

BOTTINEAU COMMUNITY WORKS

# STATION AREA DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

July 19, 2018



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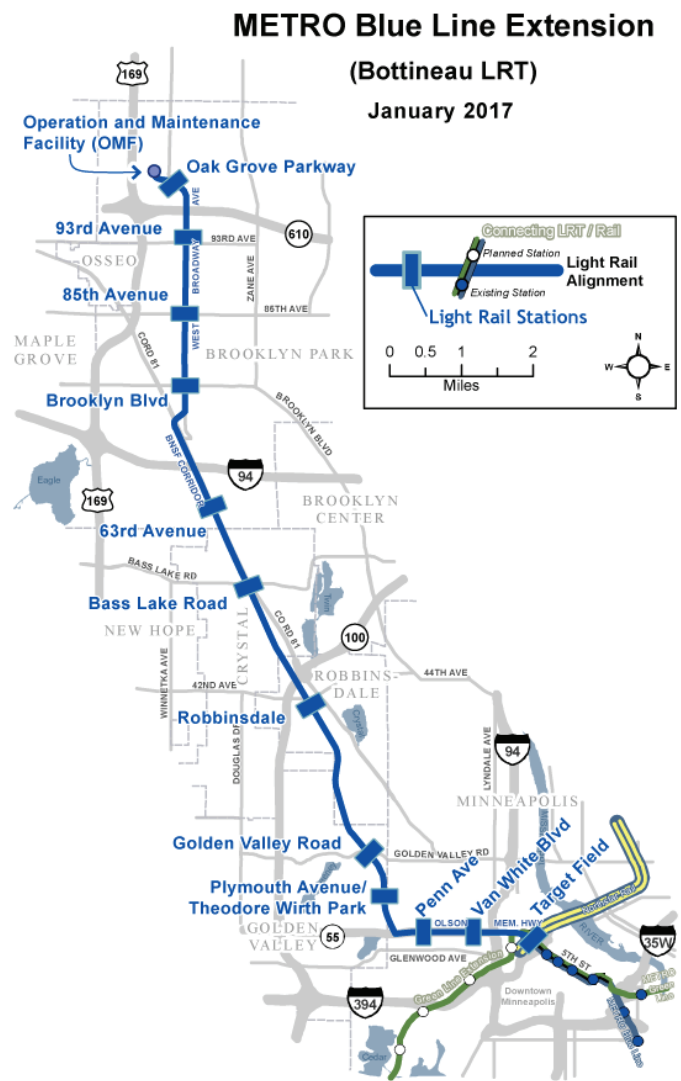
# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

The METRO Blue Line Extension is a planned 13-mile light rail transit (LRT) line that will connect downtown Minneapolis to the communities of northwestern Hennepin County, including the neighborhoods of north Minneapolis, and the cities of Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park. The LRT will terminate near the Brooklyn Park Target north office campus.

This Station Area Development Assessment report presents market-related research and recommendations relative to development in the METRO Blue Line Extension Corridor (Bottineau Corridor) for the suburban cities of Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park, in partnership with Hennepin County, Metropolitan Council with funding support provided by the Federal Transit Administration's Transit Oriented Development Planning Pilot Program. This report builds upon two related studies that were conducted as part of the same broader research effort: the Station Area Housing Gaps Analysis and the Station Area Commercial Market Analysis, which are documented under separate cover.

The METRO Blue Line Extension will be transformative by vastly increasing the mobility of people who live and work along the Corridor today, but also increasing the Corridor's accessibility to the entire region. As a result, demand for housing and commercial development along the Corridor will increase.



Source: Metropolitan Council

A central purpose of this study is to understand the need for and market viability of housing and commercial development in the Corridor. The findings from this research will also inform appropriate policy responses at the city level – including zoning changes – that position Corridor’s LRT station area to attract development that is viable and meets community needs.

This Station Area Development Assessment report focuses on station areas outlined in yellow on the map on the previous page, also listed within Table 1: Station Areas and Selected Opportunity Sites. The eight future station areas are located in Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park and within four of the station areas are selected Opportunity Sites (one in each of the four cities). The selected Opportunity Sites were identified by staff of each of the four cities, for site-specific evaluation and analysis.

*Table 1: Station Areas and Selected Opportunity Sites*

<b>City</b>	<b>Station Area</b>	<b>Selected Opportunity Site</b>
<b>Golden Valley</b>	Golden Valley Road	X
<b>Robbinsdale</b>	Robbinsdale	X
<b>Crystal</b>	Bass Lake Road	X
<b>Brooklyn Park</b>	63rd Avenue	
<b>Brooklyn Park</b>	Brooklyn Boulevard	X
<b>Brooklyn Park</b>	85th Avenue	
<b>Brooklyn Park</b>	93rd Avenue	
<b>Brooklyn Park</b>	Oak Grove	

This report looks to answer a key question about what type of development can be fostered, given existing physical and market conditions, in each station area and selected Opportunity Site. It summarizes the input from interviews with a set of developers who are familiar with the Corridor. It utilizes that information, and builds on the rest of this project’s research and analysis—housing and commercial market research, the developer and stakeholder interviews—to characterize the development environment in each station area and selected Opportunity Site, and to recommend strategies for fostering transit oriented development in each location.

## Report Format

The report is organized into two major sections. The first section presents developer feedback on how the anticipated LRT service will impact development in the Bottineau Corridor as a whole—and what zoning and development supportive strategies cities could employ to support development within the station areas.

The second section is organized by station area, covering the eight station areas. The four selected Opportunity Sites are discussed within the station area in which they are located. For each geography a characterization of the development context is offered, followed by a summary of developer comments, and recommended development strategies for fostering transit oriented development.

## Developer Interviews

Between January 9 and January 25, 2018, 10 local developers were interviewed to gain insight into the development opportunities and challenges along the Bottineau Corridor. Conversations included discussion of the impact LRT will have on development along the Corridor as a whole, and then a review of each station area. Developers were presented with maps of the station areas as well as relevant development concepts from each city's Station Area Plans. They were asked about station area characteristics that would attract residential or commercial development, and those that might pose obstacles to development. They were asked which sites they might be interested in and what it would take for them to pursue a development opportunity. The four identified Opportunity Sites were given specific focus in the conversations. See Appendix A for a list of questions that were used during the interviews.

Developers were asked how cities can use zoning and development tools to support redevelopment along the Corridor. They were asked what local policies, incentives, or actions might be needed to shape development in a transit-supportive direction, and what the public-sector role is with respect to development in the station area, including what the City could do to attract development to the site (for example property assembly, an articulated community vision, funds for clean-up, etc.).

Not every developer spoke to every station area, or every identified Opportunity Site. In some cases, the developer had a lot of experience in one community and the conversation was largely focused on development in and near that location. However, across the 10 interviews, useful information pertaining to all eight station areas was obtained.

The Developer Interview Discussion Guide, which was used to guide the discussions with developers, is attached as Appendix A.

The 10 developers interviewed offered a variety of perspectives on the Bottineau Corridor and station areas. The group included commercial and residential developers, and both market rate and affordable housing developers were represented. All were familiar with some parts of the Corridor, and many owned properties or had recent development projects within the Corridor. Most were suggested to the consultant team by city staff. The developers interviewed were:

- **Beard Group – Bill Beard**  
Market-rate housing and mixed-use development
- **Inland Development Partners – Kent Carlson**  
Retail, industrial, office, affordable and market rate housing, and mixed-use development
- **Mortenson – Brent Webb and Jeremy Jacobs**  
Office, market-rate housing development
- **Paster Properties – John Kohler and Mike Sturdivant**  
Retail, market-rate housing and mixed-use development
- **Common Bond – Diana Dyste and Kayla Schuchman**  
Affordable housing development
- **Aeon – Blake Hopkins**  
Affordable housing development
- **Kontor Realty Group – Mike Berglund**  
Market-rate workforce housing
- **Doran Companies – Kelly Doran**  
Market-rate housing and mixed-use development
- **HJ Development – Brian Merz**  
Retail development
- **Ron Clark Construction & Design – Mike Waldo and Ron Clark**  
Market-rate and affordable housing

The consultant team additionally invited conversations with client city staff and met with city staff from Crystal on January 8, 2018 and Robbinsdale on January 17, 2018. These discussions provided insights and city perspective on station area context, potential development scenarios, and recent development activity.



## **DEVELOPER COMMENTS: CORRIDOR-WIDE**

### General Development Context

All of the developers interviewed believed that LRT will be a catalyst for development along the Corridor. However, there were differences of opinion about the degree to which LRT would influence development, compared to other important factors such as area amenities and the regional housing and commercial markets. All expected that there would be new development along the Corridor in the future. There was a sense that land values are already increasing in expectation of the coming LRT service.

With that being said, the slow progress of the METRO Green Line Extension (SW Corridor) has had an impact on the perception of the METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau Corridor) as still being several years into the future. Therefore, most of the market awakening will occur over the next five years, and it will continue to grow even after initiation of LRT service. Moreover, developers commented that some of the sites were more “ready” in the near term than others. Relatedly, research on impacts of LRT service show that the property value increases associated with new transit service continued for 10 years after the initiation of the LRT service.

Developers spoke about the specific development types that are in demand today throughout the Corridor, such as market rate workforce housing (i.e., new apartments that are not aimed at the upper-end or luxury market), and medical office development. While there is housing demand along the Corridor today, the presence of LRT will strengthen that demand. However, this will be a gradual strengthening and not necessarily associated with any specific milestone in the development of the LRT. Affordable housing developers indicated that almost any site close to a LRT station is a good location for an affordable housing project funded by federal tax credits. Also, project scoring bonuses reward housing proposals that situate new affordable housing development in median to upper income census tracts. Market rate housing developers were more selective about locations—and particularly the perceived value of the location, and the quality of the surrounding amenities.

Housing developers spoke about the critical importance of community amenities and infrastructure to successful future development. Nearby schools, parks, grocery stores, and retail attract and support new development. Developers identified the need for improved pedestrian and vehicular patterns in the station areas to accommodate LRT and maximize its benefits. Reimagining streets, sidewalks, and intersections so that they facilitate and encourage people’s use of LRT is highly important.

Six retail developers were mindful of the challenging market context for bricks and mortar retail stores. In general, they would be cautious about retail development that increases the footprint of retail in a given area, except at the sites with the strongest retail market potential, which are often closest to an LRT station and have high visibility and accessibility. Where retail sites are being considered for redevelopment per the Station Area Plans, they often suggested that the retail footprint in the new development should be reduced or eliminated. They were in agreement that mixed-use development should occur in only the strongest locations (i.e., close to the station with high visibility and accessibility), or where there is a clear public purpose, in which case, the retail component of such developments may need public financial support to be viable.

Neighborhood serving office can take a small or medium format retail space as needed. But developers affirmed that standalone office buildings are choosy about where they like to locate, preferring already-branded office districts such as the I-494 corridor, or one of the downtowns. The Oak Grove station area, with its Target north office campus serving as an anchor, was considered to meet this criteria, and so could attract additional office development. Medical office development is a different development type, with its own locational requirements. Two interviewees felt that there is a demand for additional medical office space in the Corridor.

## Public Sector Role

A key focus of this report is the identification of zoning strategies and development tools that cities can employ to facilitate transit oriented development in the Corridor. Cities can guide development so that it responds to specific community needs, and benefits the community as a whole. The developers interviewed were very familiar with the role cities play in development projects. Developers' perspectives on the city's role do not have to be taken as prescriptive knowing that cities need to balance their goals, needs, and financial resources, but can prompt reflection about how cities use their tools, and serve as a reminder that cities have a lot of influence over the development that occurs within their community. Many successful developments require a partnership between the developer and the city.

The following is a summary of the perspectives developers offered about zoning regulations and development support activities that will facilitate development within the station areas:

## Developer Comments on Public Sector Support for Development

### A clear vision

An articulated vision for station areas and Opportunity Sites provides clarity to developers about what the City is looking for. It minimizes the risk that a development proposal will be rejected, and results in proposals that are more closely aligned with city goals right from the start. It also signals to the developer that there is community support for the vision, and so minimizes the risk of community opposition, which slows the process and adds cost for the developer.

### Good connections

Developers are looking for good connectivity to and from their project site. The people who will be living and/or working in new developments want good access to grocery stores, retail offerings, parks and schools, transit, and area jobs. Cities can provide good sidewalks, safe pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, clear wayfinding, and easy entrances and egresses to and from the LRT stations.

### Political will

New development may raise concerns for existing residents. Residents worry about increased traffic, congestion, or parking. When elected officials and the community want new development, publicly support it, and can speak to concerns, the developer has confidence that their proposal will be successful. Up-front investments by the developer in project planning become less of a risk.

### Site assembly

Developers prefer an assembled site. Multiple property owners in a redevelopment site adds risk. The time and uncertainty of negotiating with individual owners adds costs to the project. When possible, developers prefer that the city assemble the land for a project. Public site assembly is also a strong signal of public support.

### Establish appropriate zoning

The rezoning process adds risk for developers. They must weigh the uncertainty of a rezoning process against the financial investment they will make up front to secure the rezoning. Furthermore, when an area is rezoned as part of a redevelopment plan it demonstrates community support for the change and gives a developer confidence.

