in the median of Bottineau Blvd which is generally close and parallel to the BNSF.

Why is the Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan (2016) being updated?

Beginning in 2015, Hennepin County and the City of Crystal collaborated on a Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan to envision new land uses within a half-mile of the proposed station. The final report was completed in July 2016.

This Station Area Plan Update examines the revised route for the Bass Lake Road Station in Crystal, evaluating existing conditions and updating recommendations within a half-mile of the proposed station.

With the BLRT tracks and Bass Lake Road station now proposed to run within the median of Bottineau Blvd. an updated Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan is needed. This updated plan will evaluate the resulting changes in station access and design, including but not limited to:

- Proposed overpass structure carrying Bottineau Blvd. over Bass Lake Road
- Mobility to and from the station platform
- The transit user experience
- Potential for transit-oriented development near the station



Future site of Bass Lake Road Station in the City of Crystal

FIGURE 1: METRO BLUE LINE EXTENSION ROUTE RECOMMENDATION (2023)

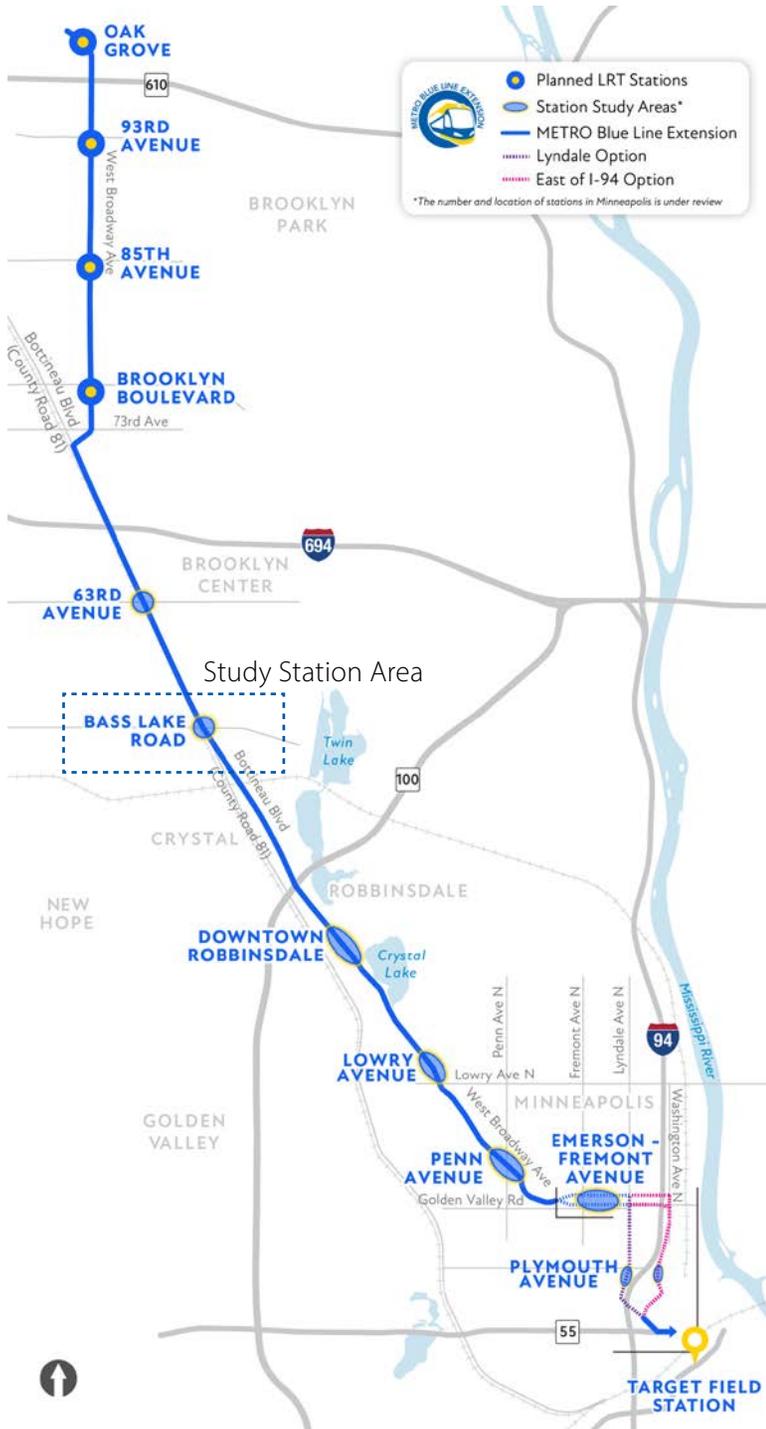
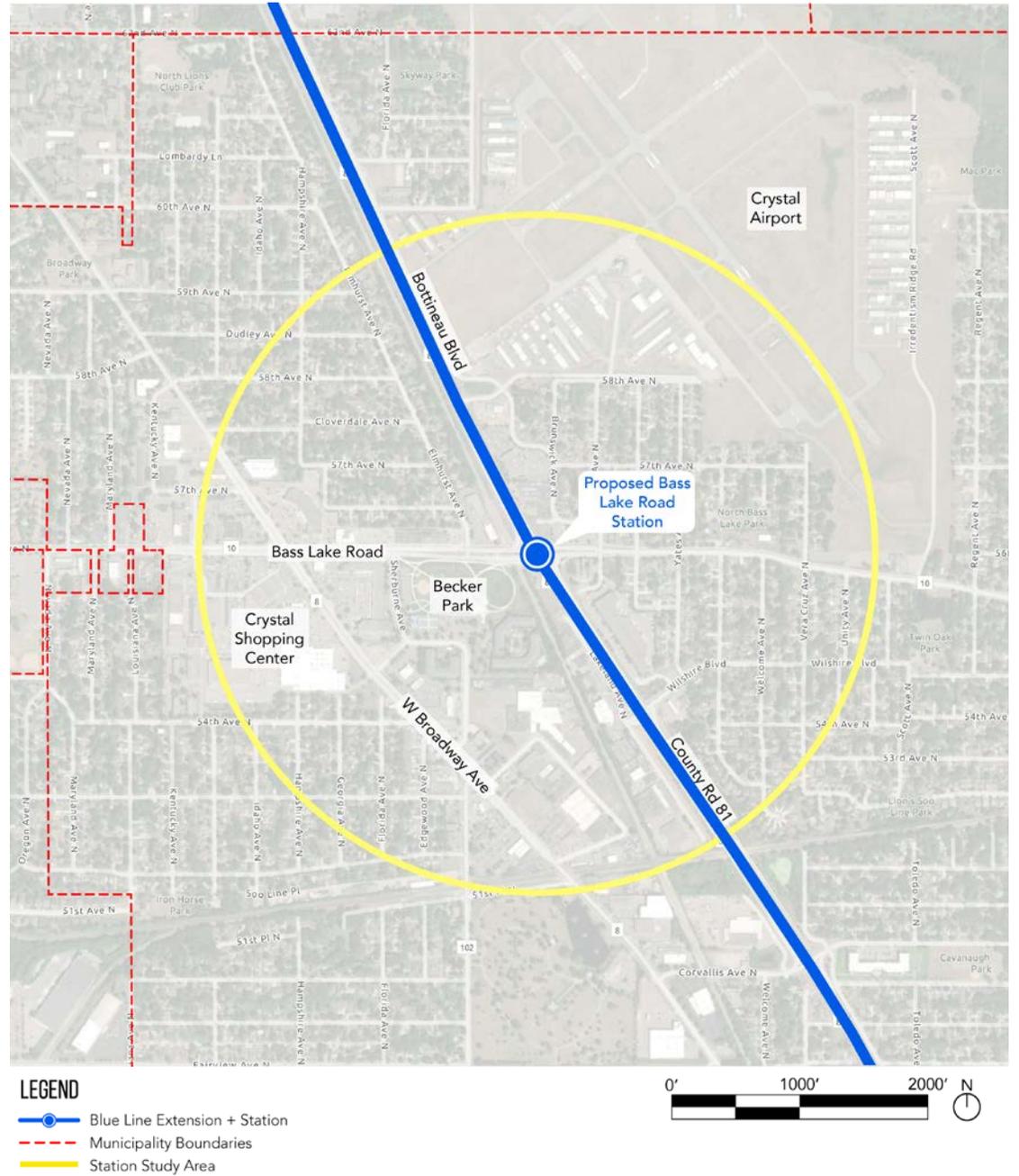


FIGURE 2: BASS LAKE ROAD STATION AREA



USE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE DOCUMENT

This study is a guide for transit-related investments to:

- Bridge the gap between current conditions and future needs by recommending near and long-term public improvements
- Enhance mobility to and from the station, improve transit ridership and the user experience
- Support transit-oriented development (TOD) including a wide range of housing options

As a result of this process, Hennepin County, the City of Crystal, and partner organizations such as Metro Transit and Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) will be able to better understand the infrastructure investments needed to increase transit ridership and improve user experiences, while also enhancing economic development opportunities. The county and city will also be able to use this plan as a guide when updating their comprehensive plans and capital improvement plans over the next 10 years.

The following is a brief overview of the organization of this report:

Chapter 1: Introduction

The document begins with an introduction regarding the planning study purpose and background, an overview of the study area, and market conditions.

Chapter 2: Existing Conditions | Where Are We Today?

Information on existing conditions, including land use, transit connections, and access and circulation issues and opportunities in the station area. This chapter also contains a summary of related plans and studies.

Chapter 3: Where Are We Going?

The Station Area Plan Update recommendations are the central features of this chapter. Information on guiding principles, station area improvements, development potential, planning strategies, and implementation are presented for the station area.

PROPOSED BASS LAKE ROAD STATION

The METRO Blue Line Extension began seeking feedback in March 2021 on revised routes that do not use freight rail property as previously planned. Based on technical considerations, community input, and past project work, a route recommendation was released in April 2022.

Currently, the intersection of Bottineau Blvd. and Bass Lake Road presents challenges for people walking, bicycling, and rolling across Bottineau Blvd. due to high traffic volumes, speeds, and travel delays. Increased challenges are experienced by non-motorized users who need to cross from one corner of the intersection to the opposite, needing to cross up to fifteen lanes of traffic – often impeded by vehicles stopped in the marked crosswalk. Furthermore, existing conditions experience significant motor vehicle volumes and delays.

Initial intersection improvements included in the 2016 Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan generally maintained at-grade intersection geometry with enhanced advanced stop bars and crosswalks, raised crosswalks for right-turn islands, enhanced pedestrian/bike signage, accessible pedestrian signals (APS), and tighter corner radii. More significantly, a grade-separated pedestrian bridge on the south side of the intersection was explored to address safety concerns for pedestrians crossing Bottineau Blvd.

Since the initial concept was presented in 2016, several other alternatives were analyzed by the METRO Blue Line Extension design team. These alternatives included:

- Existing Conditions (No Build)
- 4 lanes at grade
- 4 lanes grade-separated interchange + additional southbound lane south of Corvallis (“4/5 + interchange”)
- 4 lanes at grade + additional lanes through Bass Lake Road + additional southbound lane south of Corvallis (“4-6-4/5 at grade”)
- 6 lanes at grade
- 6 lanes grade-separated interchange

After analyzing traffic operations, safety, and feasibility, the METRO Blue Line Extension project staff favors the “4/5 + interchange” design. This alternative features two traffic lanes in each direction, with the LRT corridor situated in the center median.

The “4/5 + interchange” alternative for the station has the following design features:

- Bottineau Blvd. consisting of two lanes in each direction on a grade-separated overpass at Bass Lake Road with ramps for access from Bass Lake Road
- The intersection maintains full access for Bass Lake Road
- Park and ride vehicular access via Lakeland Avenue North from the Wilshire Boulevard intersection
- Station platform is at-grade framed by adjacent interchange bridges
- The south at-grade crossing passes under the Bottineau Blvd. bridges and provides

access to trails on either side of Bottineau Blvd. and to the park and ride

The preferred grade-separated option anticipates higher approach delays on Bass Lake Road compared to the existing conditions. This entails an approximate increase of 11 sec/vehicle eastbound and up to 25 sec/vehicle westbound. Nonetheless, the favored grade-separated interchange offers substantial safety and mobility advantages, including:

- Shorter crossing distances for pedestrians and bicyclists (about 3 minutes) when compared to the at-grade alternative (about 8 minutes).
- Grade-separated pathway provides crossing on flat terrain and minimal elevation change.
- Significantly less conflict points for pedestrians (20) when compared to the at-grade alternative (31).
- Significantly less conflict points for crossing and merging movements (28) when compared to the at-grade alternative (79).
- Improved travel times for southbound movements by approximately 30 seconds in the AM and PM peak hours; improved travel times for northbound movements by approximately 5-15 seconds in the AM and PM peak hours.

FIGURE 3: PROPOSED BASS LAKE ROAD STATION



Metro Transit is currently working towards 30% design plans for the Bass Lake Road station in Crystal. Station area plans and visualizations provided here are preliminary but represent the current design concepts for the station platform and associated infrastructure. Final designs and station locations will be refined based on community feedback and will be updated to include more details on bicycle, pedestrian, and landscape accommodations. This material is conceptual and intended to provide a frame of reference for community members to see how light rail could fit in their neighborhood.

To find project materials and ways to share feedback, visit the project website:

BlueLineExt.org



Bass Lake Road Station Proposed Renderings / Source: Metro Transit

Note: These images represent a planning concept based on cursory engineering work. If this concept advances, significant additional design would be required.

REDEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

The Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan Update included an evaluation of redevelopment opportunities in the station area with a thorough review and confirmation of the market analysis conducted for the 2016 Crystal Station Area Plan using parcels as the basic unit of analysis. The analysis built a better understanding of existing market conditions by layering numerous other elements such as demography, building permits, transit ridership by individual stop, traffic counts and employment counts. Analysis included car parking needs, as well as strategies to provide for adequate parking, based on anticipated station area redevelopment and development in other inner suburban transit station areas in the region.

Specifically, to identify and evaluate redevelopment opportunities, in coordination with City of Crystal and Hennepin County staff, the Station Area Plan Update includes the following:

- Evaluation of potential build-out scenarios for key redevelopment sites, particularly in the area bounded by Bass Lake Road, the BNSF rail corridor, and West Broadway Avenue, under the City's Town Center zoning districts, with consideration of the unique circumstances and opportunities of each site
- Evaluation of properties projected to be impacted by the proposed LRT route and station
- Identified current and future parking needs based on potential redevelopment in the station area, including district parking strategies
- Parking management strategies for commercial needs and LRT, addressing "hide-n-ride", time limits, and parking enforcement

As the City of Crystal and individual property owners and/or developers consider particular projects in the area over time, additional analysis will be needed to determine the detailed, recommended real estate product mix for particular parts of the station area.

The redevelopment analysis is included in Chapter 3.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement built upon the extensive engagement process from the 2016 Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan. The following is a brief summary of stakeholder engagement conducted during the planning process and common themes derived from stakeholder input.

City of Crystal and Hennepin County Staff Meetings

The project was coordinated with and guided by consistent meetings with staff from Hennepin County and the City of Crystal. The meetings were held regularly during the planning process to review and comment on project process and deliverables. A critical role of the city and county staff was to inform their respective jurisdictions on project activities and provide input from their boards and councils.

Crystal IRT: METRO Blue Line Extension Meetings

Crystal Issue Resolution Team (IRT) meetings consisting of staff from Hennepin County, the City of Crystal, Minnesota Department of Transportation, and Metro Transit met every other month with members of the consultant team to assist in the development and review of Station Area Plan Update recommendations and deliverables. The IRT provided valuable technical recommendations with input and guidance from Metro Transit staff and their consultants.

Public Meetings

The planning process included a public open house at a key point in the process. The open house was designed to solicit public input, held on June 22, 2023, at the Crystal Community Center. The open house presented findings from the Station Area Plan Update inventory and analysis, draft station area recommendations, and preliminary redevelopment analysis findings. The open house included a series of graphic materials prepared to communicate the Station Area Plan Update information and recommendations. The open house provided opportunities for the public to provide input and feedback on key findings and recommendations. Public input gained from these events informed the Station Area Plan Update recommendations.

Meetings with Policy Makers

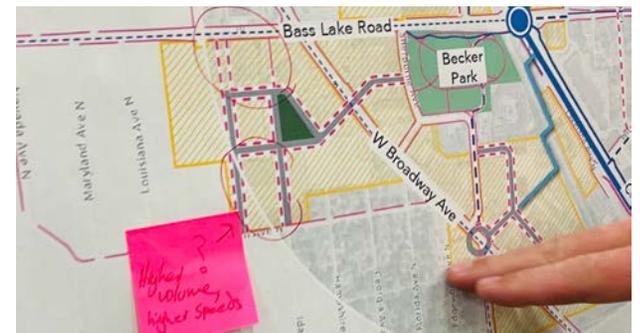
During the planning process, city policy makers were kept informed about the planning process, presented station area update planning recommendations, and provided important feedback to the consultant team. Hennepin County and City of Crystal staff, and members of the consultant team provided project information and presentations to the City of Crystal City Council and Planning Commission during the course of the project.

Stakeholder Input

The following common themes emerged from the stakeholder input process. These themes were used to inform the Station Area Plan Update recommendations:

- Safety and comfort are concerns - particularly for seniors. Address safety at station areas - through design and safety elements - lighting, safe crossings, visibility, seating, heated shelters, emergency phones, security cameras, etc. Employ crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) strategies.
- Wayfinding and signage are concerns that should be addressed in the Station Area Plan Update to better direct people to area destinations and the transit facilities.
- The surrounding neighborhoods have gaps in sidewalks and bike facilities. Ideally, these gaps would be filled, but construction and maintenance costs are a local concern.

- Traffic calming strategies should be considered near transit stations to improve pedestrian safety (bumpouts, pedestrian scaled streetscape elements, well-marked crossings, signals, on-street parking, etc.).
- Consider placemaking at stations (green space, plazas, public art).
- Maintenance of transit facilities and the sidewalks that connect people to transit is critical, especially during winter months. Plan for snow removal/storage.
- Consider transit supportive uses near stations - retail and services, housing, employment, enhanced public spaces.
- Public transit (LRT) is seen as an amenity for area businesses, residents, employees, etc. It should be marketed as an amenity. Many people are unsure of the Blue Line and what its purpose is. Consider education and marketing programs to bolster transit ridership.



Open House - June 22, 2023 at the Crystal Community Center

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Chapter 2 | Existing Conditions

BASS LAKE ROAD STATION AREA OVERVIEW

Neighborhoods

The City of Crystal has 14 officially recognized neighborhoods. The BLRT would pass through three of them: Cavanagh Oaks, Twin Oaks and Skyway. Two others, Becker and Lions Park, would be directly adjacent and west of the BLRT. The neighborhoods include a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and open space land uses. Bottineau Blvd. provides north-south connections and Bass Lake Road provides east-west connections in the station area. Becker Park, Crystal Shopping Center, and other commercial uses strongly influence movement and activity near the station.

Within these neighborhoods, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) and BNSF rail corridors present barriers to movement. Bottineau Blvd. and Bass Lake Road also limit pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.

Shopping Destination

The Bass Lake Road Station lies east of the Crystal Shopping Center and the Town Center District.

This commercial area draws people to shop in Crystal.

Employment Center

The area provides employment at a range of industrial, retail, office, and other commercial uses. Metro Transit's existing local bus routes provide an affordable transportation option for people getting to and from places of employment. Improving pedestrian and bicycle connections to these businesses is a goal of this plan.

Trail Connections

The Crystal Lake Regional Trail, adjacent to Bottineau Blvd., will ultimately connect Theodore Wirth Park and Elm Creek Park Reserve. On-street bicycle facilities, such as the bicycle lanes on Bass Lake Road east of Yates Ave. and Douglas Drive

south of 50th Ave., do not fully connect with other facilities in the station area.

