Southwest Transitway

Station Area Strategic Planning

December, 2010

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Bassett Creek Redevelopment Oversight Committee (ROC)
Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association
Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Business Association
Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association (CIDNA)
Cedar Lake Park Association
Downtown 2020 Partnership
Dunwoody Institute
Glenwood Business Association
Harrison Neighborhood Association
Heritage Park Neighborhood Association
Kenwood Isles Area Association
Lake Street Council
Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association
Midtown Community Works Partnership
Midtown Greenway Coalition
North Loop Neighborhood Association
Uptown Association
Warehouse District Business Association
West Calhoun Neighborhood Council

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Thank you to attendees and participants at our public meetings and open houses.

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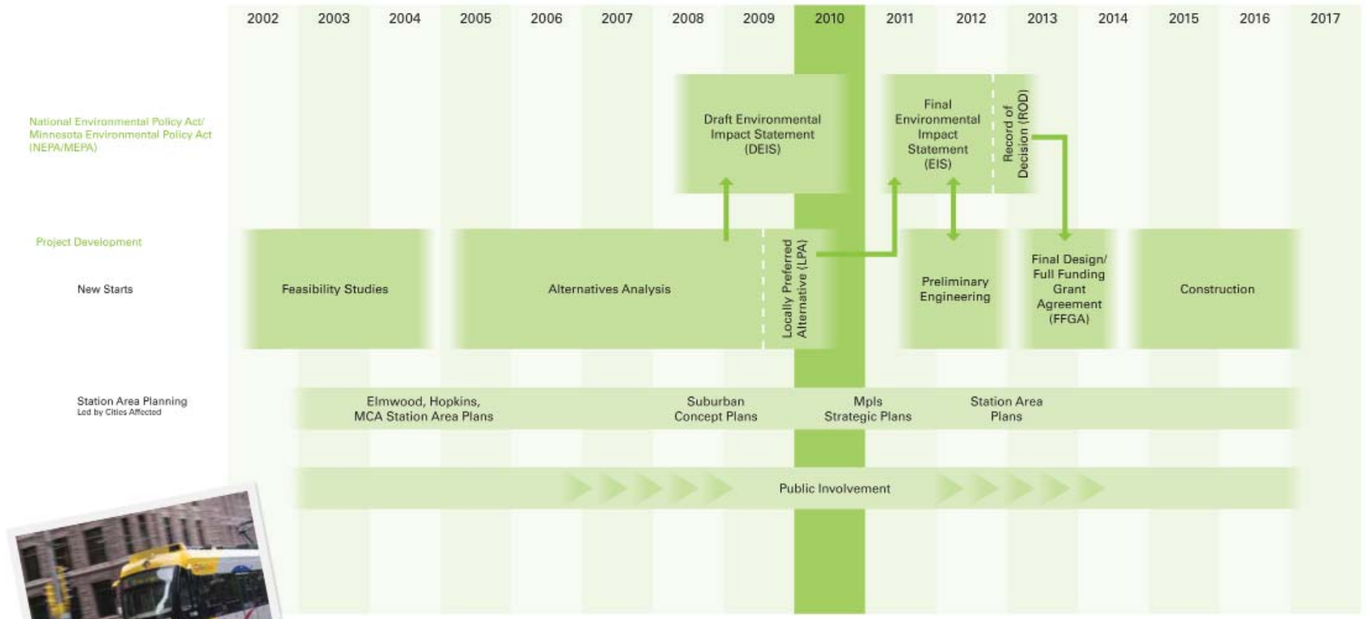
Project Background

Purpose

The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA), in partnership with the City of Minneapolis, undertook this strategic planning process in order to examine the opportunities and issues introduced by light rail transit (LRT) service on the Kenilworth Corridor in Minneapolis. The project's sponsors very specifically envisioned the process as *strategic* planning, emphasizing the need to capitalize on transit investment to create neighborhood value, enhancement and economic development. The strategic recommendations that come out of this process will be passed on to Metro Transit, to inform LRT Preliminary Engineering; City of Minneapolis, to inform land use changes; and Hennepin County, to inform Southwest LRT Community Works efforts.

Scope

The HCRRA and the City of Minneapolis charged the project design team with examining character, land use, development opportunity, access, circulation, and multimodal interface within the 1/2-mile radius surrounding each of the five stations within the boundaries of the City of Minneapolis. Recommendations regarding platform location, bus stops, pedestrian and bicycle routes and amenities, vehicular circulation and parking, land use and redevelopment were all within the scope of the project. The transit alignment (horizontal and vertical) and five station locations were considered 'givens' ; changes in these elements were not within the scope of study.



This station area strategic planning process will inform future planning and engineering efforts.

Relationship to Other Projects

This planning process assumes the alignment and mode recommended as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) by the HCRRA in November 2009 and approved by the Metropolitan Council in May 2010. The LPA emerged directly from the research and analysis carried out in the Alternatives Analysis (AA), initiated by the HCRRA in 2005.

Next Steps

The Southwest Transitway LRT project has applied to the FTA for approval to enter preliminary engineering (PE). It is expected that the results of this planning process, including recommendations regarding platform location and multi-modal access, will be factored into and influence this engineering process.

Land use and development recommendations contained within this document will also be used to guide local policy and development decisions as parcels become available and new projects are proposed within each of the station areas.

Project Process & Participants

Timeframe

The planning process took place over an eight month period, from May to December 2010. The process was co-directed by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) and the City of Minneapolis.

Technical Oversight

Major technical oversight and input was provided by the City's Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED) and Public Works, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB), HCRRA, Metro Transit, Met Council, and Hennepin County's Transportation, and Housing, Community Works & Transit Departments. These organizations participated in a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which met five times over the course of the project and commented on each major milestone of planning.

Public Input

The project used two avenues of public input: the Community Members' Working Group (CMWG) and public open houses.

The CMWG, composed of peer-nominated community representatives, met in a small-group format to provide focused feedback on issues important to the members' organizations. Meetings typically included a presentation by the project design team on project progress and plans, followed by station-specific discussion groups. A member of the project design team facilitated each discussion group, in order to respond to questions and take first-hand project feedback. While not all invited organizations (see box at right) were able to participate, all organizations were able to follow project process via email updates and postings to the project website.

Three sets of public open houses were held at major project milestones - existing conditions, land use alternatives, final recommendations - in order to solicit public input and feedback. At each milestone, two meetings were held on successive nights and at different locations in the affected neighborhoods. The same materials were presented at each meeting.

Community Members' Working Group

The station area planning effort invited neighborhood groups, business associations and property owners immediately adjacent to the five stations to designate a representative to participate in a Community Member's Working Group. This group met four times over the course of the project, typically in advance of the public open houses, in order to provide focused feedback in a small-group setting. Participating organizations included:

- **Bassett Creek Redevelopment Oversight Committee (ROC)**
- **Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association**
- **Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Business Association**
- **Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association (CIDNA)**
- **Cedar Lake Park Association**
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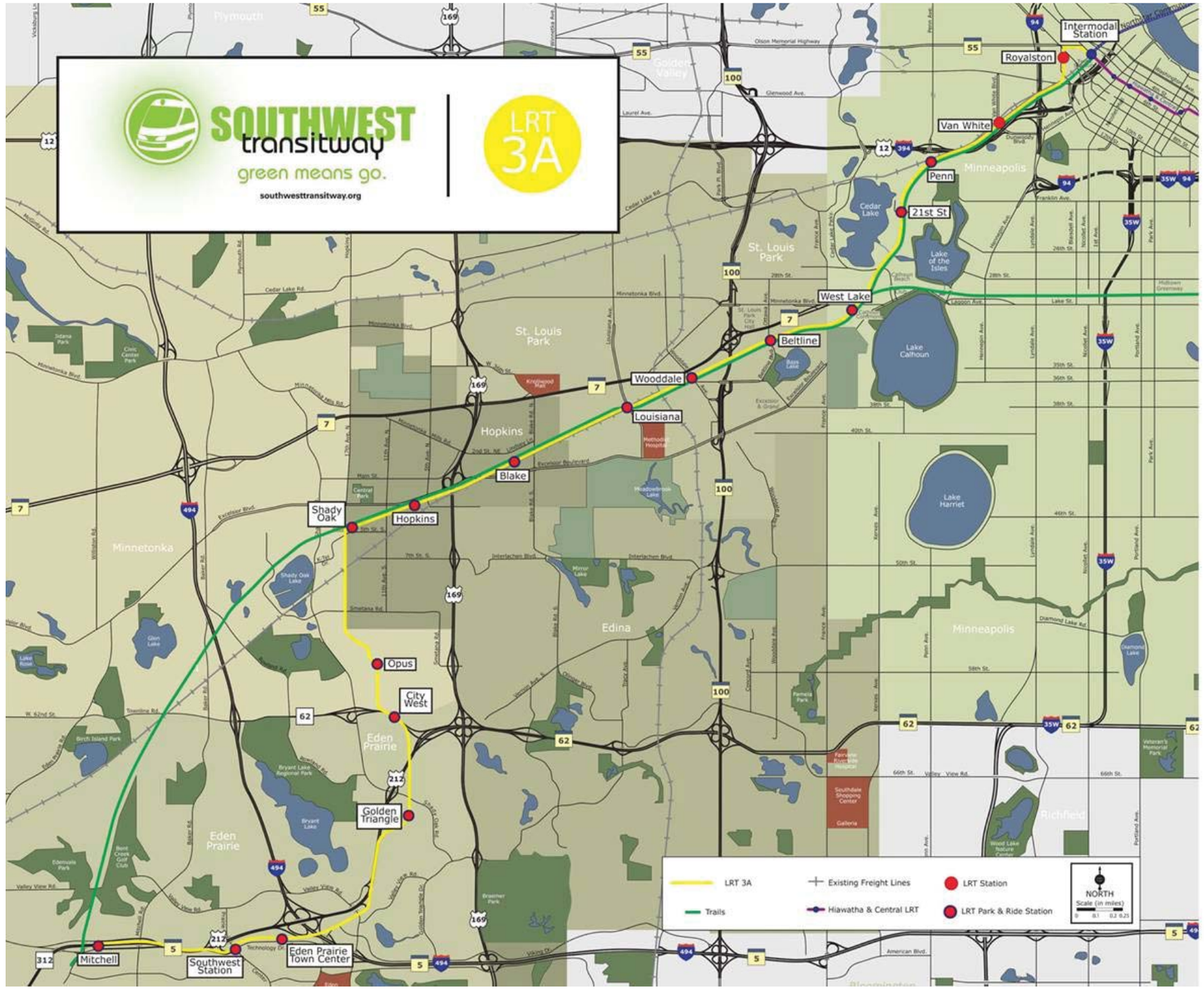
- **Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association**
- Midtown Community Works Partnership
- **Midtown Greenway Coalition**
- **North Loop Neighborhood Association**
- **Uptown Association**
- **Warehouse District Business Association**
- **West Calhoun Neighborhood Council**

Corridor Overview

Station area planning must consider station function from two viewpoints: how the station relates to other stations along the transit corridor, and how the station relates to the neighborhood in which it is located.

Station Roles

Within context of the corridor, stations must be planned to complement rather than compete with each other. Simply put, not every station can be a town center. Although the 'classic' mixed-use town center is many a community's transit dream, there are many other types of transit stations, ultimately dependent on existing conditions, community goals, and local development market. Other types of stations might include civic center, entertainment node, employment center, park-n-ride, even recreational node—there is no single correct formula, but it is certain that careful corridor planning leads to stronger, more successful station planning.



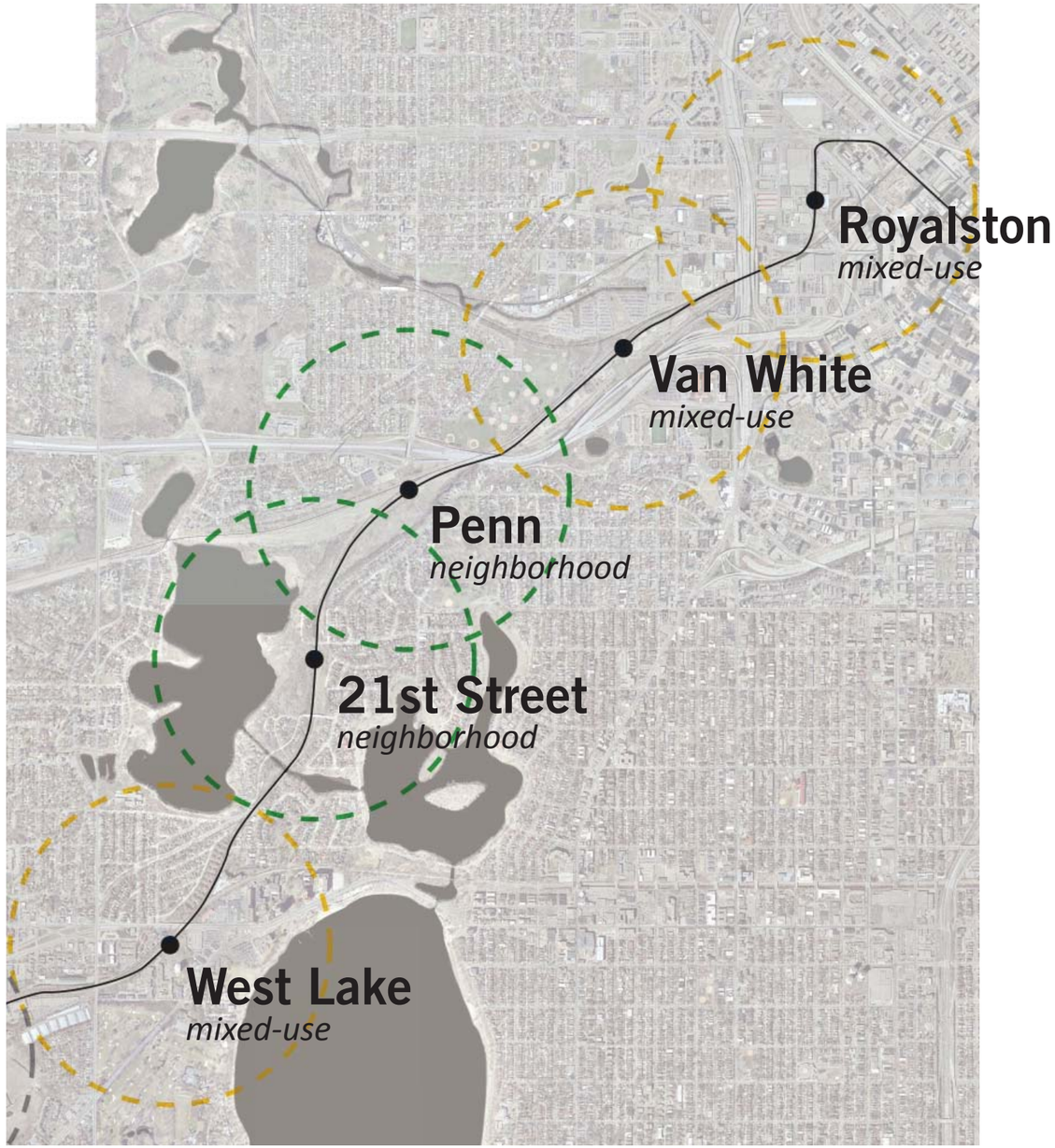
LRT Alignment 3A, the Kenilworth-Opus-Golden Triangle Corridor, was selected as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Southwest Transitway. The line will connect to the existing Hiawatha and proposed Central light rail lines at the Target Field Station at the Minneapolis Interchange, and extend southwest through the communities of St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka and Eden Prairie.

Community Context

Moving from corridor scale to community scale, transit stations should integrate with and enhance their host neighborhood. In some cases, a new station will become the centerpiece of new development or redevelopment, acting as a catalyst for change and revitalization. In other cases, the station should be as unobtrusive as possible, providing transportation and enhanced mobility but sitting lightly, almost invisibly, within the neighborhood. These descriptions represent the two ends of a spectrum, and there are as many permutations between the two roles as there are neighborhoods.

The five Minneapolis stations studied in this report are sandwiched between St. Louis Park's Beltline station, to the south, and the Target Field station to the north. Previous planning efforts have identified Beltline station as an employment center, while the Target Field station functions as a major gameday destination and transfer location. Planning is also underway for an intermodal station at this location, where passengers will be able to transfer between trains and buses from across the metro area.

Corridor and neighborhood context suggest that the five Minneapolis stations in this report fall into two broad station categories, illustrated in the graphic at right: mixed-



The five Southwest Transitway stations within the city of Minneapolis are, from north to south, the Royalston Station, the Van White Station, the Penn Station, the 21st Street Station and the West Lake Station. Service will continue southward through the communities of St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka and Eden Prairie. Station character is discussed on the next page.

Royalston. The Royalston station area is characterized as transitional mixed use, in recognition of the likely longevity of existing industrial uses. The station's downtown adjacency makes it an attractive location for eventual transition to downtown-style residential or commercial development, which are likely to co-exist with industrial uses for some time. This station area may display the most diverse definition of mixed use of all the station areas, likely serving industrial, residential, commercial, retail, entertainment and social service interests for a long time in the future. Expansion of the existing Minneapolis Farmers' Market, located one block west of the station platform, is also seen as a near-term priority.

The station area is significantly confined by adjacent highway and roadway infrastructure; as such, it is envisioned as a walk-up station only meant to serve local destinations as well as (future) origins in the form of residential. As a walk-up station, it will have no transit parking, but will still prioritize intermodal connections, particularly for the reverse-commute to southern employment destinations. Royalston will also be designed to accommodate crush loads and act as an alternate destination station for Target Field, making connectivity to the Field a priority as well.

Van White. Van White Station's role as a transitional mixed-use station was established in the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan and reflects both neighborhood desires and the goals of the site's designated master developer. The current planning process supports the use of this station area as a mixed-use area, adding 'transitional' to the station character in recognition of significant development challenges (office absorption, uncertain redevelopment time frame of several key parcels, engineering challenges for the Linden Yards parcel) that suggest an extended transitional period during which existing and new uses may co-exist. The proposed Van White Memorial Boulevard will provide additional access to the station area.

Penn. Located in a valley between two bluffs and adjacent to Cedar Lake, vehicular access to the Penn station area would have an unacceptably high impact on adjacent land uses. For this reason and in contrast to CE/LPA identification as a park-n-ride station, Penn has been characterized as a low-impact, walk-up station with a neighborhood character. It will primarily serve the adjacent residential neighborhoods for transportation to downtown, while also providing recreational lake access to Cedar Lake for patrons coming from either north or south.

21st. The 21st Street station area, situated in the midst of a very stable, predominantly single-family neighborhood and adjacent to Cedar Lake, also suggests a low-impact, walk-up station character. This station is expected to serve primarily local residents who have expressed a strong desire for a station that blends with the park-like character of the area.

West Lake. The West Lake Street station area already exhibits an urban mix of uses, with retail, residential and office already existing within the immediate station area. As such, the current planning effort considers this station the best candidate for a true, mixed-use 'urban village'. Existing uses are expected to continue, with the potential for densification in response to transit service.

Parking

Park-n-Ride

This study considers the potential for and impacts of transit parking, often referred to as Park-n-Ride. The project's planning parameters neither require nor prohibit this type of use within the five station areas but instead seeks to determine the relative balance of positive and negative effects such use would have within each individual station context. Some relevant points to consider in the parking discussion are summarized as follows:

City Policy

City of Minneapolis policy generally does not support Park-n-Ride facilities within City boundaries. The reasons for this position include the potential for lost development/preservation opportunity, and the promotion of true transit goals. With regards to development, the City feels that parking is among the least desirable land uses, and that land could be better preserved in an existing condition, or used for active development. Considering transit goals, the City feels that among the most important goals of transit is the reduction of vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Park-n-ride facilities that encourage patrons to park near their point of origin and take transit to their destination fulfill this goal; conversely, park-n-ride facilities that allow patrons to park near their destination and take transit for only a short distance in order to avoid downtown parking fees, for example, do not fulfill this goal. The Minneapolis stations offer frequent bus service by Metro Transit that can connect area residents to their closest station. Following this theory, park-n-ride facilities would be appropriate at the stations furthest from the downtown core, but not at the 'close-in' stations near downtown.

Conceptual Engineering (CE)

Conceptual Engineering (CE) includes parking at three of the five Minneapolis stations: Penn, 21st and West Lake. It should be noted, however, that the CE utilizes a regional, computer-generated model that does not account for specific station context, but rather focuses on a regional distribution of facilities. The model is also 'unconstrained', assuming for purposes of ridership projection that parking is available if people want it.

Next Steps

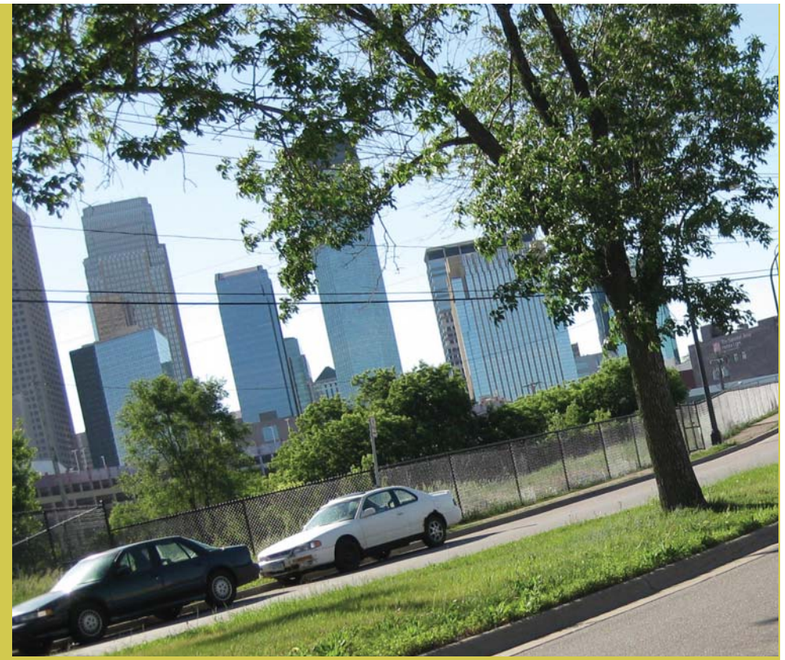
The concepts and recommendations contained in this station area strategic planning document suggest ways to integrate LRT into local neighborhoods in a context-sensitive manner, provide practical solutions to circulation and access issues near the stations, and illustrate guidelines and principles for future land use and development that will create truly transit-oriented places. The recommendations are meant to inform the upcoming Southwest LRT Preliminary Engineering process, and aid in shaping future land use designations in the station areas.

To this end, the Minneapolis Station Area Strategic Plans will be sent to Metro Transit/Metropolitan Council who will lead the LRT project through Preliminary Engineering and future project development phases, and the City of Minneapolis, who holds land use jurisdiction. City of Minneapolis staff intend to bring the plans forward for consideration by the City Planning Commission and the City Council and will suggest that the appropriate stations are designated as Transit Station Areas in order to formalize policies related to redevelopment around the stations in the City's Comprehensive Plan, *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*. Station area planning stakeholders will be notified when this proposal is brought forward and a public hearing will be held.

Hennepin County will also use this document to inform the Southwest LRT Community Works project, which seeks to integrate land use and economic development with the engineering of the LRT line.

Metro Transit/Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, and the City of Minneapolis will continue to coordinate on LRT design issues and work with area stakeholders as the project evolves.