#### A City-issued RFP clarifies expectations

One way a city can pro-actively invite redevelopment proposals is to issue an RFP or RFQ. They have value for developers because they outline parameters for the project to which the developer can respond.

### Developer Comments on Zoning

#### Density flexibility

Density creates value for developers and makes projects more feasible. When cities provide flexible support for development density, developers are more likely to be able to propose a financially viable development. Community concerns about density can often be mitigated through high quality design, parking strategies, public space improvements, and deepening public understanding of community needs.

#### Set-back reductions

When set-backs are reduced, more of the site can be built on, enabling the project to create more value.

#### Flexibility or reductions in parking requirements

Parking adds significant cost to a project. Underground parking adds direct project cost, while surface parking is costly because it consumes land area. Reducing parking requirements in station areas allows parking requirements to be tailored to market demand, and it improves the financial viability of development.

#### Encourage but don't require mixed-use

Developers understand that city residents and elected officials see vertical mixed-use development as desirable. People enjoy street level retail districts, and such developments can animate sidewalks. However, vertical mixed-use projects are very challenging to develop today, due to the changing retail environment locally and nationally. Online shopping and big box stores make it challenging to find tenants for the typically smaller retail spaces in mixed-use projects. Developers often need to subsidize the cost of the commercial spaces with the rents from the residential units in the project. Alternatives to consider include encouraging, but not requiring, mixed-use development, and animating street frontages through design features (such as large windows, pronounced entrances, active first floor amenity space, and landscaping) rather than retail businesses.

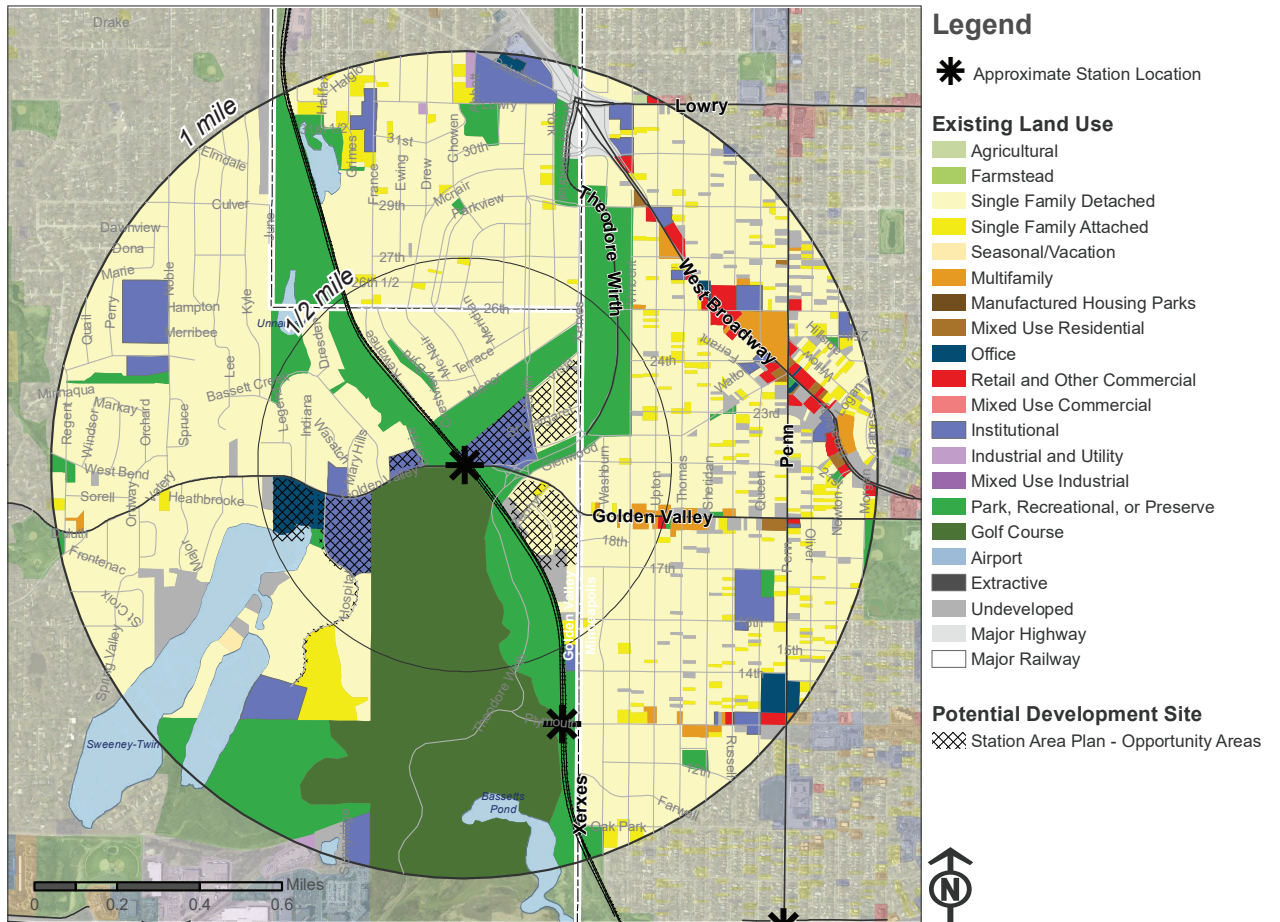
# STATION AREAS AND SELECTED OPPORTUNITY SITES

## Golden Valley Road Station Area

City of Golden Valley

The Golden Valley Road station area is largely developed as single-family neighborhoods and park land. The Station Area Plan identifies just a few opportunities for infill development—at the site of St. Margaret Mary’s Catholic Church site as well as a few sites to the west of the station along Golden Valley Road.

Golden Valley Road Station Area and Existing Land Use



Source: Metropolitan Council, ESRI, Tangible Consulting Services, SHC

## Developer Comments

- *This station area is adjacent to the extraordinary natural amenities of Theodore Wirth Park.*
- *It is conveniently close to downtown Minneapolis.*
- *The predominance of single-family homes in the area limits the amount and scale of development that can be done in the area.*
- *There are not a lot of evident development sites within this station area. The most evident is the church site, identified in as an Opportunity Site.*
- *Retail development is not advisable, because it's a low traffic, isolated area.*

## Development Context

This station area contains mostly single-family housing and parkland. There are few easy or immediate opportunities to intensify the development around the LRT station. The church site and the office/institutional sites offer the best potential for new development of scale. Additional housing development near the station might be attractive from a market perspective, but would require the acquisition of multiple single-family homes, and may face more push back from neighborhood residents.

The attractiveness of multi-family development stems from the robust park, trail, and natural amenities around the site, and the easy access to downtown Minneapolis. That combination of amenities make the area attractive to families, singles, and empty-nesters. Market rate and affordable housing products are both potentially viable. A mixed income development might address a range of community needs. The church site, due to its size and location, offers the best opportunity for a multi-family development. It's not a strong setting for retail development, but including a small retail footprint in a new development would add an asset that may benefit housing development.

#### Near-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., before the LRT is operational)

Based on research and community input, there are no sites in the station area readily available for redevelopment in the near-term. However, if St. Margaret Mary's Church were interested in selling all or even a portion of their site for redevelopment, there would be immediate demand for new housing and the site could easily become a near-term opportunity. The aging population of the surrounding neighborhoods and the current lack of rental housing with modern amenities and features means that there is sufficient demand for a variety of rental housing types, including housing with services for older adults as well as other market rate and affordable products.

Community input also indicated a demand for a small coffee shop or café that would also act as a community gathering space. However, the market analysis revealed that current traffic volumes were too low to support most types of retailers. Therefore, if such a component were included in a new development, it would likely require some type of financial assistance that would effectively subsidize a commercial tenant's rent.

#### Long-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., after the LRT is operational)

Any long-term development opportunities are contingent on the motivation of property owners to sell to interested developers. Although the LRT, which will increase market demand for housing (and to a lesser degree retail), may incentivize property owners to rethink their assets and consider selling to an interested developer, none of them consider their property a commercial investment and, thus, would not be inclined to sell unless circumstances were dictating that they do so.

The St. Margaret Mary's Church, due to its proximity to the station, would be highly attractive to developers once the LRT is operational. Moreover, the additional traffic generated by park-and-ride users would augment neighborhood demand for a coffee shop or small café and possibly increase to the point of making a retail component economically viable without financial assistance. However, the scale of the retail component would remain small as most other retailers would still not consider the location viable given the low volume of road traffic and the low number of estimated boardings at this station.

Further west of the station area, the Courage Center operates a facility on a site that would be large enough to attract significant developer interest. Like the St. Margaret Mary's site, if it were sold for redevelopment it would likely be positioned for housing because it is too distant from a critical mass of commercial uses. However, the Courage Center has operated a facility at this location for decades and neither community engagement or market research revealed any indication that the users intends to sell the property in the near or long-term.

## Development Strategies

Station Area Plan implementation means allowing for the emergence of a “village” of new housing in the station area, even though in the short-term redevelopment will likely be limited. Development strategies for the Golden Valley Road station area include the following:

- Continue to improve the station area context with trail development and strong connections between the station, neighborhoods and park land.
- Maintain a dialog with the Church about the potential for new housing that might serve both the community and the Church.
- If development does occur, make sure regulatory controls are in place that will ensure a sufficiently high quality of design and character, which will help contribute to public acceptance of the development.
- Adopt zoning changes that would support development at a financially viable scale.
- Consider zoning that would allow (but not require) a small retail footprint in areas immediately adjacent to the station.
- Consider the provision of public financial support to a pioneering housing development, which may build the market for subsequent development.



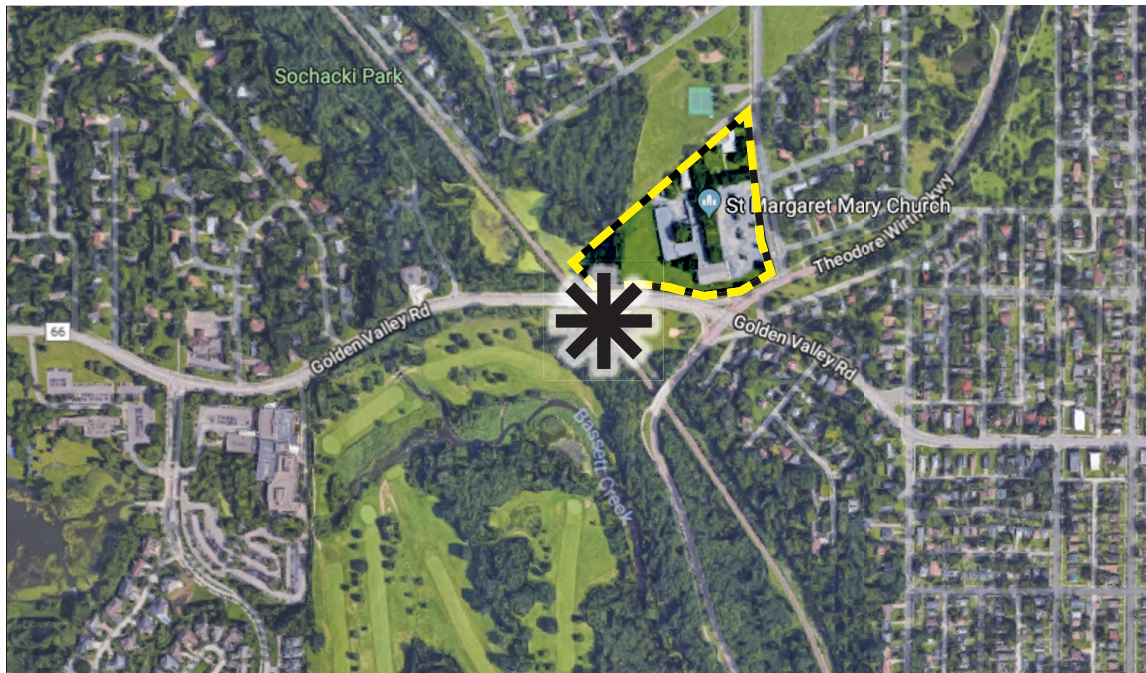
# Golden Valley Road Station Area: Opportunity Site

## City of Golden Valley

### Site Characteristics

<b>Overall Size</b>	9.92 acres, 1 parcel	<b>Development Context</b>
<b>Zoning</b>	Medium Density Residential with a PUD	
<b>Existing Land Use</b>	Church, school, surface parking	
<b>Assessed Market Value</b>	\$0 (Church exempt from tax assessment)	
<b>Ownership</b>	Church of St. Margaret Mary	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surrounding area is low-density residential and parkland, but the site is buffered from direct adjacency to single-family homes</li> <li>• Close to Theodore Wirth Park, trail systems, Bassett Creek</li> <li>• Easy access to downtown Minneapolis</li> <li>• Many amenities, but retail services are not close</li> </ul>

### Opportunity Site Location



Source: Google Maps and Tangible Consulting Services

## Developer Comments

- *This is clearly the most attractive development site near the station. It's an amenity rich area, even without the LRT station. The lack of nearby retail services to which a resident could walk is a negative.*
- *Because of the attractive development context, it has potential as a market rate housing site.*
- *Affordable housing is a good development possibility, and it could fit well with the Church ownership. Mission-driven affordable housing developers have had positive experiences partnering with churches in settings like this. An affordable housing project could score well for affordable housing development subsidy if it picks up nearby higher income neighborhoods.*
- *It would be advantageous to have the entire site, even extending to some of the park to the north. Larger scale development improves the site developability.*
- *There is not a market for retail development.*

## Development Context

The developer input and market research and analysis affirm the suitability of multi-family development on this site. It's a large site, which provides flexibility in site layout, and the ability to build at an efficient scale. It's an amenity-rich environment for residents, with surrounding parks, trails and natural amenities, and convenient access to downtown Minneapolis, and across the street from the future LRT station. The one element lacking in this area is access to retail amenities, but Golden Valley Road provides a direct connection to the Lunds and Byerlys anchored community center at Highway 100 (approximately 1.5 miles to the west).