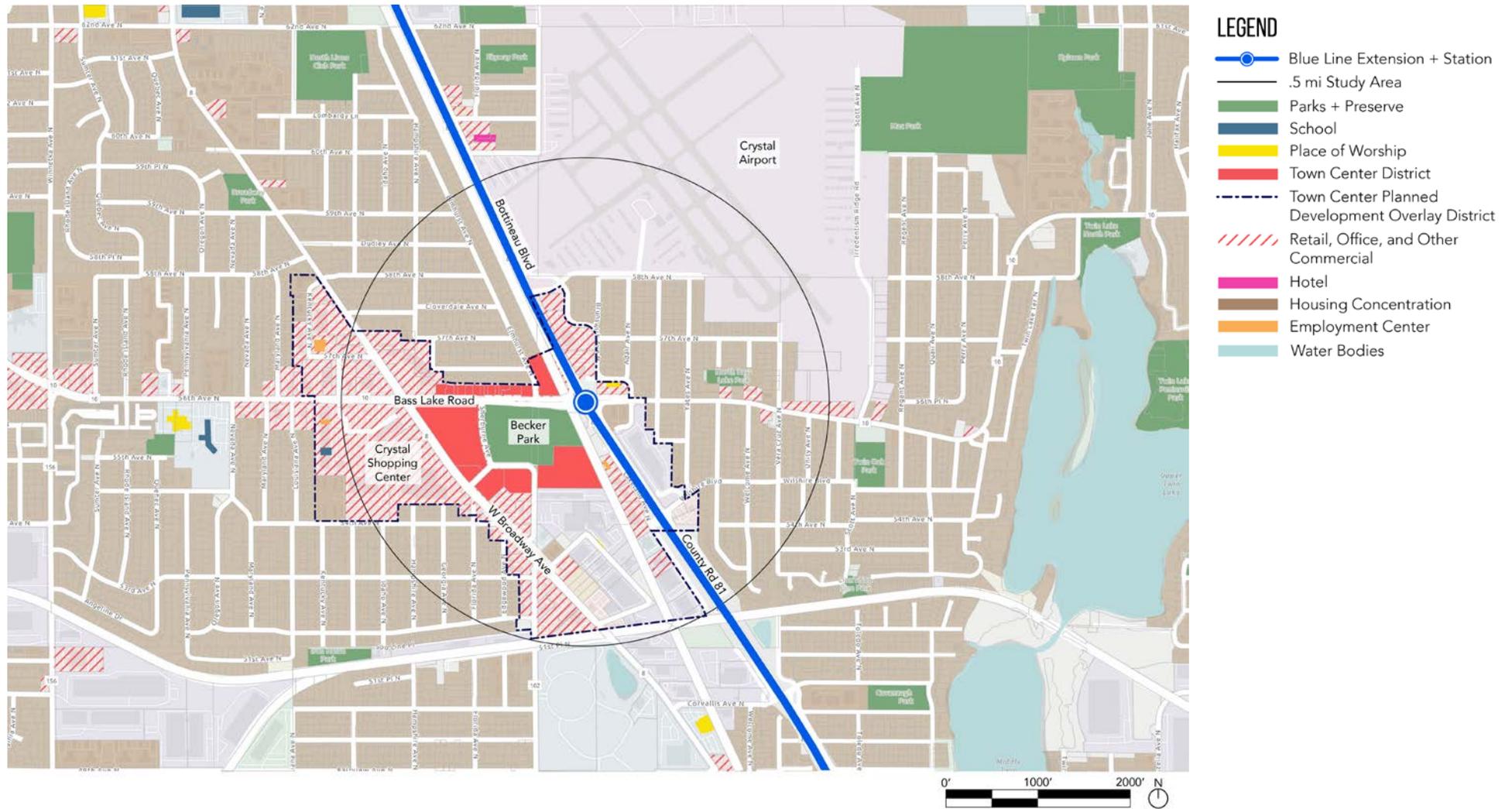
Becker Park

Becker Park provides important green space for recreation and community gatherings. The new park includes several features such as play areas, ball fields, picnic areas and shelters, courts and flexible green areas.

Station Location

The Bass Lake Road Station is envisioned as a transit-oriented gateway to Crystal, served by the METRO Blue Line and local buses. Bottineau Blvd. is an important north-south arterial connecting people and businesses throughout the northwest metro.

FIGURE 4: EXISTING CONDITIONS - STATION AREA DESTINATIONS AND AMENITIES



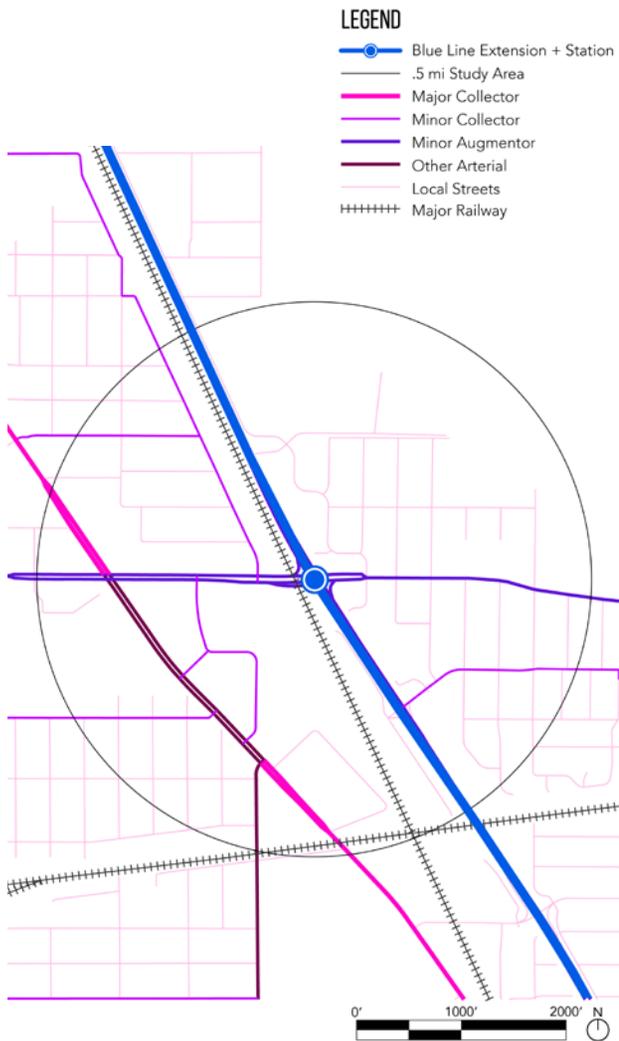


FIGURE 5: LOCAL STREET PATTERNS

West Broadway Avenue, Bass Lake Road, and two freight rail corridors interrupt the grid of local streets that characterize the station area. Due to the limited crossing points between these major infrastructure elements, traffic is funneled to a few important arterial streets, such as Bass Lake Road.

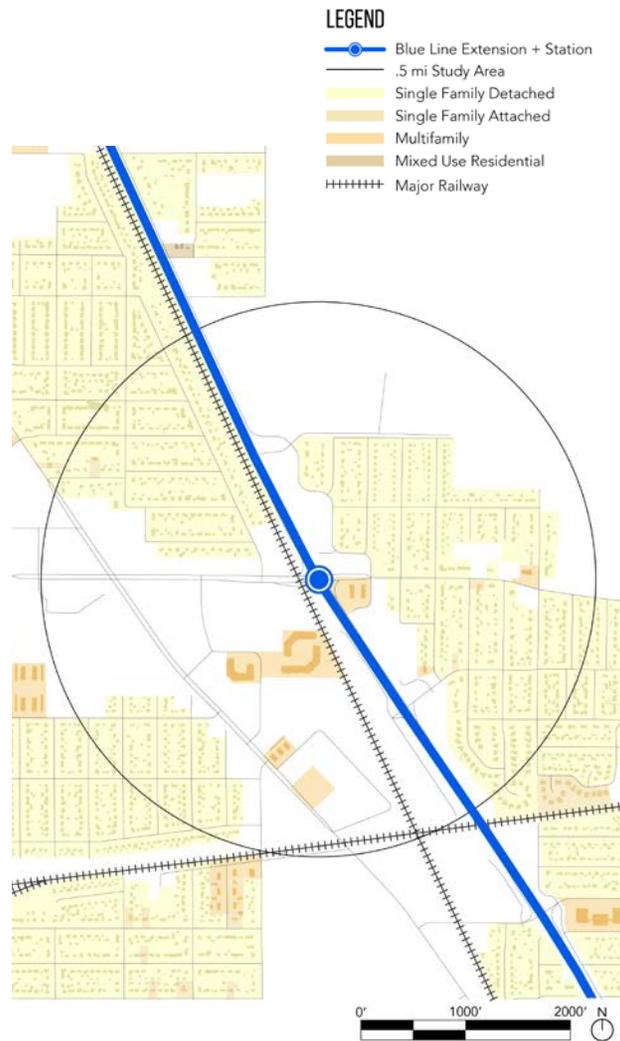


FIGURE 6: RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS

Residential uses occupy approximately half of the station area, filling most blocks created by the local street grid. Arterial streets, commercial/industrial land uses, and Becker Park create voids in the pattern.

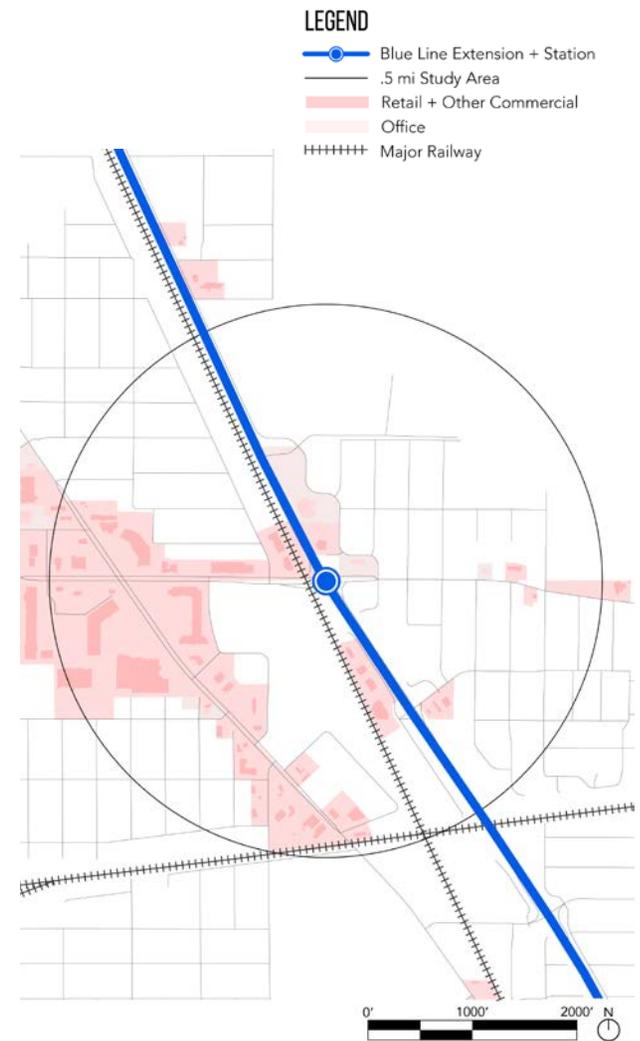


FIGURE 7: COMMERCIAL USES

Commercial uses are primarily concentrated around the intersection of West Broadway Avenue and Bass Lake Road. Shopping centers can be identified by their large building footprints. Secondary commercial uses extend south along West Broadway and Bass Lake Road. Bottineau Blvd. is also a secondary commercial address.



FIGURE 8: TRANSIT

There are several existing Metro Transit bus routes that serve city neighborhoods. Near the intersection of Bass Lake Road and Bottineau Blvd., there are several nearby bus stops. To maximize the impact of the proposed LRT station, Metro Transit will work with stakeholders before launching the Blue Line Extension.



FIGURE 9: INDUSTRIAL USES

Several industrial uses are centered near the intersection of two freight rail corridors (south of the LRT station), creating barriers to connectivity in the station area. These include freight rail lines, warehouses, and manufacturing.



FIGURE 10: PARKS AND INSTITUTIONS

A number of parks are located in Crystal. Becker Park, one of the largest, is adjacent to the light rail station. Other parks can be found around the station area perimeter.

RELATED PLANS AND STUDIES

The Place, Development & Connections Analysis in the City of Crystal is informed by several related planning documents and studies. The following provides a brief summary of key takeaways from each of these plans and studies.

For a more detailed summary of each plan and study, please refer to the Appendix.

Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan (2016)

Beginning in 2015, Hennepin County and Crystal collaborated on a station area plan for the Bass Lake Road LRT station to envision new land uses within 1/2 mile of the proposed station. Community meetings were held in September and November, 2015 and January, 2016. The final report was completed in July, 2016.

This plan evaluated a station along the route using freight rail property as previously planned for the METRO Blue Line Extension.

High Level Goals

- Re-envision the Bottineau Corridor as a multi-modal transit corridor that supports LRT, bus, pedestrian, and bicycle connections.
- Maximize and strategically align public and private investments in the corridor to support transit-oriented development (TOD) through catalytic investments in life-cycle housing, commercial development, and public infrastructure.
- Promote economic opportunity by improving access to jobs and supporting business recruitment and expansion along the corridor.
- Promote opportunities for local businesses.
- Enhance livability in the corridor by improving public spaces, supporting the creation of healthy communities, and connecting people to key destinations, including employment centers, educational institutions, and regional amenities.

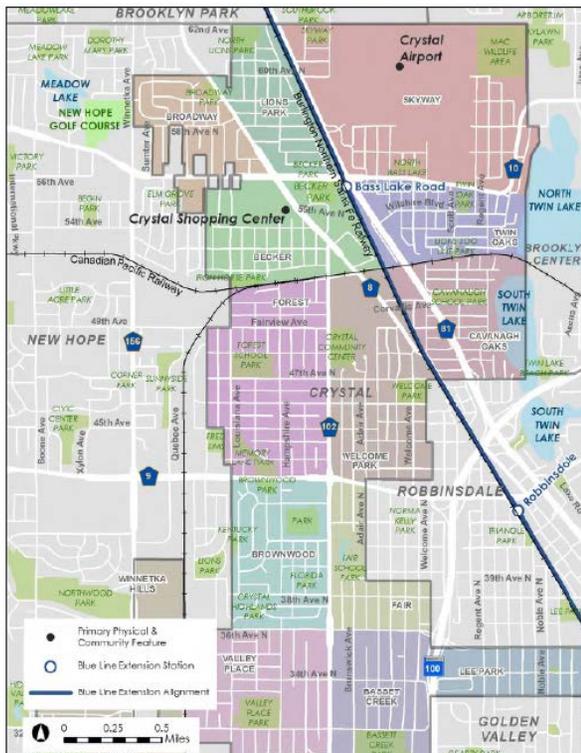


Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan (2016)

Blue Line Station - Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) (2016)

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Metropolitan Council published the project's Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) on July 15, 2016. The Final EIS identifies impacts from the Blue Line Extension Project, including measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate these impacts. In 2022, the project released a revised route which required a supplemental EIS. A Supplemental Draft EIS is anticipated to be published in 2023, with a Supplemental Final EIS anticipated in late 2024.

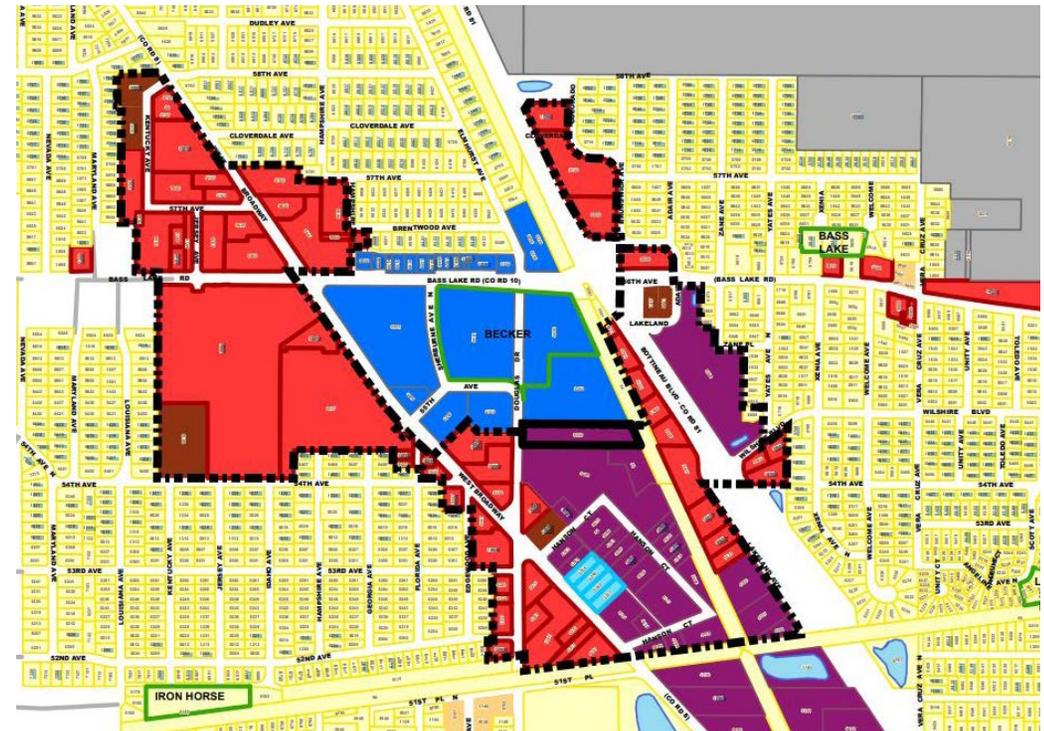
The Final EIS in 2016 found that there would be no adverse impacts to community facilities, community character, or community cohesion in Crystal from the proposed BLRT Extension project.



Final EIS Map of Crystal neighborhoods

Town Center Core District - Zoning | City of Crystal

The purpose of the TC - Town Center Core district is to accommodate walkable, mixed-use development enhancing the public realm, such as parks and streets. Commercial shops mix with multi-family and employment, buildings frame the street and face Becker Park, and local multi-modal streets balance the needs of all users.

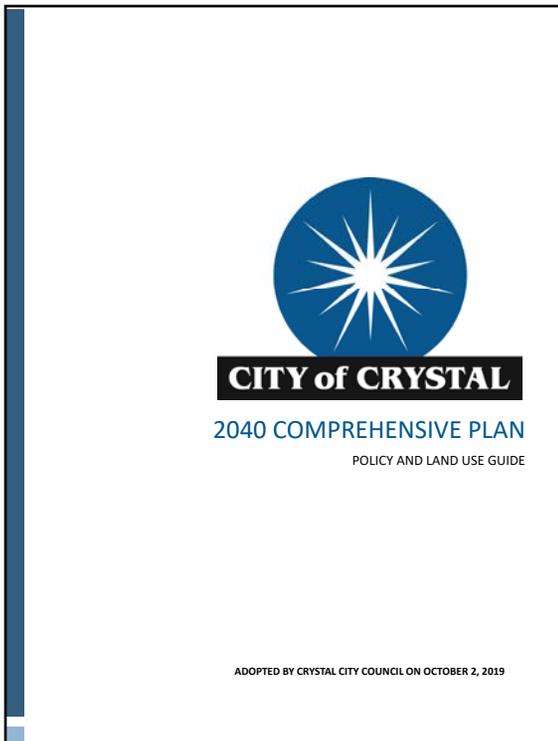


BASE ZONING DISTRICTS:

- R1 - LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- R2 - MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- R3 - HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- C - COMMERCIAL
- TC - TOWN CENTER
- I - INDUSTRIAL
- AP - AIRPORT DISTRICT

OVERLAY DISTRICTS:

- Planned Development Districts (PD)
- Town Center Planned Development (TC-PD)
- Properties Rezoned to TC-PD
- Floodplain Overlay District
- City Park Land
- Water Bodies



2040 Comprehensive Plan

2040 Comprehensive Plan | City of Crystal (2019)

The Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for Crystal's future growth, development, and redevelopment. It is intended to be broad in scope while establishing general goals, policies, and strategies. It is a guide for developers, landowners, citizens, elected and appointed officials, business owners, and investors as they make decisions about land use and infrastructure. The following includes key takeaways important to the Place, Development & Connections in Crystal:

- Prioritize development opportunities around the station area.
- Allow flexibility for higher densities in the station area - at least 25 units per gross acre, and states as a policy goal to create new zoning regulations to allow for a mix of uses, including multiple-family developments. Additionally, the new regulations will reduce parking ratios and building setbacks.
- Emphasize streetscape improvements in the station area. In 2018 the city completed streetscape improvements on the north side of Bass Lake Road within the station area. In 2019 the City reconstructed Becker Park which includes connections to existing and planned regional trails.
- Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle connections in the station area.
- Where feasible, roadways with existing striped shoulders or parking lanes on both sides of the street could be designated as bike lanes. These existing segments include CSAH 10 (56th Avenue a.k.a. Bass Lake Road) east of Yates Avenue.
- Make Becker Park an important element of the station area.
- For the proposed LRT Bass Lake Road Station in Crystal, a future housing demand of 400-600 units was identified in the report. The station area could accommodate most of Crystal's projected household growth through 2040, and meet the city's goal of a minimum of 25 dwelling units per acre within the proposed station area.
- Mixed use is a new category for the 2040 planned land use map. The category includes a vertical or side-by-side mixture of multiple family residential institutional, commercial and industrial uses.