Royalston Station

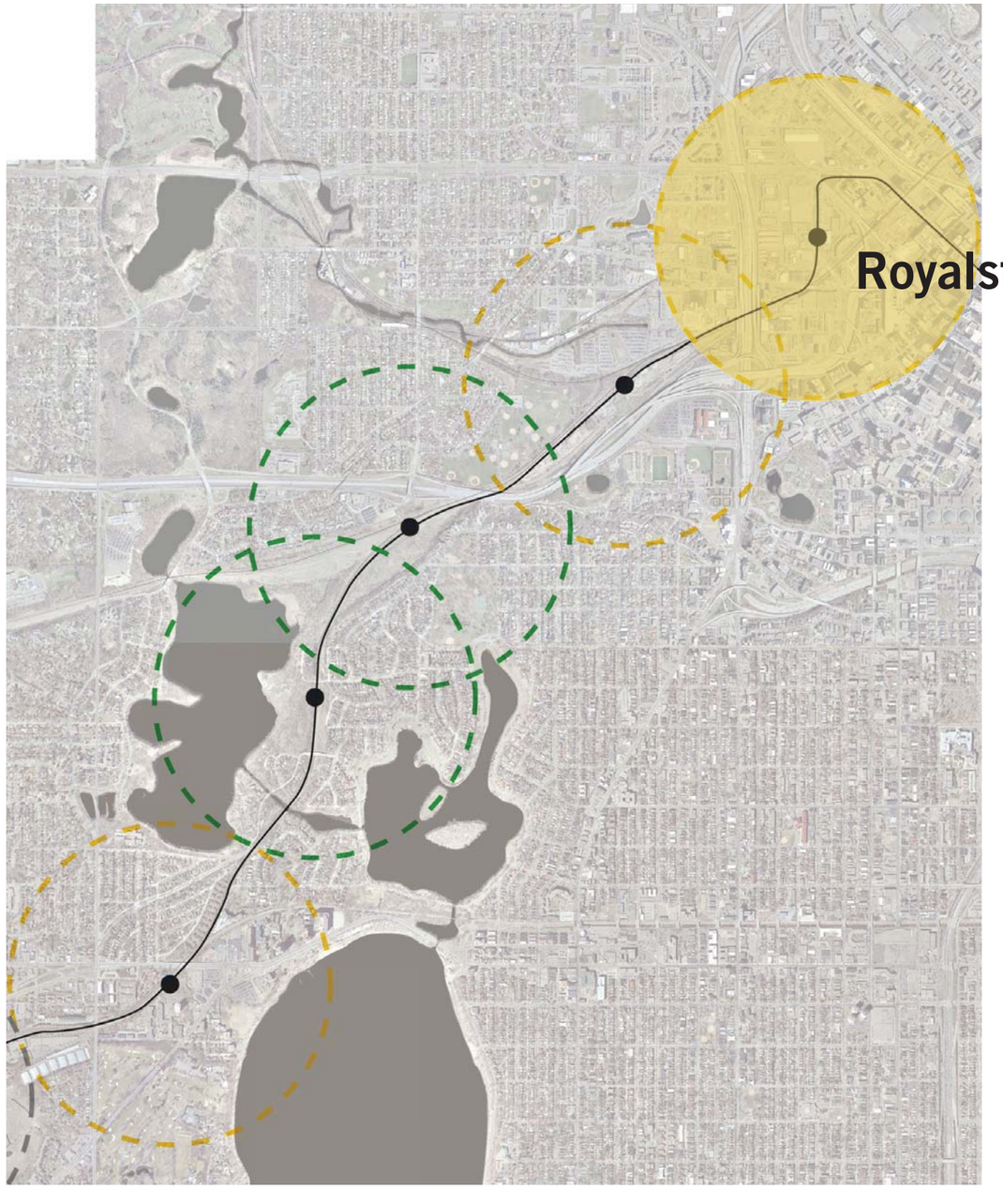


Station Area Strategic Planning

- Existing Conditions
- Previous & Current Planning Efforts
- Summary Analysis
- Opening Day Recommendations
- Sample Transit-Oriented District
- Next Steps

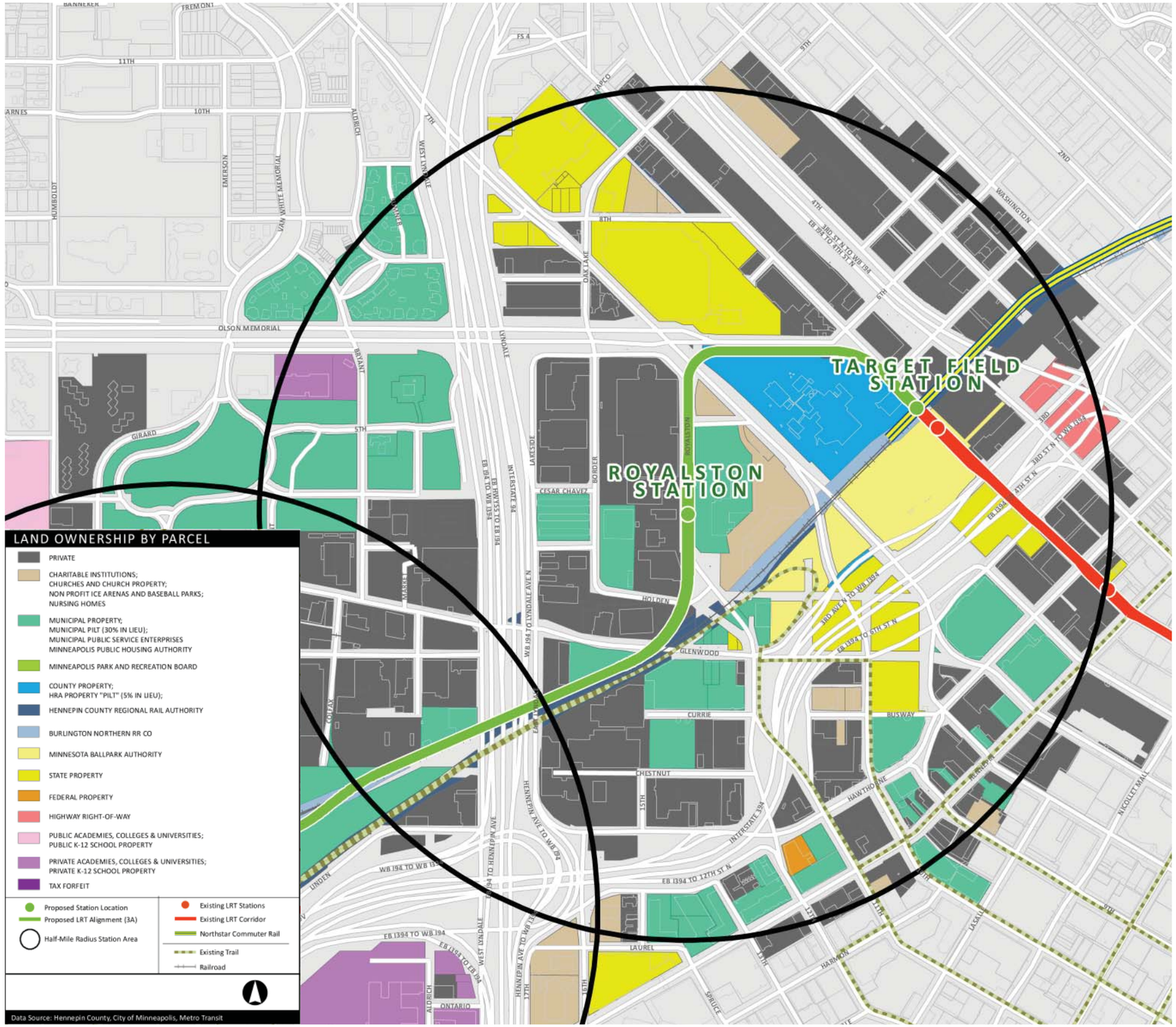
Existing Conditions

Royalston Station is the Southwest Transitway's closest station to downtown Minneapolis. The station itself will be located in an enclave of existing, low-rise industrial, while the larger station area includes commercial, office and multi-family residential. Major destinations within a 10-minute walk will be the Minneapolis Farmers' Market and Target Field.



Land Ownership

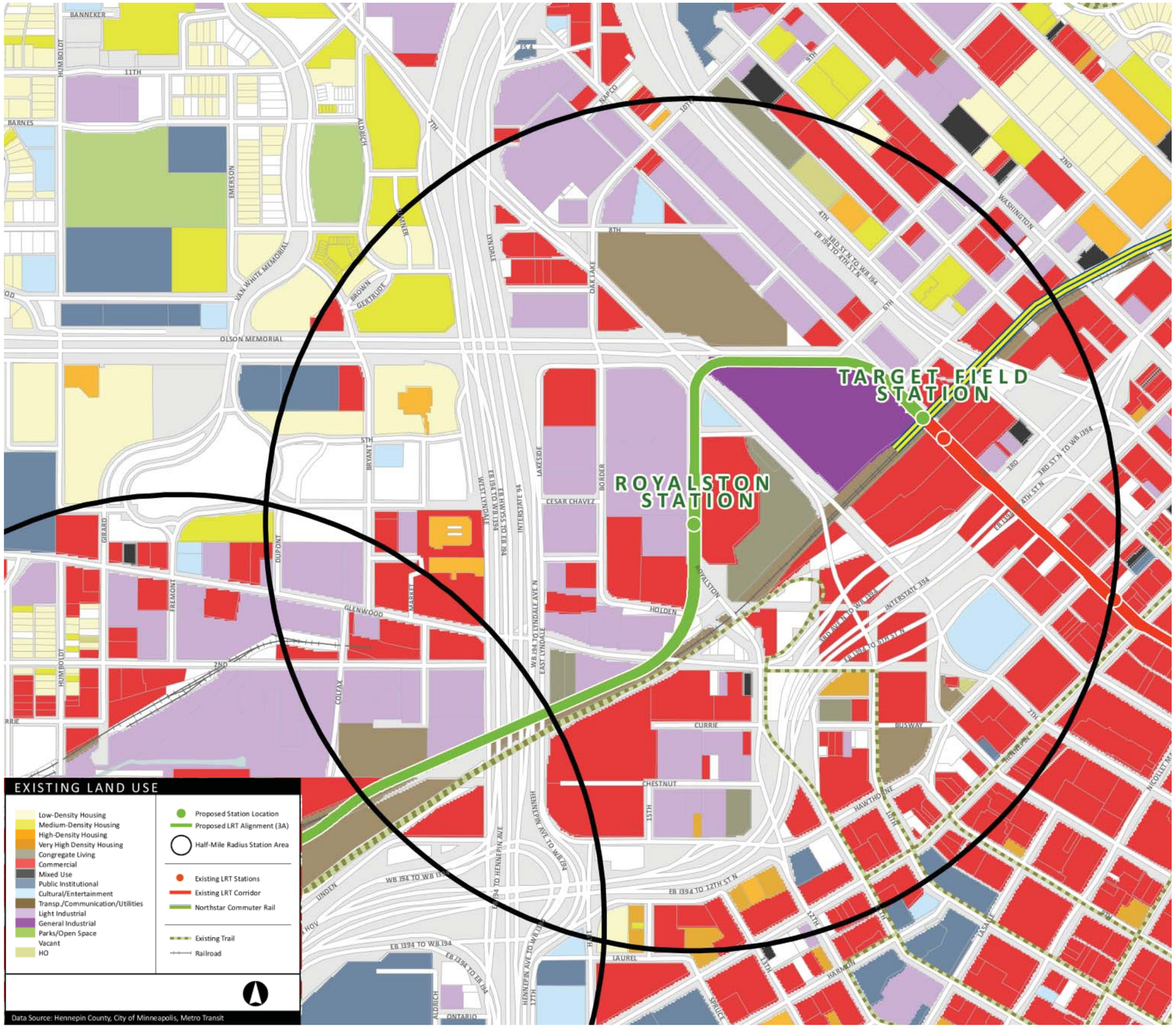
The effective station area is limited by adjacent highways and major roadways, and ownership within the more immediate station area defined by these roadways is a mix of private and public. The Minneapolis Farmers' Market, the City Public Works Traffic Building and the Metro Transit bus facility, and the Hennepin Energy Resource Center are the major public landowners in this area. The larger 1/2-mile radius station area includes additional federal, municipal and county property. Given ownership and use (see next page), private parcels offer the most likely redevelopment opportunities within the station area.



Land Use

Land use around the Royalston station is dominated by industrial and commercial uses. The majority of these uses are housed in low-rise buildings, generally one to two stories in height. The majority of these enterprises, at present, are economically healthy businesses which take advantage of adjacent highway access. Parcels are of significant size, with minimal east-west connectivity.

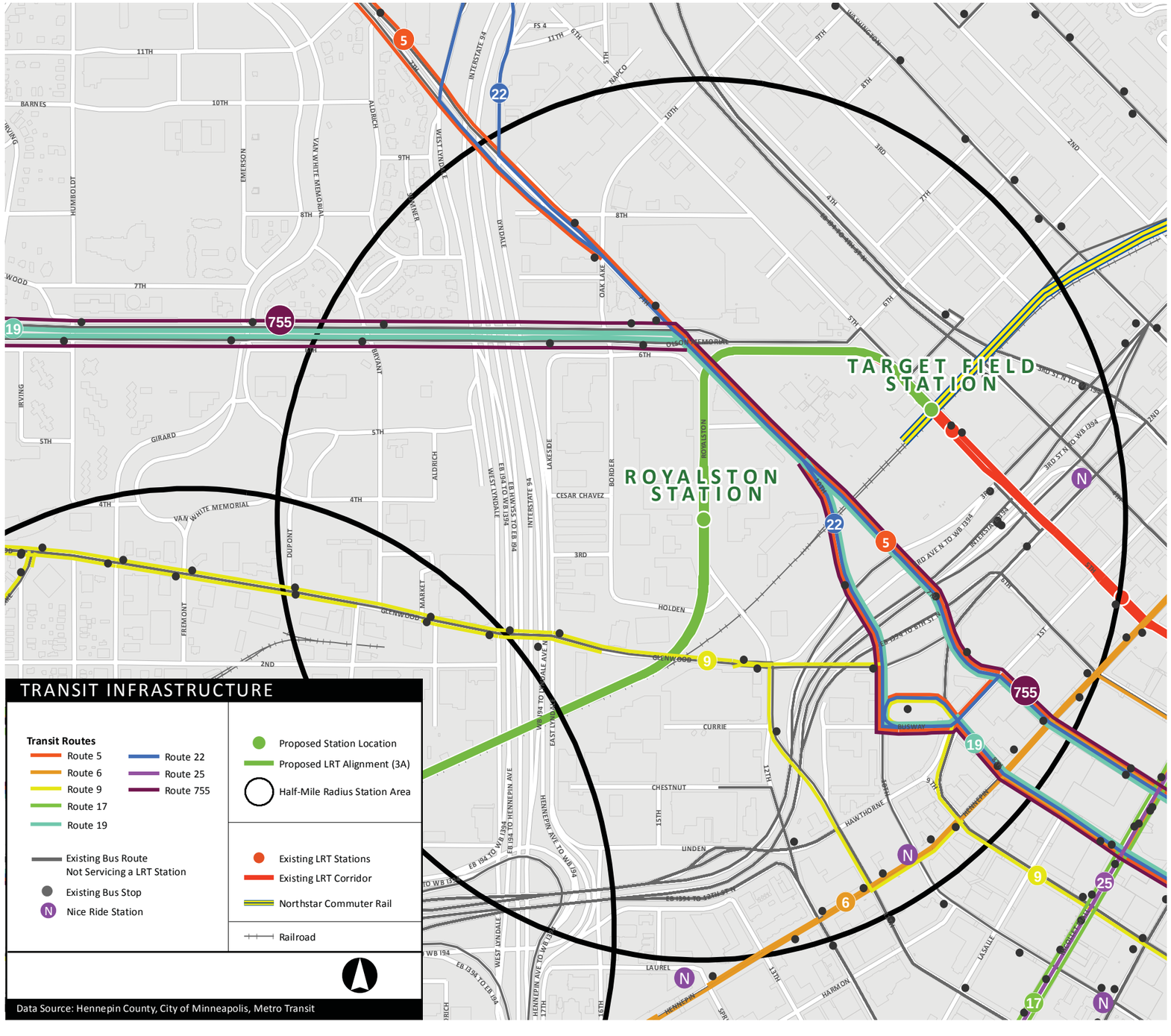
Other significant land uses and potential ridership generators within the 1/2-mile station area are Target Field, where the Minnesota Twins play upwards of 80 home games a year, and the Minneapolis Farmers' Market, open 7 days a week from April to mid-November.



Transit

Existing uses within the station area are not of a type which act as transit origins or destinations, and as such do not generate high transit demand. For this reason, routes serving this area are focused on bringing riders into downtown from the north and west.

The station area has three major transit corridors: Olson Memorial Hwy and Glenwood Ave, both moving east-west, and Seventh Ave, moving diagonally from northwest to downtown. Of these corridors, Seventh Ave has the greatest number and frequency of buses, and will be the most significant bus-LRT transfer interface.

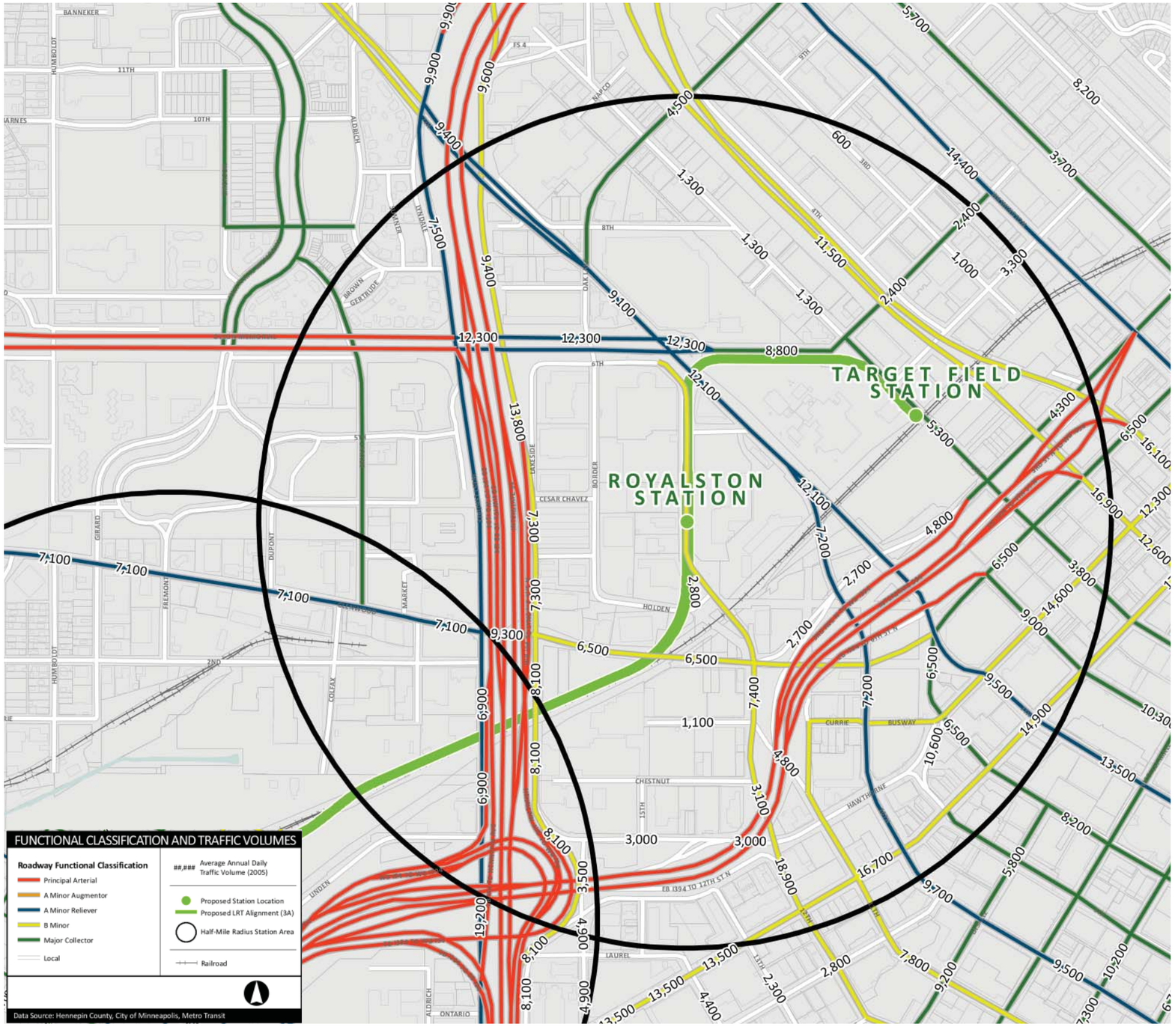


Roadways & Parking

Based on existing daily traffic volumes, the adjacent roadway network currently operates within the capacity range of the various roadway types. The Royalston Station area connects to downtown Minneapolis via Royalston Avenue and 12th Street, or via 7th Street and 10th Street. The short segment of 5th Avenue provides vehicular (and pedestrian) access to the Minnesota Twins Ball Park area and other parts of north downtown via 7th Street.

The existing industrial uses and roadway network that surrounds the station area require semi-truck access. Royalston Avenue is limited today in how it serves semi-trucks, with respect to appropriate turning radii and lane widths. Although, I-94 and I-394 provide good regional access to and through Minneapolis, these freeway facilities are obstacles to the station area as they restrict vehicular access surrounding the station area. I-94 limits the station area connections to the Heritage Park, Harrison, Bryn Mawr residential neighborhoods to the west, boxing the area in on its western side. I-394 has a similar effect with respect to the downtown area.

Most current land uses provide off-street parking. On-street parking exists on Royalston and Border Avenues, and funding is in place to add parking on Glenwood Avenue.

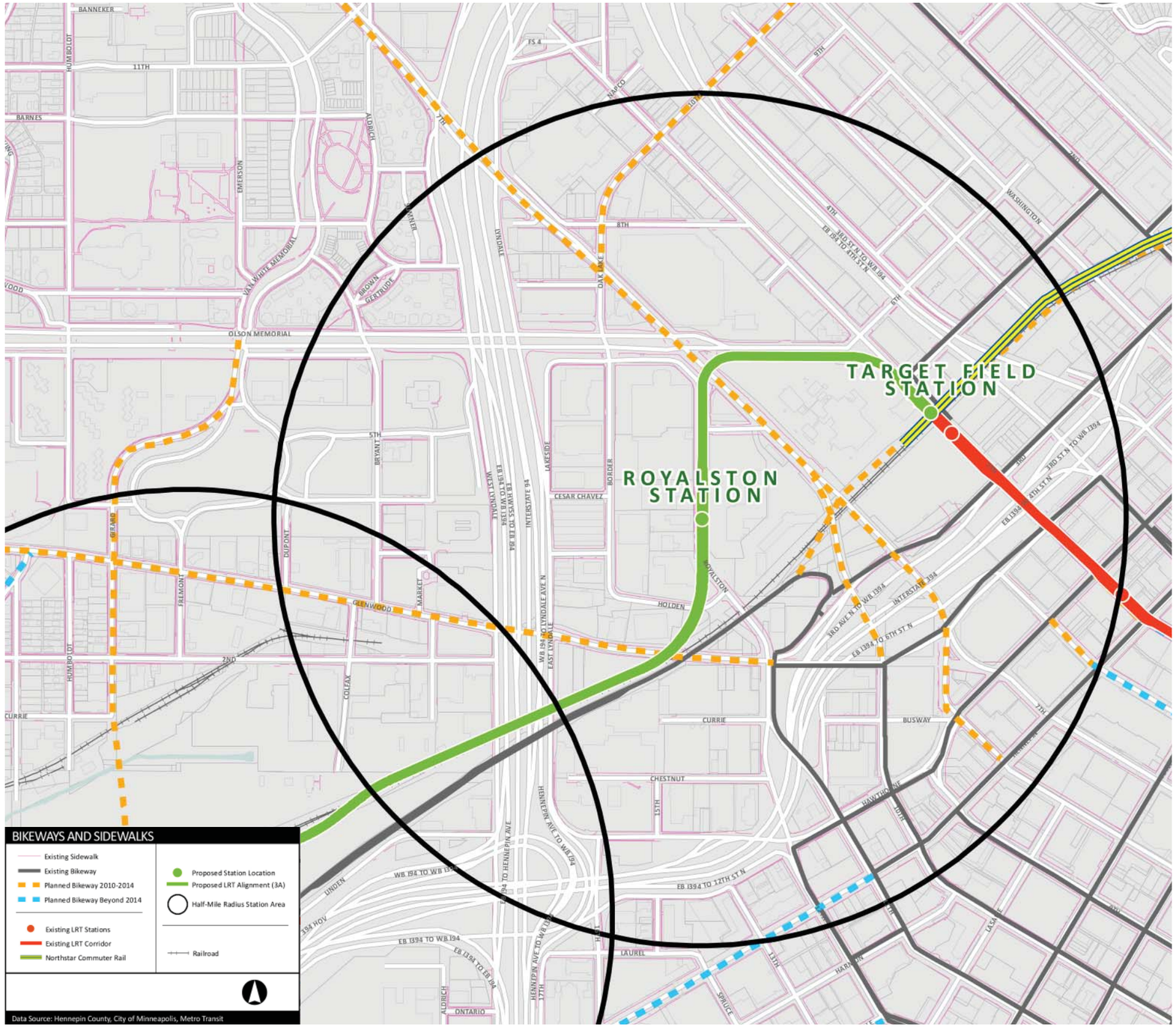


Sidewalks & Trails

Currently, the existing Royalston Station area does not provide a pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment. Large block sizes, industrial uses, major roadways and freight rail line are barriers to pedestrian and bicycle access.