The opportunity to partner with St. Margaret Mary's Church on a housing development is something to be explored. Mission driven affordable housing developers have experience creating successful affordable housing developments in partnership with religious institutions. This site would be well suited to a project that is a mix of affordable and market rate units. The development of a small retail amenity would support residential development and use of the station, but may require subsidy.

## Development Strategies

From a financial perspective, a range of housing development scenarios may be viable—including infill development that leaves the existing buildings in place, and complete site redevelopment that includes integration of the existing St. Margaret Mary’s Church in the new development. The key next step is continued communication and relationship building with the Church’s leadership and congregation, including discussions about potential mission compatibility. If and when there is appetite for exploring the opportunity, further steps can include inviting a housing developer into the conversation, creating development scenarios that still accommodate the church and their parking need, and exploring the financial requirements of the scenarios.

The public sector can play a role in fostering communication. Zoning of the site should allow for housing at a scale that provides economy of scale, and supports financial viability. For an infill development, in which the existing structures would remain, this would likely mean a minimum of 3-story development. For a full redevelopment scenario, in which the existing structures are razed, this would require more density, especially if a rebuilt church were to be subsidized by the development. Under this scenario, heights would need to be a minimum of four stories. Depending on the development scenario, the timing of the development with respect to the start of LRT service, and the inclusion of a retail component, there may be a need for public financial support.

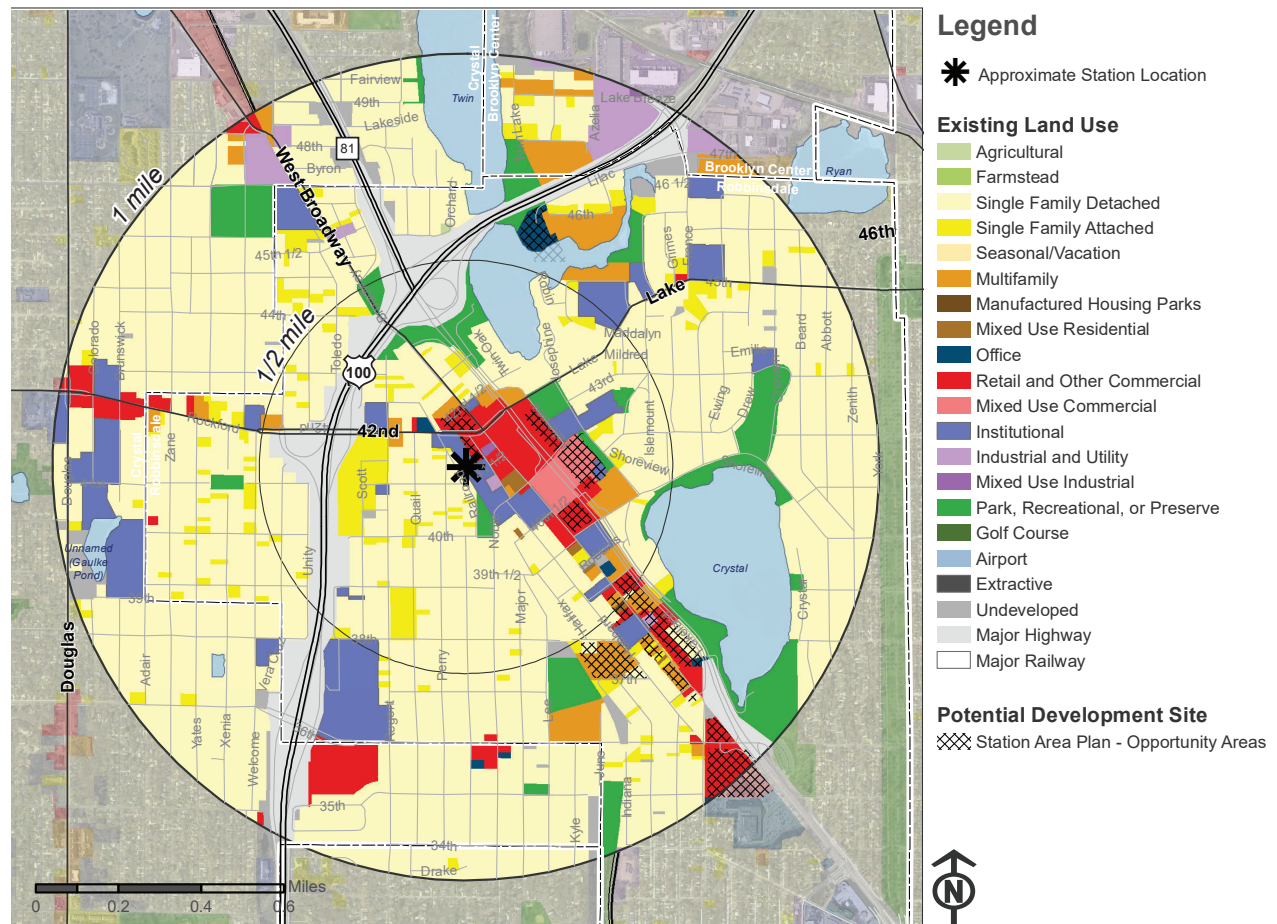
# Robbinsdale Station Area

City of Robbinsdale

The Robbinsdale station area encompasses Robbinsdale’s downtown, including the increasingly vibrant West Broadway storefront business district. The station area includes a large number of retail businesses, in a diverse mix of mall environments and standalone buildings. It also offers multi-family development at different scales. These include many affordable housing and senior housing apartment buildings. The western half of the station area is mostly developed as single-family neighborhoods.

The Station Area Plan identifies a range of development opportunities within blocks of the LRT station, to the south along West Broadway, and across Bottineau Boulevard at the site of the existing Robin Center Mall.

Robbinsdale Station Area and Existing Land Use



Source: Metropolitan Council, ESRI, Tangible Consulting Services, SHC

## Developer Comments

- *This is an exciting station area. There is already a lot of activity here to support redevelopment.*
- *The lively West Broadway storefront district is the core of the area's attractiveness.*
- *The prime location for housing is across from the station, on the north side of 42nd Avenue.*
- *The area might be over-retailed, contributing to some vacancies, and weaker retail tenants in some retail spaces.*
- *Robbinsdale Town Center mall's location, and site size, makes it a strong redevelopment site.*
- *The type of retail tenants in the Robin Center mall are right for the area, and are what could be expected in a redeveloped Robin Center.*
- *The type of retail tenants in the Robin Center mall are right for the area, and are what could be expected in a redeveloped Robin Center.*

## Development Context

This is a station area with a strong market identity supportive of new development. It is densely developed and has a destination downtown district. The new Hy-Vee and proposed apartment developments at the southern end of the station area are indicators of the desirability and market potential of the area. As the city supports and builds on the success of the area, it will be important to protect, through zoning and design standards, the distinctive character and unique small business community along West Broadway. Attracting additional multi-family development to the station area will meet housing needs and provide additional support to area businesses.

There are also some challenging conditions in the station area, such as:

- Pedestrian connections and wayfinding throughout the station area.
- Bottineau Boulevard is difficult to cross.
- The main street character of West Broadway is diluted as one moves south from the core storefront district.
- Access to sites and quality development fronting the west side of Bottineau Boulevard between 41st Avenue and 42nd Avenue is challenging.

There are a number of potential redevelopment sites in the station area, as noted in the station area plan, which would be attractive to developers and future residents under the right conditions. Site assembly challenges and the cost of property acquisition are key barriers to redevelopment. Residential rents are not high enough to attract new private development without public financial support.

#### Near-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., before the LRT is operational)

The Robbinsdale station area has one of the strongest near-term opportunities for new development along the Bottineau Corridor. Development momentum is occurring within the station area in the form of new small, infill development along the pedestrian-scaled blocks of West Broadway and it is occurring just outside of the station area in the form of new multi-story market rate housing and full-scale grocery. More importantly, the station area is becoming more noticed among the development community. As market conditions remain favorable, the development community will only increase its level of interest in the station area.

Moreover, the City of Robbinsdale owns some key parcels in the station area (e.g., northwest corner of 42nd Avenue and West Broadway), which will help to further induce additional new development. First, the City has an incentive to develop any underutilized sites they own instead of sitting on them because it is their best interest to transition such properties from non-taxable status to taxable status. Second, the City will have a great deal of control in working with developers to ensure that any new development supports the City's vision for high-quality TOD, which would result in catalyzing other purely private-driven development in the station area.

As part of the development of the LRT, Metro Transit will acquire parcels adjacent to the station for a mixed-use project that will include a transfer point for buses connecting to the LRT, a park-and-ride facility, and a residential and/or commercial component that will "line" park-and-ride facility. Between this site and the City-owned site, there is an opportunity to set the stage for additional investment in the station area that would meet a certain standard and incentivize the continued high-quality development.

There are several other potential redevelopment sites in the station area that were identified in the station area planning process. However, many of these sites have characteristics with particular challenges that make them better candidates for long-term development rather than short-term development.

Most of the near-term demand will be for new housing in the station area. However, Downtown Robbinsdale is one of the few areas along the Bottineau Corridor that is experiencing demand for new retail space. The pedestrian-scale stretches of West Broadway have become an attractive environment for destination dining, which is creating demand from other retailers that can benefit from this increased activity. This is motivating some entrepreneurs and small developers to explore opportunities to fill-in empty stretches of West Broadway. This type of development is shaped more by development regulations than by any large-scale plan or vision for significant change. Therefore, the pattern of development is much more incremental and interwoven within the existing built form.

#### Long-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., after the LRT is operational)

Long-term development opportunities are more concentrated along the periphery of the downtown. This is because the market will try to exhaust readily available development sites closest to the station first and then move outward. It is also because these potential sites, though larger than the sites found closest to the station, also present the greatest challenges. For example, some sites are located east of Bottineau Boulevard, which is challenging to cross for a pedestrian or cyclist, and are situated on low lying land that may be unsuitable for redevelopment without extensive and costly mitigation (see the following section that discusses the Robin Center site). Other sites have prominent structures that would be costly to demolish (Robin Town Center). Finally, some sites have challenging land ownership and right-of-way issues despite them consisting mostly of surface parking lots (the ½ block immediately west of Bottineau Boulevard between 41st Avenue and 42nd Avenue).

The barriers to development on these sites are currently too high even with the station area's current development momentum. However, aided by quality development in the near-term, these sites will become significantly more attractive once the LRT is operational. Moreover, the current built-form of Downtown Robbinsdale already consists of a TOD development pattern. Therefore, it won't take a significant amount of new development to create a desirable environment. The challenge will be to preserve and expand the current form.

#### Development Strategies

Maintaining and strengthening the distinctive development patterns and the unique independent business community in downtown Robbinsdale are core tasks for future action. Retail vibrancy can be strengthened through a broad range of actions, including retail vitality programs, improved wayfinding and pedestrian connections, the development of public spaces, marketing, and special events, some of which the City of Robbinsdale has been doing for years. Retail vitality programs are multi-action efforts like the National Main Streets program, which undertake physical, programmatic, business, and marketing actions in retail areas to improve their vitality.

Often times the business owners may play a lead role through a business association or business improvement district (BID), but cities have an important role to play as well, particularly with certain kinds of actions or programs.

New housing development can be highly complementary and supportive of the district character, because the new residents support area businesses, and build the area's vibrancy and safety. Zoning changes should set high standards for new developments, and particularly their frontage on West Broadway.

Redevelopment in the area will require an active public-sector role. Site specific redevelopment studies can be pursued for key sites. These can serve to attract developer interest to the area, while clarifying the expected public sector role, and anticipated return on public investment. With the results from these studies, the city can initiate Request for Proposals or Qualifications (RFP or RFQ) processes to attract developer interest. The cost of site acquisition, and the desire for ground floor retail in certain areas, make it likely that some public financial support will be needed for redevelopment projects in the foreseeable future. The amount of public support will vary by location because different locations will have different site assembly and site preparation costs, as well as different expected rents. Therefore, depending on the site, it may be useful to prepare concept level pro forma analysis in order to establish expectations for the amount of public financial support that would be required.