Bottineau Wayfinding Plan

Bottineau Wayfinding Plan | Hennepin County (2020)

The purpose of this plan is to facilitate bicycle and pedestrian navigation and maximize connections along the proposed METRO BLRT.

A family of signage typologies was developed for Bottineau Corridor wayfinding. Each sign type plays a different role in assisting station area visitors with navigation to area destinations, such as helping visitors orient themselves to the station area after they get off the train or bus, providing directions to community destinations with estimated walking and biking times to those destinations, or simply affirming that they are on the correct route.

Community Feedback Themes

- Frequent destinations for respondents from Bass Lake Road and 63rd Ave station areas: Becker Park, Target/Crystal Shopping Center, 63rd Ave Park & Ride, Brooklyn Park Goodwill
- Common Bottineau Corridor destinations included Theodore Wirth Park, Becker Park, North Memorial, North Hennepin Community College
- Common destinations outside Corridor: downtown MPLS, Mississippi River, MSP Airport, MOA, St. Paul
- Safety was a frequently-mentioned concern, especially crossing major roads that are not pedestrian-friendly
- Specific areas of concern within the station area, and potential solutions, included on pp. 48-49 of the Wayfinding Plan.
- Participants also provided input on wayfinding preferences, e.g. should be well-lit with bright colors, include “you are here” indicators, etc. Project team also collected community input regarding legibility, predictability, nomenclature, and aesthetics.

The following section describes the station area's existing conditions, including the local context, land uses, transit and transportation systems, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, amenities, destinations, and barriers to accessing the station. This analysis of current conditions presents key issues and opportunities in the station area and informs the recommendations for station area improvements.

NOTE: Existing conditions maps are based on data provided by Hennepin County and the City of Crystal. The data used to create each map is collected to varying degrees of accuracy and represents infrastructure and conditions at varying points in time. Actual conditions may vary slightly from what is shown.

LAND USE

There are several types of land uses in Crystal, including commercial, office, industrial, institutional, residential, and park uses. The city consists of a blend of quiet residential neighborhoods inset between transportation corridors and parks. As a result of its large commercial core located at West Broadway and Bass Lake Road, the station area serves as the retail center for most residents and is referred to as the city's downtown.

The 2016 Station Area Plan recommended revisions to the City of Crystal's 2030 Planned Land Use map. To provide additional flexibility, density, and diversity surrounding the station, a mixed-use TOD overlay district was recommended to apply to all parcels within the 10-minute walk area.



Crystal Airport



Becker Park



Crystal Shopping Center



Multi-family housing

FIGURE 11: EXISTING LAND USE



ROADWAY NETWORK

The roadway network in the Bass Lake Road LRT station area is served by Minor Arterials, including Bottineau Blvd. running north/south and Bass Lake Road running east/west. West Broadway Avenue is a north/south Major Collector located approximately 0.4-mile west of Bottineau Blvd.. Other roadway networks in the area are primarily Minor Collectors (e.g., Sherburne Avenue and Wilshire Boulevard) or local streets in surrounding residential areas.

Bottineau Blvd. carries approximately 28,000 vehicles per day in the station area and Bass Lake Road carries approximately 12,000 to 19,000 vehicles per day (2019/2021 MnDOT data).

Crash history at Bass Lake Road (2018-2022) reveals that the intersection of Bottineau Blvd. and Bass Lake Road has an intersection critical index above the statewide average for similar intersections, indicating a sustained crash concern at the intersection, especially for rear-end crashes. Preliminary operations analysis performed by a separate study conducted by the Metropolitan Council indicates that existing operations are generally acceptable during both peak hours, with low to moderate congestion.

Connectivity and mobility are further supported through arterial connections to regional and interstate destinations via I-94, USH 169, and Hwy 100. However, these freeways limit local mobility and access for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists - therefore, station area improvements should prioritize the comfort and safety of all users to and from the station.

Vehicular access into the proposed station area from the Minor Arterials is located at the Bottineau Blvd./Wilshire Boulevard intersection, approximately 0.3-mile south of Bass Lake Road. The proposed station's park-and-ride lot, located between Bottineau Blvd. and the BNSF Railway corridor, is expected to provide 170 new parking spaces for transit riders only. This park-and-ride will serve the parking needs and safety of transit users, directly addressing residential concerns with vehicles parking on-street ("hide-and-ride") for long periods of time in surrounding neighborhoods to access transit. Between the proposed station and Crystal's commercial core to the west, Bass Lake Road provides access to several off-street parking lots intended to serve mall and other commercial shoppers. Becker Park also includes off-street parking.

FIGURE 12: EXISTING ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION MAP

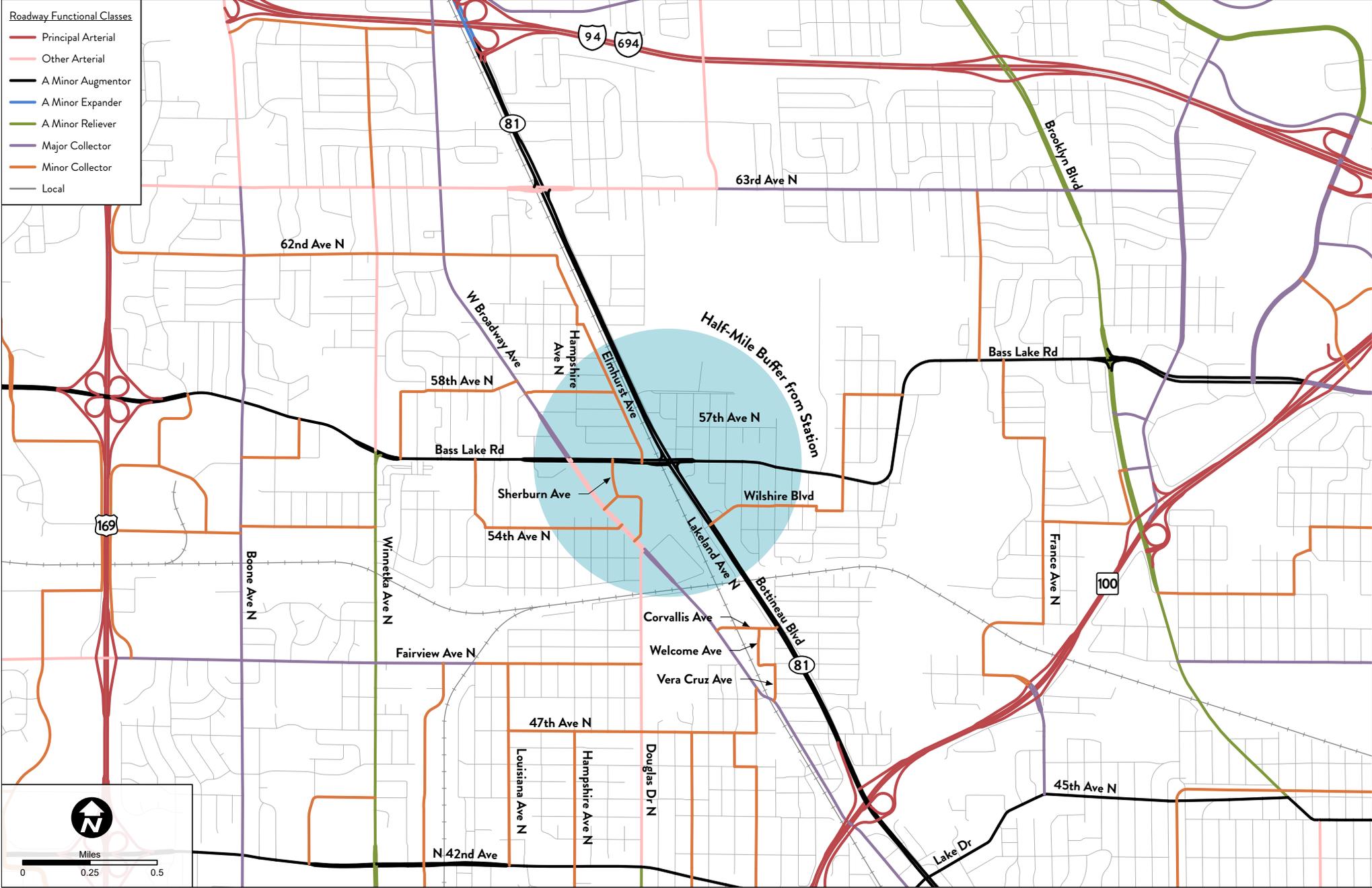
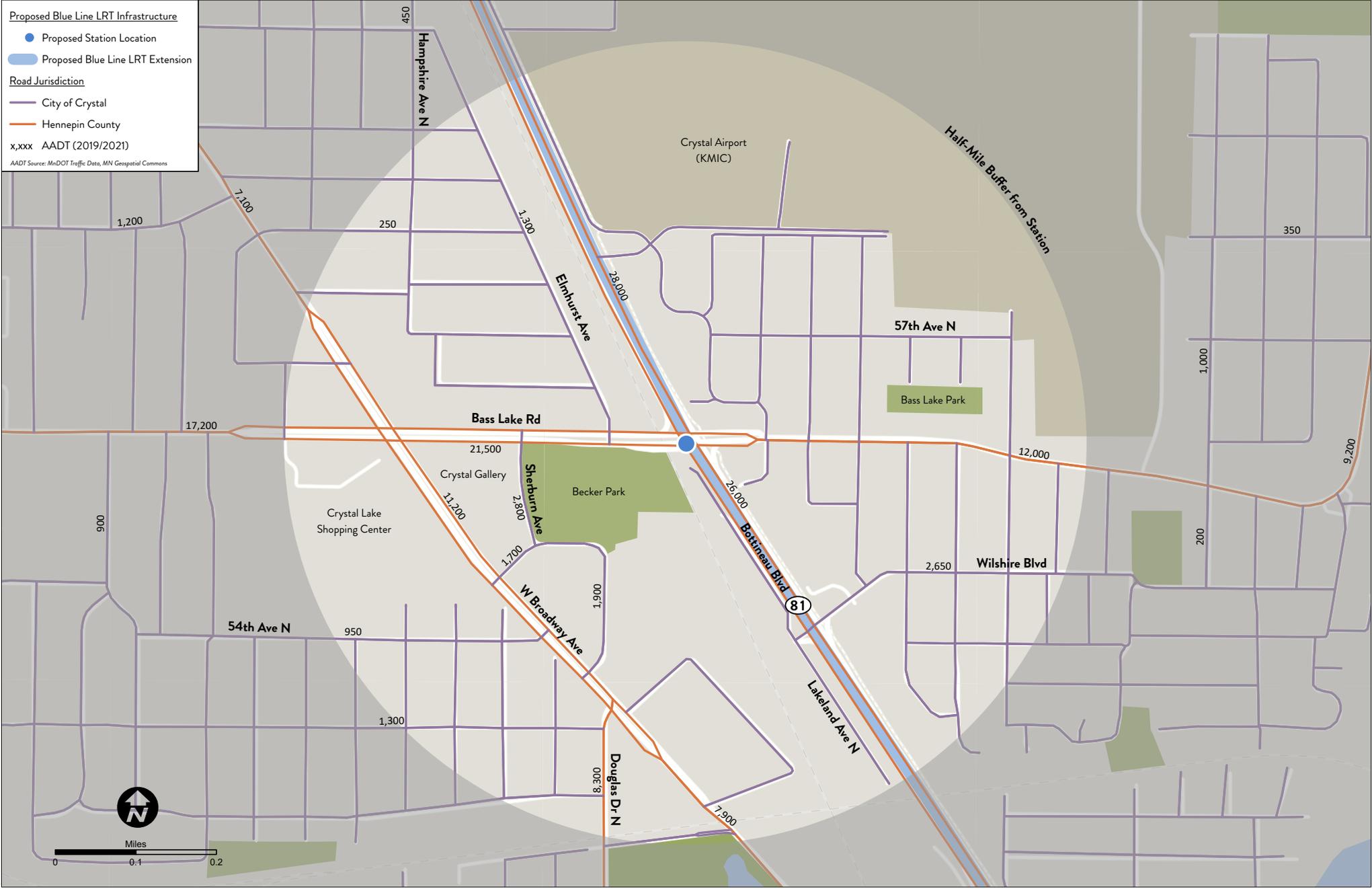


FIGURE 13: EXISTING ROADWAY AADT/JURISDICTION MAP





Bass Lake Road looking east from Elmhurst Ave.



Intersection of Bottineau Blvd. and Bass Lake Road looking southeast

TRANSIT NETWORK

The existing public transportation network near the proposed Bass Lake Road Station is served by the Metro Transit routes 716 and 721. Existing bus stops are along W Broadway Avenue and Douglas Drive (route 716) and Bass Lake Road (route 721). These existing transit routes serve the surrounding neighborhoods and many bus stops are located within walking distance of the proposed Bass Lake Road station. However, as the operation of the METRO Blue Line Extension approaches, Metro Transit should work directly with stakeholders to provide improved connections and routes to meet the demands of the new station. Complete street infrastructure improvements should also be reviewed closely to support safe access to the new station for all transit riders, including those walking, bicycling, and rolling. For example, the Blue Line Extension project should include a marked and signed crosswalk with an RRFD or HAWK signal at Bass Lake Road between Elmhurst Ave. and Becker Park. This is an existing legal but unmarked crosswalk between the Route 721 bus stops located on each side of Bass Lake Road at Elmhurst Ave.



Bus Stop along Bass Lake Road (Route 721)



Bus Stop along Broadway Avenue (Route 716)



Metro Transit Bus

FIGURE 14: EXISTING AVERAGE WEEKDAY TRANSIT ACTIVITY BY STOP (FALL 2022)



PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

The Metro Blue Line Extension's success depends on providing safe, comfortable access to transit for pedestrians. A complete pedestrian network increases transit accessibility, increases ridership, and contributes to community health.

For light rail transit, people are generally willing to walk a distance of approximately a 1/2 mile on a regular basis, or approximately 10 minutes. The area where people can easily walk to within a certain period of time is called a walkshed. Around the Bass Lake Road Station, the 10-minute walkshed almost reaches the full 1/2-mile from the station platform due to the rectilinear street pattern, but large commercial parcels, limited access along Bottineau Blvd. and across the freight rail corridor, and a lack of pedestrian facilities prevent consistent walkability in the station area. Busy intersections with high speeds, especially while trying to cross Bottineau Blvd. and Bass Lake Road, create challenges for people walking. This is exacerbated by the poor condition of most of the crosswalk markings.

Sidewalks in the station area are limited to the major streets and shared trails, while having few or no sidewalks along residential streets. Bass Lake Road, West Broadway Avenue, and Bottineau Blvd. and the streets adjacent to Becker Park have sidewalks and/or shared trails, however, beyond these roadways, the sidewalk system is lacking.

The Crystal Lake Regional Trail provides important north-south connections through the station area. Becker Park provides important shared use trails southwest of the proposed station.



Bass Lake Road Streetscape looking east from Sherburne Ave.



Crosswalk across Bottineau Blvd.

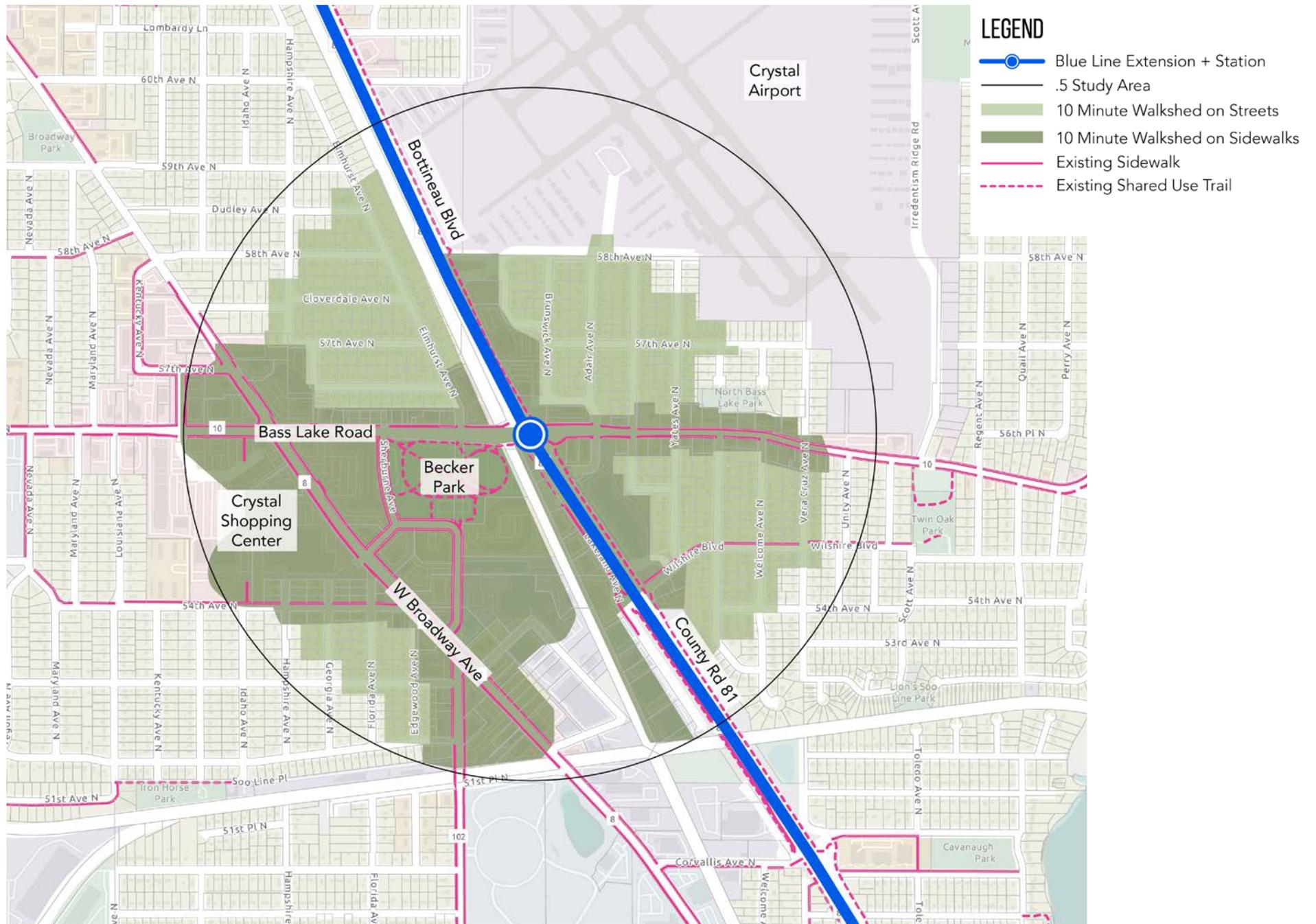


Bass Lake Road Streetscape looking west from Elmhurst Ave.



Crystal Lake Regional Trail near proposed Bass Lake Road Station

FIGURE 15: EXISTING PEDESTRIAN NETWORK - GAP ANALYSIS



BICYCLE NETWORK

Safe and comfortable bicycle access to the station can improve the transit user experience, extend the network's reach, increase ridership, and provide opportunities to exercise on a daily basis. In conjunction with the 2016 Station Area Plan, the Bottineau Bike Study examined bicycle access and circulation at and around stations, bike parking, and corridor cycling. Findings from that report are available at www.hennepin.us/bottineau.