Comprehensive sidewalk and trail connections are not present, although there are sidewalks that parallel most roadways. In addition, the Cedar Lake Trail is located just south of the proposed station. I-94 is a significant obstacle for direct pedestrian access to the station area from the west.

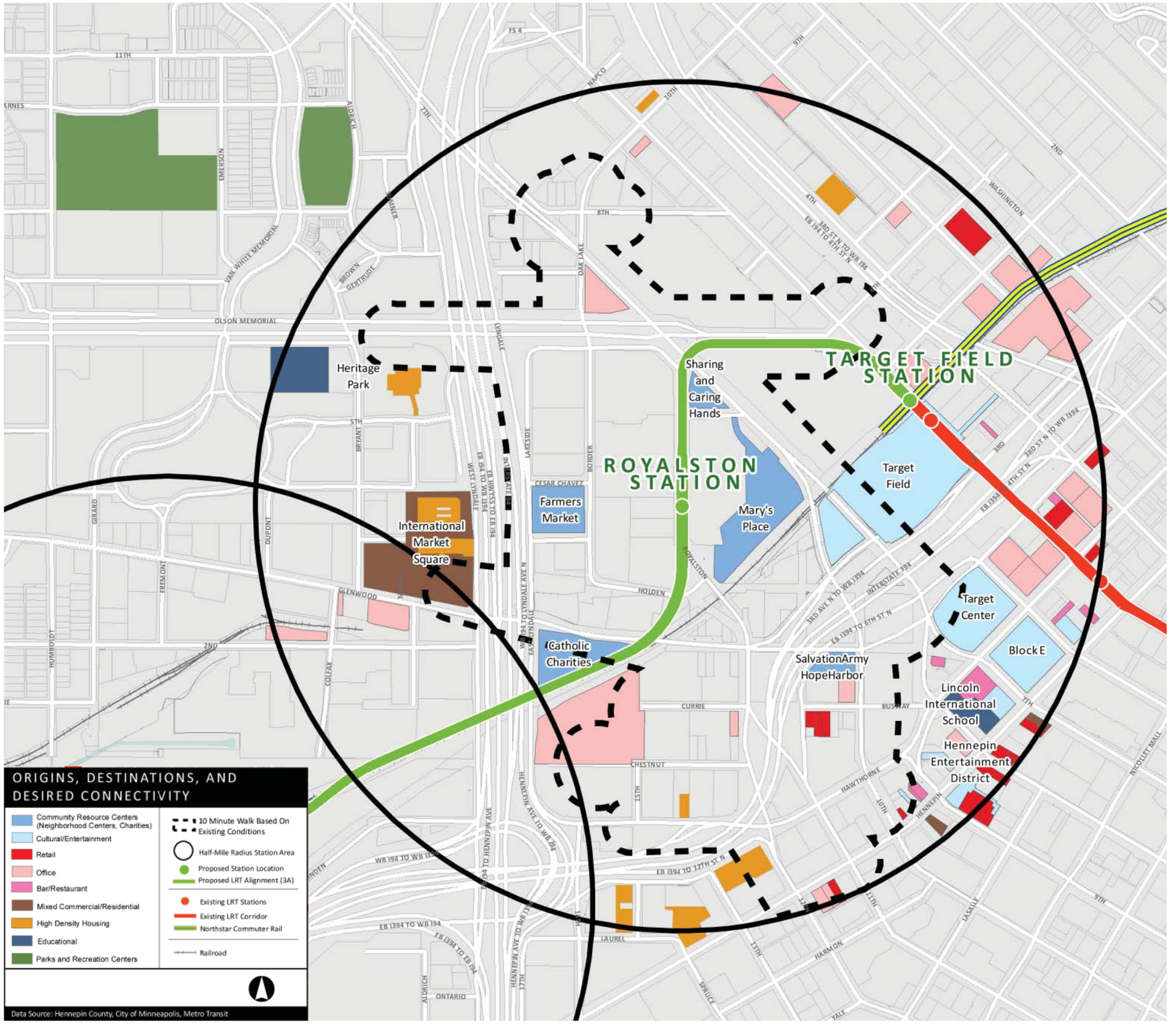
Connectivity to the residential land use west of I-94 is critical for the initial success of this station area. Although pedestrian connections to the downtown core exist, they are limited and undesirable.



Origins, Destinations & Connectivity

As noted in the 'roadways' section, roadways have a significant impact on reducing what is a 'reasonable walk' from the station, both perceptually and physically. The dashed black line at right shows what is likely to be a comfortable 10-minute walk, from a pedestrian point of view. Within this area, the station has no major, ridership-generating origins; the farmers' market and Target Field are the area's major destinations. Although some downtown locations are reachable from the Royalston Station, riders are more likely to use the closer and more intuitive Target Field or Warehouse/Hennepin station. Game days at Target Field will likely add a second major destination, spreading the condensed arrival and departure rushes between the Target Field and Royalston stations.

Redevelopment is likely to add both origins and destinations to the station area.

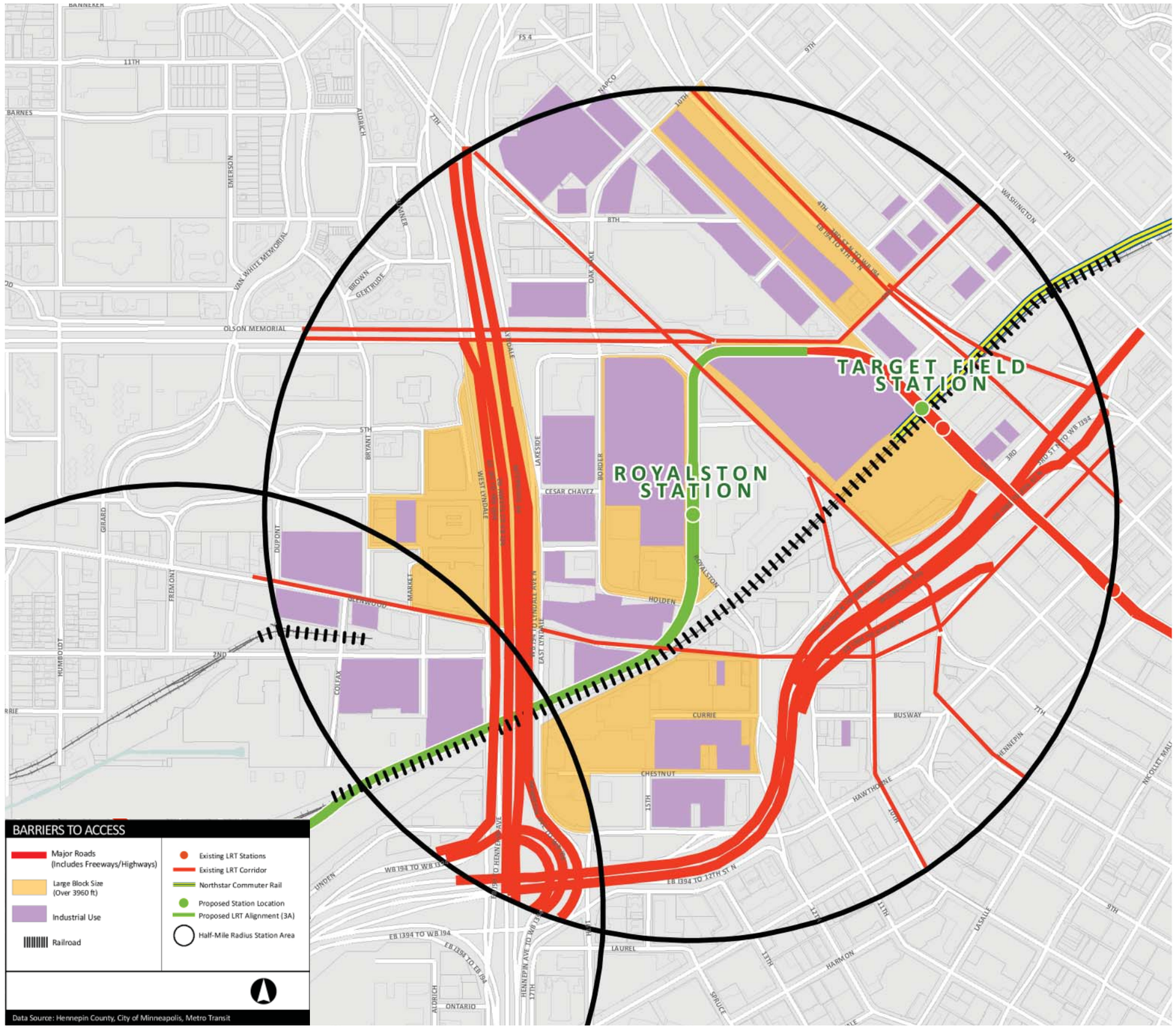


Barriers

Land use, block size and infrastructure can all have significant impacts on neighborhood walkability and, as a corollary, station access. All three of these elements are influencing factors within the Royalston station area.

Although pedestrians can pass under I-394 from the Loring Park neighborhood, the urban realm is notably hostile to pedestrians, with only informal sidewalks and a very 'concrete' feel. The scale and speed of Olson Memorial Highway and Glenwood Avenue have similar effects in discouraging foot traffic.

The predominance of industrial uses combines with large block size to create little east-west pedestrian circulation from the proposed station platform. It should be noted that these 'superblocks' are situated directly between the platform and the station area's major destinations, the Minneapolis Farmer's market (to the west) and Target Field (to the east).



Previous & Current Planning Efforts

North Loop Small Area Plan (NLSAP), 2010

This document serves as a guide to land use and development in the North Loop neighborhood for the next 20 years. It is a complementary piece that updates the Downtown East/North Loop Master Plan.

The Plan notes that existing uses within the station area are predominantly stable industrial, and notes that while the area is an attractive area for infill and densification, such redevelopment is very much a long-term vision. The plan provides an illustrative birds-eye view of a redeveloped station area, but does not provide specific product mix, layout or footprints.

The Plan does note two short term priorities: a need to reconnect the neighborhood both internally and to surrounding neighborhoods, and a vision of an expanded farmers' market.

The North Loop Small Area Plan was adopted by City Council in 2010; City staff are currently working on a rezoning study for the area.

Due to the extended redevelopment time frame anticipated for the study area, the primary goal of station area planning in relationship to the North Loop Small Area Plan is to identify transit-related enhancements and connections, and to identify land use options (such as an eastward or a northward Farmers' Market extension) that increase the area's flexibility in response to market changes and parcel availability.

This artist's rendering, from the North Loop Small Area Plan, envisions a dense, mixed-use area adjacent to the Royalston Station. The drawing looks north, showing I-94 is on the left side of the drawing.

Cultural Resources

An area adjacent to the Royalston station, generally bounded by Glenwood, Lyndale, and Royalston Avenues and Olson Memorial Highway, is currently under evaluation as a historic industrial district as part of the Section 106 review process for the Southwest Transitway project.

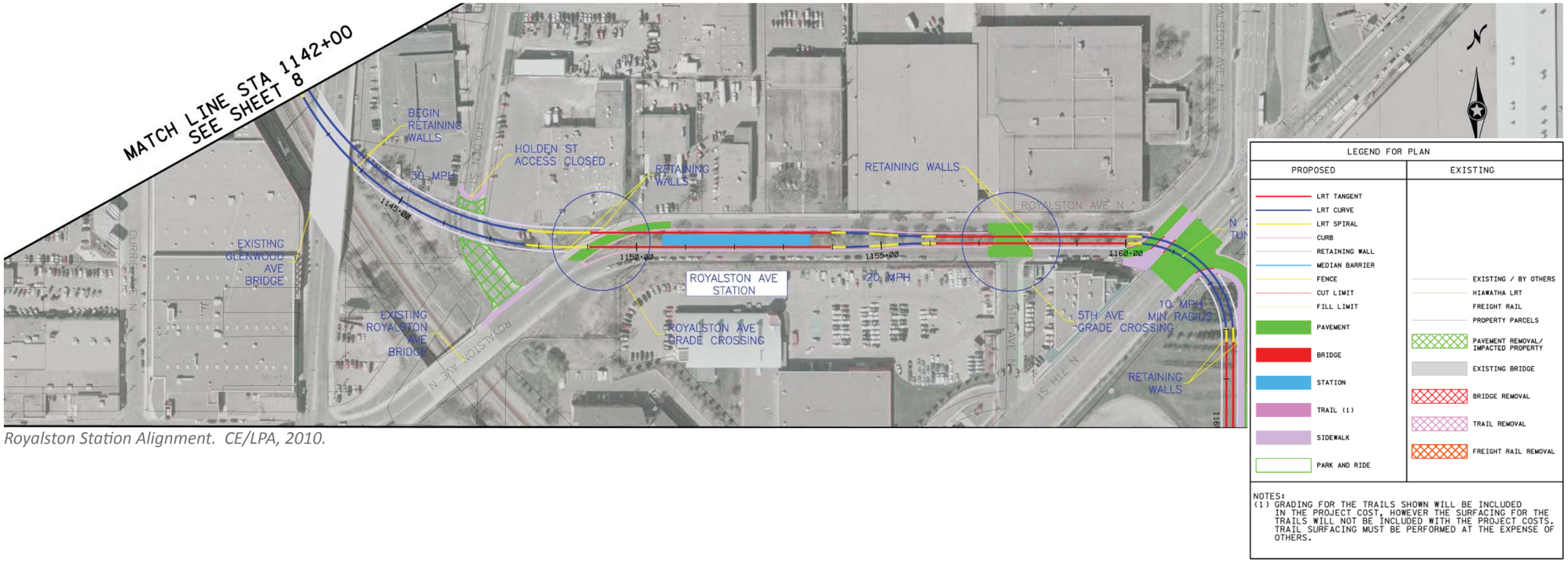
If the district is determined eligible to the National Register of Historic Places, the historic character of the area will need to be taken into account during the design of the station and related development.

Conceptual Engineering & Locally Preferred Alternative (CE/LPA), 2010

Conceptual Engineering (CE), included in the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) selected by the Metropolitan Council in 2010, represents a preliminary step in design of the actual transit infrastructure itself. Portions of this document most important to station area planning are transit alignment, station location, and at-grade/elevated/sunken crossings; these elements will have a direct bearing on future station area character and development opportunity. CE/LPA drawings show the LRT tracks crossing under 7th Street, climbing to a high-point on Royalston Avenue, and descending again to meet the existing rail bed. The significant grade differences in such a short distance mean that the location of the station platform has very limited opportunity to shift north or south along Royalston Avenue.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), 2010

The DEIS documents the possible impacts of the LRT project on both the natural and built environments. As of the writing of this document, the DEIS is currently under FTA review.



Royalston Station Alignment. CE/LPA, 2010.

Summary Analysis

Community Assessment

Community concerns for this station area centered around access issues, both vehicular and non-vehicular. Existing grades on Royalston and Border Avenues were called out in particular as issues that may complicate access. Community members specifically requested improvements to the sidewalks in the station area, as well as a need for a bicycle parking.

Design Team Assessment

As illustrated on the Barriers to Access Map, the Royalston Station area is bounded on all sides by highways and existing freight rail. The pedestrian-unfriendly nature of these barriers suggest that the station will draw from a much smaller area - the area inside these barriers - than the conventional 1/2-mile transit radius. I-94, Olson Memorial Highway, 7th Street and I-394 and its ramps will likely be the real boundaries of the station area.

The station is expected to see a large number of bus-LRT transfers from reverse commuters. The station will also act as a second boarding/unboarding option for Target Field patrons; the station's proximity to this attraction will be particularly important on game days.

Within the effective ridership area, large block sizes and limited east-west connectivity pose additional challenges for station access. Redevelopment should look for opportunities to introduce smaller block sizes and a finer-grain human scale to the area, in order to promote ridership and non-vehicular circulation.

The health of current commercial and industrial land uses, and the presence of unlikely-to-change City uses, suggests that redevelopment will occur in a mid- to long-term time frame. 'Interim' development conditions may exist for extended time periods, and station area planning should provide clear transition strategies allowing for copacetic existence of low-rise industrial uses with high-rise residential and mixed-use projects.

Royalston Station

Royalston Station is an opportunity to provide improved transit access to the Minneapolis Farmers' Market and Target Field, as well as a connection point for 'reverse commuters' from Minneapolis to the Southwest Metro Area.

Top Issues

- **Important bus transfer: high number of transfers from 7th Street**
- **Target Field: provide a second stadium-serving station to assist with heavy game-day ridership demand**
- **Pedestrian connectivity: lack of sidewalks**
- **Drop-n-Ride: provide efficient route**
- **Signage, wayfinding, lighting**

Principles

- **No park-n-ride**
- **Align with North Loop Small Area Plan**
- **Provide efficient, intuitive bus-LRT transfer**
- **Increase connections within station area and to neighborhoods**

Opening Day Recommendations

The following recommendations identify elements essential to the safe, efficient function of the transit station: pedestrian and bike connections, multi-modal transfer, passenger drop-off/pick-up, and wayfinding. These elements are the minimum recommendations of this station area strategic planning study, for implementation on opening day. It should be noted that these recommendations are outside the current Southwest Transitway LRT project as defined in the conceptual engineering drawings. While some elements may be constructed as part of the LRT project itself, other elements must be funded, designed and constructed by other entities, and will require close coordination between the City, the County, and Metro Transit, as well as local stakeholders and neighborhood groups. Further recommendations contributing to a larger transit-oriented district, projects and enhancements that may take many years to fully realize, are contained in the next section.

At Royalston, the station area planning processes seeks to build on the vision of the North Loop Small Area Plan (NLSAP). As such, the actions and recommendations detailed below should be considered refinements, not replacements, of the direction contained in the NLSAP.

Roadway

- Extend Border Ave to Glenwood Ave

CE/LPA documents show a closure of the Holden Street/ Royalston Ave intersection, with Holden being converted to a cul-de-sac to provide service to existing development. If this roadway change is executed, the following actions recommended in the NLSAP should be taken to ensure continued mobility and connectivity in the station area:

- Border Avenue should be extended to Glenwood Ave.
- Border Avenue should be made two-way movement for its entire length.
- The remaining Holden Street cul-de-sac and roadway stub should ultimately be closed, and 3rd Avenue extended (at least for pedestrians and bikes), ideally for pedestrians and vehicles), to create a pedestrian-scaled block structure.

- Introduce traffic signal at 5th Ave & 7th St

This signal will be critical for safe pedestrian connection with north-bound buses on 7th Street, and with Target Field.

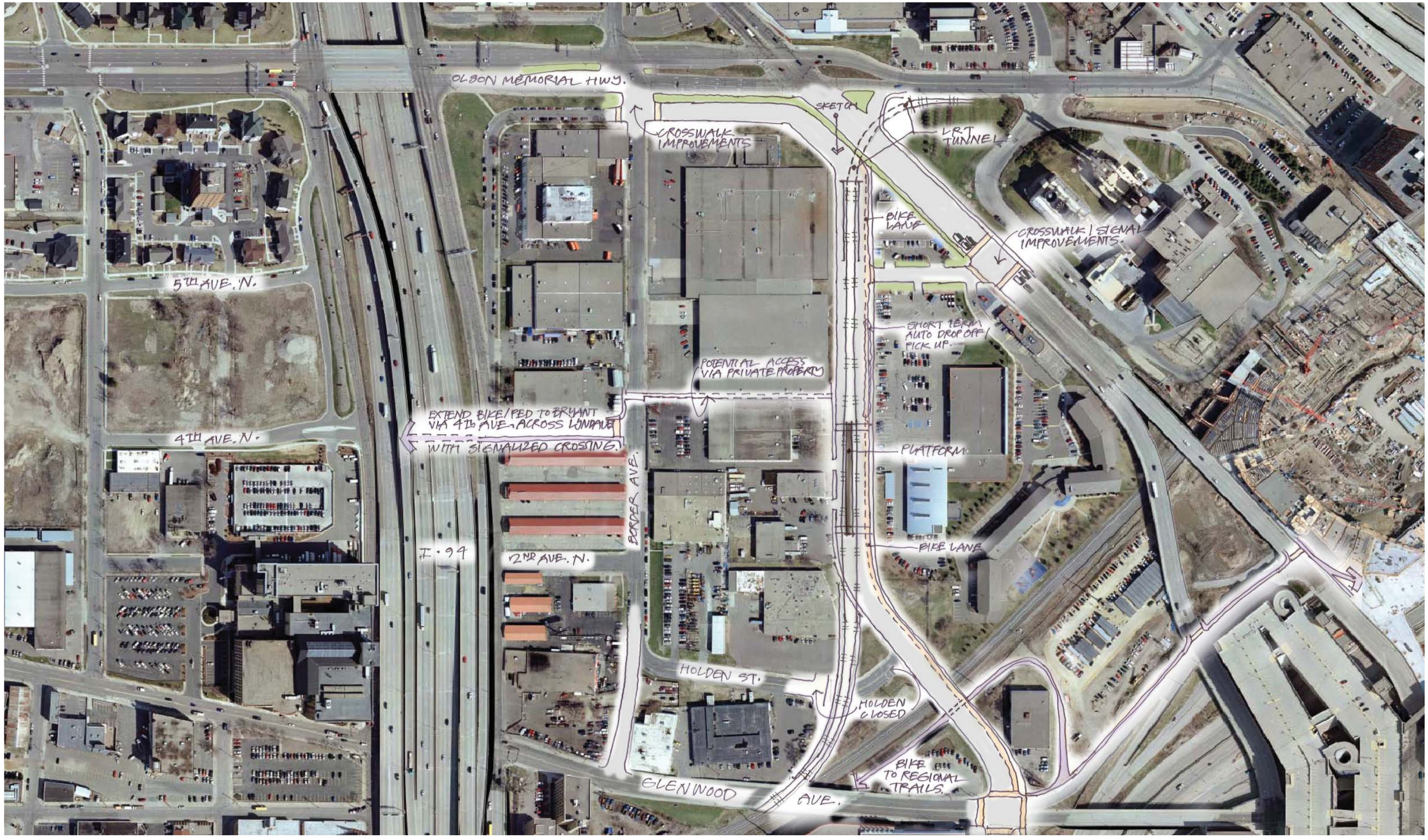
Pedestrian Connection (sidewalk)

- Reconfigure intersection geometry and signal timing to give pedestrians priority at:
  - Olson Memorial Hwy & Van White Memorial Blvd
  - Olson Memorial Hwy & N Bryant Ave
  - Olson Memorial Hwy & Border Ave
  - Royalston Ave & Glenwood Ave

- Add pedestrian-scale lighting on:
  - Royalston Ave
  - Border Ave
  - Glenwood Ave
  - 5th Ave, from Royalston to 7th St

- Establish east-west, ADA-compliant pedestrian & bike connection between the platform and the Farmers' Market.

Connections within the central station area will depend on parcel availability. These core connections should also be carried through to the west side of I-94; in this portion of the station area, 4th Ave is a likely route, and is preferred over 3rd Ave due to superblock nature of the IMS development. If 4th Ave is used for this connection, the following elements will be necessary: sidewalks on both sides of 4th Ave between Bryant Ave and I-394, defined pedestrian walkway under I-94 and through parking lot, stop sign and crosswalks at 4th Ave & Lyndale, sidewalks on south side of 4th Ave between Lyndale and Border (note that this sidewalk must be compatible with Farmers' Market functions)



Royalston Station: Opening Day Recommendations. Intermodal transfer and pedestrian connections are critical to the success of Royalston Station.