# Robbinsdale Station Area: Opportunity Site

City of Robbinsdale

## Site Characteristics

<b>Overall Size</b>	8.64 acres total, 7 parcels	<b>Development Context</b>
<b>Zoning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 parcels zoned Community Business (B4)</li> <li>• 2 city-owned parcels zoned Public Facilities</li> </ul>	
<b>Existing Land Use</b>	Retail with surface parking; storm water ponds	
<b>Assessed Market Value</b>	\$8,239,999	
<b>Ownership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 parcels owned by Robin Center/ Cushman Wakefield,</li> <li>• 2 parcels owned by City of Robbinsdale</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One block from Downtown Robbinsdale and two blocks from LRT Station</li> <li>• Difficult to cross Bottineau Boulevard</li> <li>• Northern half of site sits below grade of Bottineau Boulevard</li> <li>• Regional bike trail runs along east side of site</li> </ul>

## Opportunity Site Location



Source: Google Maps and Tangible Consulting Services

## Developer Comments

- *The site is attractive for housing. Housing would benefit from the regional bike trail, and views of Crystal Lake and downtown Minneapolis.*
- *In a redevelopment scenario, emphasize housing, and don't overdo the amount of retail and don't push vertical mixed-use.*
- *Bottineau Boulevard is a real connectivity barrier. The future LRT station seems far away.*
- *The site feels really close to downtown Robbinsdale and the businesses on West Broadway. People will find it easy to cross Bottineau Boulevard.*
- *The mix of retail businesses in the existing mall is about right for the area. If the property were redeveloped as a new retail strip mall, it would attract a similar mix of tenants.*
- *Retail could remain on the north section of the property. A small, low to medium priced grocery store (like Aldi) could be a good fit.*
- *The grade differential on the northern site poses a challenge for retail, but could facilitate housing design with underground parking.*
- *The site is attractive for affordable housing development, given its great amenities. It's large enough so an affordable housing developer could partner with a market rate developer to do a mixed income development.*
- *Redevelopment will need significant public financial support.*
- *The site is large enough that it might attract an institutional-scale equity investor [e.g., real estate investment trust (REIT) or an annuity association like TIAA]—which would lower development costs, and potentially reduce the financial support the project would need.*

## Development Context

The Robin Center site is complex. It is separated from the station and downtown Robbinsdale by Bottineau Boulevard, and the northern half of the site sits below the grade of Bottineau Boulevard. The low level of the site relative to its surroundings means that soil conditions will warrant significant investigation prior to any redevelopment.

Although the existing strip malls on the site appear viable, they are older buildings that don't contribute to the design quality of the area. Furthermore, persistent vacancy has been an issue. Over the last five years, the buildings have averaged a vacancy rate of around 15% and rents are currently between \$12 and \$13 per square foot, which would be considered affordable retail space. A large part of the site is devoted to surface parking.

The size of the Robin Center site, as well as the opportunity to intensify its use, makes it a good potential multi-family site. Attention to the transition from this site to the single-family housing to the east will be important. Building townhomes on the east side of the site, or otherwise reducing the scale of development along that frontage, are ways to provide that transition, and broaden the mix of housing products offered.

Site characteristics such as elevation changes make creative parking scenarios possible. Improving pedestrian connections across Bottineau Boulevard may be important to attracting a developer to the site.

## Development Strategies

Provided any potentially poor soil conditions can be mitigated prior to redevelopment, site zoning should allow for housing and mixed-use development at a sufficient density to be cost-efficient, should support a broad range of site development scenarios. Further study of the site will require the participation of the property owner. A site-specific development study could provide guidance concerning how much of the site should be redeveloped, what development mix and site layout concepts make sense, and how development might be phased. A study should clarify the expected public sector role, including the estimated need for public financial support. With a preferred development scenario identified, the property owner or City could take steps to solicit developer interest in the site.

Any development strategy should take into consideration the US Post Office, which is currently an anchor of the Robin Center. If a concept level development scenario is conducted, it would be important to engage representatives of the Post Office to learn their development requirements and level of flexibility should they want to remain at that location as an anchor of a new development.

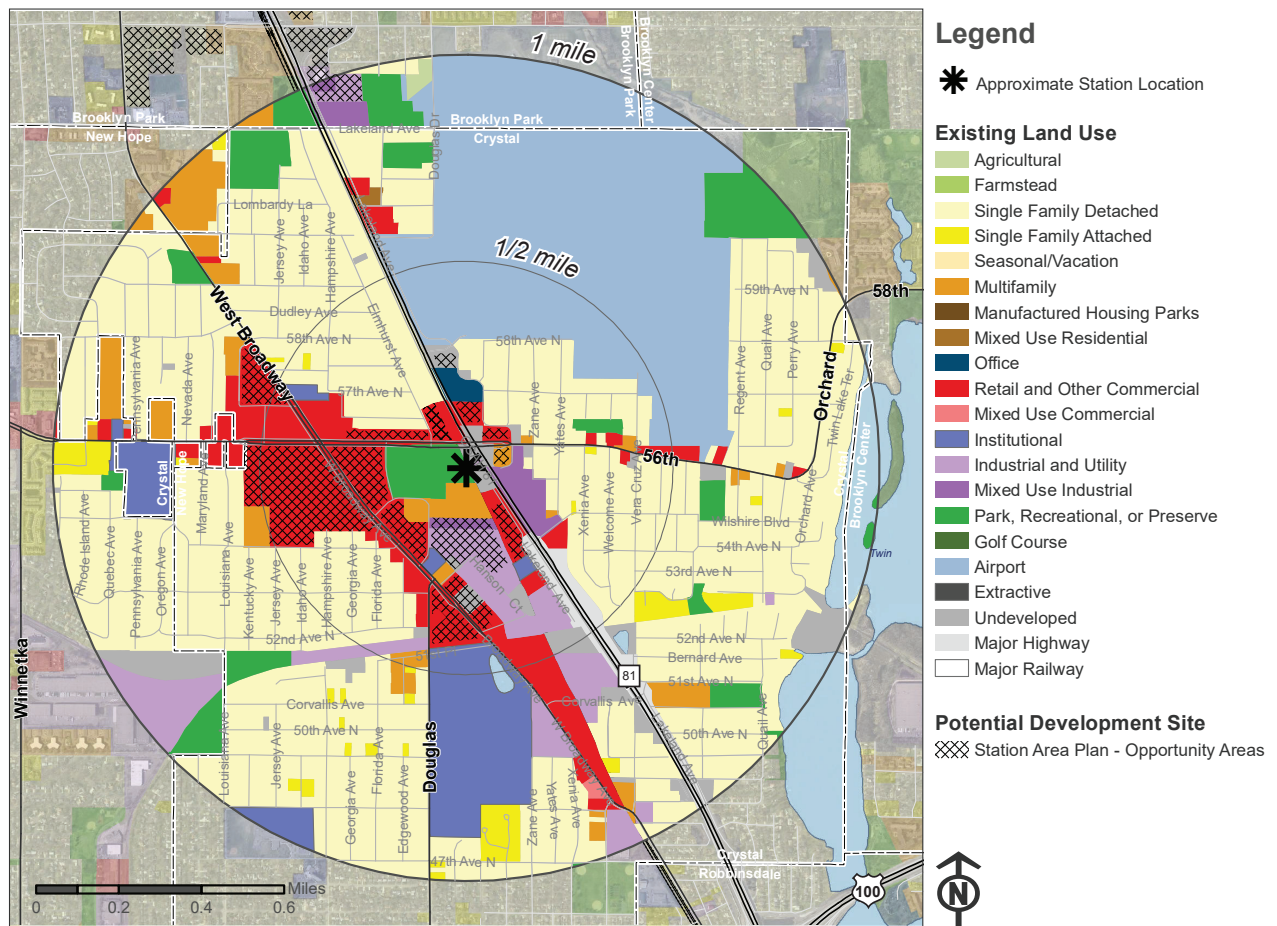
# Bass Lake Road Station Area

## City of Crystal

The Bass Lake Road station area encompasses every major category of development. The area offers retail shopping, anchored by the Crystal Shopping Center, and serves as a destination retail area for the surrounding community. There are several apartment buildings in the area totaling 379 units. There is a mix of industrial businesses south of the LRT station, and a medical office building across Bottineau Boulevard.

The Station Area Plan identifies development opportunities in every direction from the station. It highlights some key opportunities that are within a block or two from the LRT station, and which would build identity and a sense of place in that area.

### Bass Lake Road Station Area and Existing Land Use



## Developer Comments

- *This is the strongest station area because of the retail amenities.*
- *This is the weakest station area because of the condition of many properties and the demographic make-up.*
- *Area assets include the strong retail mix, which includes some newer and well-maintained properties, and frequent bus service on Bass Lake Road.*
- *Medical office is in demand in the Bottineau Corridor, and the site in this station area at the northeast corner of Bass Lake Road and Bottineau Boulevard may be a great location for that.*
- *Pedestrian crossings are important to the area's success—across Bass Lake Road and to the Crystal Shopping Center.*
- *The unattractive retail on the north side of Bass Lake Road should be converted to experience-oriented retail, with housing above.*

## Development Context

This station area has clear character and strengths, and that gives it great potential to build a transit oriented identity. Becker Park and the abundance of retail, anchored by the recently renovated Crystal Shopping Center, are core assets. Despite these assets, the overall character of the station area feels undetermined. A strengthened identity is needed in order to establish confidence in the area for housing development.

Two place-making interventions are already in process. The 2018 streetscaping improvements along Bass Lake Road will build the image and desirability of the area. The 2019 renovation of Becker Park will enhance its role as a community gathering space.

## Near-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., before the LRT is operational)

A great deal of new investment beyond the LRT is planned for the Bass Lake Road station area; Becker Park will be reconstructed and Bass Lake Road will receive a new streetscape. These investments have the potential to significantly change the perception of the station area.

With the exception of two apartment properties that are less than 30 years old, all of the properties surrounding the station and the adjacent Becker Park were identified as potential redevelopment sites in the Station Area Plan for Bass Lake Road. Although market conditions have continued to strengthen since the Station Area Plan was prepared in 2015-16, the opportunities for redevelopment appear to be limited in the near-term. The barriers are a combination of economic, environmental, and political.

The economic issues primarily revolve around the incomes of target market households. The market analysis revealed that lower median incomes among neighborhood households will likely require some form of public assistance in the development of new housing in order to cover the financing gap. This is because most target market households won't have incomes that would support market rate rental housing.

Economic issues are also impacting the potential for retail. The Bass Lake Road station area is one of the key retail districts along Bottineau Corridor. Although it will retain its position as an important retail district, it will likely not expand its retail offerings in the near-term because the retail industry is undergoing rapid change and many national chains that predominate in the station area are closely evaluating whether their business model is feasible in the long-term due to the impact of on-line retailing and other cultural shifts.

The environmental issues are due to the presence of several industrial sites south of the station that have been identified as possibilities for redevelopment. The near-term challenge is that the cost to clean-up such properties, especially to residential or commercial standards, is unknown. This uncertainty will impact developer interest. In many cases cities and other public agencies will often provide funding to assist in the assessment of such properties in order to facilitate the redevelopment process. However, this a key step in the process that can sometimes take many years and would likely delay any near-term development.

Politically, the challenge is that some of the possible redevelopment sites in the Station Area Plan were also identified as an example of a built form that contributes to and strengthens the TOD character of the station area (e.g. north side of Bass Lake Road across from Becker Park).

The market research did reveal an opportunity for near-term development of medical office space in the station area. The newest office building is a medical office building located on the east side of Bottineau Boulevard. This type of real estate sector tends to cluster. Therefore, as the healthcare industry continues to grow and expand, this would be a strong location for additional medical office space. Three corners of the Bottineau Boulevard and Bass Lake Road intersection were identified as possible redevelopment sites all of which would be appropriate for medical office space and could leverage the existing presence.

#### Long-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., after the LRT is operational)

Long-term development potential in the Bass Lake Road station area are much more positive than the near-term opportunities. Once the LRT is operational, it will augment the benefits already accrued to the new Becker Park and the rehabilitated Bass Lake Road. This level of investment will draw a lot of developer attention. Development interest will likely radiate west of the station because of this new investment and the pull of the retail activity in and near the Crystal Shopping Center. Moreover, the challenge of crossing Bottineau Boulevard to the east of the station will temper development interest in that direction.

One of the other benefits of the long-term prognosis for the Bass Lake Road station area is that one of larger commercial property owners has experience with increasing density in automobile-oriented shopping centers with more housing and other related uses. Provided this property owner continues to maintain their assets and tracks the progress of all the new public investment in the station area, this bodes well for the likelihood that they would redevelop some or all of their holdings.

#### Development Strategies

The two blocks of Bass Lake Road that connect the LRT station to West Broadway constitutes the key placemaking opportunity which can define the area's identity, and build the market for additional development in the area. Further pedestrian improvements should be pursued, but with streetscaping and park improvements already in process, the burden is primarily on private redevelopment to complete the transformation of these blocks into a signature district. For that reason, fostering redevelopment or repositioning of older properties along Bass Lake Road should be the highest development priority.

Redevelopment of the property at the northwest quadrant of Bass Lake Road and Bottineau Boulevard can include housing and retail elements, as well as placemaking features such as patio restaurant seating. Attention to high quality design will be important to build a market for subsequent development. Development of this site, and properties to the west along Bass Lake Road would benefit from site analyses that assess site development and layout alternatives, and clarify the public sector roles and financial support that would be needed for the different alternatives.