The average cyclist is willing to ride 20 minutes, or approximately three miles on flat ground, to reach an LRT station. Crystal features a grid of neighborhood streets separated by major avenues spaced approximately one mile apart.



Crystal Lake Regional Trail / Source: Three Rivers Park District



Becker Park Trails

Twin Lake provides a natural barrier in the east of the city, while Crystal Airport creates a large gap in the street network, leaving a large area without connections. West Broadway, the BNSF corridor and Bottineau Blvd. cross the grid diagonally northwest-southeast.

Regional bicycling connections are provided by the Crystal Lake Regional Trail, connecting southeast to Wirth Park and northwest to Elm Creek Park Reserve. This trail also connects with the Twin Lakes Regional Trail which extends east to the Mississippi River and the Bassett Creek

Regional Trail which connects west to Medicine Lake. The planned CP Rail Regional Trail would connect north-south from Becker Park to Nine Mile Creek Regional trail in Edina.

On-street bicycle facilities, such as the bicycle lanes on Douglas Drive south of 50th Ave. and Bass Lake Road east of Yates Ave. do not fully connect with other facilities in the station area. Future projects to close these gaps should be evaluated and implemented as funding and opportunities arise.

FIGURE 16: 20-MINUTE BIKESHED MAP

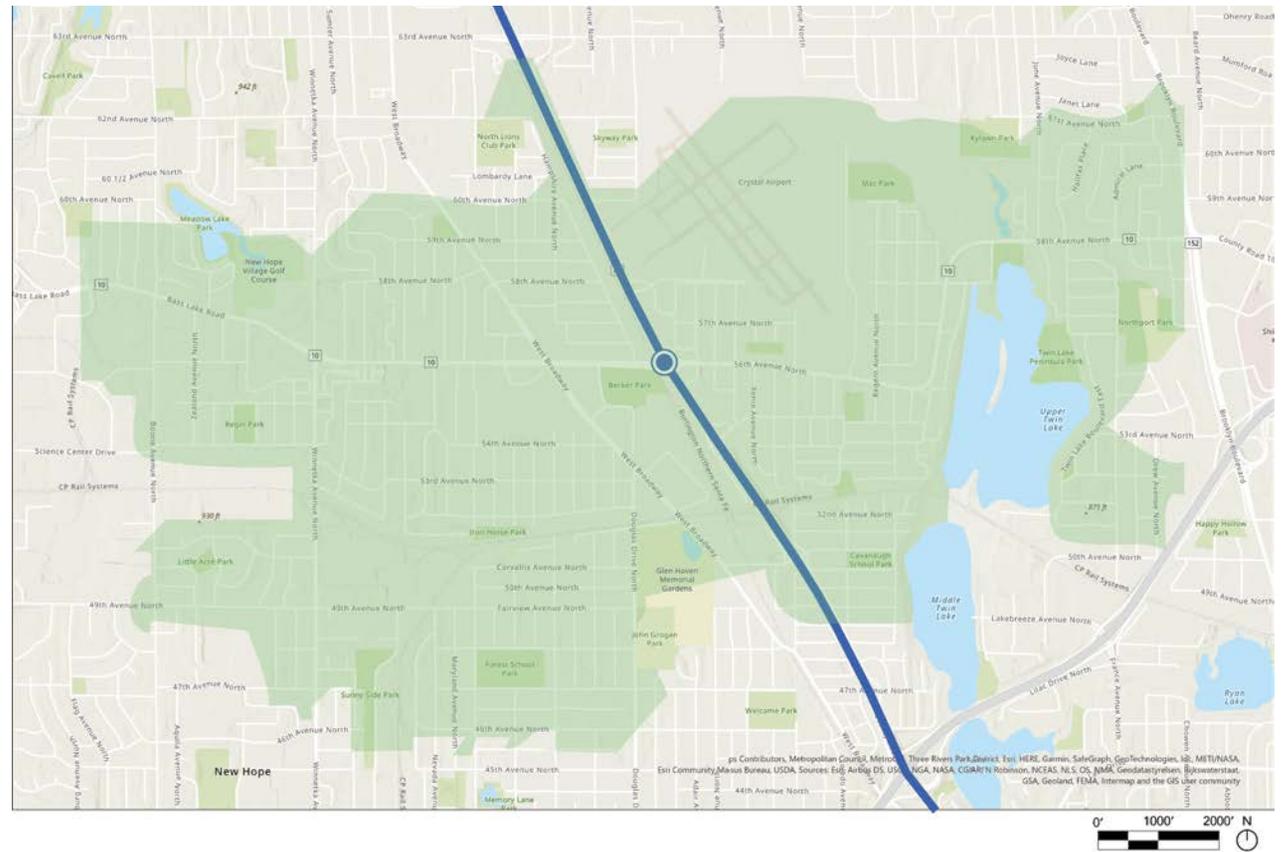
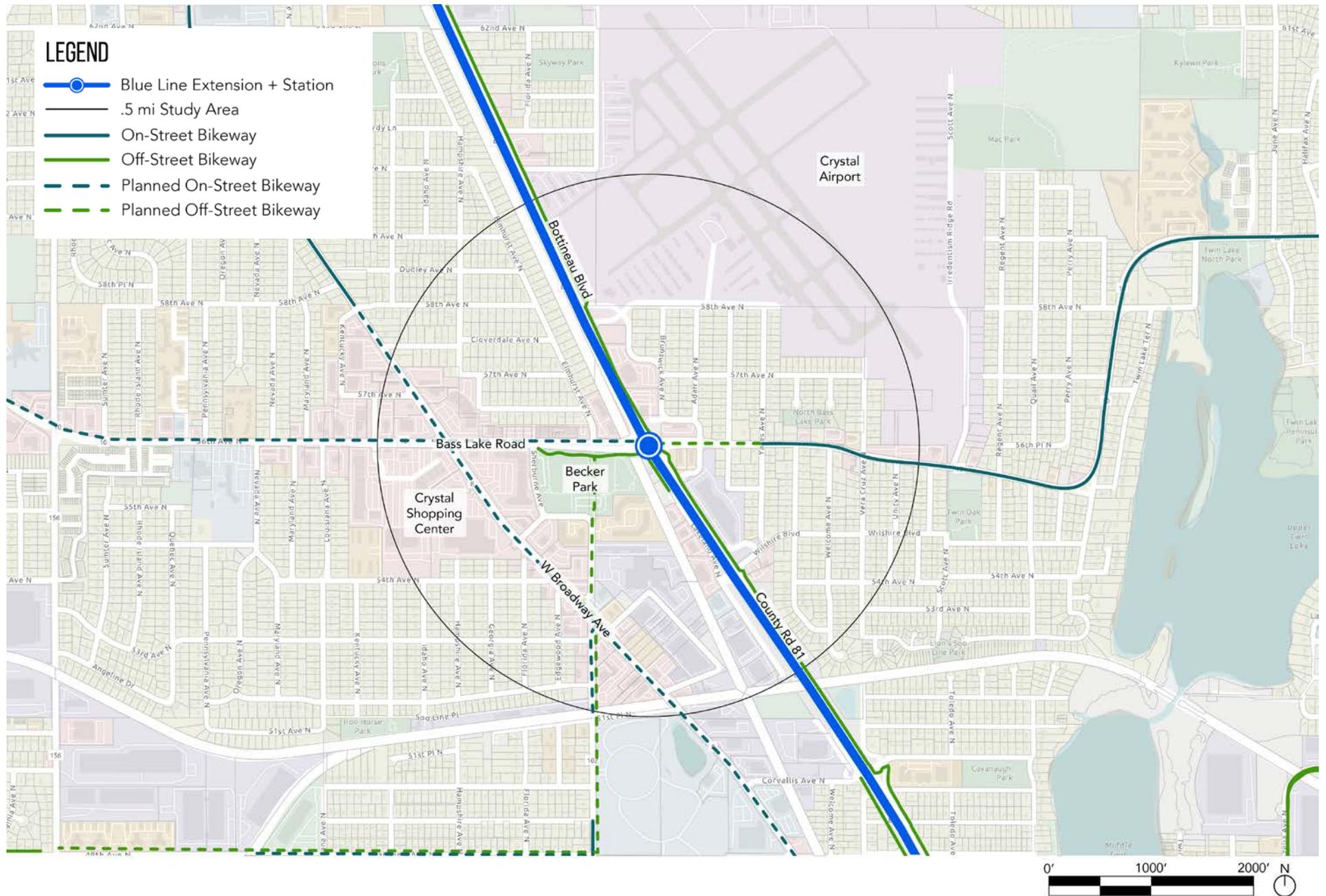


FIGURE 17: EXISTING AND PLANNED BIKE ROUTES



Chapter 3 | Where Are We Going?

STATION AREA PLAN UPDATE

The plans, diagrams and narrative on the following pages provide updated station area guiding principles and a range of recommendations for infrastructure improvements, station area amenities, and transit supportive development opportunities for the Bass Lake Road Station Area.

The **Access and Circulation Plan** shown in Figure 18 provides a high level view of how future transit, automobile, bike, and pedestrian systems can better connect to the station and its surroundings.

Figure 20 illustrates the **Station Area Improvements** that will enhance the transit user experience and identifies opportunities for future redevelopment in the station area.

Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan Guiding Principles

Placemaking

- Create a welcoming sense of arrival to the community from the station
- *Reimagine Becker Park*
- Convert Bass Lake Road from just an arterial into a compelling place
- Assist in the densification of shopping centers
- *Create safe and welcoming public spaces below the underpass*
- *Add new landscape plantings and trees to offset the loss of landscaping due to the new station change*

Connectivity

- *Engage residents in future decisions about Becker Park*
- Connect all modes of transportation to the light rail station
- Work to eliminate conflicts between pedestrians, bikes, and cars at Bottineau Blvd.
- Encourage pedestrian and bike friendly crosswalks
- Create walkable and bikeable streets

Land Use

- *Take advantage of compact building design and reduced parking requirements within a 1/2-mile radius of stations*
- *Allow for targeted mixed land uses*
- Identify long-range opportunity sites
- Remove hurdles to economic development
- *Consider additional opportunity sites east of Bottineau into the TC District*

Key

- From 2016 Plan
- *Completed since 2016*
- *New in 2023*

PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED FROM THE 2016 BASS LAKE ROAD STATION AREA PLAN

Since 2016, after additional public input, engineering analysis and more vetting of the financial implications, the following major public improvements were constructed:

- 2018-2019: Reconstruction of the streetscape on the north side of Bass Lake Road from Elmhurst Ave. west to Hampshire Ave.
- 2019-2020: Reconstruction of Becker Park including a multi-use trail along the south side of Bass Lake Road from Sherburne Ave. to the BNSF corridor.

Also, in 2019 the City adopted TOD zoning (Town Center Zoning Districts) for the station area.

Bass Lake Road Streetscape

The 2016 Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan called for constructing a new sidewalk running in front of existing shops and parking lots. On-street parking was proposed on Bass Lake Road in support of retail uses.

Additional recommendations included streetscape enhancements (pavers, street trees, furniture, lighting, and room for outdoor dining) that are oriented to pedestrians rather than cars. Facade upgrades to existing tired storefronts were also recommended along with enhancing the pedestrian connection through the Crystal Gallery shopping center.

To build on these completed projects, additional improvements are proposed by this update.

Becker Park

Becker Park is a source of community pride. In January 2016, based on feedback from the Station Area Planning process, the city decided to initiate a separate detailed planning process for Becker Park. This city-led process engaged both residents and commission members to determine what changes, if any, should be made. The Becker Park planning process created a long-term vision for the park that was useful, feasible, and realistic.

In 2020, after three years of planning, the park was redeveloped into a community gathering place. The park includes a large inclusive play area at the center of the park as well as a patio, interactive fountain, performance lawn, picnic area, accessible restrooms, basketball and pickleball courts, and biking, walking, and running paths. It also includes a 2.2 million gallon underground stormwater infiltration facility to help handle the runoff from the surrounding commercial area.

Becker Park's location, next to the proposed Bass Lake Road LRT Station provides a wonderful place for community gatherings and a focus for future redevelopment opportunities in the station area.



Becker Park

TOD Overlay / Town Center Zoning

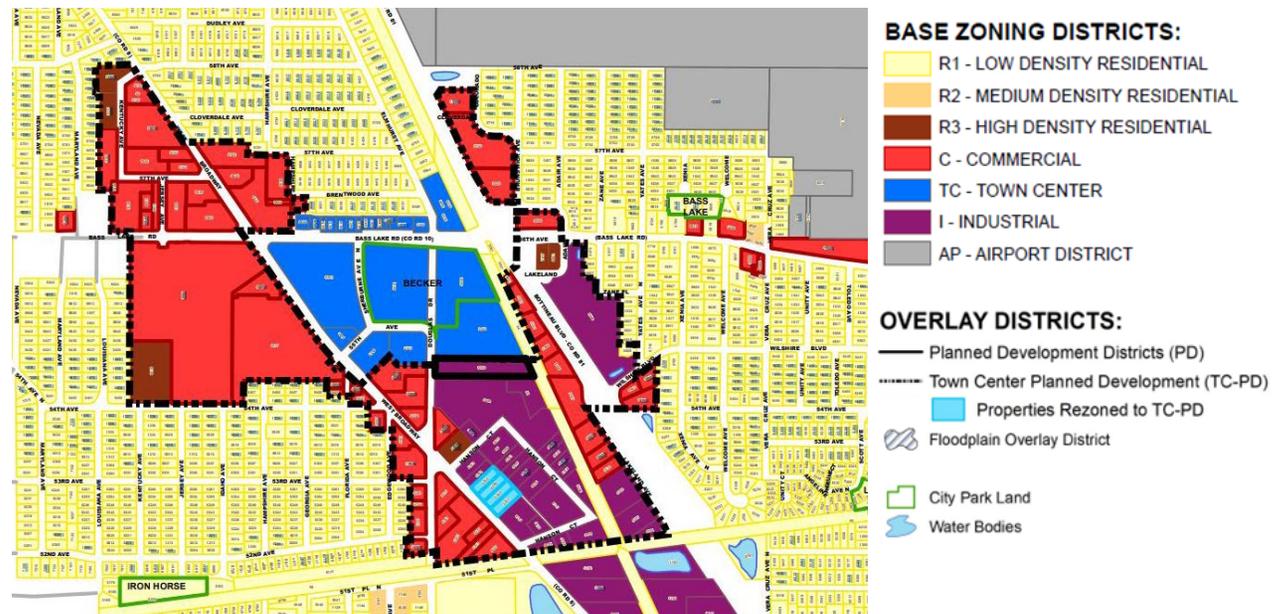
A Transit Oriented Development Overlay (TOD Overlay) is a regulatory tool that creates a special zoning district for the furtherance of transit oriented development. In the 2016 Station Area Plan, this approach was recommended for the non-residential property within the station area.

The goal is to give property owners additional flexibility/incentives to diversify and densify uses.

Elements of TOD zoning already existed around the intersection of West Broadway Avenue and Bass Lake Road in that many patrons arrive by bus and ridesharing. As a result, the city had already reduced commercial parking requirements allowing for infill development in the two parking lots.

In 2019 the City of Crystal adopted Town Center Zoning in a 220 acre area roughly corresponding to the non-single-family residential uses in the station area. This new zoning classification consists of two zoning districts: Town Center (TC) and Town Center – Planned Development (TC-PD). The following are the significant zoning requirements in these districts:

- **Density.** Allowed densities range from 16 to 80 units per gross acre.
- **Off-street parking requirements for multi-family residential.**
 - Within the TC district, the required parking ratio is one space per unit
 - Within the TC-PD, it is two spaces per unit, but this ratio can be reduced based on a parking study showing less parking is needed
- **Building location.** Building fronts are to be close to the street and parking located within or behind the building.
- **Mixed uses.** Town center zoning allows for, but does not mandate, a mix of uses within a building.



Crystal Zoning Map

STATION AREA IMPROVEMENTS

The recommendations listed below outline a range of future station area improvements intended to improve mobility to and from the Bass Lake Road transit station, enhance the transit user experience, and facilitate transit supportive redevelopment near the station.

Pedestrian Connections

Fully connected and comfortably designed pedestrian networks are indispensable to providing door-to-door service for transit users. Since a wide range of potential riders will walk farther on comfortable, active, pedestrian-friendly streets than in vehicle-dominated conditions, transit reaches its greatest potential in walkable places.

A complete and connected pedestrian network in the station area contributes to the safety and convenience of transit riders and should be prioritized in ridership-oriented transit street design and planning. The following provides more specific recommendations for enhancing pedestrian connections to and from the Bass Lake Road Station:

Improvements at Bottineau Blvd. and Bass Lake Road

- Pedestrian Improvements to be Implemented:
 - » Add stop bar in advance of crosswalk (for visibility)
 - » Add crosswalks at right-turn islands
 - » Add advanced pedestrian/bike signage
 - » Add audible pedestrian signals
 - » Tighten corner radius
 - » Widen white crosswalk markings (minimum 10 feet)
 - » Underlay crosswalk markings with a black field so they are more visible
- Pedestrian Improvements Requiring Further Study:
 - » Add no right turn on red for east-west movement
 - » Add intermediate pedestrian signals/pushbuttons to medians (only when there is sufficient space)
 - » Narrow or remove left turn lanes to create larger refuge area
 - » Add bollards/landscaping in median
 - » Enhance crosswalk markings (raised crosswalk at channelized turn)
 - » Review east-west right turn lane

- » Crosswalk tables at porkchops

Intersection Improvements along Bass Lake Road

- Develop pedestrian promenades along south side of Bass Lake Road, from Sherburne Ave. to West Broadway to match north side
- Improve the existing legal crosswalk at Elmhurst with white pavement marking and a stop bar in advance of the crosswalk, a median refuge and either a RRFD or HAWK signal.

Improvements to Consider for City Streets

- Widen white crosswalk markings (minimum 10 feet)
- Evaluate stop bars in advance of crosswalk (for visibility)
- Pedestrian and bike crossing signage
- Raised crosswalks
- To improve connections add sidewalks within the ½-mile radius of the Bass Lake Road station on the following streets:
 - » Yates Ave N
 - » 57th Ave N
 - » Brunswick Ave N
 - » 58th Ave N
 - » 60th Ave N

» Elmhurst Ave N

Bicycle Network

The integration between bicycling and public transit can provide multiple benefits. The primary benefit is that it puts public transit within the reach of more potential riders across a larger area. It also provides riders with greater flexibility, including the ability to adapt trips based on their individual needs or to work around service disruptions. This integration helps spread demand more evenly across the system.

A well-planned and executed bicycle network that provides safe and convenient connections to and from the Bass Lake Road Station will increase transit ridership while providing health benefits. Below are some specific recommendations for improving bicycle connections to and from the station area:

Priority recommendations of the Bottineau Bike study include:

- » Multi-use trail on the south side of Bass Lake Road, connecting existing trails west of Minnesota State Highway 169 with the Bass Lake Road LRT station and the existing Crystal Lake Regional Trail.

- » Bike lanes on Sherburne Avenue between Douglas Drive and Becker Park, providing a direct connection between the LRT station (through Becker Park), planned trails and bike lanes on West Broadway, and the existing bike lanes on Douglas Drive.
- » Bike lanes on 60th Avenue, Wilshire Boulevard, and Bass Lake Road connecting the Bass Lake Road LRT station with planned trails on Bottineau Blvd.. This corridor is an important connection to the east of the transitway where Twin Lake and the Crystal Airport create barriers in the street network. Similarly, limited east-west crossings of Bottineau Blvd. make this an important bicycle connection across Crystal.
- » Combination of a trail, buffered bike lane, and bike lane along West Broadway connecting Brooklyn Park to Crystal and downtown Robbinsdale. This route provides local bicycle connections and an alternate on-street route to the Crystal Lake Regional Trail.
- » Provide bike pumping and repair station at the Transit Station.
- » Provide visible, convenient and accessible bike parking and lockers at the Transit Station.
- » Provide wayfinding signage to direct bicyclists in and near the station area.