- Introduce wayfinding signage at:
  - Olson Memorial Highway & Van White Memorial Blvd
  - Olson Memorial Highway & N Bryant Ave
  - Olson Memorial Highway & Border Ave
  - Royalston Ave & Glenwood Ave
  - Royalston Ave & 5th Ave
  - 5th Ave & 7th Street
  - 7th St & 5th Ave (bus stops)
  - Target Field: 7th Street gate & plaza
  - Glenwood Ave & Border Ave (new intersection, recommended in NLSAP)
  - N Bryant Ave & 4th Ave

Bicycle Connection (trail/bike lane)

- Create direct bike access between platform and Cedar Lake Trail

Where the Cedar Lake Trail surfaces and connects to the Royalston Ave bridge, connect to a new on-street bike lane (if new cross-section permits) OR widen sidewalk on east side of Royalston Ave to serve as multi-use pathway.

- Install NiceRide station

A bike share station on the station platform will enhance connectivity and mobility within the station area.

Transit Connection

- Introduce bus stop at 5th Ave & 7th Street

Parking Management

Farmers' Market parking under I-94 is likely to be used by transit patrons. If this condition is permitted, install cross-walks and stop signs at appropriate locations on East Lyndale Ave N. If this condition is not permitted, parking management and enforcement will be required.

It should also be noted that downtown parking requirements are generally more progressive than those applied to the City as a whole. The Downtown Parking Overlay District, which applies in the Royalston station area, is specifically meant to "protect the unique character of the downtown area and mixed-use downtown neighborhoods by restricting the establishment or expansion of surface parking lots."

Platform

The platform location identified in the LPA documents is in alignment with station area planning goals.

Land Use

Station area planning identified no immediate land use changes necessary for LRT introduction. Strategic, long-term land use recommendations are contained in the next section.

Royalston Avenue, looking south from Olson Memorial Highway, opening day.

Public Comment

Neither the Community Members' Working Group nor the general public as represented at the Public Open House had strong reactions, positive or negative, to the Royalston Station Area concept plans.

Questions & Comments

- **I like the Farmers' Market emphasis.**
- **Will the exisitng social services (east of Royalston Avenue and south of Glenwood Avenue) have to relocate?**
  Social services are retained in their current locations and configurations in these concepts.
- **The bike trail must remain uninterrupted.**
  Continuity of the existing multi-use path wiill be maintained at all stations, including Royalston.
- **Who will decide which parcels will redevelop, and when?**
  Redevelopment will be market-driven, and is likely to be led by private developers. Public investment, such as a farmers' market expansion or creation of a new public amenity, such as a park or plaza, may serve as early-phase catalysts to attract private development. Public-private partnerships are a also possibility in the station area.

Sample Transit-Oriented District

The graphic at right illustrates one of many ways the Royalston station area might look in the future, embodying transit-oriented development principles. This drawing is not a plan, per-se, but simply a graphic representation of the physical form that could evolve within a framework of pedestrian-focused, transit-supportive policies.

The goal of this station area strategic planning process is not to decide which parcels will redevelop, when they will redevelop, or even what specific land use they will have. All of these particulars will be decided by market demand, and by the private landowner. Rather, the goal of this process is to identify the land use and planning principles most relevant to this particular station area, and to begin to formulate a framework of visioning principles that will act as a base for future, more detailed planning efforts.

As stated in the Opening Day Recommendations, it is important to note that this station area planning processes seeks to build on the vision of the North Loop Small Area Plan (NLSAP). As such, the actions and recommendations detailed below should be considered refinements, not replacements, of the direction contained in the NLSAP.

Roadway

Station area planning identified no additional, long-term roadway changes beyond those identified in the preceding Opening Day Recommendations.

Pedestrian Connection (sidewalk)

- Introduce pedestrian-scale streetscape improvements along Glenwood Ave, both sides, consistent with recommendations in adopted community plans

- Introduce additional streetscape enhancements between the 7th Street bus stops and the platform, in order to shorten the perceived walk distance between bus and LRT.

Enhancements could include, but would not be limited to, special paving, special lighting, banners, planting, public art.

Bicycle Connection (trail/bike lane)

- Prioritize City-proposed bikeways on Glenwood Ave & 7th St

As of the writing of this document, updates on the City's Bicycle Master Plan can be found on the web at: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/bicycles/bicycle-plans.asp

Transit Connection

Station area planning identified no additional, long-term transit recommendations beyond those identified in the preceding 'Opening Day Recommendations'.

Parking Management

- Consider reduced parking requirements, shared parking and other parking management tools.

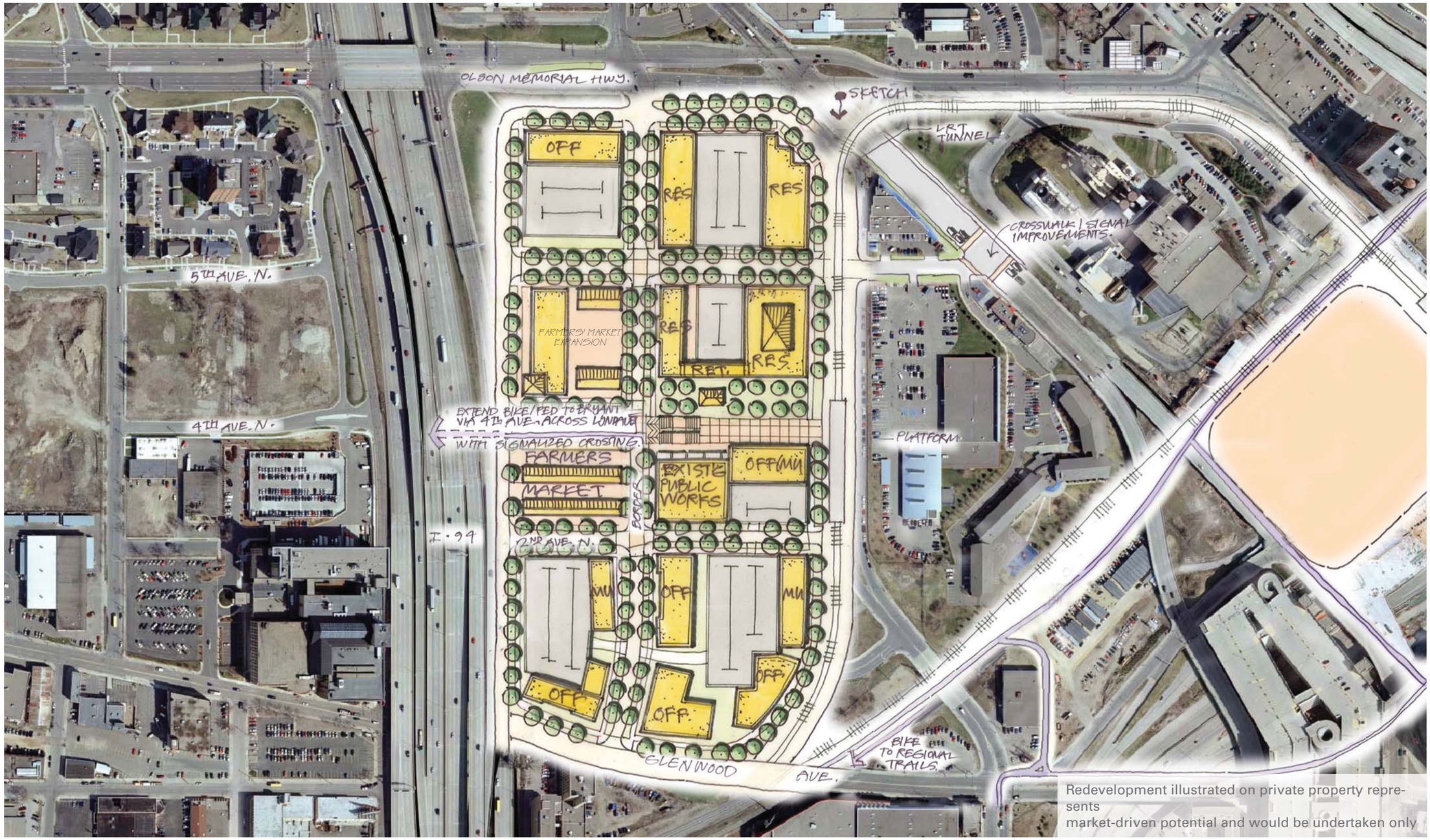
In order to promote density and capitalize on transit connectivity, reduced parking requirements, shared parking, parking caps (maximums instead of minimums) or phased parking requirements (a lower parking cap or lower parking requirements as the area reaches redevelopment build-out) should be considered.

The City of Minneapolis's zoning code already sets parking maximums for most uses. In station areas in particular reduced parking numbers should be encouraged. In addition, application of the Transit Station Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District should be considered. This zoning overlay further reduces the minimum and maximum parking requirements. It also allows for parking to be located an additional 500' from the use served and reduces parking lot dimensions.

Care should be taken that parking policy is not so stringent as to discourage market-based development. Enforcement will be required.

Platform

Station area planning identified no additional, long-term platform changes beyond those identified in the preceding Opening Day Recommendations.



Redevelopment illustrated on private property represents market-driven potential and would be undertaken only

Royalston Station: Sample Transit-Oriented District. Royalston's location and large parcels offer redevelopment potential for a true, mixed-use urban neighborhood with places to live, work and recreate within a compact, walkable environment.

Land Use

- Increase internal connectivity of station area

As the immediate station area redevelops, buildings should be sited to create a smaller, more pedestrian-scale block structure. East-west connection at 3rd, 4th, and 5th Avenues should be introduced. Full roadways accommodating vehicles as well as bikes and pedestrians are preferred, but if grade or parcel size issue prove difficult, pedestrian & bike connection should be a minimum requirement. As another measure promoting internal connectivity, Border Ave should also be opened to two-way traffic.

- Create a new, centrally-located public plaza

A plaza can act as both a catalyst and amenity for the new medium- to high-density residential envisioned for this area. The plaza should be centrally located and could be coupled with a pedestrian promenade connecting the station and farmers' market. A location between Border & Royalston, and between 3rd & 5th Aves would be preferred for the most direct connection between platform and farmers' market.

- Distribute land uses with less visually- and noise-sensitive uses adjacent to I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway.

Residential uses should be internal to the site, to provide noise/visual buffering from the adjacent highways. In contrast, retail and commercial uses can benefit from increased visibility by locating adjacent to significant downtown routes, and should be locating along Glenwood Ave, in keeping with the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan, which designated this roadway as a commercial corridor.

- Promote active ground floor uses

An interesting, human-scaled public realm encourages pedestrian activity and activates an area. Active ground floor uses with a high degree of transparency (ie, windows) create an inviting walking district. This recommendation applies to parking ramps as well, which should 'wrapped' with commercial, retail, or other active uses at ground level. Any ramps that are not 'wrapped' should be internal to the block.

Zoning

As identified in the market analysis for the North Loop Small Area Plan, redevelopment in this station area is going to be long-term. A current rezoning study to implement the plan's recommendations is contemplating zoning changes along the new Glenwood Avenue Commercial Corridor to allow for
a mix of uses, but the remainder of the Industrial zoning in the station area is likely to continue in the short-term in order to keep the thriving industrial businesses conforming. The plan states: "the direction in this district should be refined once a Southwest Transitway station is a certainty and the current market has improved – an updated market analysis will likely be needed."

Next Steps

Context & Planning Assumptions

- The North Loop Small Area Plan was adopted by the Minneapolis City Council in 2010. The Minneapolis Station Area Strategic Plan for the Royalston Station is meant to complement the North Loop Small Area Plan by providing LRT specific recommendations and alternative development scenarios.
- No park and ride allocation in LRT project; station area strategic planning also does not recommend park and ride at the Royalston Station.

Planning Process

The tables at right summarize the recommendations contained in the preceding 'Opening Day Recommendations' and "Sample Transit Oriented District' sections. A number of broader steps, listed below, will be needed to set the framework for the more specific steps identified at right.

Specific Recommendations to be Implemented by LRT Opening Day	Additional Study & Design during Preliminary Engineering	Policy Change	Lead Jurisdiction
Traffic signal at 5th & 7th	x		City
Intersection geometry & timing	x		City, County
Wayfinding signage	x		SW LRT Project
Bike access between Cedar Lake Trail and station platform	x		City
Ped/bike connection between station platform and farmers' market	x		City
NiceRide station	x		City
Bus stop at 5th & 7th	x		Metro Transit
Border Ave to Glenwood Blvd	x		City, SW LRT Project
Streetscape enhancements: bus - LRT connection	x		City, BID

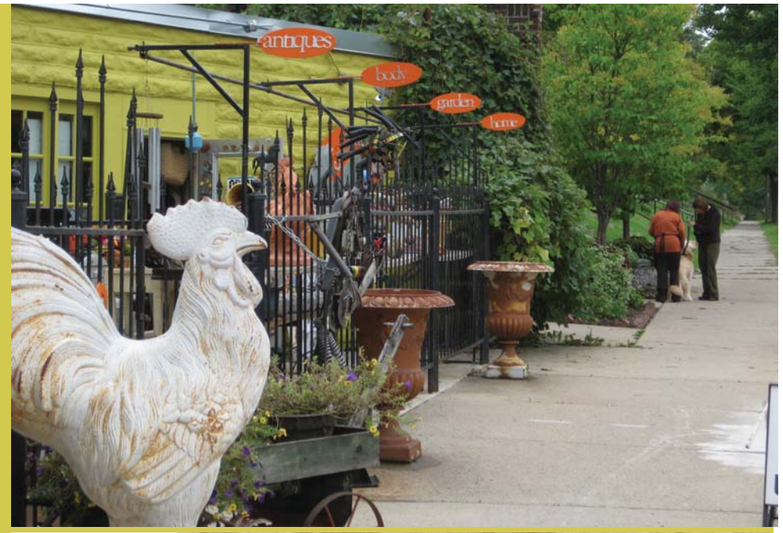
Specific Recommendations to be Implemented as Needed	Additional Study & Design during Preliminary Engineering	Policy Change	Lead Jurisdiction
New bikeways	x		City
Distribute land uses according to noise/visual sensitivity		x	City
Streetscape enhancements: Glenwood Blvd	x		City, BID
New park/open space	x		City, private developer
Parking management tools	x		City
Internal connectivity/smaller block size		x	City
Active ground floor uses		x	City

- Provide input to preliminary engineering for LRT effort with Met Council
- Carry out station area, but non-LRT infrastructure enhancements: close gaps in pedestrian & bike circulation, including roadway modifications
- Adopt appropriate transit-area policies at the City/County level
- Create a development-friendly environment (transit overlay zone)
  - Evaluate current land use needs & desires
  - Explore parcel assembly & acquisition
  - Identify catalytic projects (public/private)
  - Consider RFP's
- Identify funding mechanisms, incentives & public participation

Van White Station

Station Area Strategic Planning

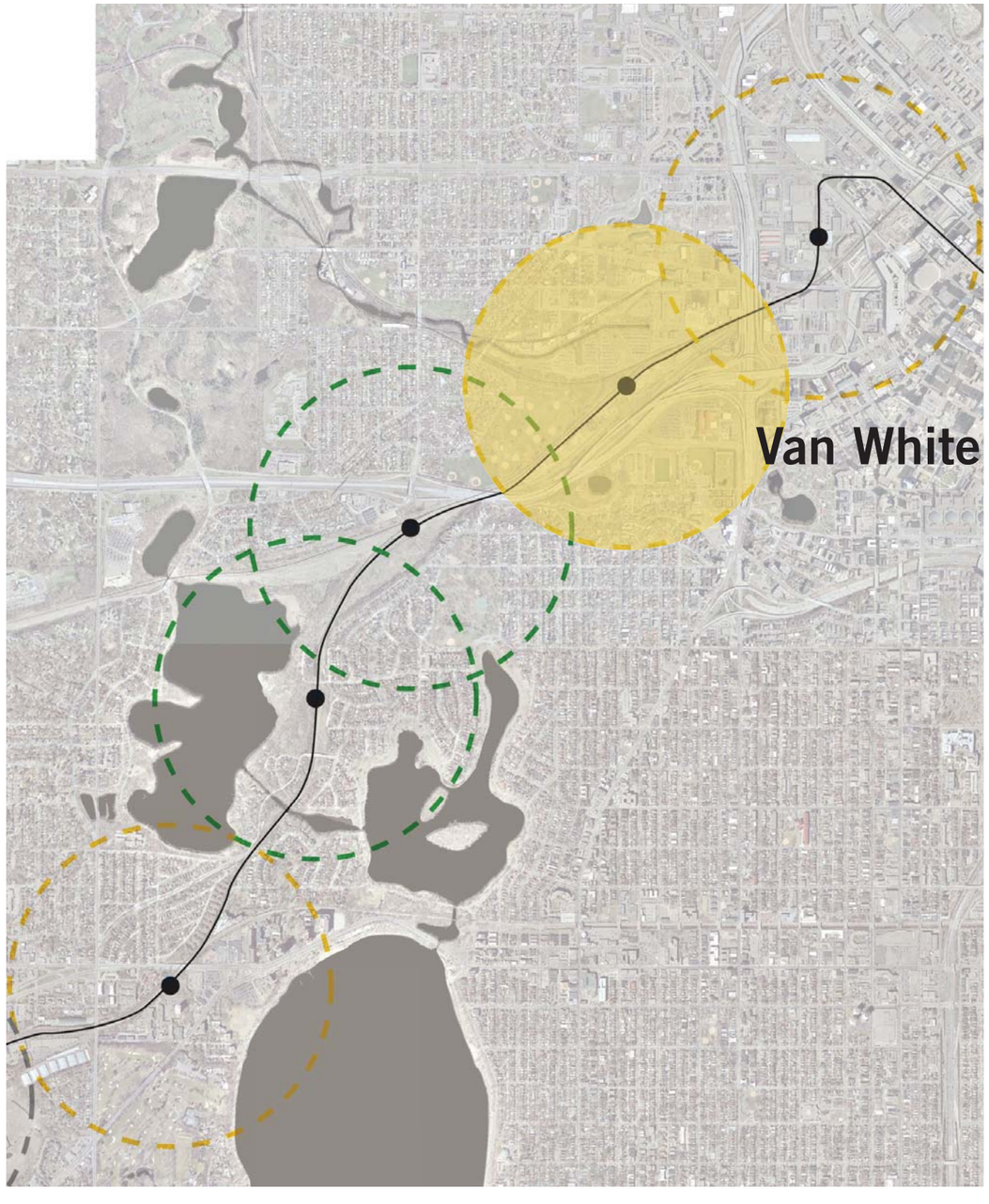
- Existing Conditions
- Previous & Current Planning Efforts
- Summary Analysis
- Opening Day Recommendations
- Sample Transit-Oriented District
- Next Steps



Existing Conditions

The Van White Station is located in the heart of the Bassett Creek Valley, envisioned as one of Minneapolis's next great urban redevelopments. Detailed vision for the area is set out in the City-adopted Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan (BCVMP: 2000, 2007), which illustrates an intensive mix of uses including office, residential, civic and retail. Uses will be mixed both horizontally and vertically, and will enjoy close proximity to active and passive open space.

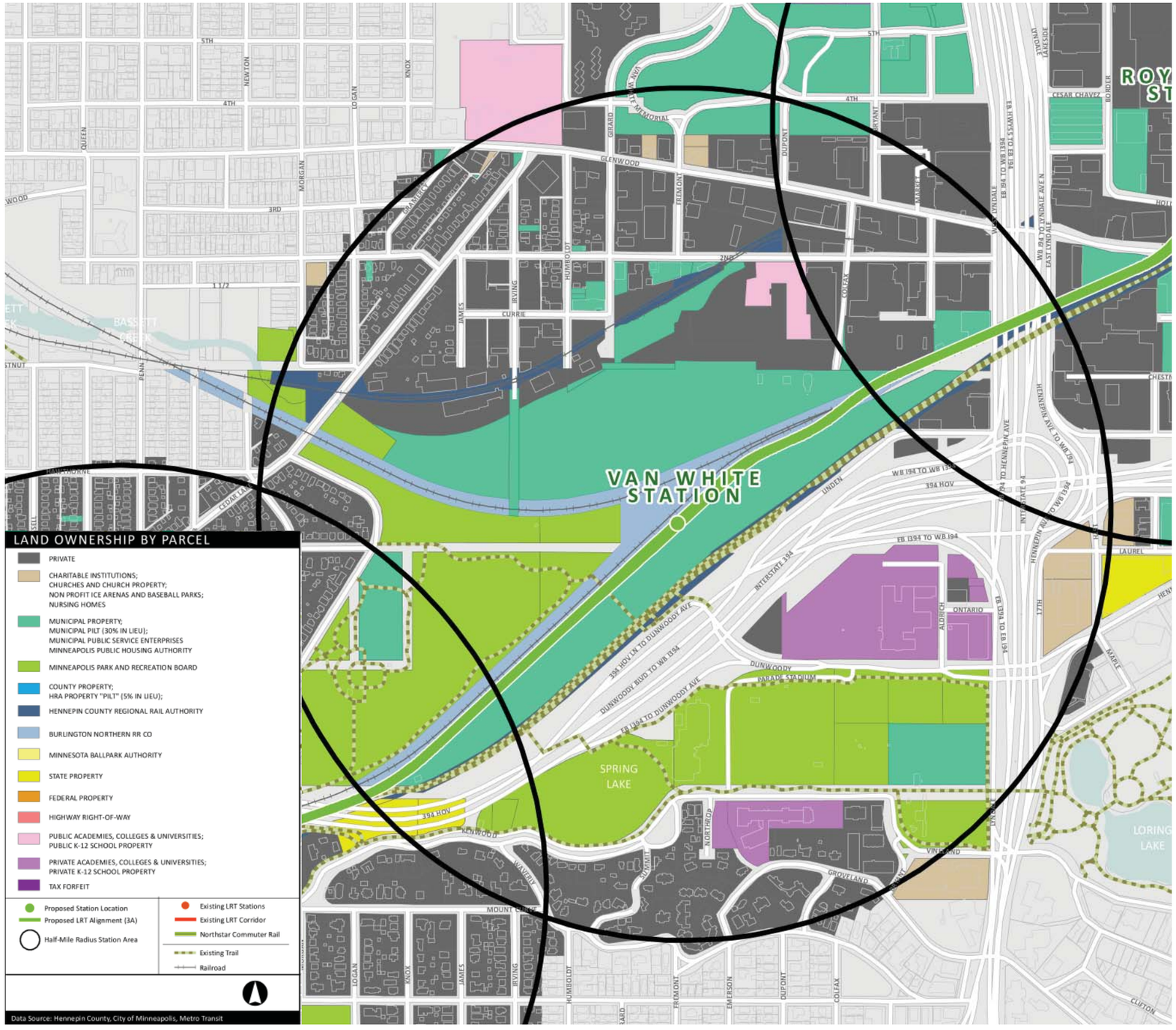
In addition to anticipated new uses, the station will also serve the well-established, predominantly residential neighborhoods of Bryn Mawr, Harrison, Lowry Hill, and Kenwood.



Land Ownership

The Van White station is surrounded almost exclusively by publicly owned property; the City-owned impound lot and gravel yards and the MPRB-owned Bryn Mawr Meadows park are the largest public parcels in this area, and exert a significant influence on station character and development potential. The western portion of the LRT alignment abuts privately-owned rail property.

The outer perimeter of the 1/2-mile radius station area, north of I-394, is dominated by stable, residential ownership. South of I-394, additional MPRB property and private educational (Dunwoody Institute) holdings form the bulk of the area.