If medical office development is needed in the Bottineau Corridor, that's a good opportunity for the northeast quadrant of Bass Lake Road and Bottineau Boulevard— which may be the most suitable site among all of the station areas because of site size and the presence of an existing medical office building. The medical office scenario for the northeast corner of the Bass Lake Road and Bottineau Boulevard intersection is deserving of further analysis and additional conversations with people who are knowledgeable about that market sector.

Zoning of property along Bass Lake Road and West Broadway should support housing development at a cost-effective density level, and set a high quality design standard. Adding multi-family housing in and around the station area will not only provide needed housing, but it will support LRT ridership and station area retail. Requirements for ground floor retail, nevertheless, should be minimal because the retail market context is not strong enough to support new construction rents without public financial support.



Bass Lake Road Station Area: Opportunity Site  
 City of Crystal

*Site Characteristics*

<b>Overall Size</b>	10.97 acres, 4 parcels	<b>Development Context</b>
<b>Zoning</b>	Northerly parcel zoned Commercial (C1). All other parcels zoned Industrial (I)	
<b>Existing Land Use</b>	Industrial, surface parking, vacant	
<b>Assessed Market Value</b>	\$4,349,000	
<b>Ownership</b>	1 parcel by Mar Properties, 3 parcels by Firstam One	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becker Park redesign will provide good pedestrian connections to the light rail station to the north.</li> <li>• Strong retail amenities are anchored by Crystal Shopping Center to the northwest.</li> <li>• Multi-family buildings to the north are viable and are supportive of further residential development.</li> </ul>

*Opportunity Site Location*



Source: Google Maps and Tangible Consulting Services

## Developer Comments

- *This as an attractive housing site for either affordable housing or market-rate workforce housing. [Note: several interviewees expressed this view.]*
- *The site can accommodate multiple phases of development, which could be family and/or senior housing.*
- *The development should not include a retail component.*
- *Contamination issues should be anticipated, due to nature of current and past uses.*
- *It is important to improve the West Broadway pedestrian crossing and provide a good path to the LRT station.*
- *Redevelopment will require public support, possibly including site acquisition in order to attract developer interest.*
- *The City of Ramsey offers a good example of new multi-family adjacent to a LRT station.*
- *It is hard to “put the there there.” Industrial redevelopment is a better fit. [Note: one developer expressed this view.]*

## Development Context

This site provides an opportunity for the City to strengthen the station area. It has a close connection to the LRT station, and housing development in any part of the station area strengthens the vibrancy of the area. The site is a good multi-family housing site. It benefits from proximity to the LRT station, the park, and the area’s retail offerings. The size of the site allows the establishment of site amenities that can be attractive to residents. There are also challenges to redevelopment. The site has value today as a business/light industrial location. Site acquisition will be expensive, and environmental remediation may add additional costs. Some of the adjacent uses would not fit well with new residential development.

## Development Strategies

Further site analysis can clarify realistic development options for the site, as well as the public financial implications of redevelopment. Building the case for assertive public intervention may require studying such scenarios and estimating likely public cost and returns. Given the existing use, requiring a Phase I environmental review would establish some expectations about the possible need for remediation.

Relationship building can also be pursued, to maintain an open and constructive dialog with property owners. Zoning of the site should allow for building at a cost-effective scale. It should not require or encourage a retail component.

Timing is an important consideration. It may be easier to attract development to this site after placemaking efforts along Bass Lake Road and improvements to Becker Park give the area new cachet.

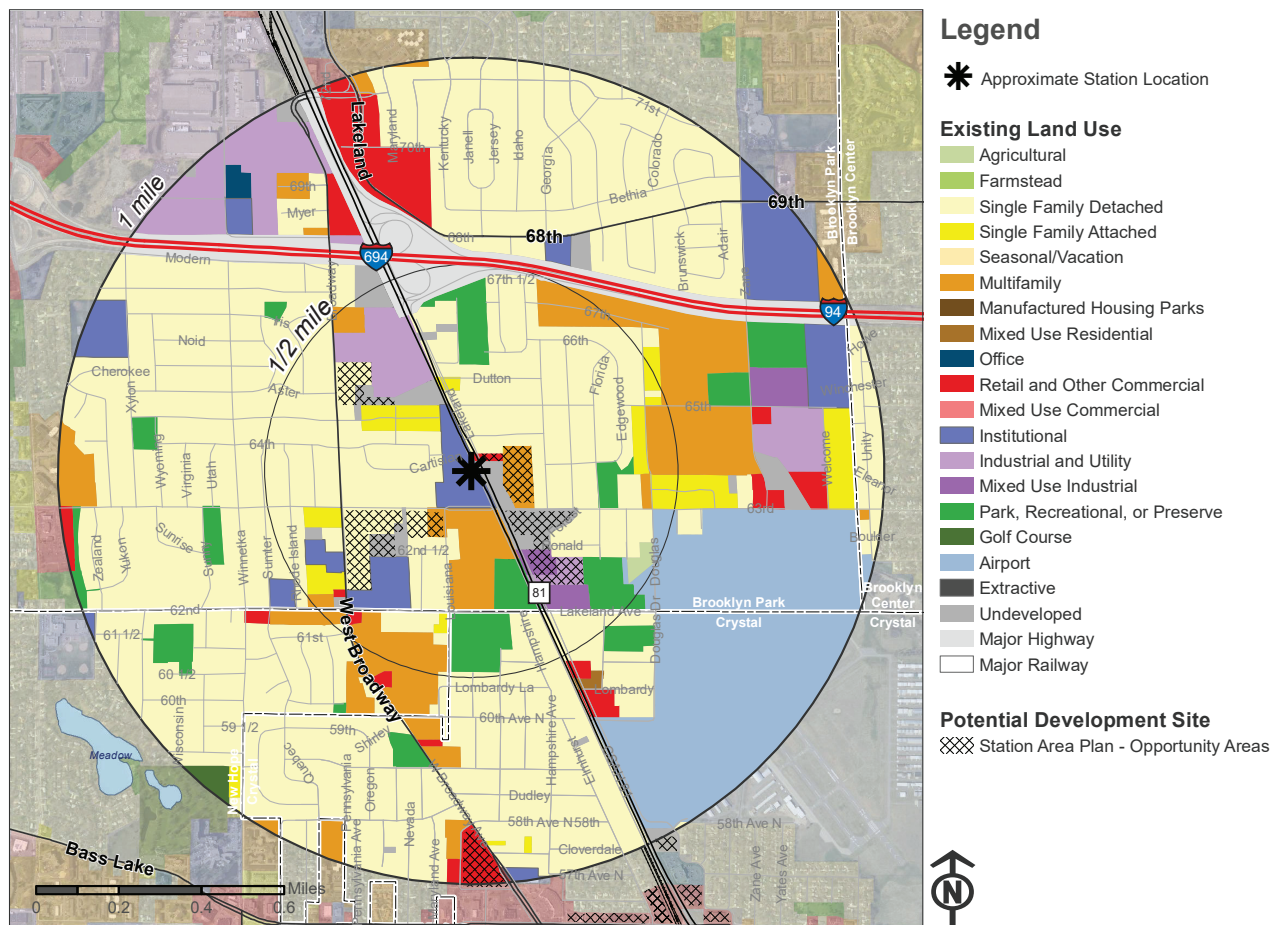
## 63rd Avenue Station Area

### City of Brooklyn Park

The 63rd Avenue station area is an area that's largely developed as housing. There are some clusters of apartment development, many of which are within a couple of blocks of the LRT station, and single-family neighborhoods. There are a few industrial buildings in the station area, and no retail development.

The Station Area Plan identifies a few areas for potential redevelopment in close walking distance from the LRT station.

### 63rd Avenue Station Area and Existing Land Use



Source: Metropolitan Council, ESRI, Tangible Consulting Services, SHC

## Developer Comments

### SE Quadrant

- *[Market rate housing developer] The land area is too small an area for housing, and there are few nearby supportive amenities aside from the future LRT station.*
- *[Affordable housing developer] It's a good site for housing. It is vacant which makes TIF more valuable. A safe pedestrian crossing of Bottineau Boulevard would be needed.*
- *A commercial development works best. The site has excellent access.*

### NE Quadrant

- *This is a good redevelopment site. It has multi-family zoning. New affordable housing here would meet community needs.*
- *Challenges at this site: difficult to cross Bottineau Blvd to get to station; a developer would likely have to overpay for the land; and removing existing naturally occurring affordable housing is politically difficult even when replacing it.*

## Development Context

The eastern side of this station area has the highest potential for redevelopment; however, both of the development sites on 63rd Avenue are challenging. The station area's southeast quadrant is a small site, which limits its potential for commercial or residential development, but has excellent access and visibility. Further site analysis is needed to sort out the viability of different development alternatives.

The northeast quadrant is already developed as low-rise, naturally occurring affordable apartments. There is an opportunity for a higher density housing development on the site, but site acquisition would probably be costly. New multi-family housing on the site can address community needs for more housing options, and locate more people close to the station improving their access to jobs.

Timing is a consideration. The desirability and development potential of both areas will likely improve when the transit service is operational.

The western side of the 63rd Avenue station area did not attract any developer interest during the interviews. Unlike the eastern side of the station area, most redevelopment opportunities on the western side would require the assembly of numerous residential sites, which is often highly unattractive to developers without significant assistance from the public sector.

#### Near-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., before the LRT is operational)

Based on the existing uses, the lack of a sizable site, and lower incomes of many households, the near-term development opportunities for the 63rd Avenue station area are limited. Moreover, community input from the station area planning process did not identify any significant redevelopment potential except for the Hennepin County-owned site at the southeast corner of Bottineau Boulevard and 63rd Avenue.

Although the Hennepin County site is generally too small to make financially feasible for a traditional housing or retail development, the Station Area Plan suggested the potential for a local ethnic marketplace or pop-up market space. This concept would involve a semi-permanent structure that would allow for basic market stalls to be rented by small entrepreneurs or start-up businesses that sell goods. Given the high proportion of low-income and/or immigrant families in the surrounding neighborhoods this would be an opportunity to support their efforts to start or grow a business.

#### Long-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., after the LRT is operational)

Long-term development opportunities are limited as well due to the lack available or even potentially available sites. Any significant long-term development opportunities are many years away and likely will not be impacted by the LRT, at least not within its early years. The Station Area Plan did identified a very long-term vision that imagined the apartment property in the northeast corner of Bottineau Boulevard and 63rd Avenue being redeveloped into new multi-family housing and some of the industrial buildings fronting Bottineau Boulevard south of 63rd Avenue potentially being redeveloped.

#### Development Strategies

Zoning actions can occur in the short-term. In the southeast quadrant of the intersection, consider zoning that preserves development flexibility, so that housing or commercial development could be pursued. Development standards should be established for either scenario, so that any new development builds the area's identity, and supports future high quality development.

Improvements to pedestrian crossing of Bottineau Boulevard and 63rd Avenue can also be undertaken in the short-term. Additional redevelopment potential is likely to emerge over time, after the initiation of LRT service.

# Brooklyn Boulevard Station Area

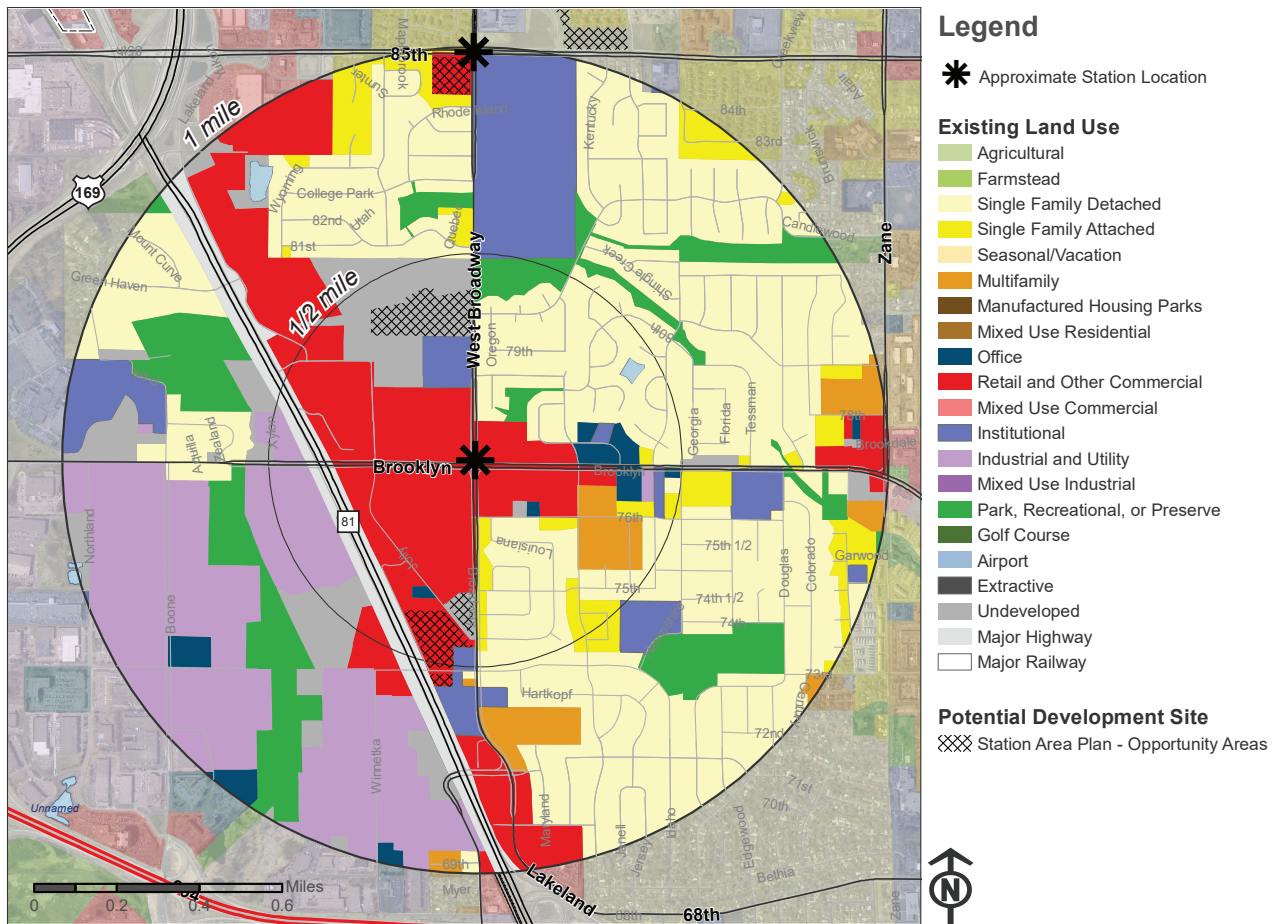
## City of Brooklyn Park

The Brooklyn Boulevard station area is marked by large retail developments on all four quadrants. Single-family neighborhoods are predominant to the east. The western half of the station area is primarily retail and industrial, with West Broadway serving as a dividing line between the two.