Bike Lockers



On-street Bicycle Lane



Bicycle Repair Station

FIGURE 18: ACCESS AND CIRCULATION PLAN

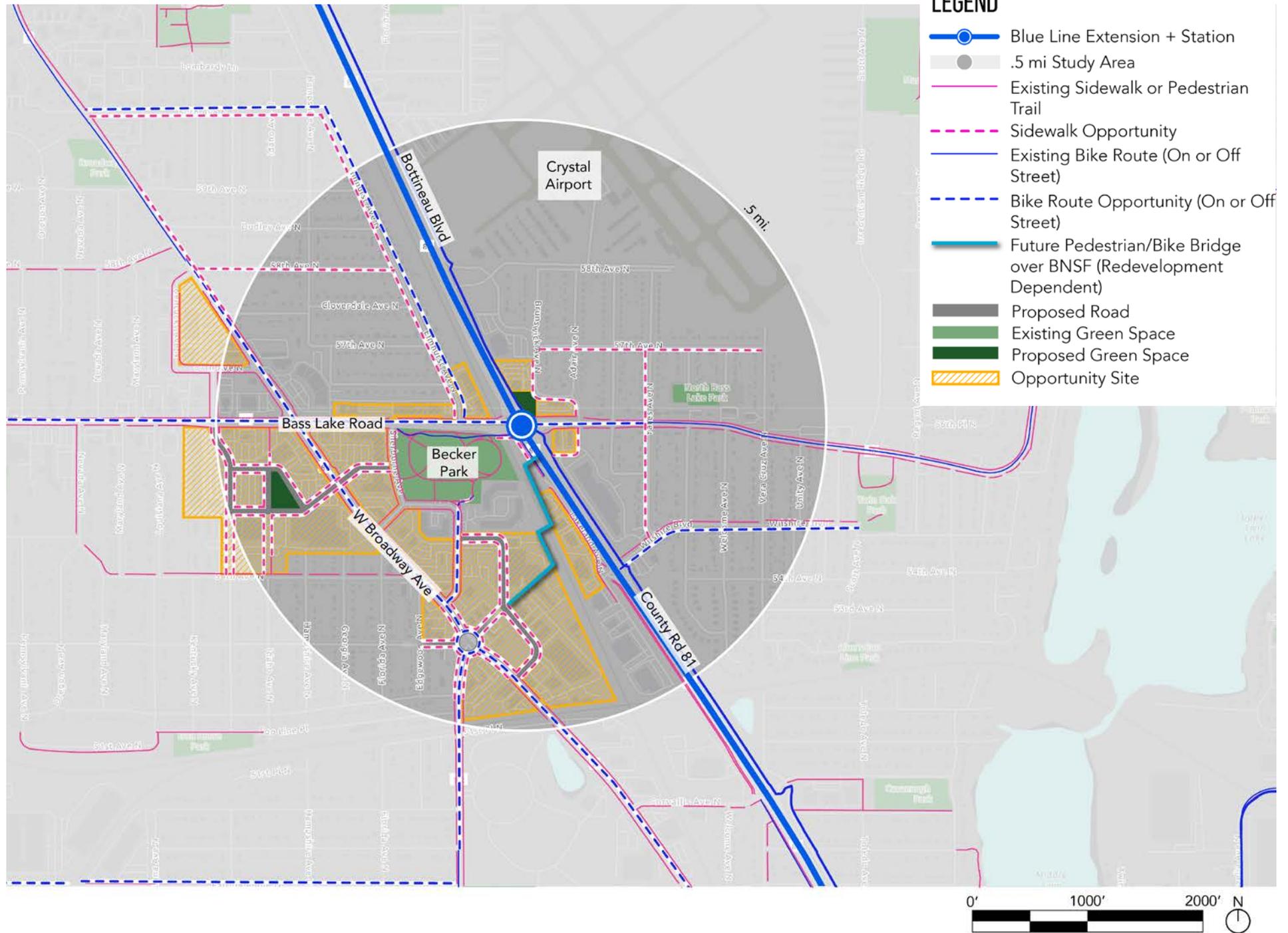
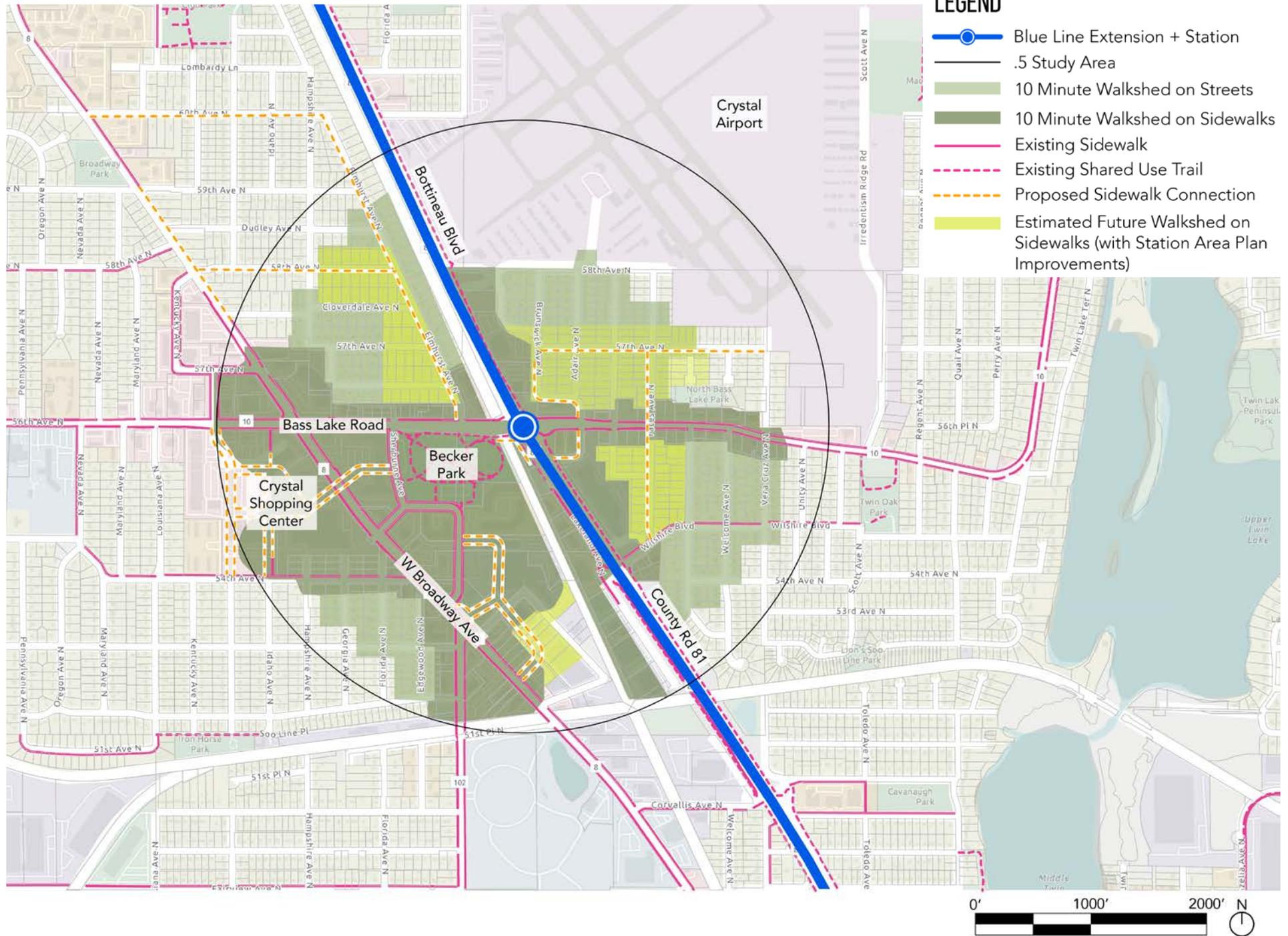


FIGURE 19: ESTIMATED FUTURE WALKSHED WITH STATION AREA PLAN IMPROVEMENTS



Roadways

The street network surrounding the proposed station generally achieves proper accessibility for motor vehicles. Bass Lake Road specifically provides an opportunity to incorporate improved roadway features that support economic development, multimodal safety, and enhanced mobility and circulation in the station area.

Non-Motorized Transportation

There are several improvement opportunities to consider that support connectivity and access to the station for all users. Note that the below roadway improvements are in addition to the preferred grade-separated interchange alternative at Bottineau Blvd. and Bass Lake Road as well as the pedestrian and bicycle improvement opportunities outlined in this chapter.

- » When feasible, eliminate as many conflicts as possible between pedestrians, bicyclists, and motor vehicles at Bottineau Blvd. intersections (e.g., remove free-right movements with porkchop medians, or alternatively, install crosswalk tables).
- » Optimize signal timings along Bottineau Blvd. at Bass Lake Road and Wilshire Blvd/Lakeland Ave to minimize delay increases for cross-street traffic and improve accessibility to the proposed station's park and ride area.

- » In order to make the proposed LRT station more accessible, consider a bike/ped connection southwest from the station. This would require a bridge over the BNSF rail corridor.
- » As redevelopment in the station area occurs, explore opportunities to reduce block sizes and add additional street, sidewalk and trail connections.
- » Implement more of the improvements recommended by the 2016 Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan:
 - » Construct a 12-foot-wide multi-use path on the south side of Bass Lake Road between Sherburne Avenue and W. Broadway Avenue
 - » Construct an 8-foot-wide sidewalk on the north side of Bass Lake Road between Hampshire Avenue and W. Broadway Avenue
 - » Streetscape enhancements to extend the 2018 project
 - » On-street parking on both sides of Bass Lake Road where feasible and warranted by adjacent redevelopment

Transit Connections

Transit ridership will be enhanced by focusing on the “last mile” connections to fill the gaps between destinations and the transit station. Specific transit improvement recommendations include the following:

- » Include seating and paved waiting areas at all transit stops within the station area.
- » Include bus shelters at higher-demand transit stops and/or at stops closest to proposed LRT station.
- » Include adequate lighting for safety and visibility at higher-demand transit stops and/or at stops closest to the proposed LRT station.
- » Provide bus schedules and transfer information at all bus stops in the station area.
- » At the LRT station and park and ride, consider providing real-time travel information and complimentary WiFi, flexible curbspace for shared mobility, bicycle amenities, electric vehicle charging stations, and comfortable waiting and loading areas.

Wayfinding and Signage

A well-designed and comprehensive wayfinding and signage system plays an important role in improving the service level of transit stations, helping transit users find their way to and from the transit station and other nearby destinations. Providing route information that is clear, understandable, and accurate makes it easier for passengers to understand their travel options, find connecting bus stops, and neighborhood destinations within the station area. Specific wayfinding and signage recommendations include the following:

- » Integrate recommendations from the 2019 Bottineau Wayfinding Plan to facilitate bicycle and pedestrian navigation and maximize connections within the Bottineau Corridor along the proposed METRO Blue Line LRT Extension (BLRT)
 - » Community feedback preferred well-lit signage with bright colors
 - » Integrate the family of signage typologies from the Wayfinding Plan. Each sign type plays a different role in assisting station area visitors with navigation to area destinations, such as helping visitors orient themselves to the

station area after they get off the train, providing directions to community destinations with estimated walking and biking times to those destinations, or simply affirming that they are on the correct route.

- » Design and install a cohesive and contextual wayfinding and signage system near the LRT station and within the station area, including key intersections at Bottineau Blvd./Bass Lake Road, Bottineau Blvd./Wilshire Blvd., W. Broadway Avenue/Douglas Drive, Bass Lake Road/W. Broadway Avenue as well as major destinations such as Becker Park, major shopping destinations, and the Crystal Community Center.

Public Spaces

At the heart of a transit-friendly station area are public spaces that are comfortable and convenient for transit riders and surrounded by uses that create a sense of place for passengers and visitors alike. Great transit stations can provide dignified waiting spaces, are easily accessible and support those who walk and cycle, serve multiple uses and foster different activities, and most importantly, are neighborhood anchors that instill pride in the community. Specific public space recommendations include the following:

- » Enhance the new public plaza at the transit station with landscaping and site furnishings (seating, trash receptacles, etc.).

Public Art

Public art can help make transit stations more than just places to wait. The integration of public art at and near the transit station can create an attractive, vibrant sense of place, reduce crime and instill a sense of community pride. Specific recommendations for public art include the following:

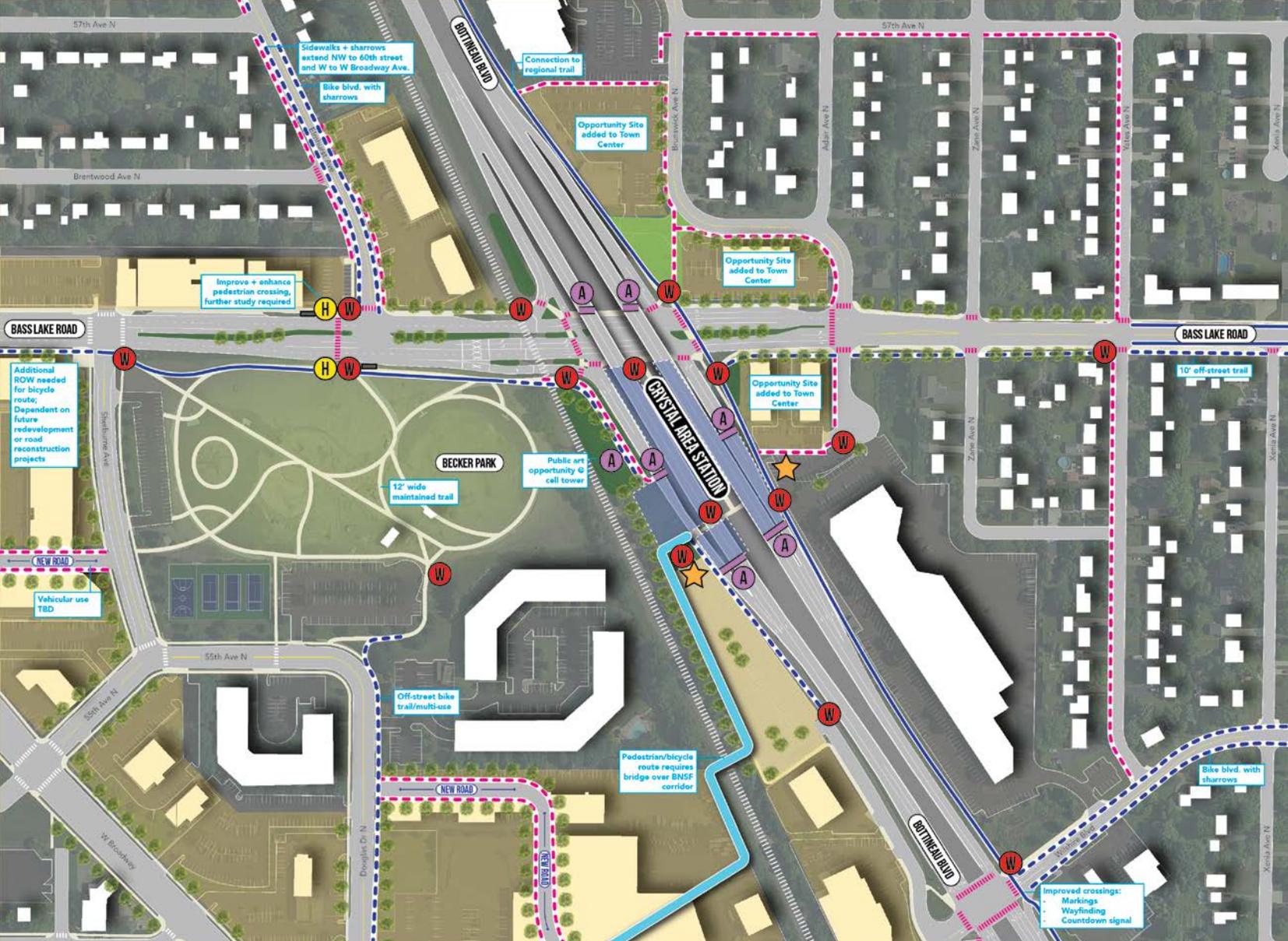
- » Integrate public art within the new transit station area plaza, parking lot, or structure to strengthen the identity of the transit station and the surrounding district.
- » Use public art to mask cell tower near Bass Lake Road and Bottineau Blvd..

Park-and-Ride / Drop Off Areas

To facilitate desired parking activity and encourage more transit ridership at the Bass Lake Road station, improvement recommendations include the following:

- » Accommodate designated passenger drop-off areas to provide more accessible drop-off points and prevent illegal parking activity.
- » Drop off areas can and should be accommodated at both the LRT station park and ride lot west of the station and the area east of the station.
- » Provide wayfinding information to direct drivers to the designated park-and-ride and drop off areas at key intersections to minimize parking in the neighborhoods and in other private lots.
- » Allocate spaces for carshare services (e.g., HOURCAR), rideshare services (e.g., Uber/Lyft), and other microtransit services (e.g., Metro Mobility, shuttle services).
- » Provide bicycle parking at the transit station.
- » Consider a “right size” parking ratio for new development in the station area to encourage a walkable environment and encourage transit ridership.

FIGURE 20: STATION AREA IMPROVEMENTS



- LEGEND**
- Proposed Sidewalk
 - Improved Pedestrian Crossing
 - Existing Bike Route (On or Off Street)
 - Bike Route Opportunity (On or Off Street)
 - Hawk Signal
 - Wayfinding/Signage
 - Public Art
 - ★ Kiss & Ride
 - Bus Shelter
 - Streetscape Improvements
Includes street trees & plantings, pedestrian lighting, green infrastructure, and ADA compliant paving
 - Future Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge over BNSF (Redevelopment Dependent)
 - Opportunity Site
 - Enhanced Landscaping
 - Public Green Space
 - Public Space/Placemaking
Includes special paving, safety lights and feature lighting, site furnishing and seating, trash receptacles, public art and murals, programming, bike parking, and CPTED principles

STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS

Streetscape design improvements enable pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists to share and use the street, accommodating the needs of all users. Improvements to streetscape design can include increased street lighting, enhanced street landscaping and street furniture, increased sidewalk coverage and connectivity of pedestrian walkways, bicycling infrastructure, street crossing safety features, and traffic calming measures. Specific streetscape improvements include the following:

- High visibility crosswalks
- HAWK signals (High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk) where warranted
- Public Art
- Wayfinding and signage
- Street trees and plantings
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting
- Site furnishings
- Visible and accessible cycling amenities including bike parking, repair and pumping stations, and wayfinding to support cyclists to and from adjacent trail networks