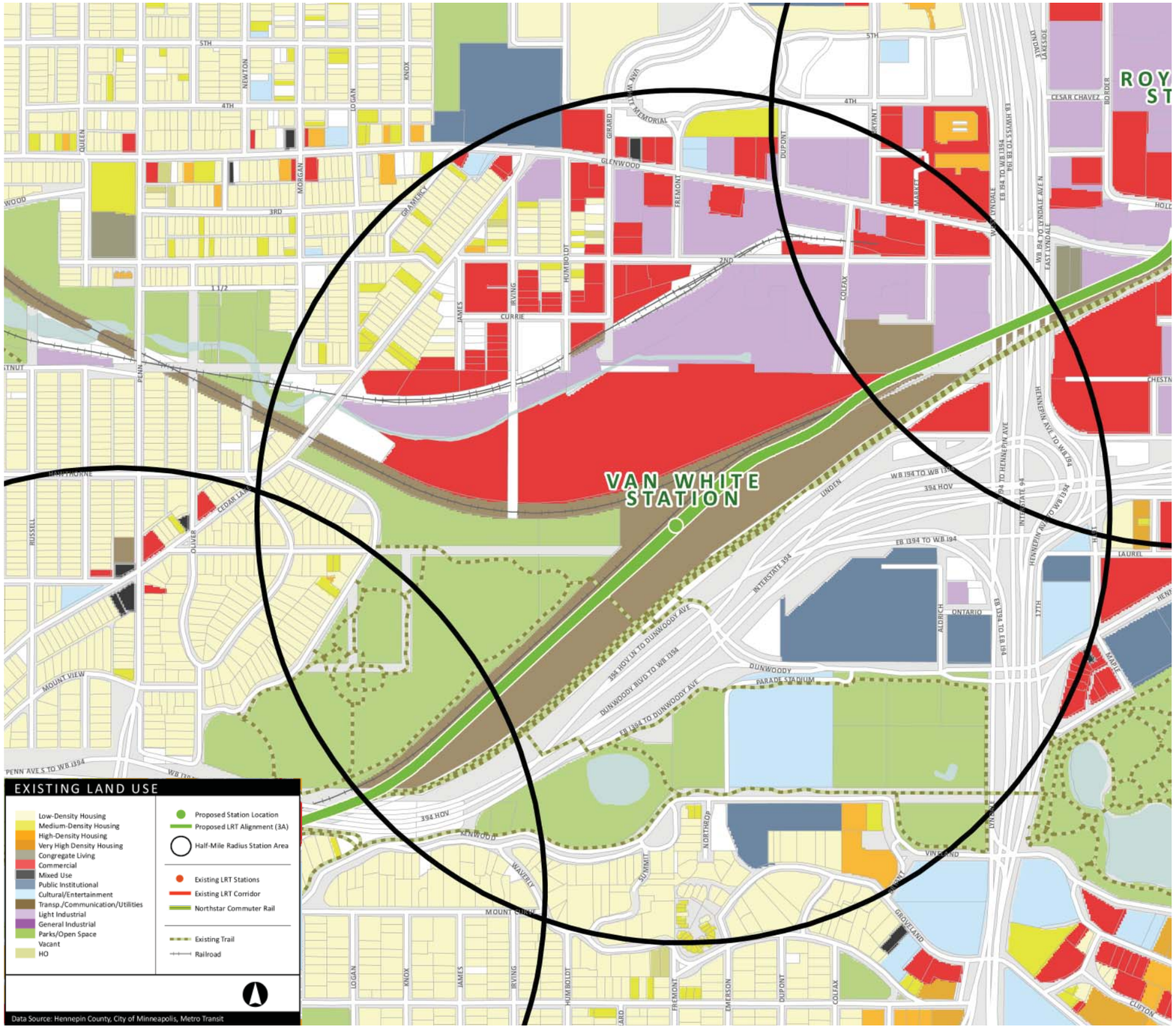


Land Use

Land uses of most interest within the station area are the City-owned properties to the north and east of the station. These parcels, the City impound lot to the north and the City concrete crushing yards to the east, have been identified by the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan as the area's most promising redevelopment parcels.

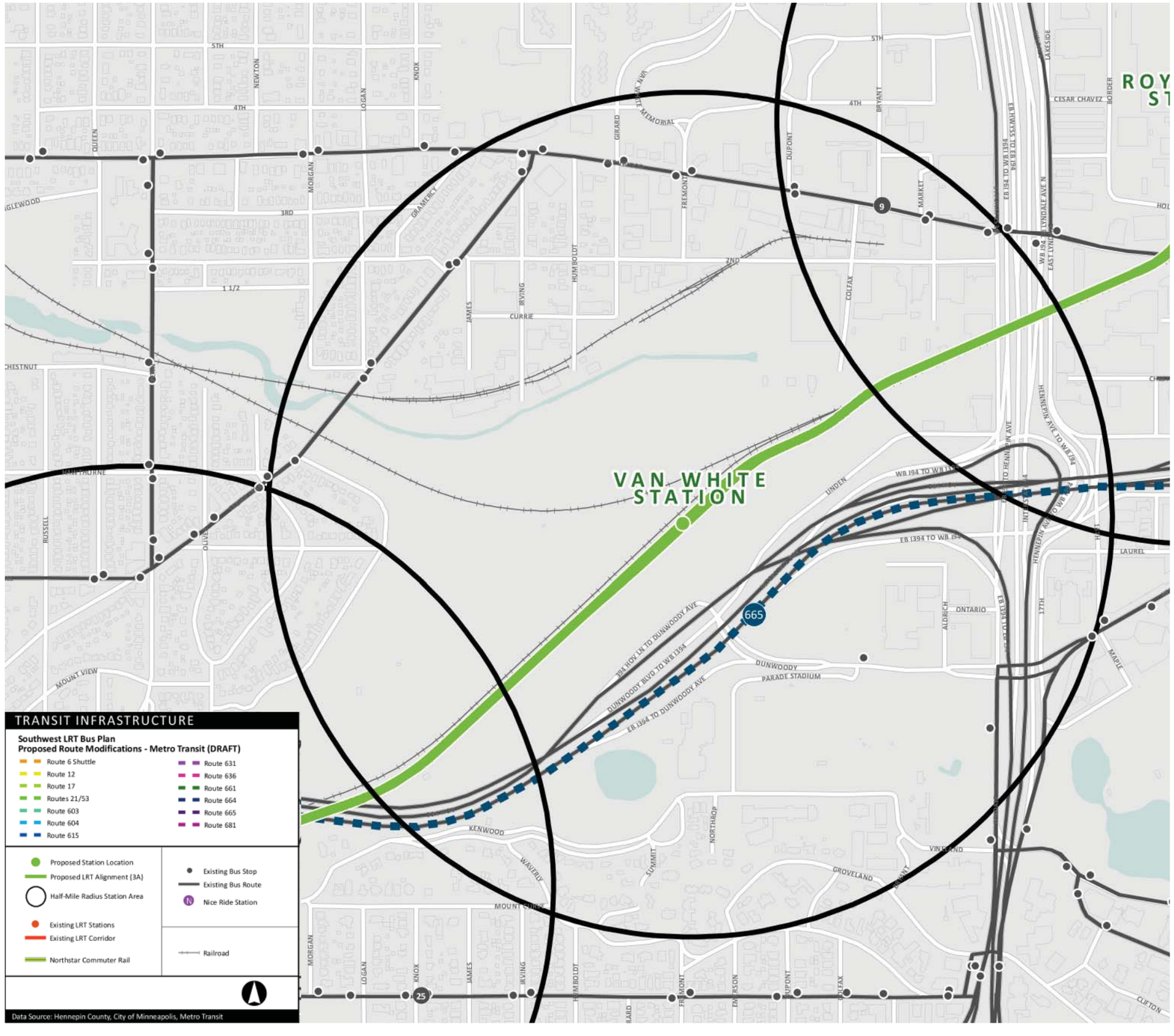
Also located within the 1/2-mile radius station area, the Dunwoody Institute and Walker Art Center could prove significant ridership generators for the station. Ridership will be influenced by the quality of pedestrian connections to area destinations such as the Walker Art Center and Dunwoody Institute.

Perimeter residential areas are stable and are composed of primarily single-family residences, with a small amount of intermingled multi-family. Industrial and commercial uses are present on 2nd and Glenwood Avenues.



Transit

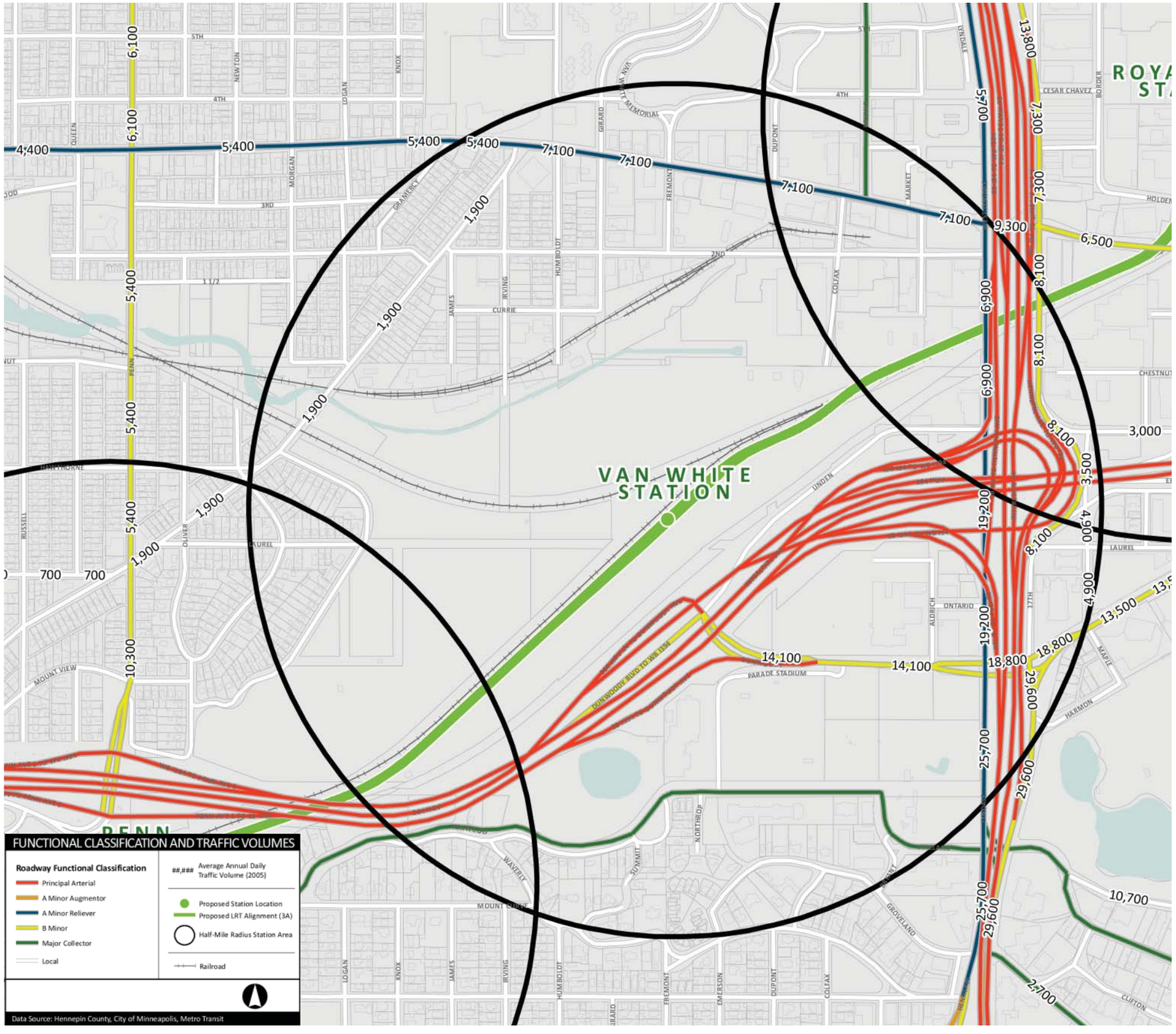
There are no existing or planned bus routes serving the Van White station location. The closest bus stop along an existing sidewalk or roadway is approximately a half-mile away. Glenwood Avenue has bus service, but no direct access from the station location (as it exists today). Dunwoody Boulevard does not have an existing transit route between I-394 and Lyndale Avenue.



Roadways & Parking

The existing roadway network is limited due to the condition and use of the land in the station area. The area has been identified for redevelopment as part of the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan (BCVMP). There is no existing roadway network in the immediate area of the potential station location. Dunwoody Boulevard is the closest roadway providing access to downtown Minneapolis, the Lowry Hill neighborhood and I-394. Moderate traffic volumes allow this roadway to operate well. I-394 is a major roadway bordering the southern station area. For this station, I-394 is a contributing factor to providing quality regional access via Dunwoody Boulevard. Lyndale Avenue on the eastern edge of this area carries heavy traffic on a portion of its one-way southbound roadway, causing it to operate near capacity during peak hours. Future Van White Memorial Boulevard will connect Dunwoody Boulevard to the existing alignment of Fremont Avenue and north crossing SH 55, extending to Plymouth Avenue. This future connection will alleviate some of the congestion currently on Lyndale Avenue.

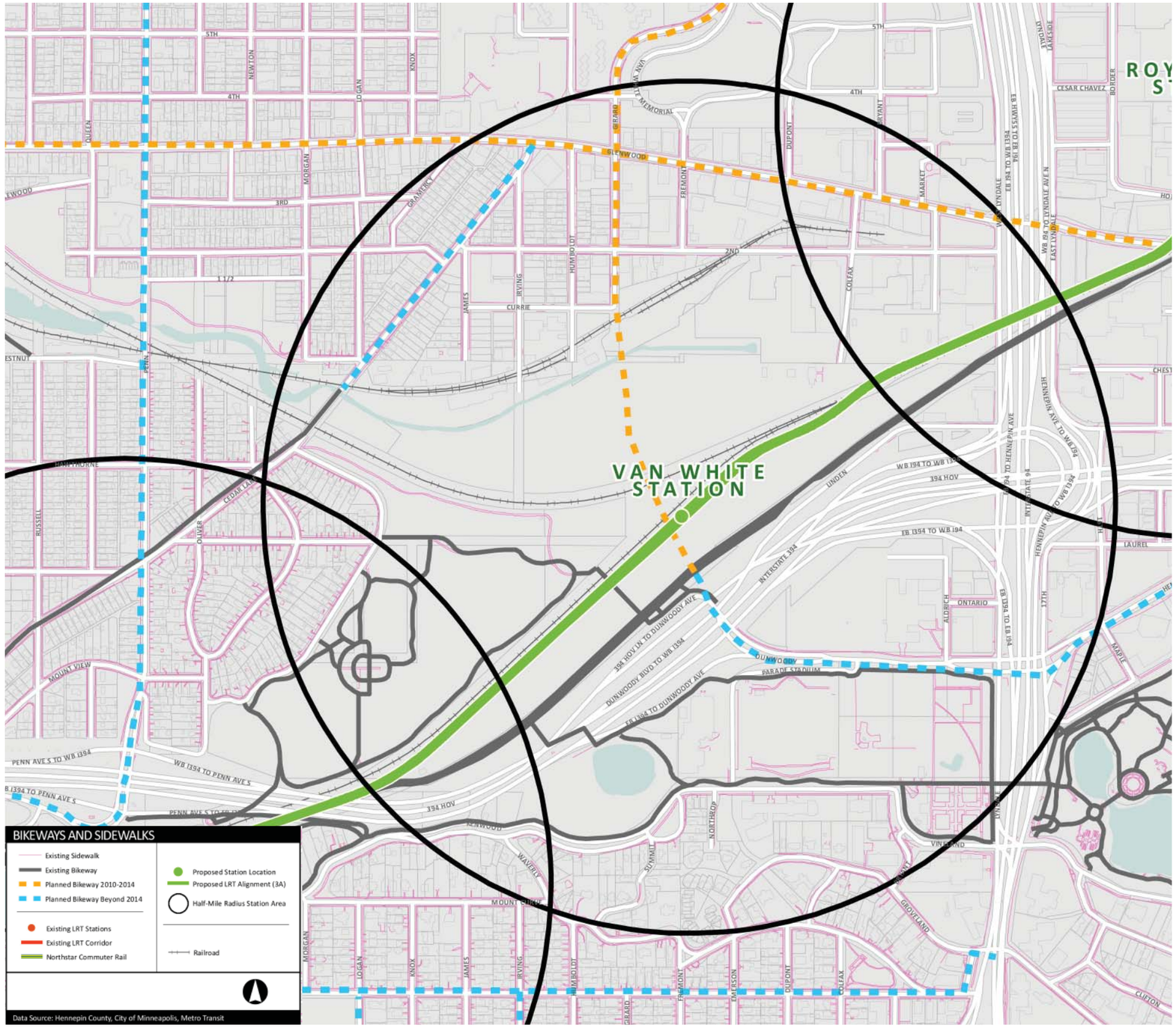
The residential areas within the half mile station radius have on street parking allowed with some restrictions near the parks.



Sidewalks & Trails

The existing sidewalk network is limited due to the lack of development in the immediate area. However, the trail network in this area is extensive with the Cedar Lake Trail on the southern boundary of the station area. Additional connections to other city trails exist through Bryn Mawr Meadows and Parade Park, providing access into the Bryn Mawr and Lowry Hill neighborhoods, which have comprehensive sidewalk networks throughout. There is an existing pedestrian bridge crossing the freight rail line with vertical circulation provided via two helix style ramps. This provides an existing safe crossing of the freight rail line for both pedestrians and bicyclists.

Van White Memorial Boulevard will be constructed with sidewalk facilities. These linkages will provide north-south access for pedestrians and bicyclists from points further north to the proposed station location.

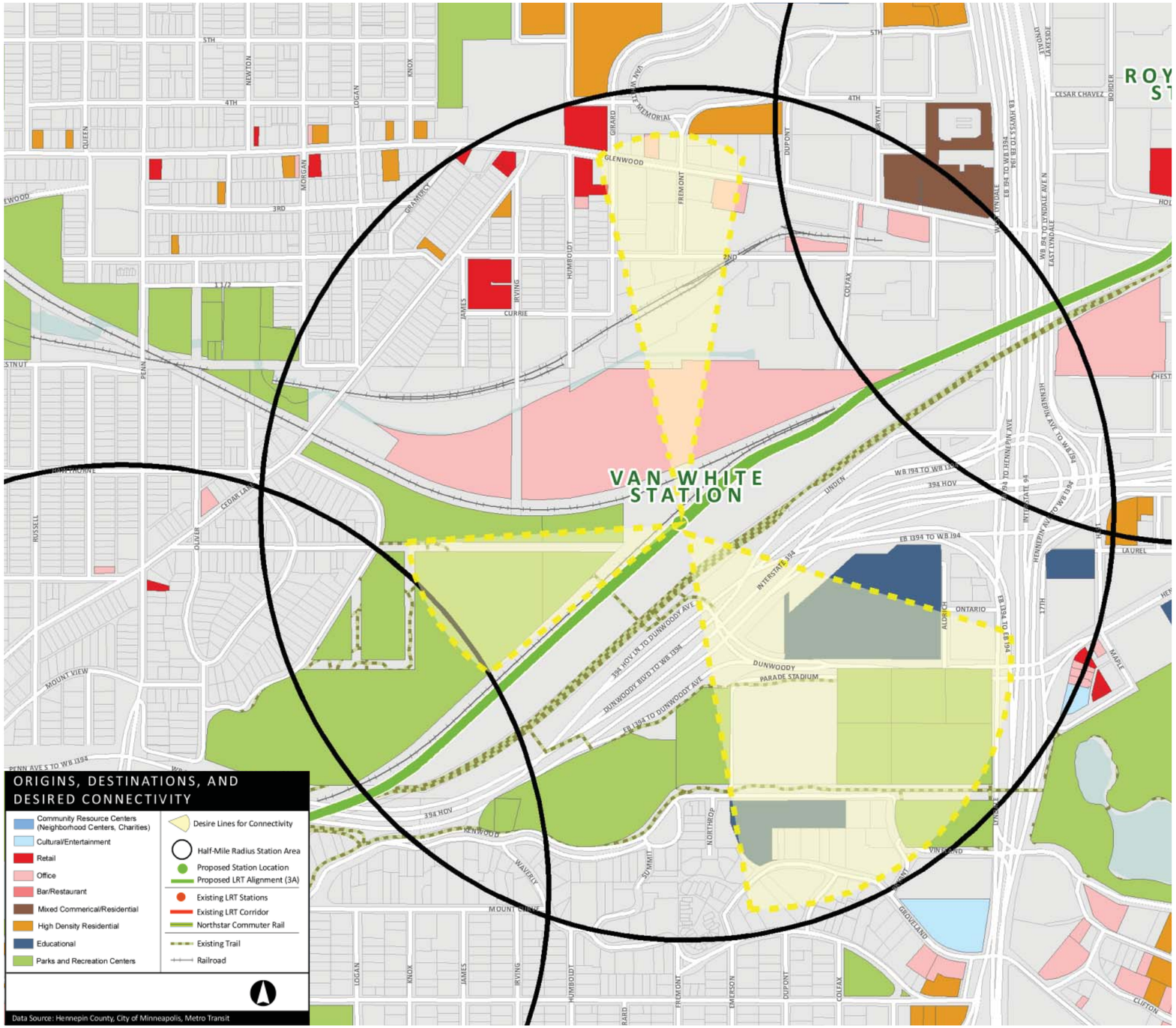


Origins, Destinations & Connectivity

Van White station has potential to function as both a destination and an origin station. To the east of the station, Dunwoody Institute and the Walker Art Center are both within walking distance of the station. Dunwoody Boulevard will be the primary connection to both these destinations. Dunwoody offers both daytime and evening classes and may produce riders across both these timeframes. While the Walker is open during the day, ridership for this destination is likely to be greatest during evening and weekend special events, when parking is at a premium.

To the west, Bryn Mawr Meadows is heavily used for organized sporting activities such as youth soccer and may also serve as a destination. The existing pedestrian bridge connects the station to this open space amenity, as well as to the Bryn Mawr neighborhood beyond. User demand in this direction is likely to be heaviest on weekends for Bryn Mawr Meadows, and on weekdays for neighborhood residents.

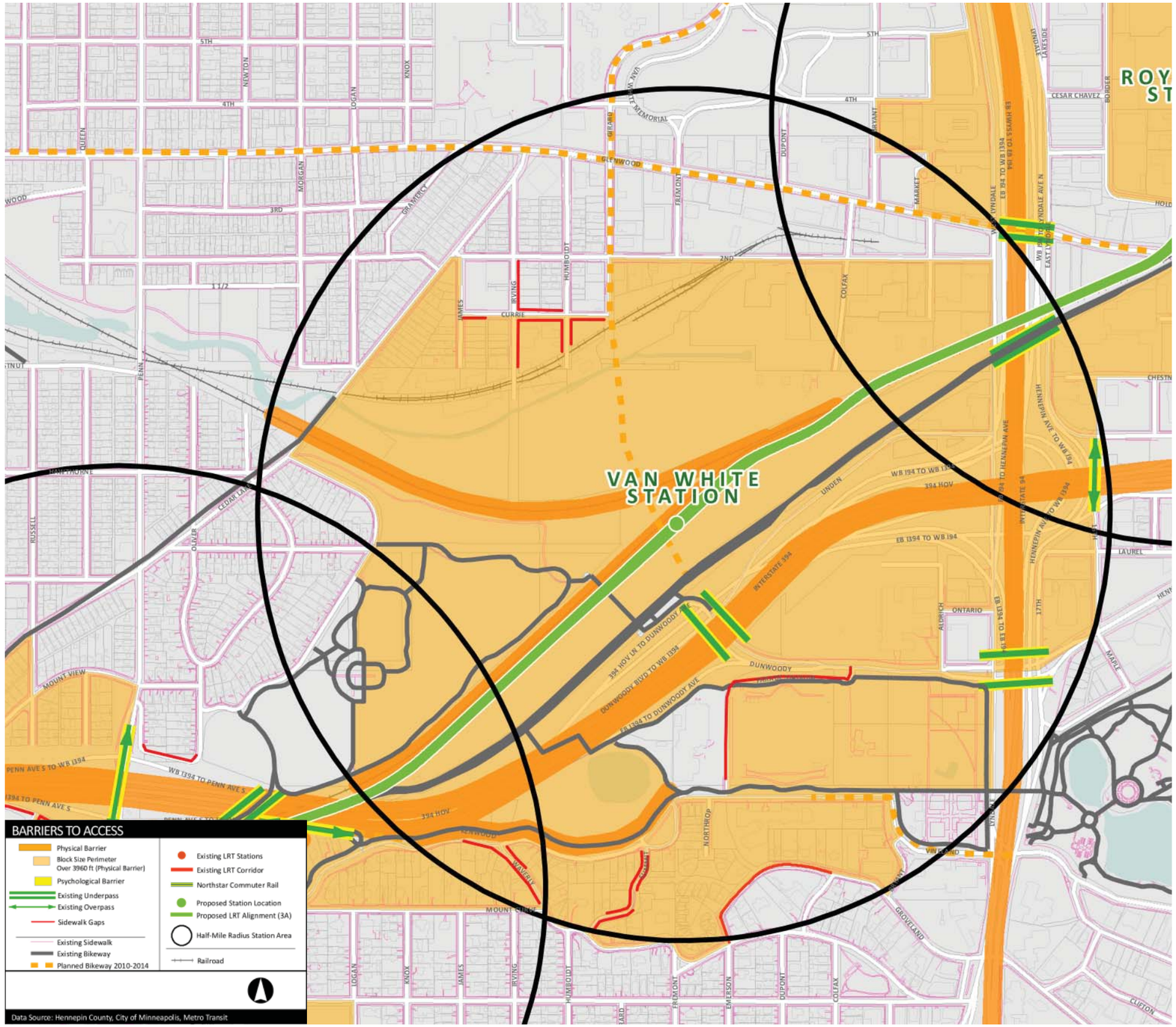
Harrison neighborhood residents will access the station via the Van White Boulevard Memorial Bridge, scheduled to open in 2012.