In recent years there has been minimal storefront vacancies in this station area. High occupancies are driven somewhat by affordable rents but also by a surge in the number of new retail establishments owned by immigrants or persons of color, which reflect the demographic profile of the surrounding neighborhoods. Many of the new retail establishments have not only tapped into the local residential base, but also demand from immigrant and other cultural groups located throughout the metro area.

The Station Area Plan identifies key development opportunities a few blocks both north and south from the LRT station.

### Brooklyn Boulevard Station Area and Existing Land Use



Source: Metropolitan Council, ESRI, Tanaible Consulting Services, SHC

## Developer Comments

- *This is a very auto-oriented station area with strong retail on three corners of intersection.*
- *This area feels tired.*
- *This is not a compelling area for market rate housing.*
- *Development Opportunity Sites are some distance from the LRT station.*
- *There are attractive sites for workforce and/or affordable housing here.*

## Development Context

There are opportunities for infill development near the station. A key area identified as a development opportunity in the Station Area Plan is a large vacant property a couple of blocks north of Brooklyn Boulevard. A second development opportunity is a few blocks to the south of Brooklyn Boulevard, where land will be acquired for the LRT right of way. Both sites are considered suitable for housing development by developers.

There is also an opportunity to attract infill development on one or more of the existing shopping center properties. These properties have extensive parking areas, so there is land to support additional retail pads, or apartments, or vertical mixed-use development.

## Near-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., before the LRT is operational)

The Brooklyn Boulevard station area is dominated by auto-oriented, big-box retail. There has been substantial reinvestment to many of the retail properties in recent years. Therefore, redevelopment opportunities will be limited to a small number of older retail centers or freestanding retail buildings. Furthermore, in the near-term, changes in the retail sector will limit growth opportunities among national chain retailers as many of them delay investment due to the impact of on-line retailing. However, opportunities are emerging to support small retailers who are meeting the needs of new demographic groups, such as younger households, people of color, and immigrants. This could involve repositioning older properties to be more conducive to small retailers or improving the public realm to help maintain or increase occupancies.

Despite the lack of immediate development opportunities adjacent or near the station, there are potential sites approximately a ½-mile north and south of the station that would have more immediate, near-term potential. Given their distance from the station itself, these sites may likely be able to support lower-density development that is still transit supportive, such as



townhomes, both affordable rentals and middle market owner-occupied product, because the land would be less expensive than land adjacent or closer to the station.

The candlewood site, which is north of the station, is clearly the most ripe for development because it is a vacant site in which ownership has changed in recent years. This site is discussed in more detail in the following pages as an example opportunity site. The other site south of the station would be created by the construction of the LRT, which would add new development sites. The Station Area Plan indicates that this site is appropriate for mixed-use development including some commercial as well as residential uses given its proximity to the Target anchored strip mall immediately to its north.

#### Long-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., after the LRT is operational)

Once the LRT is operational, the large surface parking lots that surround the station on all four sides will become more viable development opportunities. The Twin Cities is starting to experience more and more examples of this type of in-fill development. Most notably, the developer, Wellington Management, filled in a portion of the parking lot serving the Hi-Lake Shopping Center in Minneapolis, which is adjacent to the Lake Street Station of the Blue Line, with multi-family housing above ground floor retail. Coincidentally, Wellington Management is the manager of the Northwind Plaza, the shopping center at the northeast corner of Brooklyn Boulevard and West Broadway.

Although housing will be the primary driver of new development in the Brooklyn Boulevard station area over the long-term, the station area will likely maintain its role as an important retail district along the Corridor because of its proximity to nearby residential neighborhoods and employment areas. However, the model of a large anchor store surrounded by small national chains will be put under a great deal of stress as on-line retail continues to eat away at the market share of traditional retailers. This will incentivize property owners to consider new, more innovative shopping center formats and retail stores.

Part of the long-term challenge of maintaining the existing retail presence in the Brooklyn Boulevard station area will be the available spending power of nearby households. National and regional economic trends show a widening income gap between what was historically considered “working class” or lower-middle class households and upper-middle class households. The neighborhoods served by the retailers in these station areas are mostly on the wrong side of this widening gap. If this trend persists long-term, there will be significantly less disposable income available to support many of the existing retailers, especially the national chains, which are driven by stringent standards regarding trade area household incomes. To some degree, the LRT will undoubtedly mitigate the impact of these broader economic trends in the station areas by

attracting new, more affluent households to them. However, despite this effect, retailing in these station areas will likely need to evolve into sustainable concepts and formats that are not as dependent on national chains filling the majority of the spaces.

### Development Strategies

As LRT development progresses, coordination of land acquisition between Metro Transit and the City of Brooklyn Park will be important for the development of the area to the south of Brooklyn Boulevard—as well as other steps that can be undertaken to set the stage for attracting future development. Preparatory steps might include conversations with property owners, more detailed site-specific exploration of development scenarios, design charrettes or other exercises that build public understanding of realistic development options, and analysis of the public sector role that is likely required to attract development, including estimating the level of public financial support that is needed.

As noted above in the development context, infill development on underutilized parking areas is a potential strategy. As with any development on private property, this will require conversations with property owners, which may be informed by case studies of recent development projects in similar settings. Case studies can be an effective way of demonstrating to stakeholders the financial and market feasibility of this type of development.

Zoning changes can be adopted along the corridors in the station area which support multi-family housing development at a density level that is cost-effective. Zoning should also ensure that new housing development offers a high quality frontage along the public sidewalk.

There are few public amenities in the area, so public realm enhancements such as streetscaping or improvements to pedestrian circulation may be important beneficial actions that could also be taken in the near term.

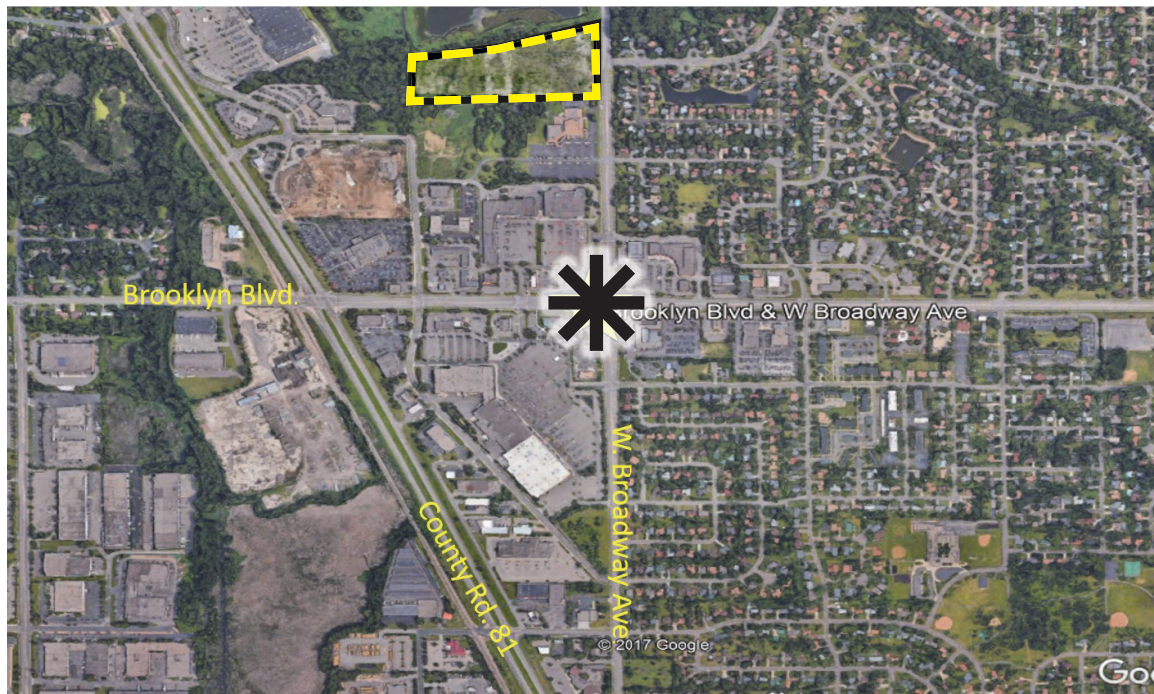
# Brooklyn Boulevard Station Area: Opportunity Site

City of Brooklyn Park

## Site Characteristics

<b>Overall Size</b>	14.68 acres (1 parcel)	<b>Development Context</b>
<b>Zoning</b>	Multiple Family (R5)	
<b>Existing Land Use</b>	Vacant	
<b>Assessed Market Value</b>	\$2,565,400	
<b>Ownership</b>	First Minnesota Bank	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The adjacent church property to the south is 18.46 acres</li> <li>• West Broadway Avenue is not pedestrian friendly</li> <li>• There is a local street network to the west that is currently not connected to the site</li> <li>• There is strong retail at Brooklyn Boulevard and West Broadway</li> </ul>

## Opportunity Site Location



Source: Google Maps and Tangible Consulting Services

## Developer Comments

- *The key site asset is the scale of opportunity. It would be efficient to build 200 units. Adding the western part of the Church site would further enhance desirability.*
- *It feels far from the station. Sidewalk, streetscaping enhancements would help.*
- *[West Broadway will be reconstructed as part of the LRT project and will include multi-use trails on both sides of the roadway along with trees, landscaping, pedestrian lighting, and street furniture.]*
- *This is a great site for affordable housing. But a recent affordable housing proposal for this site was not supported by the City.*
- *Connect the site with walkways to the street system to the west.*
- *There may be water table issues on the site.*

## Development Context

This site is a valuable opportunity for Brooklyn Park. Its scale allows for a housing development large enough to be financially viable. It is likely to attract a workforce or affordable housing proposal. The size of the site also allows for a creative mix of housing products. For example, there is opportunity for townhomes to be part of the development mix, a product that is in short supply in Brooklyn Park.

The LRT project encompasses a number of improvements along West Broadway, including multi-use trails on both sides of the roadway, pedestrian-scale lighting, and landscaping that will make the development sites feel better connected to the future LRT station. New development should take advantage of a site that can support internal amenities as well, such as gardens, outdoor play areas, or community gathering spaces.

## Development Strategies

The site is ready for redevelopment. The City can choose how proactive it wants to be in encouraging the development of the site. It could lead a developer solicitation process on behalf of the property owner. It could take steps to build public support for realistic development scenarios. It could invite the neighboring church to the table to discuss sale or partnership options, including consideration of mission-compatible housing development on the site. It could also pursue outright acquisition of the site, a measure which would send a signal of strong public support for new development. In any of these scenarios, ongoing communication with the existing property owner will be important.

The zoning of this site should allow for a broad range of housing types, and the development of the site at a cost-effective density level.