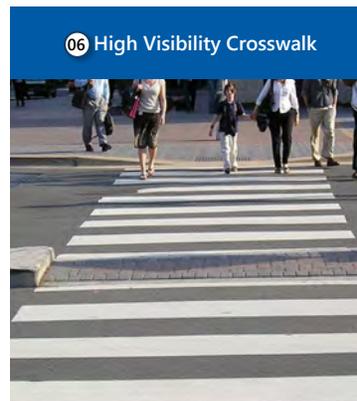
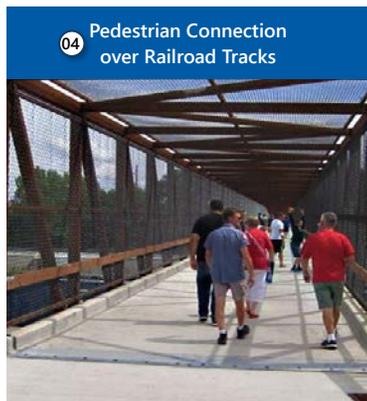
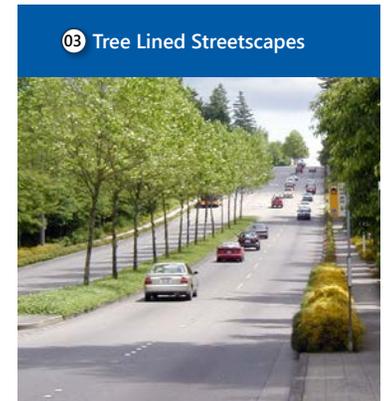
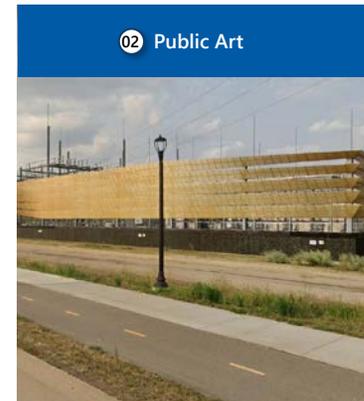
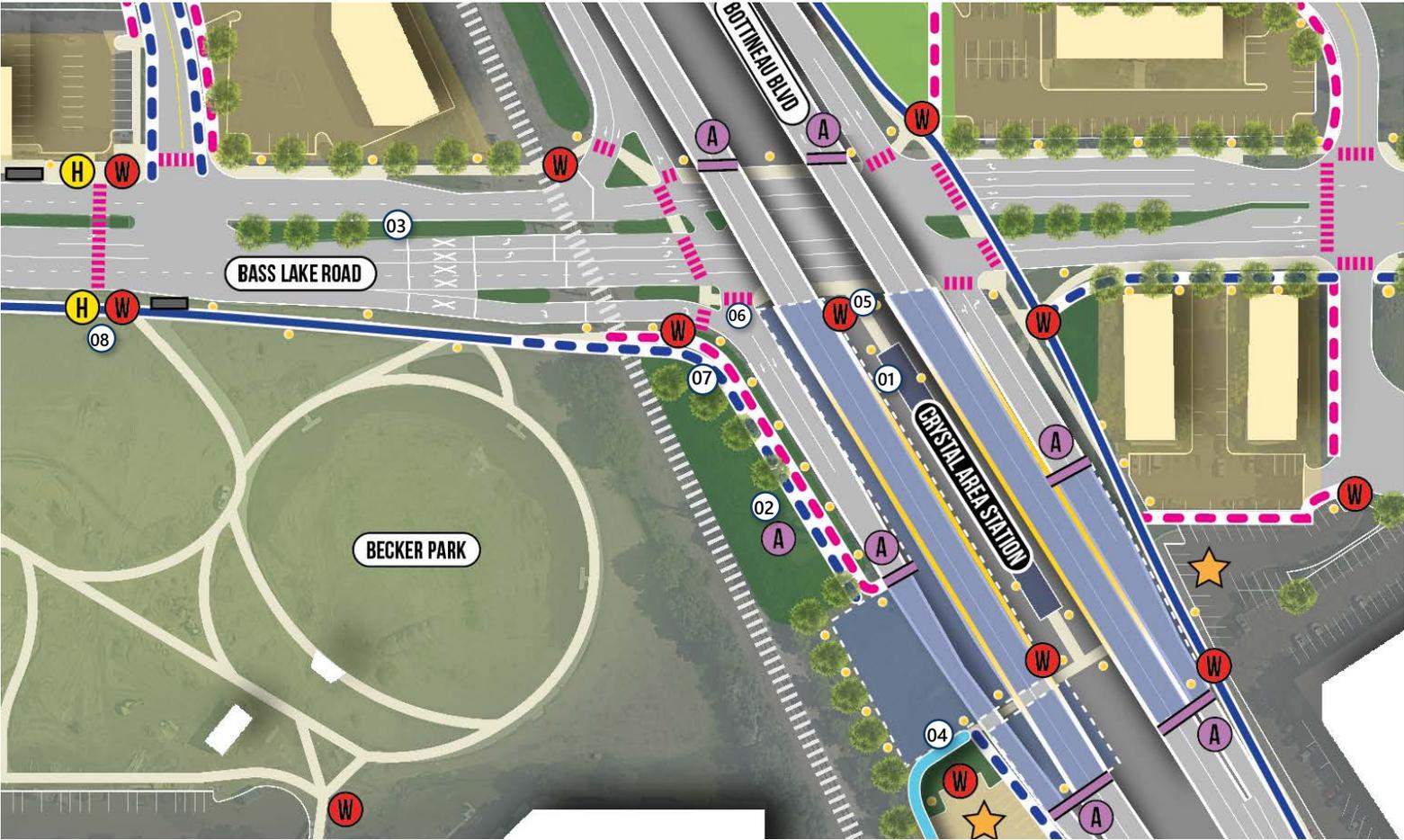


FIGURE 21: STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS



- LEGEND**
- - - Proposed Sidewalk
 - ||||| Pedestrian Crossing
 - Existing Bike Route (On or Off Street)
 - - - Bike Route Opportunity (On or Off Street)
 - H Hawk Signal
 - W Wayfinding/Signage
 - A Public Art
 - ★ Kiss & Ride
 - Bus Shelter
 - Pedestrian Lighting
 - Streetscape Improvements
Includes street trees & plantings, pedestrian lighting, green infrastructure, and ADA compliant paving
 - Future Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge over BNSF (Redevelopment Dependent)
 - Opportunity Site
 - Enhanced Landscaping
 - Public Green Space
 - Public Space/Placemaking Opportunity
Includes special paving, safety lights and feature lighting, site furnishing and seating, trash receptacles, public art and murals, programming, bike parking, and CPTED principles

UNDERPASS ENHANCEMENTS

As noted in Chapter 1, the grade-separated interchange proposed for Bass Lake Road Station will undergo further design, study, and engineering. The following design guidance should be taken into consideration when designing and planning the underpass condition created by the interchange option to help ensure a comfortable pedestrian experience.

Bright

Lighting

- Provide uniform spread lighting and reduce contrast between shadow and illuminated areas
- Provide higher than minimum level of lighting
- Light areas that will be used at night time: platform, drop-off and pick-up zone, park-and-ride, adjacent paths, etc.
- Integrate lighting into site features where feasible, i.e. steps, walls, site furnishings
- Provide light fixtures in areas that require good visibility - pedestrian routes and entrapment areas
- Provide enhanced lighting that illuminates vertical surfaces, ceiling wash, integrates with public art and landscape areas

Clean and well-maintained

- Create a low maintenance, easy to clean and maintain space with durable materials
- Ensure clearances for equipment under the bridge
- Create multiple public/private partnerships for future maintenance success

Bright/light colors in underpass area

- Paint the underpass area with bright and welcoming colors

Public Art

- Create opportunities for various types of public art - murals, lighting, sculpture, etc.
- Enhanced and interactive public art

Branding

- Brighten and enliven the area with site branding that is reflective of the culture and community

Safe

Sight Lines

- Allow clear sight lines and visibility
- If sight lines need to be obstructed, make them visible by using glass or other enhancements such as mirrors
- Plan for landscape improvements to not block sight lines, including upon maturity

Clear Definition of Movement Nodes

- Reduce auto / pedestrian / bike conflicts
- Define appropriate and different spaces for movement and gathering

Wayfinding / Signage

- Create consistent and clear wayfinding and signage
- Signs and wayfinding should convey the message with adequate information. For example, indicate where to go for assistance or help, where public washrooms are located, and the hours of operation of the LRT station. The message should be conveyed in suitable language(s) or universal symbols.

Soften

Greening

- Integrate plantings and trees to soften the space and reinforce branding/wayfinding
- Create space for greening
- Leverage green space for stormwater management
- Consider integrating vines, green screens, hanging plants on bridge walls/columns
- Preserve existing vegetation where feasible
- Opportunity for gateway plantings, raised planters, and pollinator gardens

FIGURE 22: BASS LAKE ROAD STATION - PLANNING CONCEPT

Paving

- Integrally colored concrete paving

Noise reduction

- Integrate noise reduction measures in the underpass area - i.e. sound dampening panels

Site Furnishings

- Provide various types of seating
- Provide bike racks / lockers in convenient locations
- Provide waste receptacles

Climate

- Design with shade, wind, and cold in mind

Activation/Destination

Welcoming to All

- Reflect the neighborhood interests
- Placemaking should reflect the culture of the community

Flexible

- Create flexible spaces for pop-ups
- Integrate power/electrical hook-ups and water supply

Programming

- Potential integration of programming and activation uses in the underpass areas



Bass Lake Road Station Proposed Renderings / Source: Metro Transit

Note: These images represent a planning concept based on cursory engineering work. If this concept advances, significant additional design would be required.

FIGURE 23: UNDERPASS DESIGN PRECEDENTS



- KEY
- SITE AMENITIES
 - PROGRAMMING
 - BRANDING
 - LANDSCAPE

Station Area Redevelopment Potential

STATION AREA REDEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

Market trends were evaluated citywide, within the station area, and then specifically on five opportunity sites at the direction of City of Crystal staff.

As a whole, a number of factors will influence how the station area develops in coming years as the extension of the Blue Line comes further into focus:

- Market metrics for citywide development and absorption of multifamily and commercial indicate stability but not rapid growth.
- The analysis of anonymized mobile phone data highlighted that the Bottineau Boulevard/Bass Lake Road area is a regional crossroads currently, so many people in the northwest metro know and frequent this space.
- There is a substantial amount of underutilized square footage in the station area, particularly in its south portion as shown in Figure 25.
- As redevelopment in the station area occurs, opportunities to reduce block sizes and add additional street, sidewalk and trail connections should be explored. Research suggests that smaller block sizes create more walkable environments for pedestrians and enhance accessibility.
- Finally, the city's investment in Becker Park is a valuable amenity for new residential development in the Crystal Station area.



Hypothetical Transit Oriented Development



Example of Transit Oriented Development

Market Context

Overall, Crystal's market for multifamily and commercial real estate has been stable and modestly growing over the last decade. The city has added 119 units of multifamily housing over ten years to reach its current inventory of 1,969. The quantity of total retail space increased 3.8% over the time frame to its current level of 712,000 square feet, including approximately 160,000 for the Target store and grocery. Office space has declined over the same period, including the largest reductions in Q1 2018 (24,800 square feet) and Q1 2021 (12,810 square feet). Like almost every community, office demand is expected to decline for the foreseeable future. In contrast, medical uses currently occupy about 75,000 square feet in Crystal with additional medical office being developed.

LRT station investments have demonstrated capacity to reshape development and activity patterns in the metro area. Blue Line and Green Line station areas already in service have shown often substantial change in the profile and density of land use, accommodating both more residents and employment within walking distance of LRT stations. In addition, though delayed, the station areas of the Green Line extension display significant increases in development interest. For example, the area immediately surrounding Opus Station has added more than 2,200 housing units since the Green Line station locations were approved. The 325 Blake Road development, directly associated with the Green Line extension, is slated to add 833 housing units and 18,000 square feet of

FIGURE 24: MARKET BACKGROUND

Land Use	2023 Inventory	2013-23 Citywide Absorption
Multifamily	1,969 Units	119 Units
Retail	712,000 Square Feet	27,233 Square Feet
Office	105,000 Square Feet	(23,170) Square Feet
Medical	75,000 Square Feet	N/A

commercial space, on a site that was previously used for cold storage. While Crystal's market has been relatively stable, with little addition of new inventory, approval and full funding of the Blue Line extension could inject a new level of development interest.

While non-medical office continues to be developed in the metro area as a whole, the reorganization of that market will likely preclude any development or leasing interest in this product type in the Crystal station area for the foreseeable future.

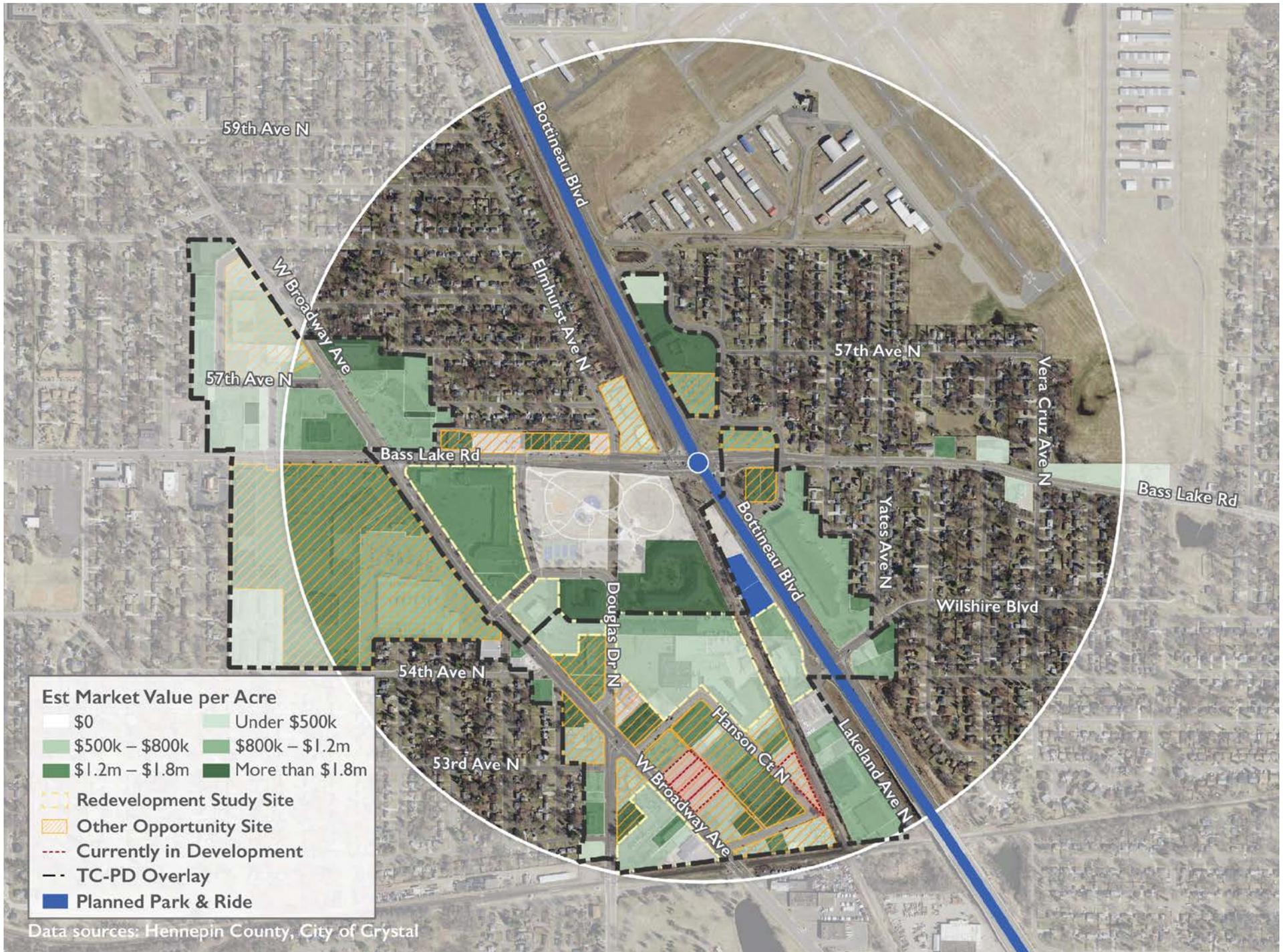
Market and Design Intersections

The development of Becker Park establishes a significant opportunity for park-oriented multifamily development. Opportunity Sites A, B and C each derive some value from proximity to the park, and that linkage is most valuable for residential uses. At the same time, Broadway will continue to be important frontage for potential retail and medical uses. The ranking and prioritization, outlined below, reflects the value of these two station area anchors.

The Dilemma of Available Land

The city's opportunity sites within the immediate Crystal station area comprise almost 30 acres of land. This large quantity of land at play is an asset that should prompt a concerted effort by the city to phase where and how public investment and emphasis is placed. For the full potential of each of the individual sites to be realized, the city should attempt to focus market interest on one or two of the opportunity areas at a time, in a phased sequence. Adopting funding tools for specific sites at a time, for example, will increase the efficiency of the city's investments in placemaking and potential gap financing in the station area.

FIGURE 25: MARKET VALUE PER ACRE, PARCELS IN COMMERCIAL AND TOWN CENTER ZONES



OPPORTUNITY SITES

Sites Overview

The five opportunity sites, Sites A, B, C, D, and E, are located southwest of the proposed Bass Lake Road Station. The sites, selected by city staff, are further studied on the following pages. See Figure 27 for a map of the opportunity site locations.

FIGURE 27: OPPORTUNITY SITES OVERVIEW



Current Conditions Overview

Within the station area, Figure 26 demonstrates the key attributes of the five opportunity sites examined in more detail.

FIGURE 26: CURRENT CONDITIONS FOR KEY OPPORTUNITY SITES

Site	Area in Acres	Area in Sq Ft	Est. Mkt. Value	Zoning
A	8.43	367,203	\$11,518,000	TC
B	3.16	137,516	\$1,796,000	TC(CK) + TC-PD (Perkins)
C	10.97	477,672	\$6,511,000	Industrial + TC-PD
D	4.19	182,609	\$2,493,000	Commercial + TC-PD
E	2.46	107,158	\$2,101,000	TC-PD
Other Commercial	94.69	4,124,620	\$121,994,000	N/A

Development Capacity in Opportunity Sites

For additional context, floor-area ratios (total building square footage divided by land area) can give us some framing of how much development could be proposed – and what kind of market absorption would be required for such development to be market viable.

Figure 28 portrays development capacity, presuming floor area ratios of 0.5 and 1.0 for the five key opportunity sites.

FIGURE 28: DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY IN KEY OPPORTUNITY SITES

Site	Square Footage	
	FAR of 0.5	FAR of 1.0
A	185,000	365,000
B	70,000	140,000
C	240,000	480,000
D	90,000	185,000
E	30,000	60,000

Site Redevelopment Viability Overview

Ranking the Five Opportunity Sites by Viability

After analyzing potential redevelopment opportunities, the table below presents a sample program for demonstration purposes, along with a ranking. Further pages provide an explanation for each key opportunity site, covering its current conditions and potential for redevelopment.