Barriers to Access

The Van White station area is currently inaccessible by vehicle due to existing industrial land uses occupying the bulk of the site. Even with a rearrangement or relocation of uses, the station area remains minimally accessible with a single access point at Linden Avenue. The proximity of I-394 interchanges and direction-changing on/off ramps further complicates intuitive understanding of the area.

This industrial character and vehicle-focused land uses acts as a psychological barrier for pedestrians and cyclists, as well. This group of users, likely to desire station access from the neighborhood west of the station, must also overcome the significant physical barrier of the freight rail line. This active railroad corridor can be crossed on foot or bike via the existing pedestrian overpass just south of the proposed station platform, but it should be noted that the extra effort involved in negotiating this elevated bridge can be discouraging to some users and has been shown to promote illegal, at-grade crossings.



Previous & Current Planning Efforts

Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan (BCVMP), 2007

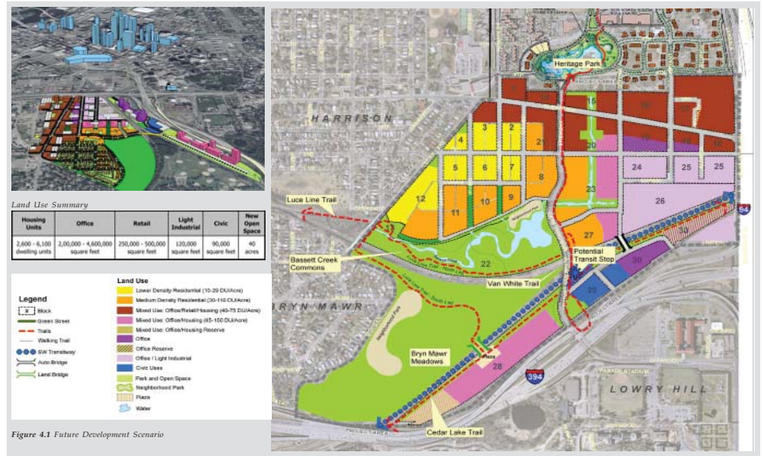
The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan offers a 25-year, two-phase map for future redevelopment of the Van White Station Area. The plan provides a thorough examination of community goals, planning alternatives, financial feasibility, phasing and implementation responsibility. The Plan is supportive of Southwest Transitway alignment through the project area, and of the creation of a station within the project area.

With the depth of market, financial, traffic and infrastructure analysis included in the Plan, the prime goal of current station area strategic planning activities is to support and refine the vision and conclusions contained in the BCVMP document. Specifically, the current effort also identifies transit elements (such as the potential introduction of a railcar layover facility on the Linden Yards site) that could positively or negatively impact specific elements of the BCVMP, or the implementation of the plan as whole.

Ryan Companies Development Concept, 2009

This graphic concept plan illustrates anticipated building footprints and site yields for Ryan Companies' anticipated Phase I development, which includes the Linden Yards site as well as a small portion of the existing impound lot. This plan represents the designated Master Developer's first refinement of the general land use distributions shown in the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan.

For station area planning purposes, this plan is considered the 'base condition'. Options presented in this document evaluate and refine the Ryan Companies plan in terms of transit relationship and interface.



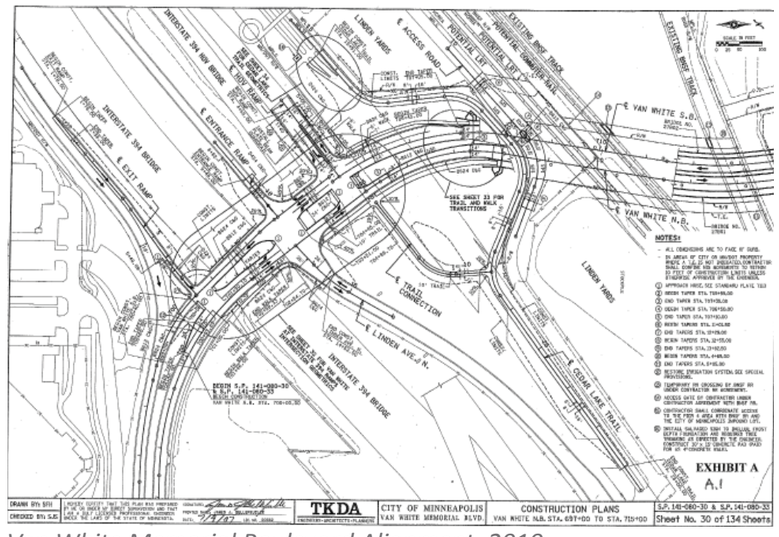
Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan, 2007.

Linden Yards Concept Plan, Ryan Companies, 2009.

Van White Memorial Boulevard Engineering Documents, 2010

These documents show the vertical and horizontal alignment of the proposed Van White Memorial Boulevard.

The roadway 'touchdown' (where the elevated roadway comes to grade on the Linden Yards parcel) shown in the 2009 Ryan Companies development concept does not match the location shown in the 2010 engineering documents. Further coordination of the Van White bridge and the Ryan Companies development plans will be necessary.

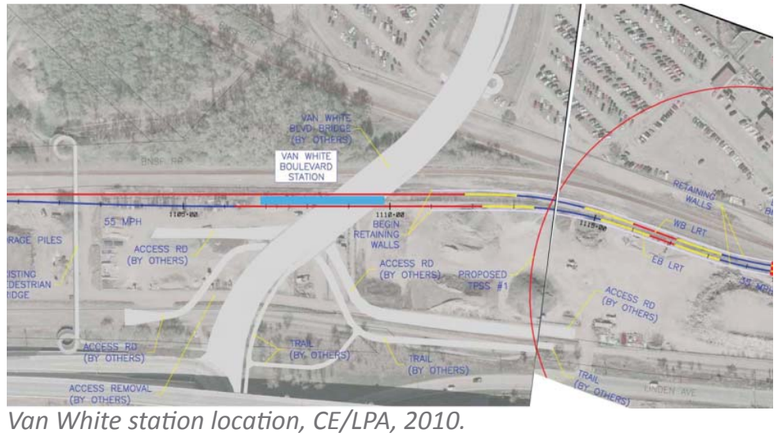


Van White Memorial Boulevard Alignment, 2010.

Conceptual Engineering & Locally Preferred Alternative (CE/LPA), 2010

Conceptual Engineering (CE), included in the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) selected by the Metropolitan Council in 2010, represents a preliminary step in design of the actual transit infrastructure itself. Portions of this document most important to station area planning are transit alignment, station location, and at-grade/elevated/sunken crossings; these elements will have a direct bearing on future station area character and development opportunity.

CE/LPA drawings show the Van White station platform directly below the proposed Van White Memorial Boulevard, supported at this point on an elevated structure. This station area planning effort proposes that the station shift southward to a point equidistant between the existing pedestrian overpass and the proposed Van White Memorial Boulevard structure. Station area planning further recommends vertical access, on the west side of the Linden Yards parcel, from both structures.



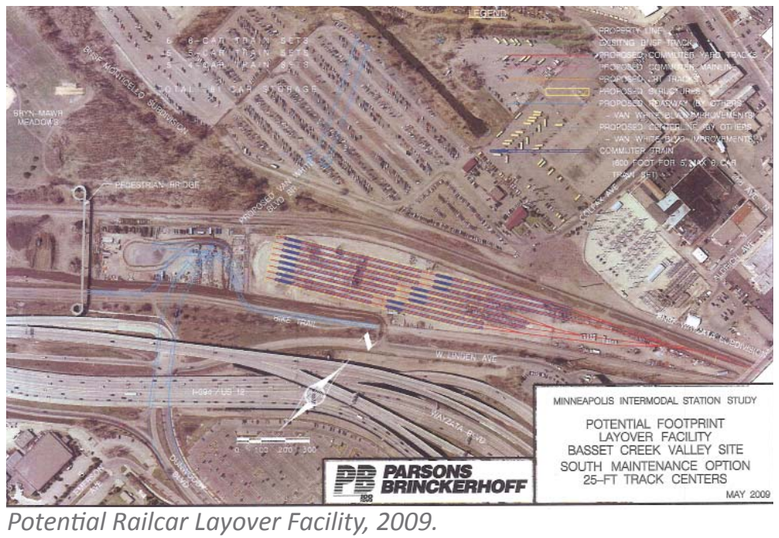
Van White station location, CE/LPA, 2010.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), 2010

The DEIS documents the possible impacts of the LRT project on both the natural and built environments. As of the writing of this document, the DEIS is currently under FTA review.

Hennepin County Rail Layover Facility Study, 2009

Hennepin County is currently conducting a study of potential sites for a passenger rail layover facility. Two sites near the Southwest LRT alignment, Linden Yards and Cedar Lake Yards, are under evaluation. It is not within the scope of this Station Area Strategic Planning to evaluate the merits of the sites, and there has been no official selection of the preferred site to date. However, the City of Minneapolis has negotiated with Hennepin County and has indicated a wilingness to sell the Linden Yards site for the purposes of a rail layover facility.



Potential Railcar Layover Facility, 2009.

Additionally, the study notes several major advantages of the Linden Yards site:

- There is no vehicular access to the Cedar Lake Yards site
- There are no utilities to the Cedar Lake Yards site
- In order for passenger trains to be stored at Cedar Lake Yards, they must pass through the Linden Yards West development on an additional track
- The additional track would not fit under the as-proposed Van White Boulevard Bridge

For the reasons cited above, the station area planning study illustrates development over the top of the rail layover facility at the Linden Yards site. This accommodation is responsive to the City of Minneapolis adopted Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan, the City of Minneapolis resolution to sell Linden Yards for the purposes of the rail layover facility, as well as the ongoing Hennepin County rail layover facility study.

Summary Analysis

Community Assessment

Community members exhibited a high level of comfort with redevelopment in general, and with increased development densities in particular, as laid out in this station area's adopted master vision plan, the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan (BCVMP). This plan directs redevelopment to the City-owned parcels on either side of the LRT alignment. In regards to the station itself, residents were interested in station access, particular for bikes and pedestrians. Community members would like to see a formal connection between Bryn Mawr Meadows and the Cedar Lake trail, noting that current 'informal' access across the freight rail line is unsafe. Residents also stressed the need for adequate separation between freight and LRT lines, and the heavily-used Cedar Lake Trail.

Design Team Assessment

The BCVMP provides an excellent roadmap for future development and redevelopment throughout the station area, and station area planning does not propose to re-write this plan in any way. Rather, station area planning will look to refine those elements of the plan that represent immediate and interim station area needs, in advance of full implementation of the plan.

Access will be the single most important element requiring refined planning in advance of station opening, particularly in light of uncertain redevelopment timelines for properties immediately adjacent to the station itself. Opening-day station facilities must provide, at a minimum, bike and pedestrian access, as well as kiss-n-ride dropoff.

Van White Station

Van White Station is an opportunity to integrate LRT into a major new mixed-use development. The station will serve employees and residents, and provide access to nearby parks and trails.

Top Issues

- **Ridership depends on redevelopment**
- **Narrow parcel depths immediately adjacent to station platform**
- **Site access to Linden Yards parcel**
  - **emergency vehicles**
  - **traffic volume**
- **Potential railcar storage**

Principles

- **No park-n-ride**
- **Support and refine BCVMP**
- **Provide adequate emergency access to immediate station area**
- **Provide appropriate traffic level-of-service to immediate station area**
- **Provide pedestrian and bike access over freight rail**

Opening Day Recommendations

The following recommendations identify elements essential to the safe, efficient function of the transit station: pedestrian and bike connections, multi-modal transfer, passenger drop-off/pick-up, and wayfinding. These elements are the minimum recommendations of this station area strategic planning study, for implementation on opening day. It should be noted that these recommendations are outside the current Southwest Transitway LRT project as defined in the conceptual engineering drawings. While some elements may be constructed as part of the LRT project itself, other elements must be funded, designed and constructed by other entities, and will require close coordination between the City, the County, and Metro Transit, as well as local stakeholders and neighborhood groups. Further recommendations contributing to a larger transit-oriented district, projects and enhancements that may take many years to fully realize, are contained in the next section.

At Van White, the station area planning process seeks to build on the vision of the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan (BCVMP). As such, the actions and recommendations detailed below should be considered refinements, not replacements, of the direction contained in the BCVMP. Construction of the Van White Memorial Bridge will be critical to providing both vehicular and non-vehicular station access to the larger community.

Roadway

- Establish two points of entry to both portions (east and west) of Linden Yards parcel

Alternate access is critical for emergency operations, such as fire and ambulance. Varied access may often help ease vehicular congestion during peak travel periods.

- Design new street cross-section (on western portion of Linden Yards parcel) to accommodate auto drop-off/pick-up function as well as bus stops directly in front of the station platform, both sides of street

Anticipated development at the station on opening day is extremely limited, as is the station area's connectivity to adjacent areas. Given these two limitations, auto drop-off/pick-up will be important to establishing ridership at this station on opening day and beyond.

- Introduce wayfinding signage at:
  - Dunwoody Blvd.
  - Van White Memorial Blvd/Dunwoody Blvd intersection
  - foot of existing pedestrian bridge

- Introduce pedestrian lighting

Pedestrian lighting should be included on the access roadway in front of the mixed-use office building.

Pedestrian Connection (sidewalk)

- Create ADA-compliant, vertical circulation between existing pedestrian bridge and station, at platform area

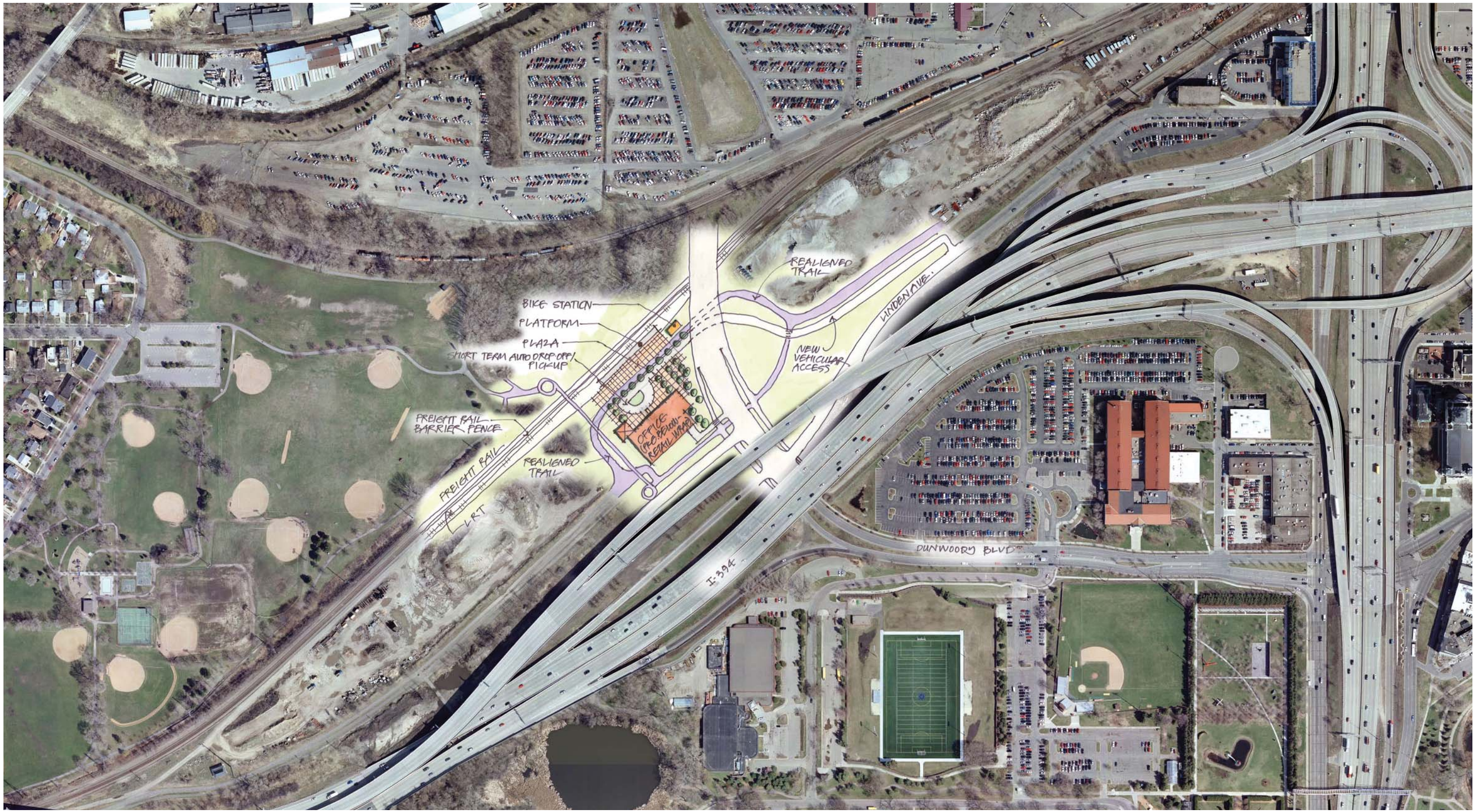
If this access cannot be accommodated, the site plan will have to accommodate pedestrian circulation from east side of parcel (where the existing ped/bike bridge touches down) to west side of parcel (station platform)

- Create ADA-compliant, vertical circulation between Van White Memorial bridge, at platform area

This connection complements but does not replace pedestrian connection between the bridge landing and the station area (see next recommendation.)

- Create ADA-compliant station access between Van White Memorial bridge landing and platform area.

Pedestrians and cyclists accessing the station from the northern portions to Bryn Mawr and across the Van White Memorial Blvd bridge will need to cross from the Linden Yard's east to west sides. Additional land use changes may also be necessary to allow this connection (see "Land Use" on this page).



Van White Station: Opening Day Recommendations. Building orientation ensures that development faces and integrates with the transit station. Cedar Lake Trail is re-routed to promote easy, efficient bike-LRT transfer. Trail and roadway are horizontally aligned to minimize the number of bike-vehicular crossings.

Bicycle Connection (trail/bike lane)

- Relocate a portion of the bike path parallel to station

This routing is critical to enable LRT-bike transfer. If the potential railcar storage facility is in place on opening day, or constructed at any time in the future, the bike path will likely need to transition to the south side of the parcel to accommodate the railcar facility. In this case, the path should transition north of the LRT platform, in order to maintain direct bike-LRT interface at station.

- Install NiceRide station

A bike share station on the station platform will enhance connectivity and mobility within the station area.

Transit Connection

There are no existing or planned bus routes serving the station platform. Given current adjacent land uses, this station area strategic planning process identified no immediate transit changes necessary for LRT introduction.

Van White Station: Sample Transit-Oriented District. Conceptual view looking north toward Van White Memorial Boulevard bridge.

Parking Management

Given current City policy, proximity to downtown and neighborhood preference, this station area strategic planning process does not recommend development of parking facilities in tandem with LRT introduction.

Platform

- Slide platform south of the location shown in the LPA drawings.

This change reduces the walk distance between the existing pedestrian bridge and the station, and also introduces the possibility of direct vertical pedestrian connection with the bridge at this or some future date.

Land Use

- Modify or relocate existing uses which impede station access.

Existing land uses will need to be curtailed or relocated to the degree necessary to allow for vehicular, pedestrian and bike access to the station, as described in the preceding recommendations.

Public Comment

Public comment centered on the need to follow the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan (BCVMP). While the potential Rail Layover Facility is still a concern, the majority of citizens offering input felt comfortable that the opening day and sample TOD recommendations did reflect the vision of the BCVMP.

Questions & Comments

- **There should be no park-n-ride at this location.**
  While the final decision of whether or not to provide transit parking will be made in the Preliminary Engineering (PE) process, this station area planning process recommends that this station NOT include park-n-ride facilities. The DEIS does not include parking at this station
- **There should be no railcar storage at this location.**
  This decision is beyond the scope of station area planning. This process seeks only to show how the BCVMP and Ryan Companies vision might be integrated with such a facility.
- **There is concern that redevelopment will not move past the single building shown in the short-term option.**
  Timeframe and ultimate build-out is beyond the scope of station area planning. Planning is meant only to establish guidelines for transit-oriented development; market forces will ultimately determine the type and density of development
- **Incorporate the historical railroad character of the area.**
  Platform character, plaques and monumention will all be a part of preliminary and final engineering.
- **We need to keep our 'bike freeway'; keep the curves and stops to a minimum.**
  Final trail alignment will be determined in the preliminary engineering process, but this process recommends that the bike trail parallel the light rail alignment rather than be routed to the eastern side as the Linden Yards parcel, as shown in the DEIS.

Sample Transit-Oriented District

The graphic at right illustrates one of many ways the Van White station area might look in the future, embodying transit-oriented development principles. This drawing is not a plan, per-se, but simply a graphic representation of the physical form that could evolve within a framework of pedestrian-focused, transit-supportive policies.

The goal of this station area strategic planning process is not to decide which parcels will redevelop, when they will redevelop, or even what specific land use they will have. All of these particulars will be decided by market demand, and by the private landowner. Rather, the goal of this process is to identify the land use and planning principles most relevant to this particular station area, and to begin to formulate a framework of visioning principles that will act as a base for future, more detailed planning efforts.

As stated in regards to the Opening Day Recommendations, it is important to note that this station area planning process seeks to build on the vision of the Bassett Creek Valley Mater Plan (BCVMP). As such, the actions and recommendations detailed below should be considered refinements, not replacements, of the direction contained in the BCVMP.

Roadway

Station area strategic planning identified no additional, long-term roadway recommendations beyond those identified in the preceding 'Opening Day Recommendations.'

Pedestrian Connection (sidewalk)

- Site development should emphasize pedestrian movement and priority over vehicular movement.

Bicycle Connection (trail/bike lane)

- Prioritize City-proposed bikeway on Dunwoody Blvd

As of the writing of this document, updates on the City's Bicycle Master Plan can be found on the web at: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/bicycles/bicycle-plans.asp

Transit Connection

- If bus service is introduced on adjacent roadways, bus stops should be located as close to the station platform as possible, preferably within the transit plaza area.