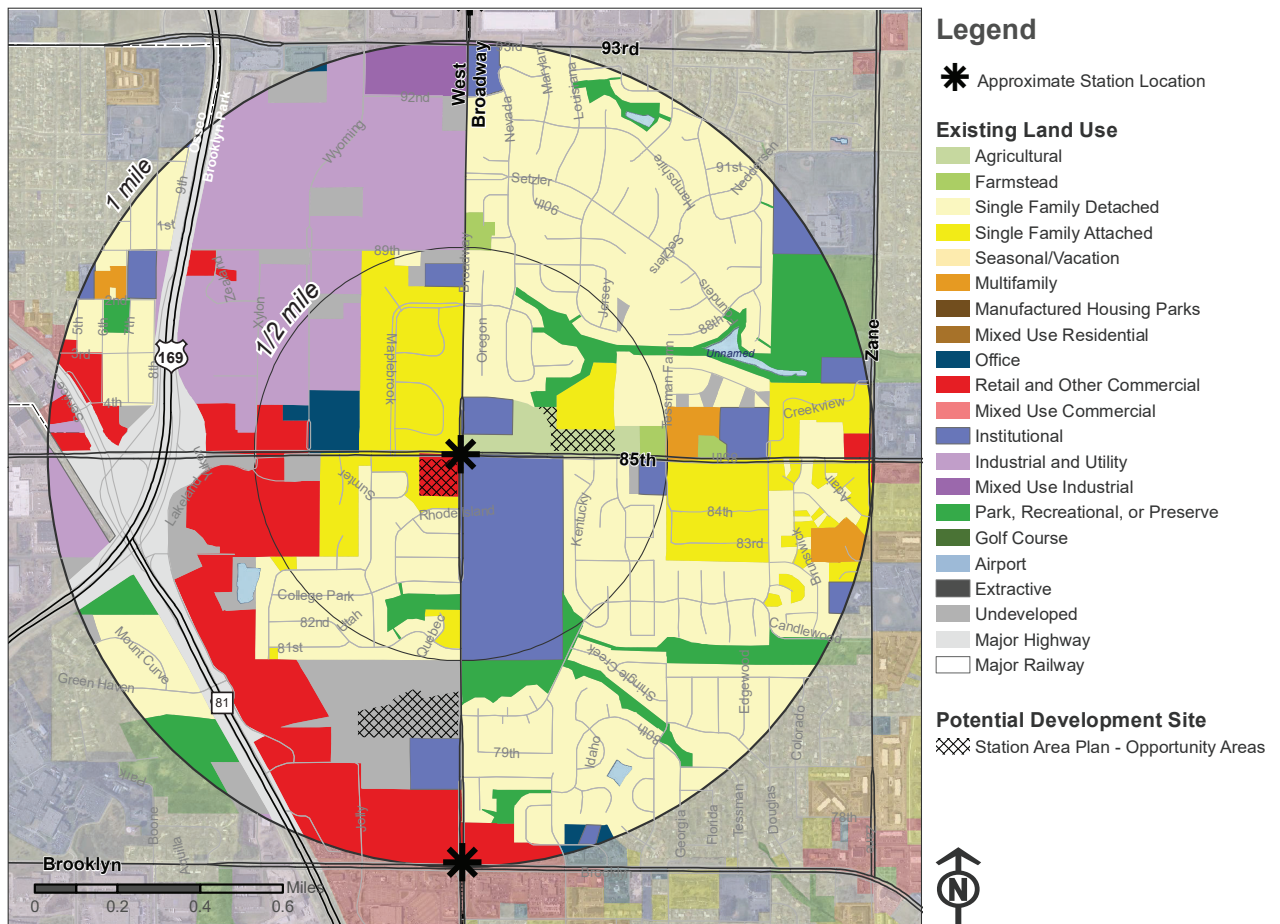
## 85th Avenue Station Area

City of Brooklyn Park

The 85th Avenue station area is anchored by North Hennepin Community College (NHCC), which attracts students each day to the area. Public facilities across the street from the College to the north include a new county library and planned public plaza and new arts center. There's a retail mall on the southwest quadrant. The rest of the station area is primarily low density neighborhoods.

The Station Area Plan identifies the potential for new housing to the east of the public facility campus on the north side of 85th Avenue, and it envisions a mixed-use redevelopment of the retail mall.

### 85th Avenue Station Area and Existing Land Use



Source: Metropolitan Council, ESRI, Tangible Consulting Services, SHC

## Developer Comments

- *The proximity to North Hennepin Community College and library is an asset.*
- *This is a great area for new housing: apartments, townhomes, affordable.*
- *The cost of land will be a tipping point for a successful development deal.*
- *The presence of the college might make the community more favorable towards affordable housing here.*
- *The retail property at the southwest corner is on the market. Reorient it and push the parking to the back. Build ground floor service retail, 3-4 stories of housing above, and provide underground parking. It will attract young people, and older people selling single-family homes (winter elsewhere, have children in the area).*

## Development Context

The 85th Avenue station area has a strong character. North Hennepin Community College (NHCC), the library, and planned performing arts center and civic plaza are strong assets. There is vacant land immediately east of the library along 85th Avenue. The shopping center at the southwest corner is currently on the market.

There is a need for workforce and affordable housing along the Corridor, and new housing at this station area could benefit community college students (most of whom work while they attend school) and enable other tenants to reach jobs along the light rail network. The vacant parcels east of the library along 85th Avenue are owned by NHCC and would be large enough to support a new housing development. The Facilities Master Plan adopted by NHCC in 2016 for their campus shows the eastern most vacant parcel north of 85th Avenue being guided for a mix of residential and commercial uses that would support the functioning of the school. This space is not intended to be used for instructional purposes as it is considered too far from the campus core. New development is likely to require public financial support.

The other opportunity at this station area is the shopping center, Broadway Square. It has the potential to be a signature development site. Its size (5 acres) and location make it amenable to redevelopment as multi-family housing with retail on the first floor. Developers interviewed indicated that market rate units would be attractive to empty-nesters, and young singles and couples, using the LRT to commute to work. Improved street crossings would bring students and college staff to the retail businesses. A coffee shop or small restaurant would be a good addition to the area.

#### Near-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., before the LRT is operational)

The 85th Avenue station area has two potential redevelopment sites: the Broadway Square Shopping Center and a parcel of vacant land on the north side of 85th Avenue east of the station that owned by NHCC. The Station Area Plan identified these two sites as potential long-term redevelopment opportunities. Since the Station Area Plan was completed, however, the Broadway Square Shopping Center has become available for sale. Due to the “tired” appearance of this shopping center, this would suggest that any new property owner would be looking for a “value add” proposition in which significant rehabilitation or total redevelopment will yield much higher revenues. Therefore, it is now much more realistic to consider this property a near-term development opportunity. Outside of Downtown Robbinsdale, this is probably the most marketable site along the Bottineau Corridor to support multi-family housing located above ground floor retail.

Meanwhile, the other potential development owned by NHCC could also be very realistically considered a near-term opportunity as well. Being owned by NHCC and having been identified for multi-family housing in their most recent facilities masters plan, there is no reason not to think that this site could not be developed at any time. Currently, the housing market is extremely strong and NHCC could either use that justification to develop the site as housing.

#### Long-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., after the LRT is operational)

Beyond the two identified potential development sites noted above, the only long-term development opportunities would come out of the NHCC campus. Most likely, any future development in the core of the campus would be institutional. However, NHCC is planning to update their 2015 facilities master plan in 2019-20 and this process could potentially identify peripheral sites on their campus that could not only serve the institution’s core educational mission but perhaps also provide a supportive use as well that could be developed in partnership with other entities. This is currently the case with a parcel NHCC currently controls north of 85th Avenue that is now under development as a performing arts center.

## Development Strategies

Specific strategies to consider for the opportunity sites north of the NHCC campus include:

- Consult with NHCC about plans for the properties they own and their student housing needs .
- Consider site-specific analyses of development scenarios and estimated public sector financial support, and refine development goals accordingly.
- Discuss development scenarios with a range of developers in order to generate development interest and build a deeper understanding of the housing types, scale, and density that would be viable for targeted sites.
- Initiate conversations with other property owners north of 85th Avenue to understand their issues and concerns with any development associated with the vacant parcels.

Regarding the shopping center site at the southwest corner of West Broadway and 85th Avenue, consider the possibly following strategies:

- Meet with the property owner or manager to understand needs and plans.
- Clarify the public vision for the station area and enact zoning that is consistent with the vision.
- Gather some examples of comparable developments in the region to see how a mixed-use development could fit into this station area.
- Survey Brooklyn Park residents to find out their future housing needs in order to tailor a project to their desires as well as build community support for it.

Zoning of these sites should allow for development at a scale that provides economy of scale and supports financial viability—as well as establish high quality design standards.



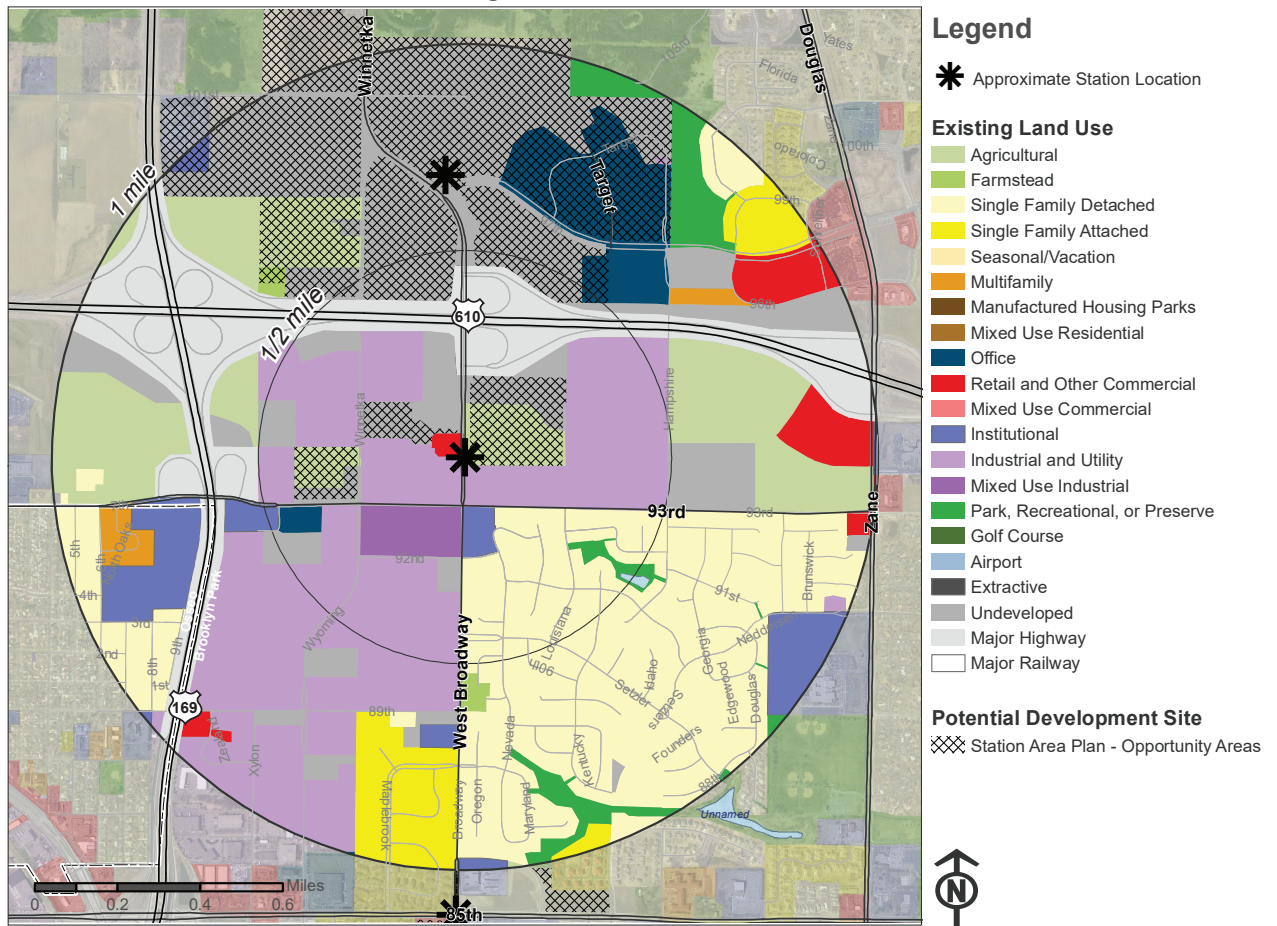
## 93rd Avenue Station Area

City of Brooklyn Park

The 93rd Avenue station area is surrounded by a business park, with large office/industrial/warehouse facilities. Only the southeast quadrant of the station area is a residential, single-family neighborhood.

The Station Area Plan identifies a few remaining development opportunities in the business park, for additional industrial development.

### 93rd Avenue Station Area and Existing Land Use



Source: Metropolitan Council, ESRI, Tangible Consulting Services, SHC

### Developer Comments

- *The area works well as an officelindustrial area. It's not suitable for housing development.*
- *The station would benefit from some small supportive retail.*
- *This area offers jobs and would support nearby affordable housing.*

## Development Context

The 93rd Avenue station area functions well as an office/industrial area. Vacancies are low, properties are well-kept, and development appears to be taking care of itself. Proximity to Highway 610 makes the area very attractive to the business park development that is occurring.

## Near-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., before the LRT is operational)

The 93rd Avenue station area has been rapidly building out with typical business park uses, such as flexible office-warehouse space, traditional warehouse space, manufacturing, and limited-service hotels to serve area businesses. In the near-term, any remaining sites over five acres will likely be developed as flexible office-warehouse or traditional warehouse space. Smaller sites, especially those with higher visibility and accessibility, will develop as small convenience-based retail (e.g., fast food or convenience store) or lodging.

The two hotels currently under development in the station area will be closely observed by hotel developers to see how well they perform once open. If these properties perform well and more jobs are added to the Highway 610 corridor, developers will look for opportunities for additional hotel development in the station area in the near-term. Although the LRT by itself won't drive new hotel development in the near-term, it will certainly influence whether developers will choose one highway interchange over another. All things being equal, a developer will opt for a hotel location with an LRT station within walking distance versus a location without an LRT station within walking distance.