FIGURE 29: OPPORTUNITY AREAS: SAMPLE PROGRAMS FOR DEMONSTRATION PURPOSES

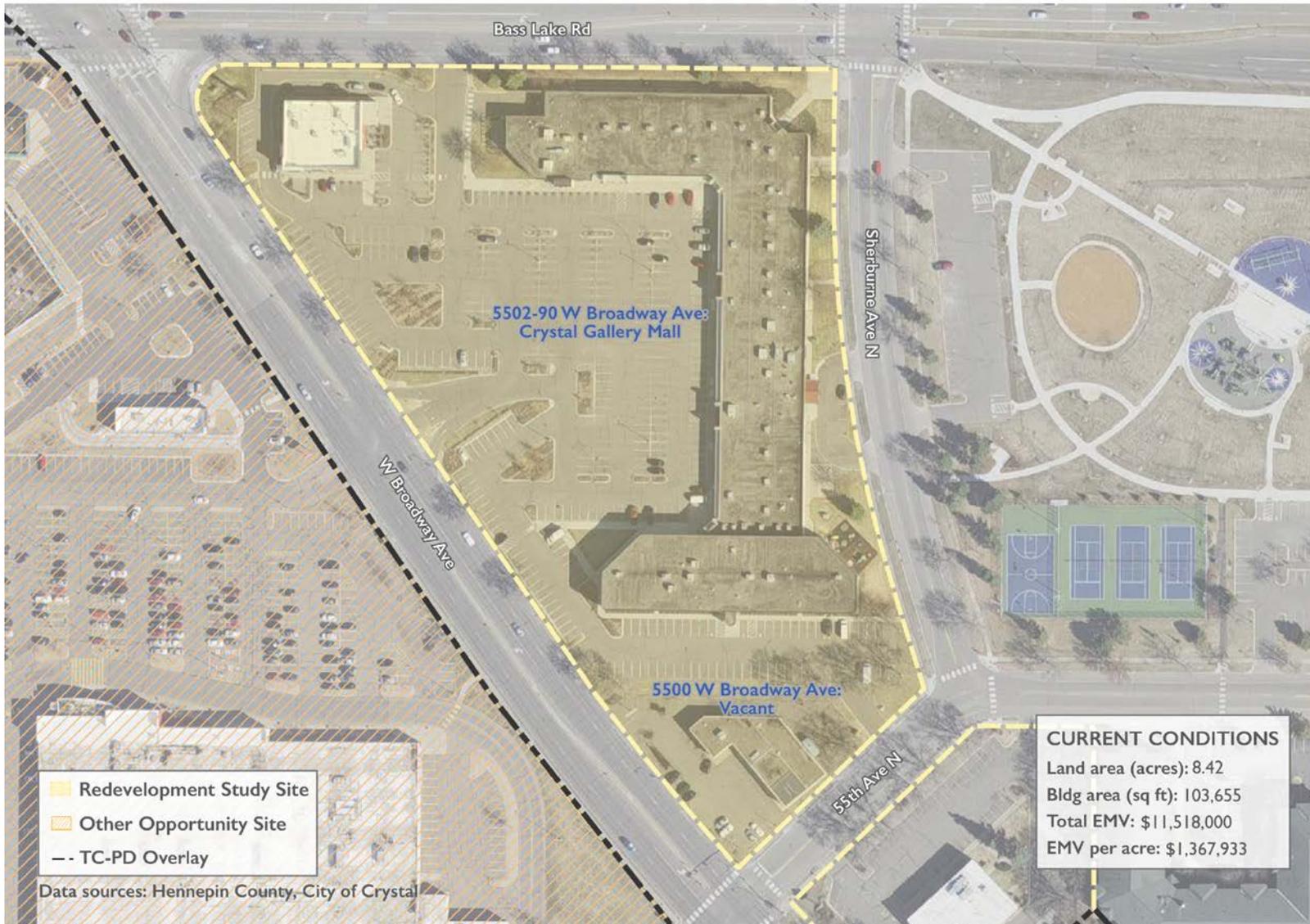
Rank	Site	Site (SF)	Site (Acres)	Sample Program for Demonstration Purposes									Housing Units (Total)
				Square Footage	Effective FAR	Retail	Medical	Office	Multifamily (SF)	Multifamily (Units)	Townhome (SF)	Townhome (Units)	
1	A	367,203	8.43	370,000	1.01	10,000	40,000	-	320,000	291	-	-	291
3	B	137,516	3.16	150,000	1.09	10,000	40,000	-	100,000	91	-	-	91
4	C	477,672	10.97	435,000	0.91	10,000	-	-	350,000	318	75,000	54	372
5	D	182,609	4.19	115,000	0.63	10,000	40,000	-	-	-	65,000	46	46
2	E	107,233	2.46	220,600	2.06	5,000	-	-	215,600	196	-	-	196

Site A (Crystal Mall Block)

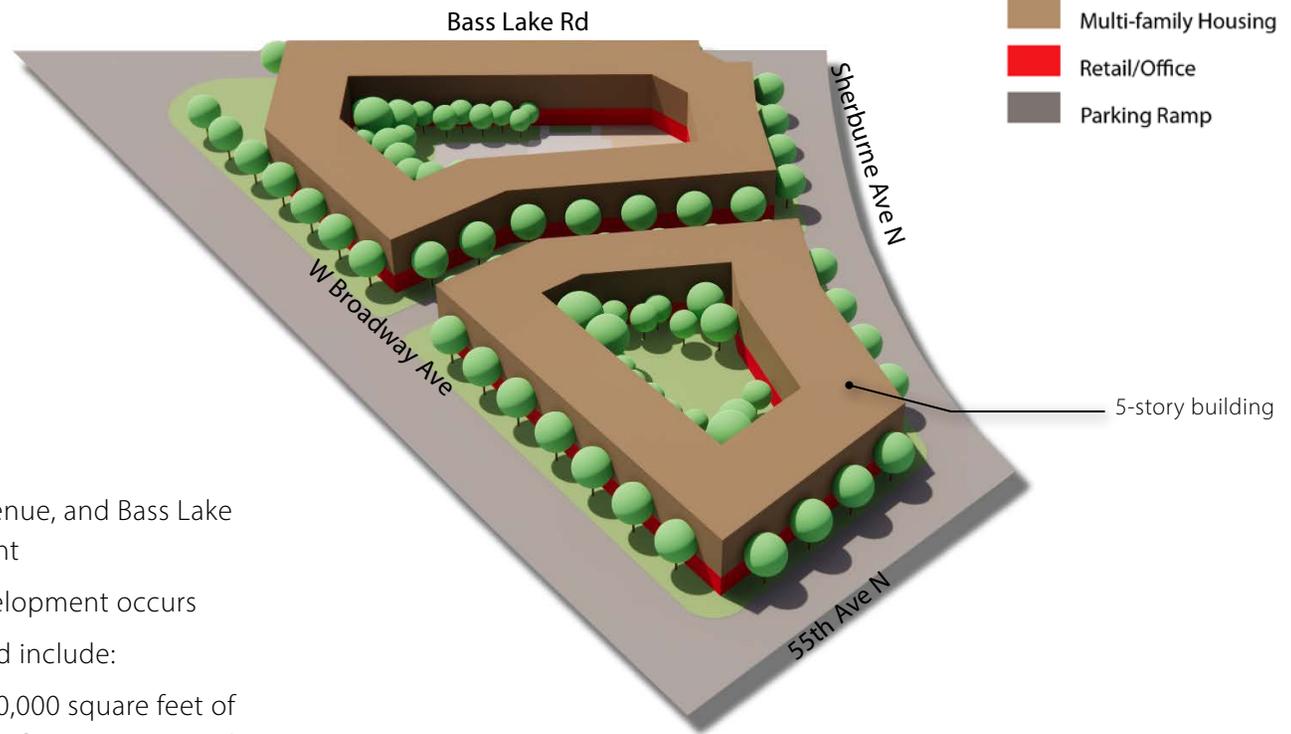
Current Conditions

Site A is the Crystal Mall block. This site is large with the assets of good geometry, park frontage, and proximity to both the future LRT station and the Crystal Shopping Center.

FIGURE 30: SITE A (CRYSTAL MALL BLOCK)



Redevelopment Potential - Site A (Crystal Mall Block)



- **Opportunity Site Rank: 1**
- 8.4 acre site adjacent to Becker Park, Broadway Avenue, and Bass Lake Road, and size and geometry facility redevelopment
- Break superblock into two smaller blocks as redevelopment occurs
- Sample program for demonstration purposes could include:
 - 300 units of multi-family housing along with 40,000 square feet of medical office building and 10,000 square feet of supportive retail

Precedent Imagery

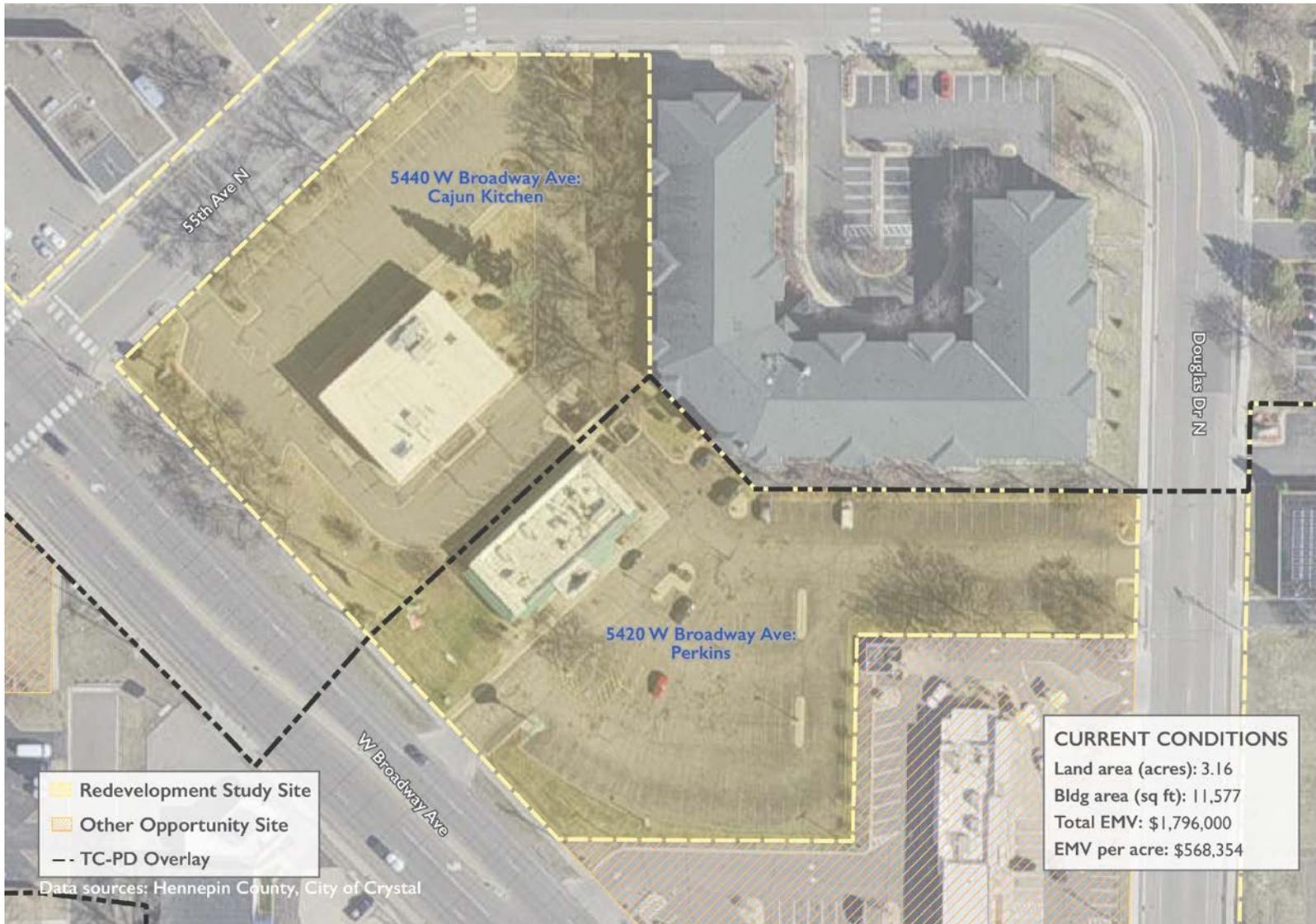


Site B (Perkins + Cajun Kitchen)

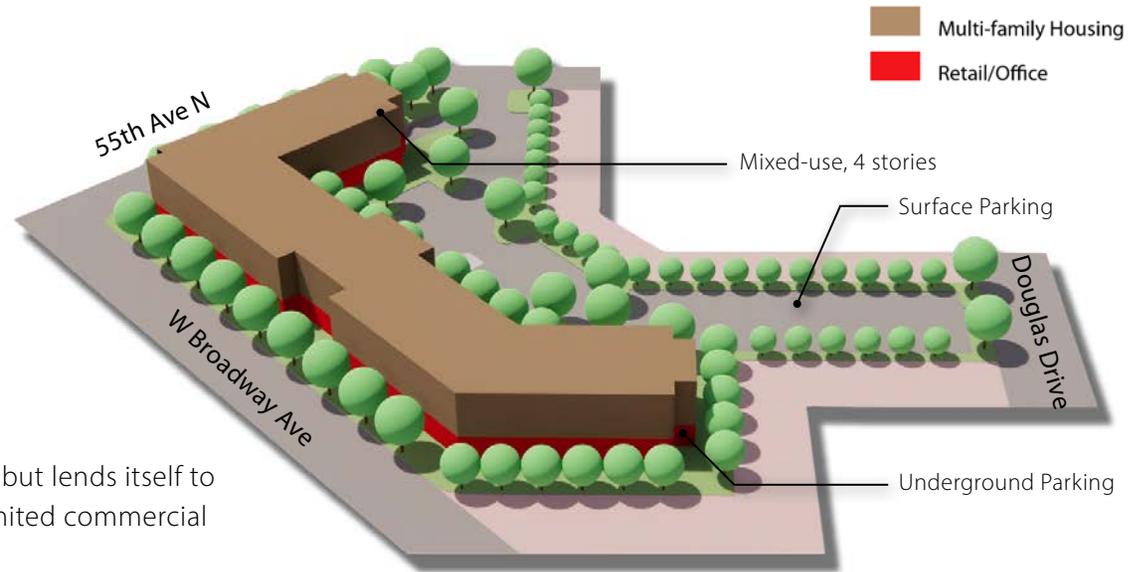
Current Conditions

The parcels are decent sized if assembled together. The adjacent Calibre Chase Apartments and the Broadway frontage, and access to both 55th and Douglas are attractive attributes for Site B.

FIGURE 31: SITE B (PERKINS + CAJUN KITCHEN)



Redevelopment Potential - Site B (Perkins + Cajun Kitchen)



- Opportunity Site Rank: 3
- 3.1 acre site poses a challenging layout for redevelopment, but lends itself to multifamily give the adjacent residential use, and also to limited commercial development on the Broadway frontage
- Sample program could include:
 - 100 units of multi-family housing along, with a 40,000 square foot medical office building and limited retail (10,000 square feet) to serve each

Precedent Imagery



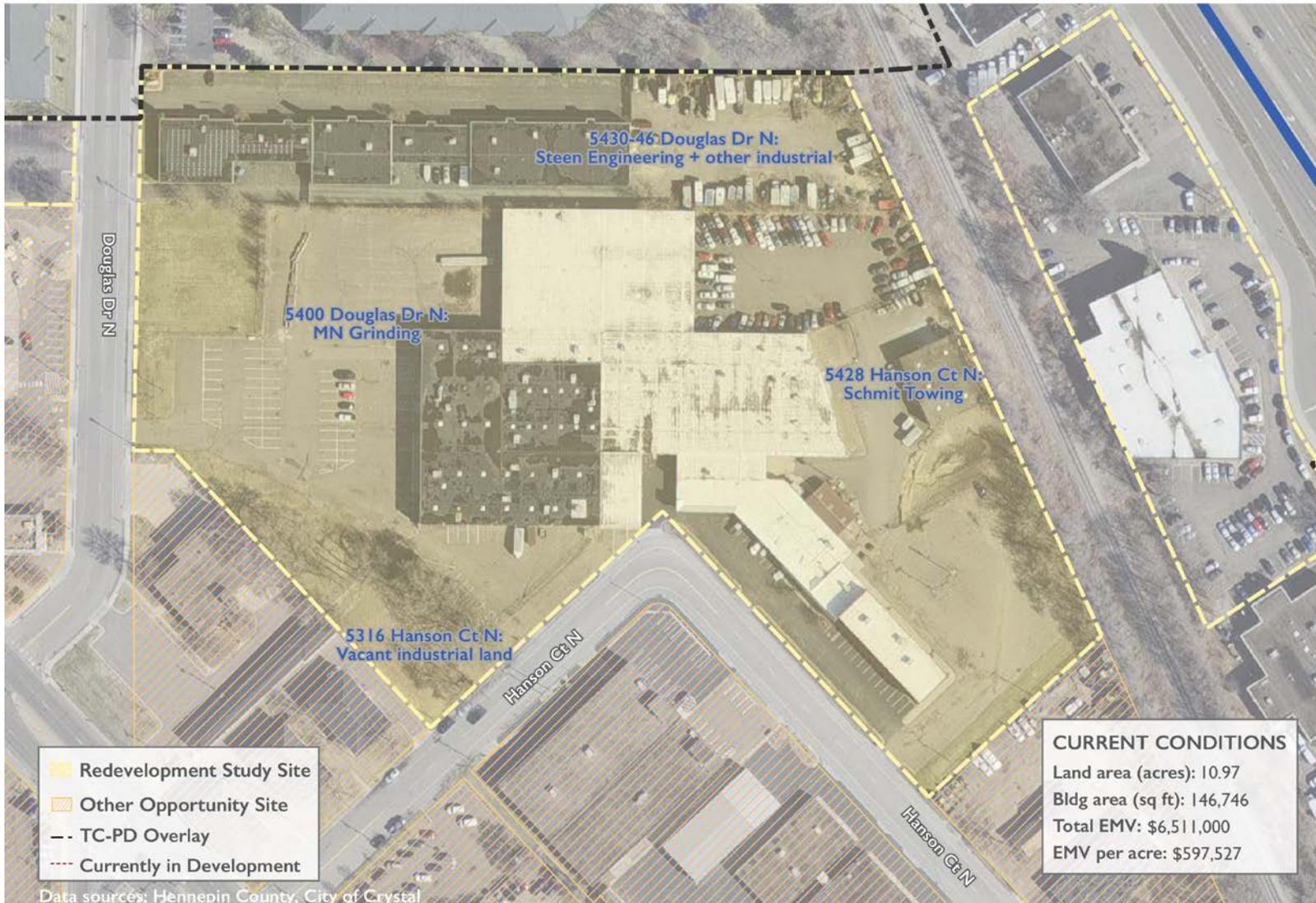
Site C (Industrial + Vacant Parcels)

Current Conditions

This is the largest among the five sites. Leveraging the available square footage will be best accomplished here with housing, perhaps a mix of multifamily and townhome housing types, and some retail for frontage on Douglas Drive.

This is a large site with lighter visibility, and likely some remediation needs, particularly for a project proceeding with housing.

FIGURE 32: SITE C (INDUSTRIAL + VACANT PARCELS)



Redevelopment Potential - Site C (Industrial + Vacant Parcels)



- **Opportunity Site Rank: 4**
- 11.0 acre site, the largest of the opportunity sites, suited to residential to leverage station area proximity and manage relative lack of visible frontage for other uses.
- Break superblock into smaller blocks by adding roadways as redevelopment occurs.
- Given that the site is adjacent to Cedarwood Apartments to the north and the quantity of space is available, a sample program could include:
 - 300 units of multi-family, 50 townhome units, and limited retail (10,000 square feet)

Precedent Imagery



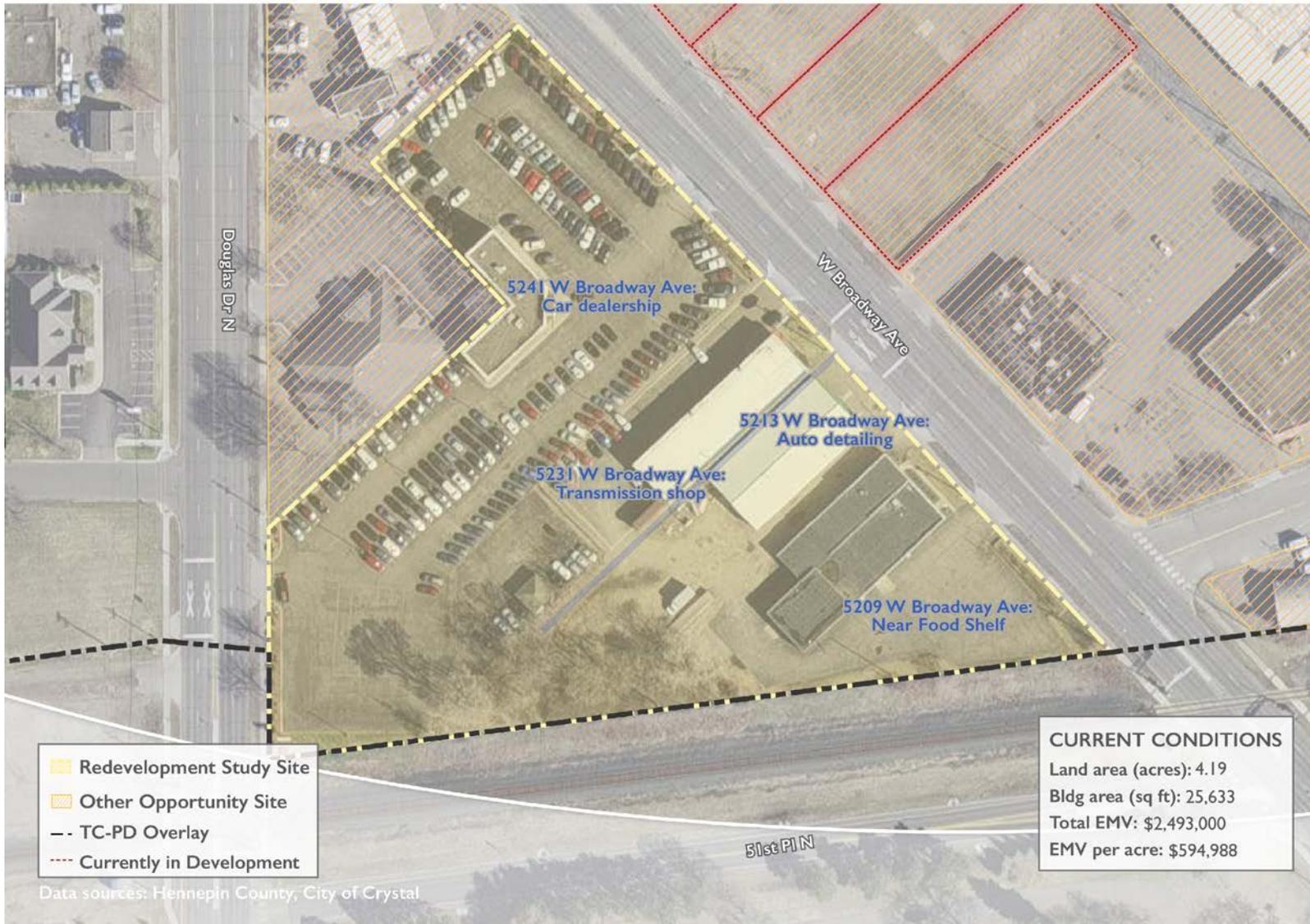
Site D (Car-Related Businesses + Food Shelf)

Current Conditions

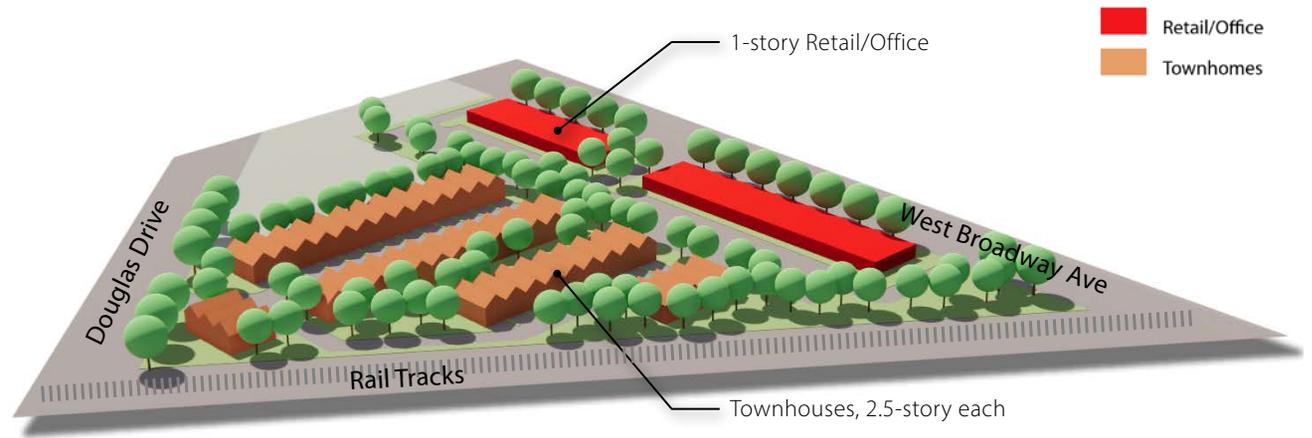
This is a site of good size and shape, offering Broadway frontage. At the same time, it has less proximity to the station area, and a perceived barrier in the form of Broadway.