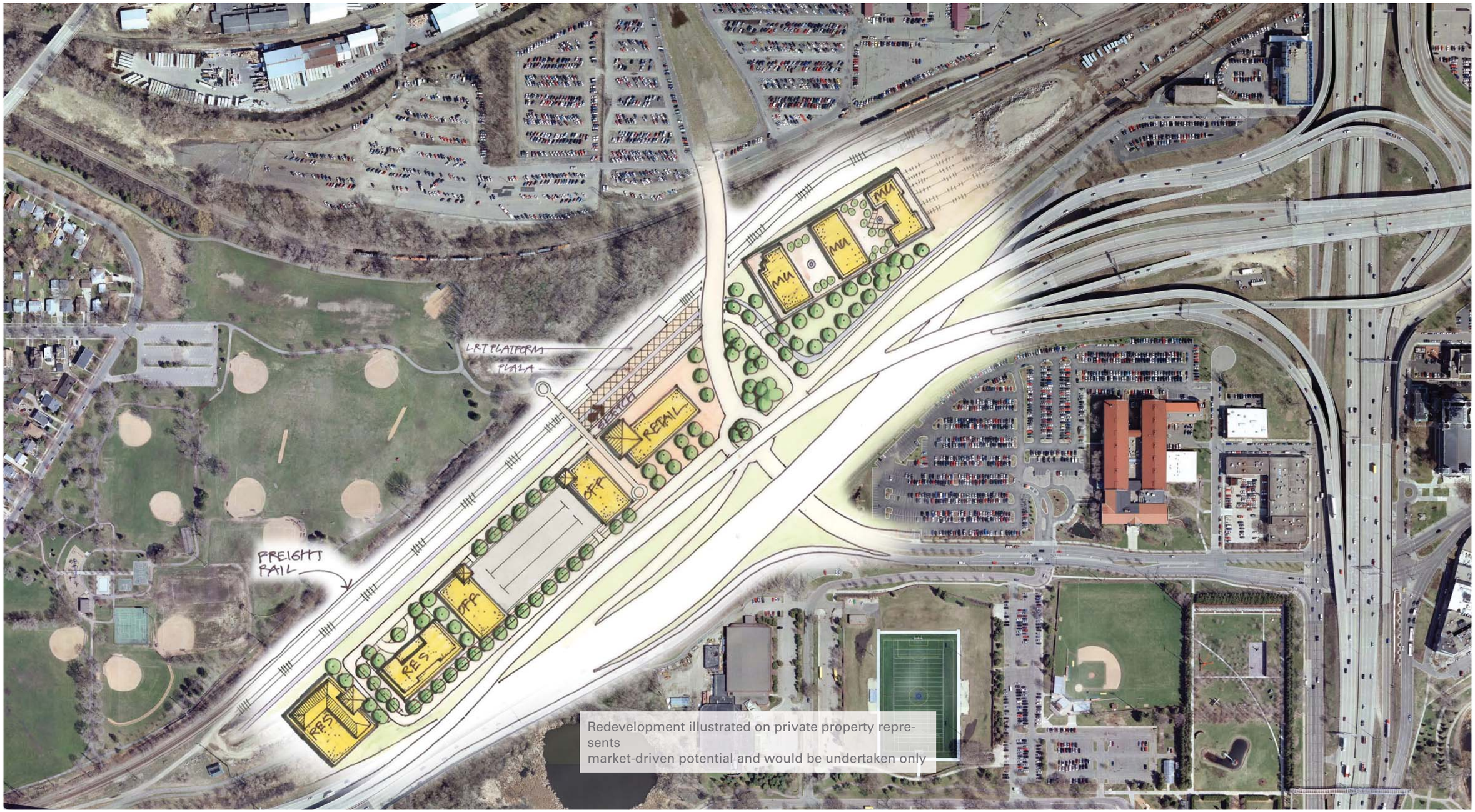
Parking Management

- Consider reduced parking requirements, shared parking and other parking management tools.

In order to promote density and capitalize on transit connectivity, reduced parking requirements, shared parking, parking caps (maximums instead of minimums) or phased parking requirements (a lower parking cap or lower parking requirements as the area reaches redevelopment build-out) should be considered.

The City of Minneapolis's zoning code already sets parking maximums for most uses. In station areas in particular reduced parking numbers should be encouraged. In addition, application of the Transit Station Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District should be considered. This zoning overlay further reduces the minimum and maximum parking requirements. It also allows for parking to be located an additional 500' from the use served and reduces parking lot dimensions.

Care should be taken that parking policy is not so stringent as to discourage market-based development. Enforcement will be required.



Van White Station: Sample Transit-Oriented District. Connectivity and pedestrian-level detail are key to a successful development around the Van White station.

Platform

Station area strategic planning identified no additional, long-term transit platforms beyond those identified in the preceding Opening Day Recommendations.

Land Use

- Development immediately adjacent to (facing) the platform should:
  - have active ground floor uses
  - orient its primary façade to the platform
  - include vertically mixed-uses, with transit-supportive retail uses on the ground floor

- Development on and above the railcar storage facility should have an appropriate southern (platform-facing) façade.

Usable, active ground floor space is preferred. If not possible, the façade should come to ground, in order to screen railcar storage, and offer an appropriate level of pedestrian detail. If the area southeast of railcar storage is developed as open space/park/amenity, same façade guidelines as above apply.

- Development on and above the railcar storage facility should utilize area between railcar storage/development and Linden Avenue to create new open space/park.

A new park can act as both a catalyst and amenity for the high-density uses envisioned for this area. The very urban, hardscape-dominated context of the station area suggests that green space would serve the area well, and continue Minneapolis's tradition of integrating nature within the urban environment.

- All development should ensure an appropriately detailed, pedestrian-oriented ground floor.

- All development should promote active ground floor uses

An interesting, human-scaled public realm encourages pedestrian activity and activates an area. Active ground floor uses with a high degree of transparency (ie, windows) create an inviting walking district. This recommendation applies to parking ramps as well, which should be 'wrapped' with commercial or retail spaces at ground level. Current conceptual planning efforts illustrate the use of podium-type residential buildings. Often designed with substantial blank walls, few pedestrian entrances/exits and lack of detail at the pedestrian level, these structures are not a preferred building type for pedestrian-oriented areas. If these buildings are used, ground floor should be scaled and detailed for pedestrian interest.

Zoning

- Rezone properties to transit-friendly districts, and apply appropriate overlays, as development proposals are submitted.

In 2007 many properties in the Basset Creek Valley area were rezoned in order to set the stage for the type of development envisioned in the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan. The most notable changes were to the Linden Yards parcels which were zoned Office Residential 3, a high density mixed use district. The impound lot and several parcels just to the north were left Industrial, but the Industrial Living Overlay district was added, which allows for the development of housing in industrial districts. In the future the zoning of the impound lot in particular should be revisited, but this should be done when a development proposal is presented.

Next Steps

Context & Planning Assumptions

- Van White Memorial Boulevard will be constructed before Southwest LRT opens
- The Van White station area will be developed according to the adopted Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan; City uses will be relocated, though the timeframe is uncertain
- Rail layover facility, if constructed in Linden Yards, will be designed in a way that does not preclude the develop ment proposed in the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan
- No park and ride allocation in LRT project; station area strategic planning also does not recommend park and ride at the Van White Station.

Planning Process

The tables at right summarize the recommendations contained in the preceding 'Opening Day Recommendations' and "Sample Transit Oriented District' sections. A number of broader steps, listed below, will be needed to set the framework for the more specific steps identified at right.

- Provide input to preliminary engineering for LRT effort with Met Council
- Prepare site for development (relocate County/City uses, construct roadways on parcel, construct VW Memorial Pkwy)
- Adopt appropriate transit-area policies (refine/advance BCVMP) at the County/City level
- Identify master developer (done)
- Identify funding mechanisms, incentives & public participation

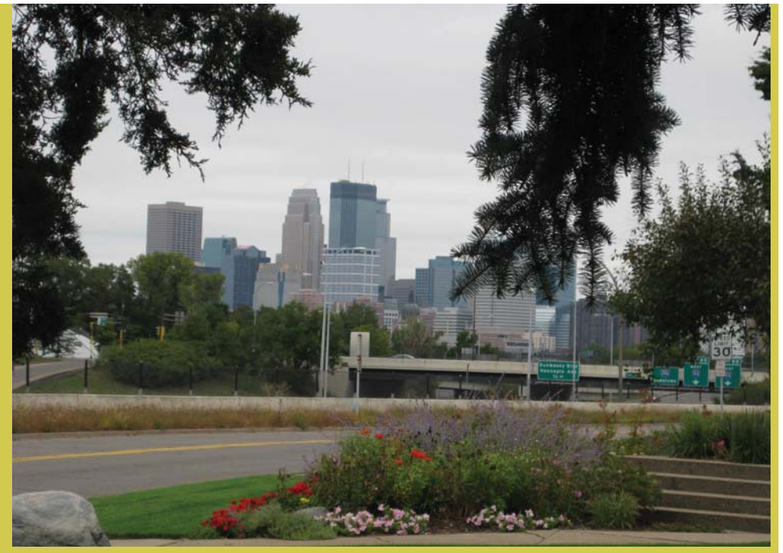
Specific Recommendations to be Implemented by LRT Opening Day	Additional Study & Design during Preliminary Engineering	Policy Change	Lead Jurisdiction
Patron drop-off/pick-up in new roadway	x		SW LRT Project
Wayfinding signage	x		SW LRT Project
Vertical circulation between existing ped bridge and station platform	x		SW LRT Project, City
Station access between Van White bridge and station platform	x		SW LRT Project, City
Relocate (a portion of) bike path to parallel station	x		SW LRT Project, City
NiceRide station	x		City
Modify station platform location	x		SW LRT Project

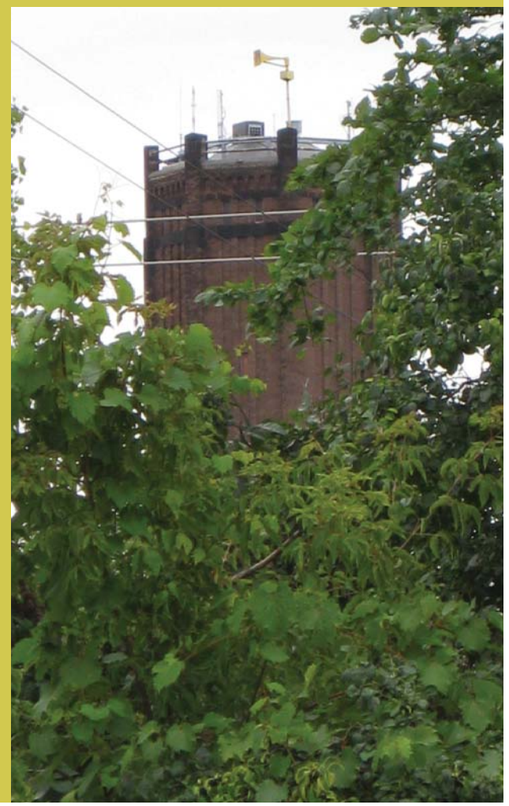
Specific Recommendations to be Implemented as Needed	Additional Study & Design during Preliminary Engineering	Policy Change	Lead Jurisdiction
Bikeways	x		City
New park/open space east of railcar storage facility	x		City, private developer
Modify/relocate existing, impeding uses on Linden Yards parcel	x		City
Site-wide pedestrian circulation		x	City
Parking mangement tools	x		City
Orient station-adjacent buildings to the station		x	City
active ground-floor uses in station-adjacent buildings		x	City
Vertically-mixed uses in station-adjacent buildings		x	City
Screen railcar storage from station		x	City
Appropriate detail at the ground floor for all buildings		x	City
Active ground floor uses		x	City

Penn Station

Station Area Strategic Planning

- Existing Conditions
- Previous & Current Planning Efforts
- Summary Analysis
- Opening Day Recommendations
- Sample Transit-Oriented District
- Next Steps

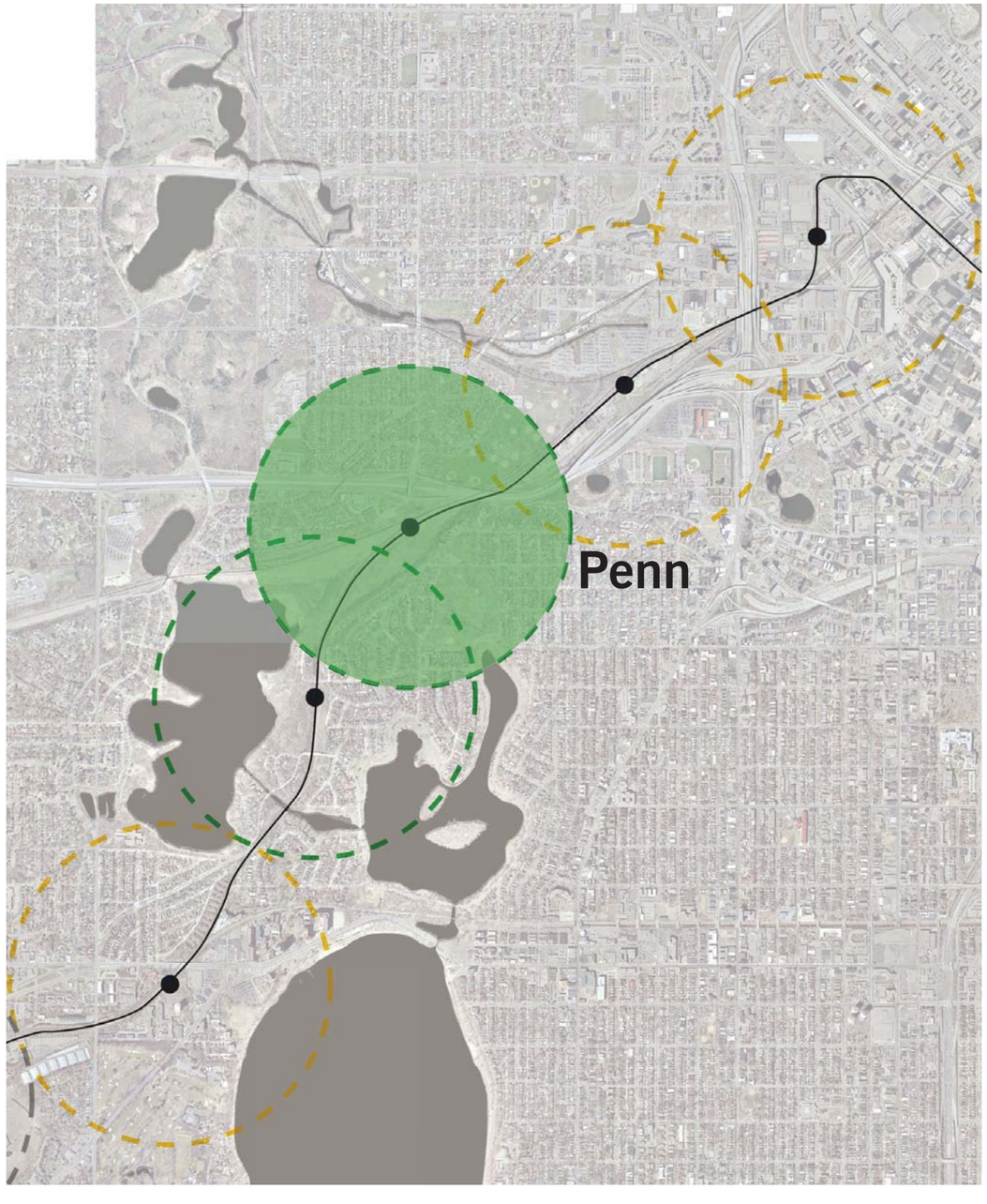




Existing Conditions

Penn Station is located in a valley just south of I-394, with neighboring residential and office uses located high on bluffs to the east and west. The Cedar Lake Trail and Kenilworth Trail join at this point, and Cedar lake is just south and west of the station platform.

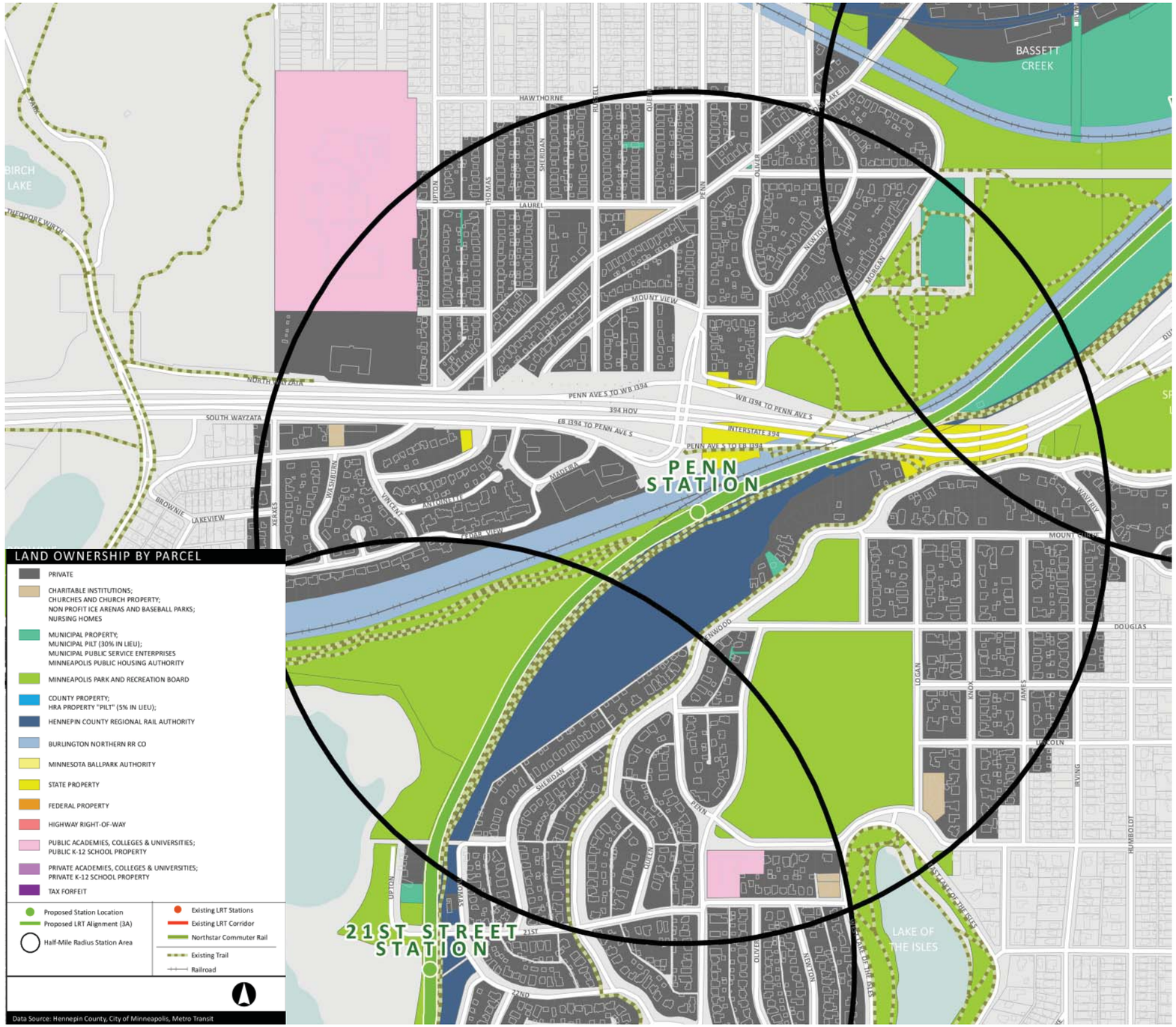
This station will provide transit access to the stable residential communities of Bryn Mawr, Lowry Hill and Kenwood, as well as recreational access to neighboring Cedar Lake, the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, and the Grand Rounds trails.



Land Ownership

The Penn station is surrounded by public property owned by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA), Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB). MPRB owns several parks within the station area.

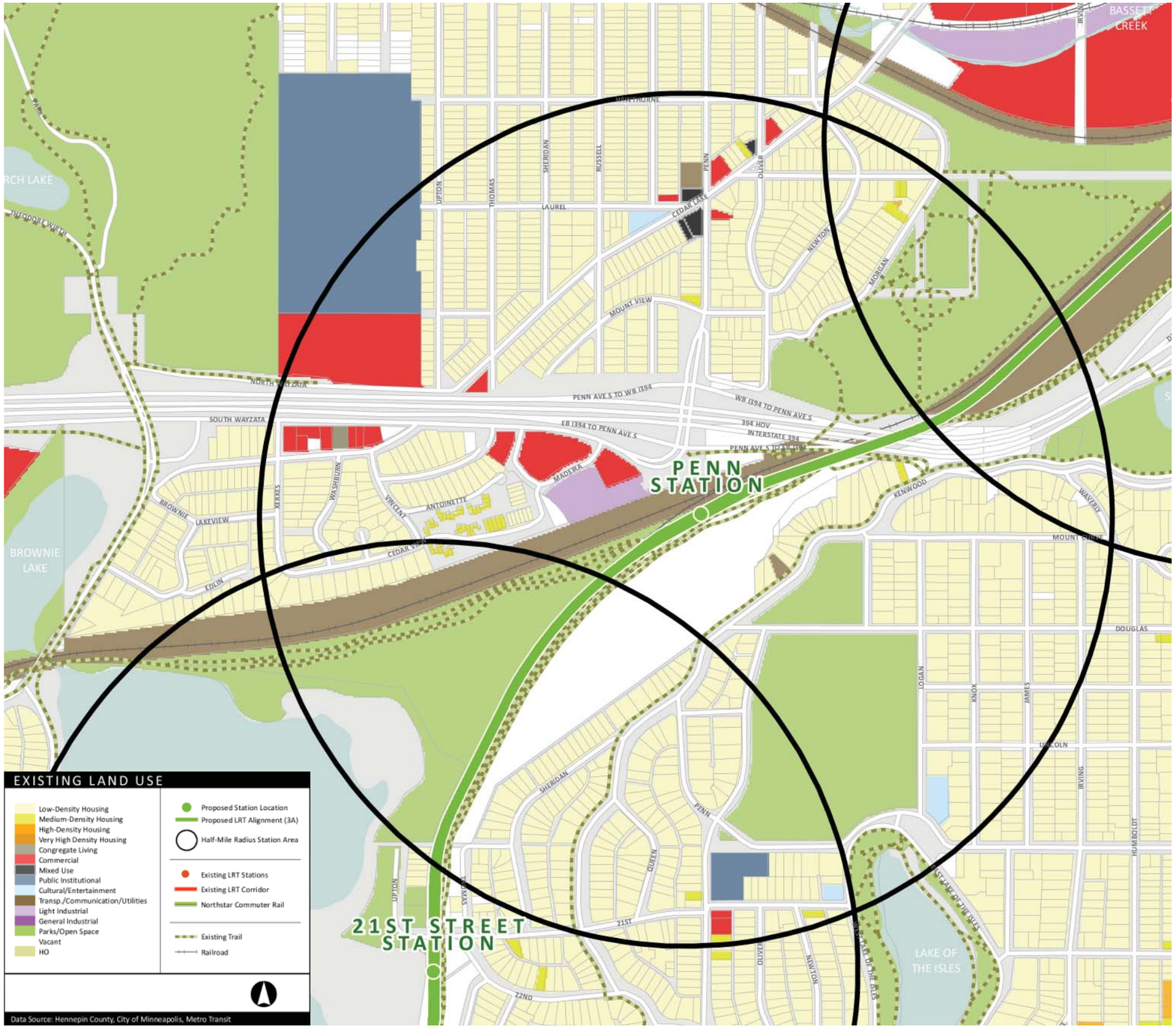
The remainder of the station area is dominated by private residential parcels, with a small number of commercial and educational owners in the western part of the station area.



Land Use

The majority of parcels within the Penn station area are single-family residential or park/open space. Residential areas are stable and predominantly owner-occupied. There is a small cluster of commercial and light industrial uses on the western portion of the station area.