## Long-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., after the LRT is operational)

Once the LRT is operational, it will probably be many years before viable development sites become available as many of the sites will fairly new buildings on them. Nevertheless, the LRT will exert greater pressure on the oldest properties in the station area. Eventually, these site will be evaluated for their redevelopment potential. When this dynamic begins to occur, the type of new use being considered will be dependent on how well the station is connected via sidewalks and trails to nearby properties. The more connected properties are to the station the more likely developers will consider more intense use of the site.

## Development Strategies

The business park image could be enhanced through simple branding and signage at strategic locations. A uniform streetscape/landscaping plan along West Broadway and 85th Avenues could enhance the attractiveness of the business park, and improve perceived access to the station area.

Zoning strategies should support intensification of jobs per square foot and permit complementary uses such as maker spaces, restaurants, and service-oriented retail at appropriate locations.

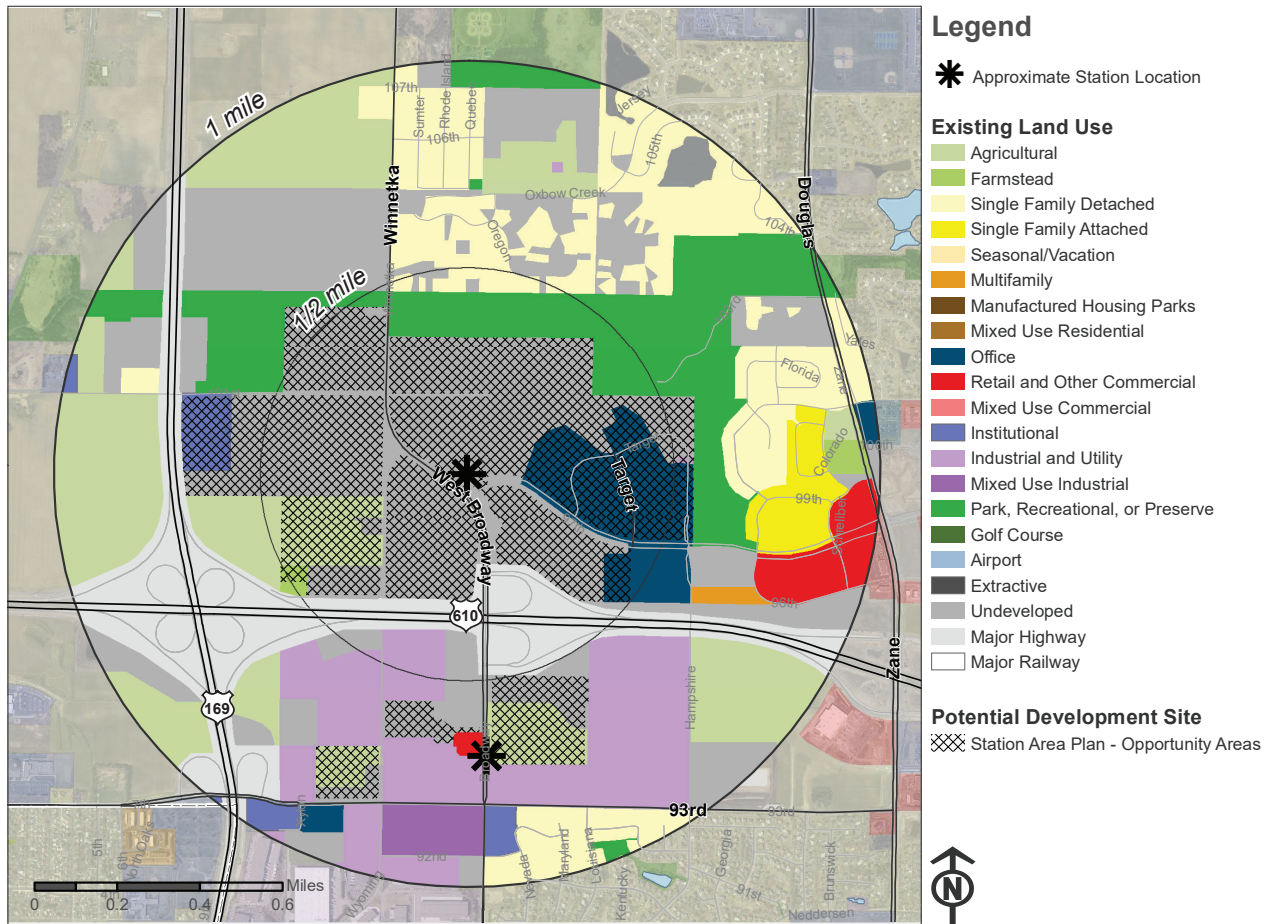
# Oak Grove Station Area

City of Brooklyn Park

The Oak Grove station area is anchored by a set of Target north office campus buildings. But aside from that, the land is undeveloped. Some luxury apartments have been developed just outside the half mile radius to the east.

The Station Area Plan offers an exciting vision for additional office, retail and housing in the station area. A key feature is a high density housing area, offering storefront retail on the ground floor, fronting on a new pedestrian-oriented street.

## Oak Grove Station Area and Existing Land Use



Source: Metropolitan Council, ESRI, Tangible Consulting Services, SHC

## Developer Comments

- *There are many assets in this station area: highway access, visibility, parks and trails, retail at Zane Ave.*
- *Developers are supportive of the Station Area Plan's concepts—high density housing with a walkable retail area.*
- *Many housing options would work:*
  - *Affordable and market rate apartments. Market rate housing could be targeted to both a luxury or workforce market.*
  - *Additional office development would also be viable.*
- *Needs good walkability to the Zane Avenue retail amenities.*
- *Target is a key landowner. They need to continue to be engaged, so that they continue their partnership and support for future development plans.*

## Development Context

The Oak Grove station area has strong potential for new development. Its access to Highway 610, proximity to parks and trails, presence of the Target north office campus, nearby retail amenities at Zane Avenue, and the success of recent housing development—all point toward continued development success. The environment makes it possible to set high standards for development, and to be intentional about the desired mix of housing products. The plan for a walkable Main Street retail and high-density housing community just south of the Target buildings makes sense for the station area. It will provide a housing type and walkable environment that is in demand in the area, and build character in what is now a somewhat blank slate.

A variety of housing types could be viable here, so a truly mixed-income community is a possibility. In the near-term before any retail is developed in the station area, new housing development will benefit from enhanced pedestrian connections to the retail amenities at Zane Avenue. However, as more housing is developed in the station area and retail follows in its place, the design and orientation of the retail will be much more pedestrian oriented than the existing retail at Zane Avenue. This difference in design and context will allow for the two retail areas to serve different markets (e.g., destination vs. neighborhood) and thus be more complementary rather than competitive. Additional office space would also be supported, building on its proximity to the Target north office campus.

#### Near-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., before the LRT is operational)

The Oak Grove station area, with the exception of the Target north office campus, is vacant. Therefore, the timing of development will be highly dependent on the introduction of new infrastructure into the station area. Given the rapid absorption of the 610 West apartments, which are located east of the station area just beyond its ½-mile radius, the market for market rate, transit-oriented development is strong and would support more near-term development. With that being said, the amount of vacant, developable land is large enough that full build out the station area will take many years even when factoring in the operation of the LRT.

The Oak Grove station area has limited retail potential in the near-term because it will take many years before enough supporting uses (i.e., housing and additional office space) will be built to support any significant amount of retail development.

Based on current trends, isolated office campuses are becoming harder for employers to attract and retain young workers. However, office buildings located in vibrant, walkable mixed-use districts with access to frequent transit are performing much better. This suggests that it may take time, likely after the LRT is operational, before any significant office development will take place. That said, the proximity to Target may serve to attract other businesses. However, since Target opened their north campus office there has yet to be another office development.

The Station Area Plan does not include low-density industrial uses. However, there could be the possibility to introduce more job intensive industrial uses (e.g., light manufacturing) as long as it complements instead of compromises the vision of a mixed-use district.

The new hotels under development in the 93rd Avenue station area will be closely watched to see how they perform. If they perform above expectations, developers will very much look to the Oak Grove station area as ideal location for new hotel development.

#### Long-Term Development Opportunities (i.e., after the LRT is operational)

Given it availability of land, the Oak Grove station area has the potential to capture up to 2,000 new housing units over the next 20 years. As planned, this station area could easily accommodate all types of housing at a variety of price points.

The challenge for the Oak Grove station area to realize its retail potential is timing, right-sizing the amount of retail space, and making sure the retail experience complements instead of directly competes with nearby retail districts (i.e., Zane and Highway 610). Retail tends to follow the development of housing and offices. The amount of new households and new offices that will form a solid base from which retail of any significance can be supported will take

many years. Given that an important retail district is emerging approximately one mile east of the station at Zane Avenue and Highway 610, this area will establish itself as the place for surrounding neighborhoods to go to for basic or everyday goods and services. Therefore, any retail in the Oak Grove station area won't be able to rely on these nearby existing neighborhoods as a market for everyday goods and services. It will need to be a combination of destination retailers, who are benefiting from workers and visitors, and smaller scale neighborhood retailers, who are serving the new residences built in the station area.

The Oak Grove station area is the only location in the Corridor that may be attractive to high-rise office development. It has excellent visibility from Highway 610 and the Target north office campus serves as an anchor for the area's identity as an office district. Therefore, if land in the Oak Grove station area is guided for high-rise office development, developers are likely to respond favorably. Although retail uses tend to follow housing and offices, interest in high-rise office development will be enhanced if the development of the pedestrian-oriented mixed-use community, with its storefront retail and restaurant amenities, occurs first.

In the Oak Grove station area, assuming it builds out according to plan, low-density industrial development will not be financially feasible. However, the risk of copious amounts of vacant land, which is the current situation in the station area, is that the land never finds market traction for the planned uses. This could lead to a situation in which the land owner may be highly incentivized to explore other uses besides those identified in the Station Area Plan. Although the regulatory environment may prevent certain land uses and development types, this wouldn't prevent a highly motivated owner or owners to exert a lot of pressure to change regulations should it be in their best interest.

As the Oak Grove station area is built out with a mixture of uses, it has the potential to capture additional hotel development. In addition to adding more limited-service hotels, which will become the dominant hotel type, it could also be in a position to eventually support a full-service hotel as well because the station area may add room night generators through the development of more corporate office space and a unique retail district.

## Development Strategies

Single ownership of most future development sites simplifies the development of the area, as well as the role the public sector will need to play. A major role for the public sector is to maintain and advance the vision, which in turn implies maintaining good communication with Target Corporation, the primary land owner. Ongoing high-level communication will ensure that there is a common purpose in the pursuit of implementation activities.

More detailed master planning is needed for the future high-density neighborhood and retail corridor to be developed south of the Target north office campus. This could occur in two ways: 1) in partnership with a master developer; or 2) the master plan and implementation strategy is refined before soliciting developer interest. In either case this represents another opportunity to reinforce alignment between the City, the community, and the property owner.

## APPENDIX A

### Blue Line: Commercial Analysis and Development Opportunity Analysis Developer Interview Guide

[Project introduction as needed. Interviewee will be informed that we have questions about the corridor in general, questions about station areas, and questions about 4 specific Opportunity Sites.]

#### Questions about LRT Corridor

1. Tell us about your experience with the communities along the proposed Bottineau LRT corridor.
2. In general, how is the Bottineau LRT corridor viewed today as a place for residential/commercial development? How will the LRT line change that? (Developer may be familiar with some or all of the station areas.)

#### Questions about Station Areas

[Except for the first question, the following questions focus on station areas one at a time. Based on the answer to the first question, and a sense of how much time the interviewee will allow, they may be asked of selected station areas, or all of the station areas.]

1. Which of the station areas are you most familiar with?
3. What characteristics does this station area have that would be attractive for residential development, or would present obstacles to residential development?
1. What characteristics does this station area have that would be attractive for commercial development, or would present obstacles to commercial development?
2. What redevelopment scenarios have the strongest demand currently? How do you see that changing over time, or with the coming of LRT? When in the LRT development process do you see development demand happening?
3. What local policies, incentives, or actions might be needed to shape development in a transit-supportive direction? (Re policies: For example, does there need to support for a certain level of density or height?)
4. What would it take to interest you to do a development in the station area? What site(s) might you be interested in?



## Questions about 4 Selected Opportunity Sites

[The following questions focus on the selected housing Opportunity Sites one at a time. Depending on how the interview is going, and the time remaining, they it may be asked of selected sites, or all of the sites.]

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the site? Are there potential connections or synergies within the station area that redevelopment of the site should/could reflect?
2. What type of housing product would work best on this site? What are the challenges to doing a housing development here? Is there a certain density level or height that makes development viable?
3. How does the opportunity for development change when LRT service begins? How might it change long-term?
4. What is the public sector role with respect to development of the site? What could the City do to attract development to this site? (Property assembly, clear community vision, clean-up funds, etc.)

## Materials

We plan to utilize the following information for context and reference during the interview.

- A 17” by 17” Corridor Map
- A 17” by 17” Station Area Context Card for each Station Area, that offers relevant exhibits from the station area plans
- The selected development sites will be outlined on the Station Area Context Cards