This is a site to contemplate for a later phase of redevelopment, given the substantial amount of space that could accommodate shorter-term redevelopment closer to the platform.

FIGURE 33: SITE D (CAR-RELATED BUSINESSES + FOOD SHELF)

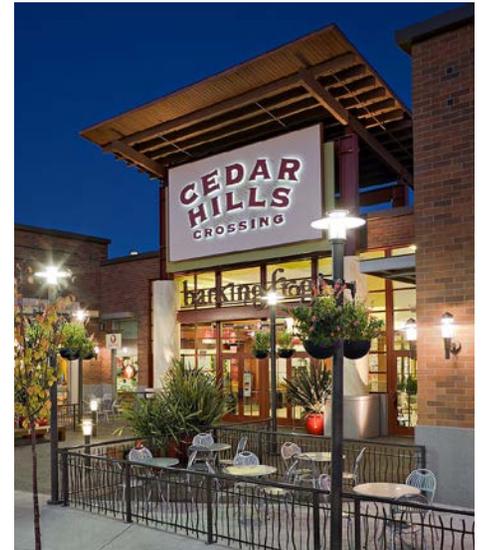


Redevelopment Potential - Site D (Car-Related Businesses + Food Shelf)



- **Opportunity Site Rank: 5**
- 4.2 acre site is located across Broadway Avenue from the core of the station area. While benefiting from visibility on Broadway, this site is less desirable for denser redevelopment in an early phase of transition
- A sample program in the near or intermediate term could include a community of:
 - 50 townhomes, a 40,000 square foot medical office building capitalizing on the Broadway frontage, and limited retail (10,000 square feet)

Precedent Imagery



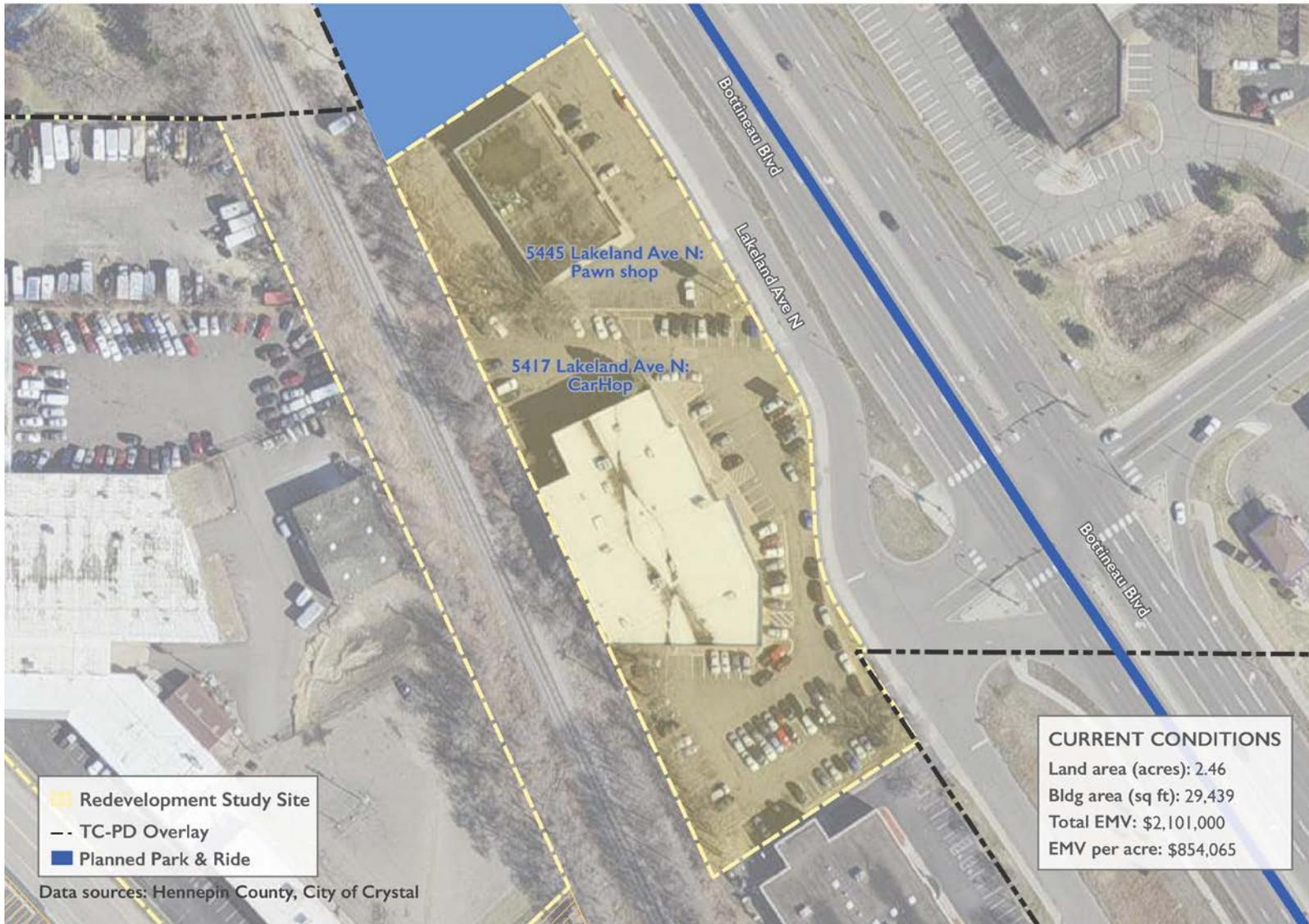
Site E (Pawn Shop + CarHop)

Current Conditions

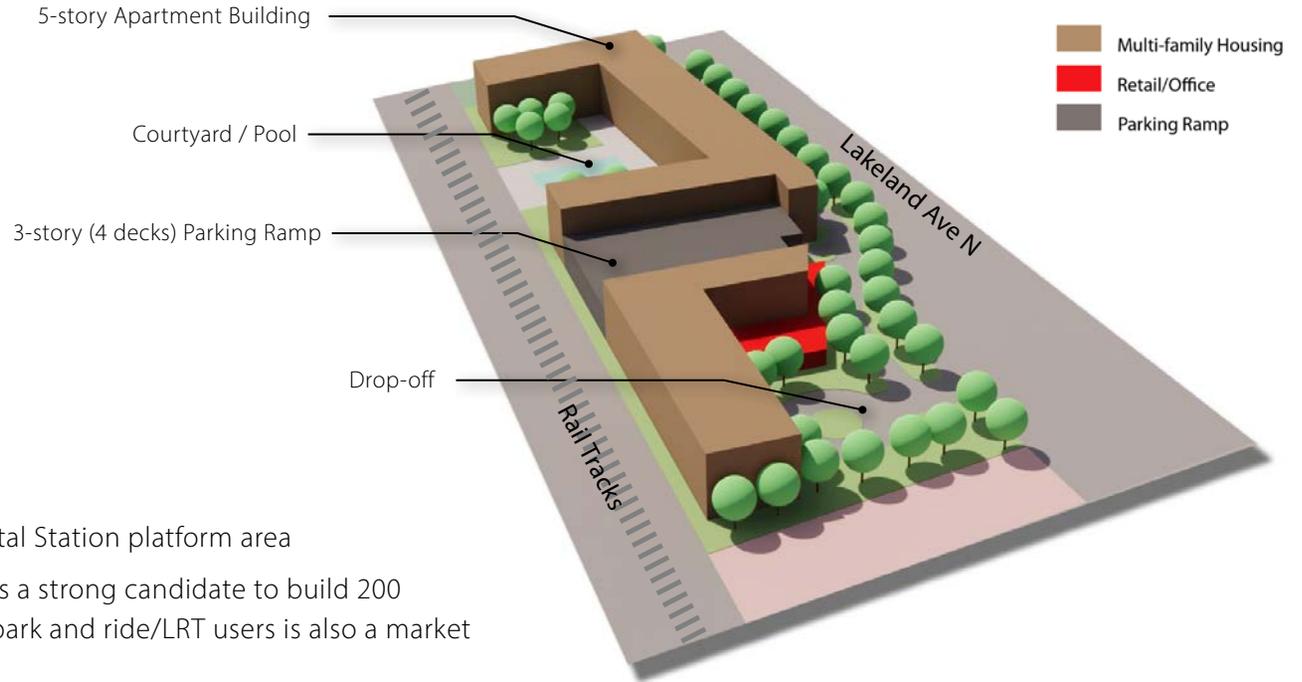
This presents itself as a strong candidate for transit adjacent development, probably allowing for a project approaching 200 units .

Retail could support residents and transit users here, as well.

FIGURE 34: SITE E (PAWN SHOP + CARHOP)



Redevelopment Potential - Site E (Pawn Shop + CarHop)



- Opportunity Site Rank: 2
- 2.4 acre site is adjacent to the planned Crystal Station platform area
- Given location, size and geometry, the site is a strong candidate to build 200 units. Retail to support the residences and park and ride/LRT users is also a market opportunity here.

Precedent Imagery



TOOLS TO SUPPORT TOD AT STATION AREA

For Housing Affordability

- Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Inclusionary zoning
- Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Hennepin TOD grant program
- Land banking for affordable housing
- New Markets Tax Credit (station area is eligible)

For Site-Level Barriers to Development

- Value Capture Tools
- Tax Increment Financing
- Tax Abatement
- Station area location in Opportunity Zone
- New Markets Tax Credit (station area is eligible)

For Placemaking + Leveraging Station Proximity

- Revolving Loan Fund
- Debt Financing
- General Obligation
- Special Assessments
- Revenue Bonds
- Conduit

For Business Retention and Expansion

- Corridor-based Tax Increment Financing
- Station area location in Opportunity Zone – eligible for business development

For Cleaning up Contaminated Land for Development

- Hennepin County Environmental Response Fund (ERF)



Precedent Imagery - Transit Oriented Development

Parking Management Strategies

PARKING GOALS

In addition to the recommendations included in the Station Area Improvements section of this Plan (see “Park-and-Ride / Drop Off Areas”), three parking goals have been identified. To reinforce the overall goal of supporting a high-quality public realm in the station area and improving placemaking, connectivity and land use principles, the following are the parking goals for the project:

- Calibrate parking requirements and facility designs to reduce unnecessary parking and encourage mode shift towards transit, biking, and walking.
- Identify parking management strategies to discourage and reduce spillover into residential neighborhoods.
- Leverage parking facility investments to share use and maximize efficiency.

EXISTING PARKING CONDITIONS

The vast majority of parking spaces within the station area are privately owned, were developed to meet the needs of existing uses (businesses and residences) and are organized in separate surface parking lots. Public parking lots are provided for business along the north side of Bass Lake Road between Sherburne Avenue and the Crystal Town Center Mall, and at Becker Park.

Approximately twelve on-street parking spaces are provided along the north side of Bass Lake Road between Elmhurst and Sherburne Avenues. On-street parking is also provided on Sherburne Avenue, 55th Avenue North and Douglas Drive North. Parking is also permitted on the residential streets east of Bottineau Boulevard.

As a part of the Town Center zoning district, parking requirements for the Station Area include:

- No parking spaces are required for non-residential uses
- 1 parking space is required for each residential dwelling
- No bicycle parking spaces are required for any use



On street parking - Bass Lake Road

STATION AREA PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Parking Management Strategies are policies, programs and techniques aimed at managing and optimizing parking usage in a given area. When appropriately applied, parking management can significantly reduce the number of parking spaces required in the station area, providing a variety of economic, social and environmental benefits. The following are recommended strategies to manage parking within the station area.

Strategy	Pros	Cons
Develop, implement and monitor a Travel Demand Management (TDM) Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a comprehensive, holistic, district-wide approach to planning and managing transportation facilities and programs from shared parking efficiencies to issuing transit passes. Can contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, improvements in social equity and healthy living initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires financial investment/cost to plan, establish and manage.
Promote and support shared parking, allowing spaces to serve multiple users or destinations (including through formal agreements between owners).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User-friendly, leverages initial facility investment, simplifies application and enforcement of parameters such as duration, time of day, and or vehicle type restrictions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires formal cooperative agreement between parking facility owners / managers. May include costs for monitoring and enforcement if restrictions (duration, time of day, etc.) are applied.
Include on-street parking on new and reconstructed streets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User friendly, leverages initial street construction, protects adjacent pedestrians from traffic, provides opportunity for future revenue via metered parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complicates snow removal, increases paved area and associated issues of urban heat island effect and rainwater runoff.
Establish minimum bike parking requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal cost to implement and maintain, supports healthy living, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires establishing, implementing, and enforcing (typically) by city staff. Relies upon convenience and popularity of biking and or change in behavior (from driving to biking) for maximum effectiveness.
Improve and expand pedestrian and bike facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modest cost to implement and manage, can leverage existing transportation infrastructure investment, supports healthy living, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relies upon convenience and popularity of walking and biking and or changes in behavior (from driving to walking and biking) for maximum effectiveness.
Promote and participate in establishing a parking district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User friendly. Supports pooling and sharing of parking resources which can reduce the need for each businesses to provide all of their own on-site parking. Provides opportunities for consistent parking resource management and maintenance, enforcement of regulations (where applicable) and collection of revenue to self-fund operations and maintenance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires cooperation between facility owners/ managers. Requires financial investment / cost to plan, establish and manage.
Establish a resident parking permit program for station-adjacent residential neighborhoods to mitigate spillover, hide-and ride parking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces transit station area related spill-over, hide-and-ride parking within station area adjacent residential neighborhoods by requiring permits and enforcing and collecting fines. Fine revenue can be used to fund the permitting program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires time and funds for planning, implementation and management of resident parking permit program.
Consider establishing Parking Benefits District (PBD) within the station area and adjacent residential areas / neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a comprehensive system for operating, managing and funding of station area parking-related programs and facilities including such things as regulatory signage, residential permits, bike parking, and app-based parking space revenue collection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires time and funds for planning, implementation, management, and operations. Requires education and related assistance to area businesses in understanding the actual hidden costs of providing free parking.

DISTRICT PARKING APPROACH

Employing a district approach to parking helps reduce the need to build parking facilities for each individual development. In turn, land is utilized for its highest and best use to improve economic density.

Parking districts vary considerably by organizational and operational structure. The most common types include:

- » **Development Authorities** promote physical and economic development growth in key business districts such as in downtown areas.
- » **Improvement Districts** are often responsible for maintaining parking operations and services in designated districts.
- » **Transportation Management Associations**, generally operated by member institutions or businesses, are designed to mitigate local congestion, manage parking and operate travel demand programs in a specific area.
- » **Enterprise Funds** generally mandate that developers in a certain district pay fees in lieu of fulfilling municipal parking minimum requirements to a dedicated financing program.
- » **Public-Private Partnerships**: their structure and management varies by the specific parking needs and demands within the district, together with the adjacent land uses.

A district-wide parking approach for the Bass Lake Road Station Area needs to:

- » Align with near- and long-term (re)development efforts within the station area and Town Center district
- » Treat parking facilities as shared resources whereby all users (vehicles) within the station area and Town Center district can utilize any of the available parking spaces
- » Take parking reductions into consideration to support active modes of transportation (e.g., walking, biking, transit, and carpooling)
- » Establish a comprehensive set of operational and management policies and regulations
- » Manage parking as a district-wide resource

It is also common to include formal agreements between property owner to share parking resources within a district parking program.

TRAVEL DEMAND MANAGEMENT PLANS

Travel Demand Management (TDM) is the application of strategies and policies to reduce travel demand (specifically that of single occupancy private vehicles), or to redistribute this demand in space or in time.

TDM Plans are often required by cities and used by developers (for commercial, residential, and other development types) to promote TDM strategies and reduce the use of single occupancy vehicles. The Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul require large developments to develop and implement TDM Plans to minimize their traffic impacts and parking needs. Most often these TDM Plans are developed upon redevelopment or initial development and implemented as the site becomes functional. Monitoring of the TDM Plans over time is a best management practice that should receive further attention to ensure mode share goals are achieved. Common TDM Strategies include:

- Establishing mode share goals/targets
- Designating a TDM liaison
- Proving transit pass discounts
- Providing bike facilities (racks, storage and repair stations)
- Developing and providing orientation packets with:
 - Bicycle facility maps
 - Shared parking availability
 - Transit schedules
- Monitoring progress and success of TDM Strategies



TDM Tools

Implementation

The recommendations proposed in this Station Area Plan Update provide a guide for the City of Crystal and its partners to plan for short-term and long-term improvements to the public and private realm that will come as a result of the Blue Line Extension LRT investment. The plan update was developed with input from key stakeholders including the city, the county, Metro Transit, and the community.

Some of the recommendations included in this plan update will be included in the LRT project and will be funded and constructed as part of that effort. However, many of the recommendations proposed in the Station Area Plan Update will require either the public sector or private sector to secure additional funding and approval in order to implement the proposed improvements. Additionally, while some improvements may be implemented in the short-term, others may require several years to be realized.

As mentioned in the 2016 Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan, a recommended next step in the process of realizing the station area vision is to develop an Investment Framework to help guide the implementation of this Station Area Plan Update. Through this process, the partners and stakeholders will:

- Determine which projects should be completed by Opening Day (the day the Blue Line Extension LRT begins operation) and which projects will be implemented later,
- Prioritize projects, and
- Advance more detailed plans, including cost estimates, timelines, and sources of funding.

As design and implementation of each element of the plan moves forward, the partners and stakeholders must work collaboratively to ensure that public and private investments in the station area are in alignment with the goals and guidelines established in this plan.



Example of multi-family housing construction