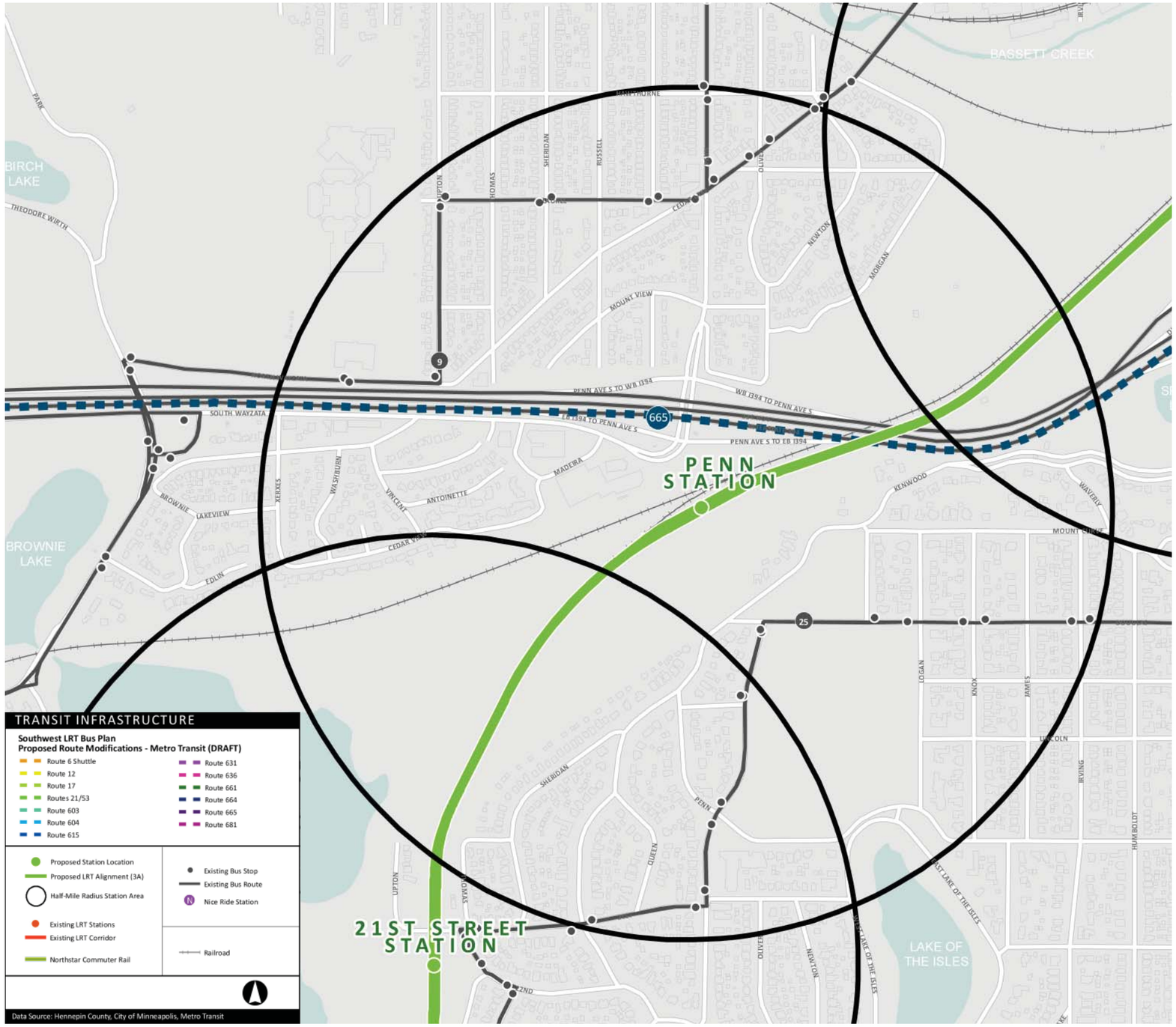
Uses immediately abutting the station on the valley floor are passive open space and multi-use trails, including the HCRRA-owned parcel (white on the accompanying graphic) shown as 'vacant.' The active freight-rail corridor (brown) and I-394 are a significant, limiting uses that are unlikely to change.



Transit

Existing transit connectivity within the proposed station area is limited. Bus Routes 9 and 25 travel within a half-mile of this area. Route 9 runs along North Wayzata Boulevard to Upton Avenue, then northeast of the station. Route 25 runs along Douglas Avenue to Oliver Avenue, then southwest of the station through the Kenwood neighborhood. Many express routes operate on I-394, but do not stop near the Penn Station.

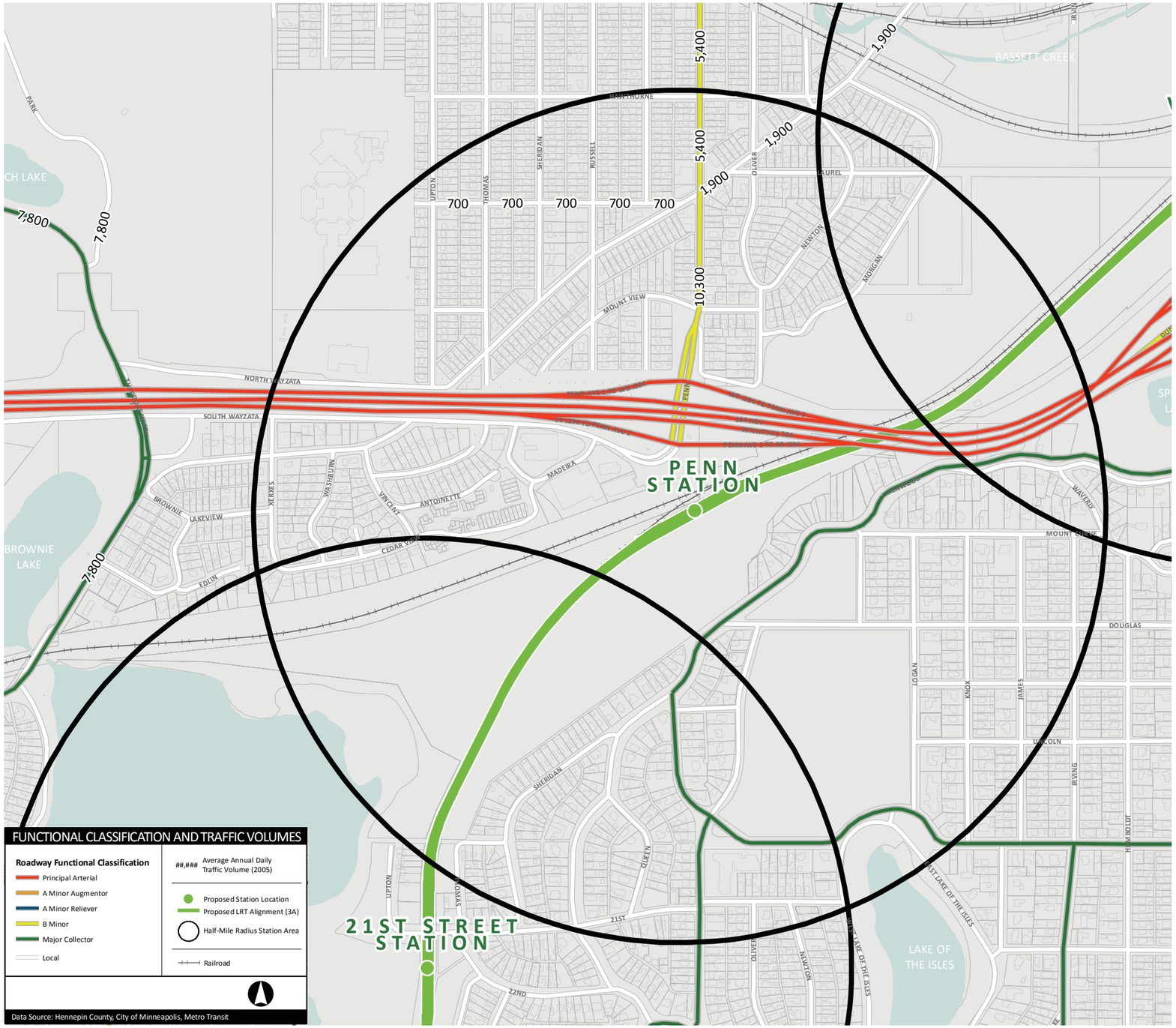
As stated in the Existing Conditions introduction, Penn station will be on the valley floor; existing bus service runs at bluff level above this valley.



Roadways & Parking

Based on the existing traffic volumes, the majority of the surrounding local roadway network operates well below its capacity. However, the Penn Ave/I-394 interchange area is highly congested as peak hour volumes on the interstate, freeway ramp segments and bridge section of Penn Ave exceed its capacity resulting in heavy queues across the Penn Ave Bridge. The congestion negatively impacts the pedestrian and bicycle experience in the immediate area. There is currently no public roadway access to the station area. The bluffs and freight rail in this area are physical barriers that limit the ability to complete a roadway connection.

The station area is located between the Penn I-394 interchange and Kenwood Pkwy and has poor access by vehicle. The residential areas within the half mile station radius have on street parking allowed with some restrictions near the parks.

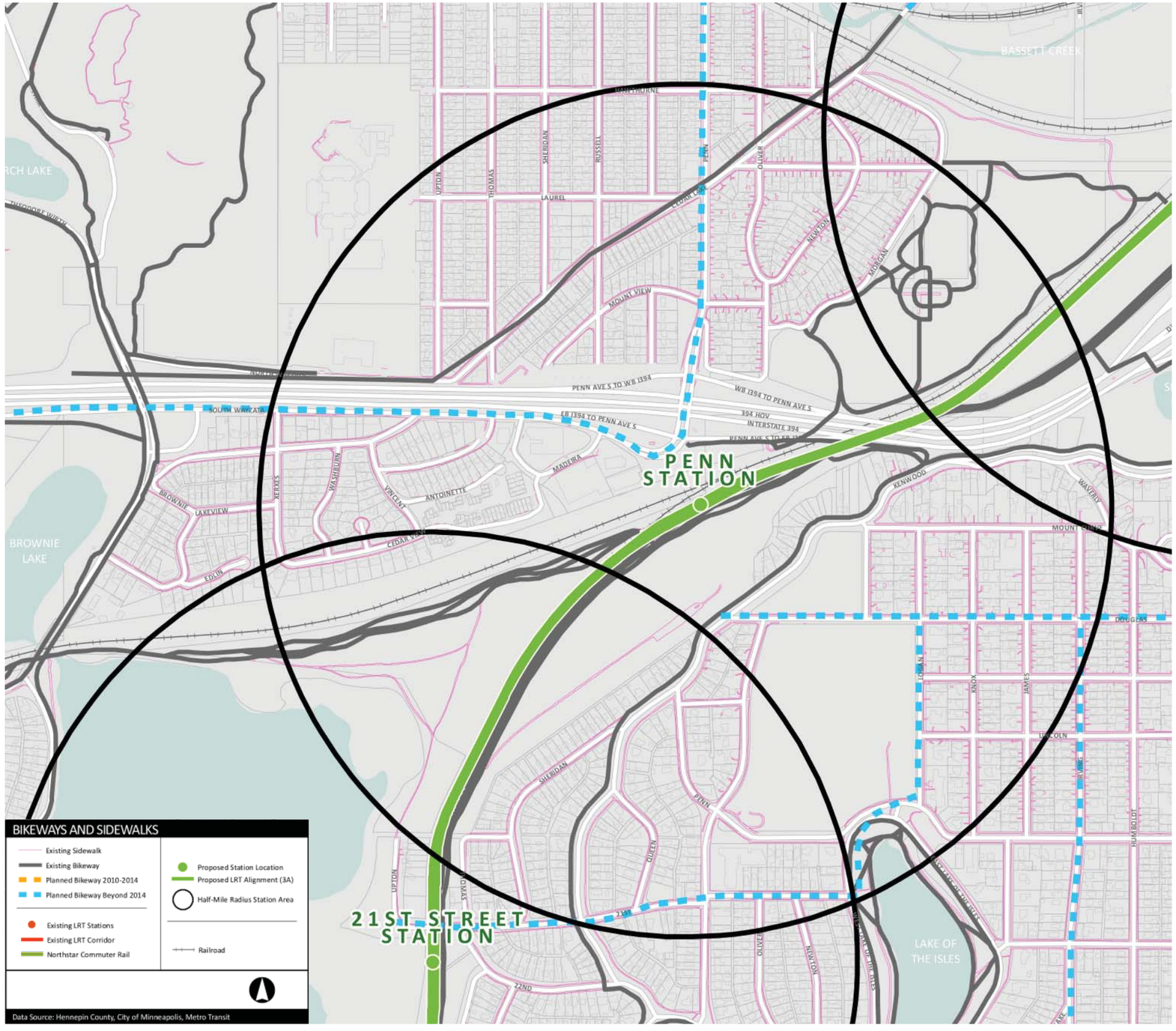


Sidewalks & Trails

The majority of the adjacent roadway network within the Bryn Mawr and Kenwood neighborhoods has adequate sidewalks. The trail network through the station area is significant as the junction point of the Cedar Lake Trail and Kenilworth Trail. The Kenwood neighborhood has a bike route along Kenwood Pkwy and Lake of the Isles. A direct pedestrian connection is lacking from the Kenwood or Bryn Mawr neighborhoods to this station area.

Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to the Bryn Mawr and Kenwood neighborhoods may be achieved via the existing helix pedestrian/bike ramp and/or a new connection to the Kenwood neighborhood at approximately Douglas Avenue. It should also be noted that a significant number of pedestrians and cyclists choose to access the Cedar Lake Trail illegally in this area, by walking across the freight tracks at grade.

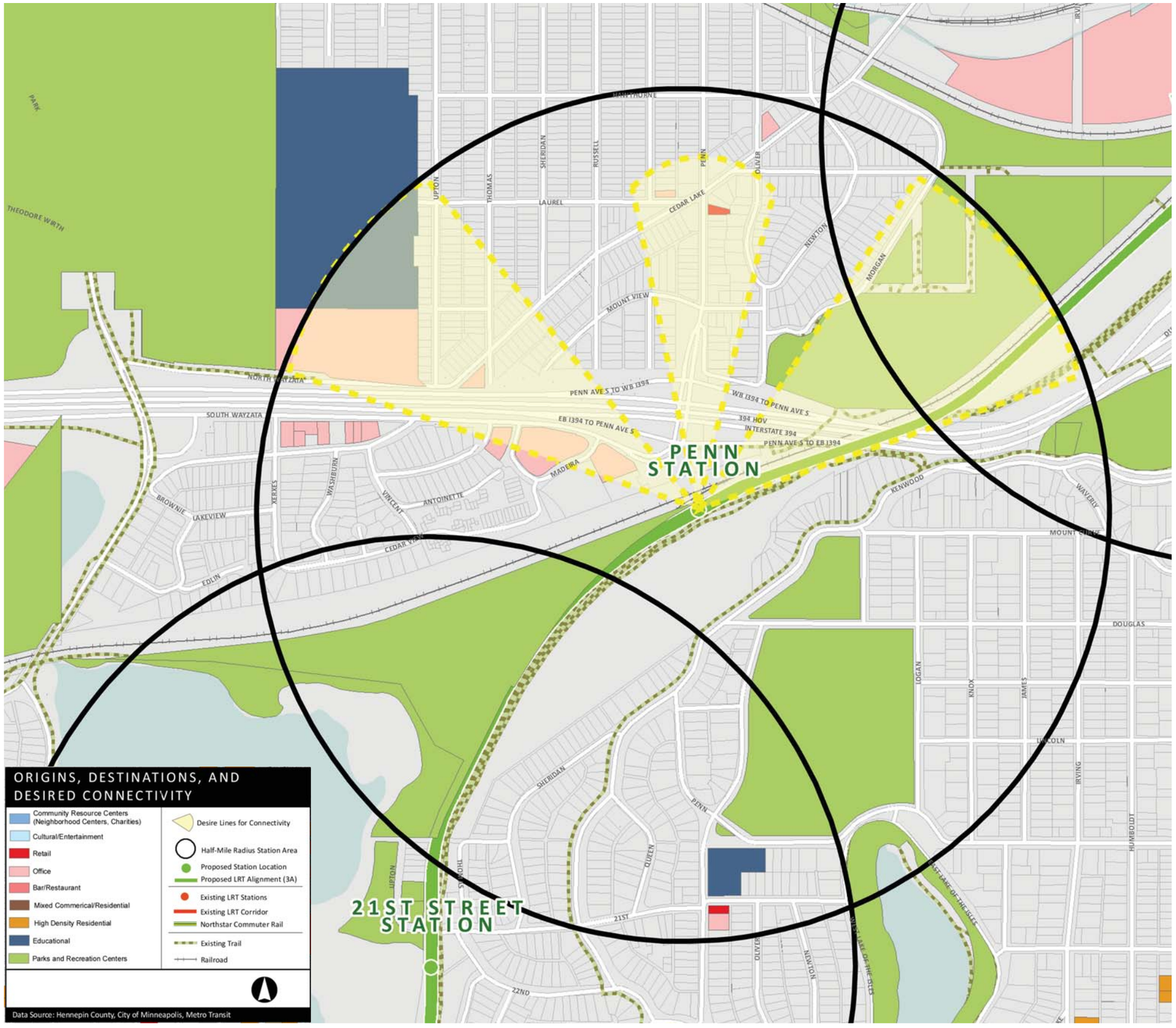
The bluffs on the east and west sides of the station area are significant impediments to pedestrians and cyclists. "Cow paths" exist in these areas, indicating an intuitive travel route between the bluffs and the proposed location of the station platform that could be formalized (and made ADA-accessible) during station construction.



Origins, Destinations & Connectivity

This station will likely generate origin-based ridership. Regardless of whether riders are headed to downtown Minneapolis or to suburban employment nodes served by a reverse commute, peak travel hours will be weekday a.m. and p.m. peak. A small number of riders may use this station to access the handful of commercial uses arrayed along I-394, most notably the Quest employment center on the station area's perimeter.

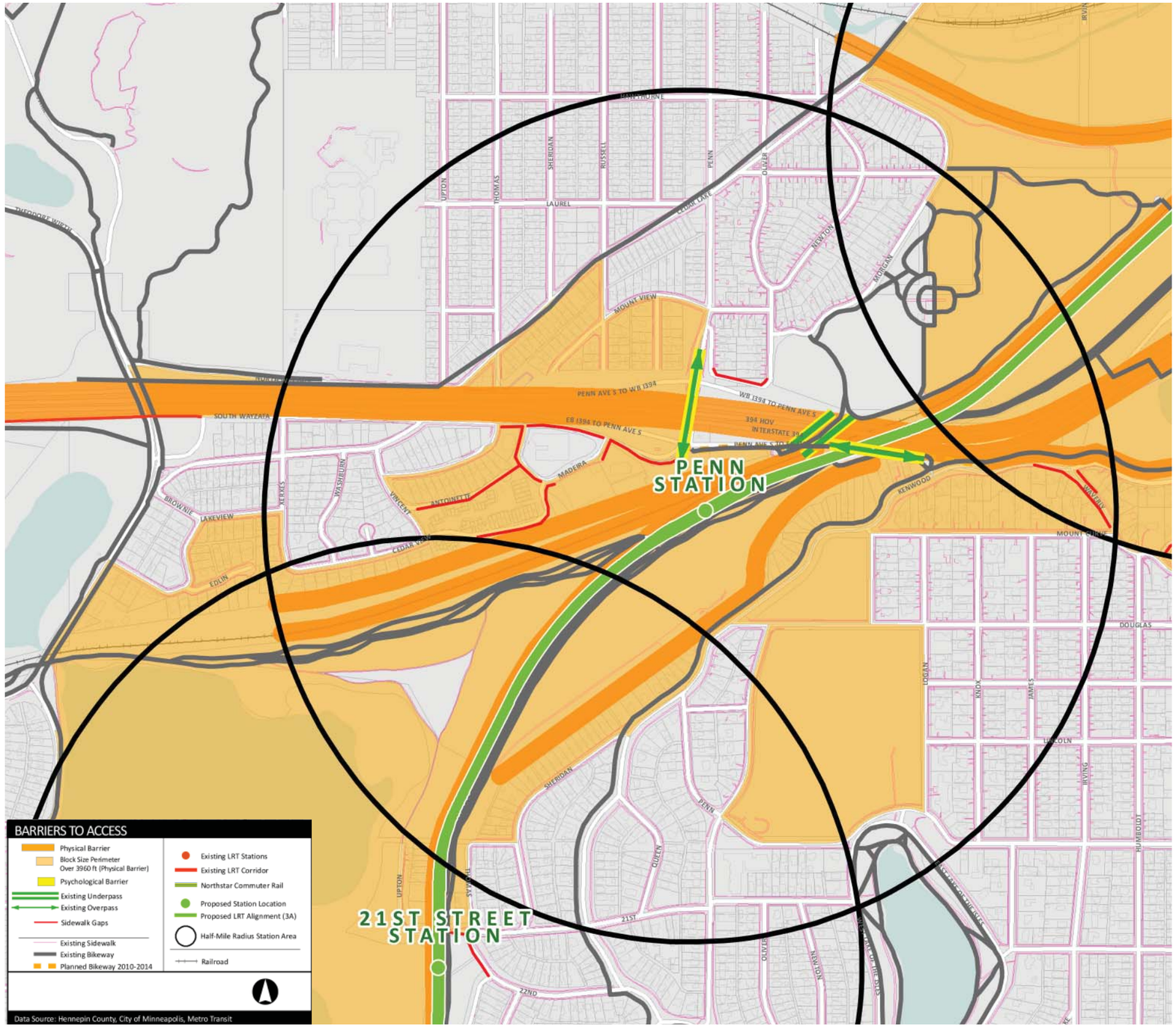
The station area's central destinations are Bryn Mawr Meadows, Anwatin Middle School and Bryn Mawr Elementary school, and a small enclave of neighborhood-serving retail. Given their scale (retail) and user base (schools), however, these destinations are unlikely to generate significant transit ridership. Bryn Mawr Meadows may provide limited destination riders, but these riders are likely to use the closer Van White station.



Barriers to Access

The station area's most significant barrier for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic is topography. Located in a narrow valley and bounded by stable uses, the site has little opportunity for vehicular access to the station itself. This condition means that all users, regardless of whether they arrive by foot, bus or car, will have to walk some distance to the station. Related to topography is the site's minimal visibility from adjacent roadways and properties.

As at Van White station, the active freight rail line act and I-394 act as additional barriers requiring grade-separated crossing for all users.

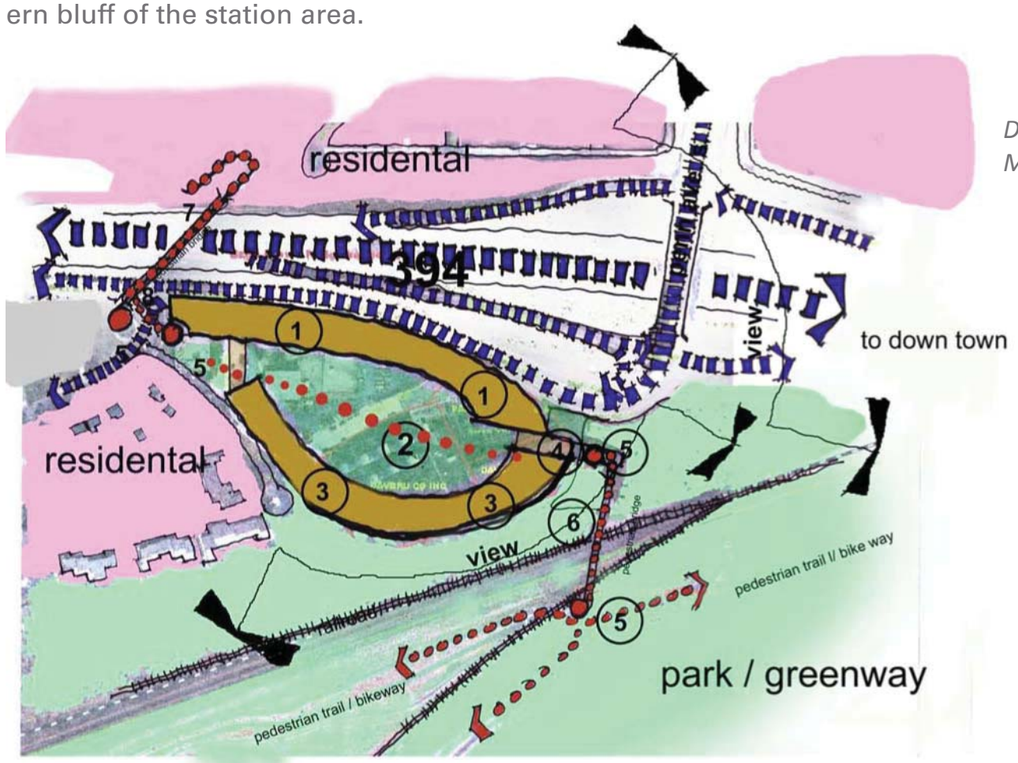


Previous & Current Planning Efforts

Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Land Use Plan, 2003

This community-generated document outlines existing conditions and priorities for the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood. The plan identifies nine goals for neighborhood design and development; these goals are generally consistent with pedestrian- and transit-oriented development principles.

The document identifies nine redevelopment 'opportunity' sites, one of which (South Gateway) falls within the Penn station area. The sketch plan for this site is shown below, and includes multi-level retail and plaza space on the western bluff of the station area.



Development concept on western bluff, Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Land Use Plan, 2003.

Hennepin County Rail Layover Facility Study, 2010

Hennepin County Public Works is currently conducting a study of potential sites for a passenger rail layover facility. Two sites near the Southwest LRT alignment, Linden Yards and Cedar Lake Yards, are under evaluation. It is not within the scope of this Station Area Strategic Planning to evaluate the merits of the sites, and there has been no official selection of the preferred site to date. However, the City of Minneapolis has entered into an agreement with Hennepin County to sell the Linden Yards site for the purposes of a rail layover facility.

Additionally, the study notes several major advantages of the Linden Yards site:

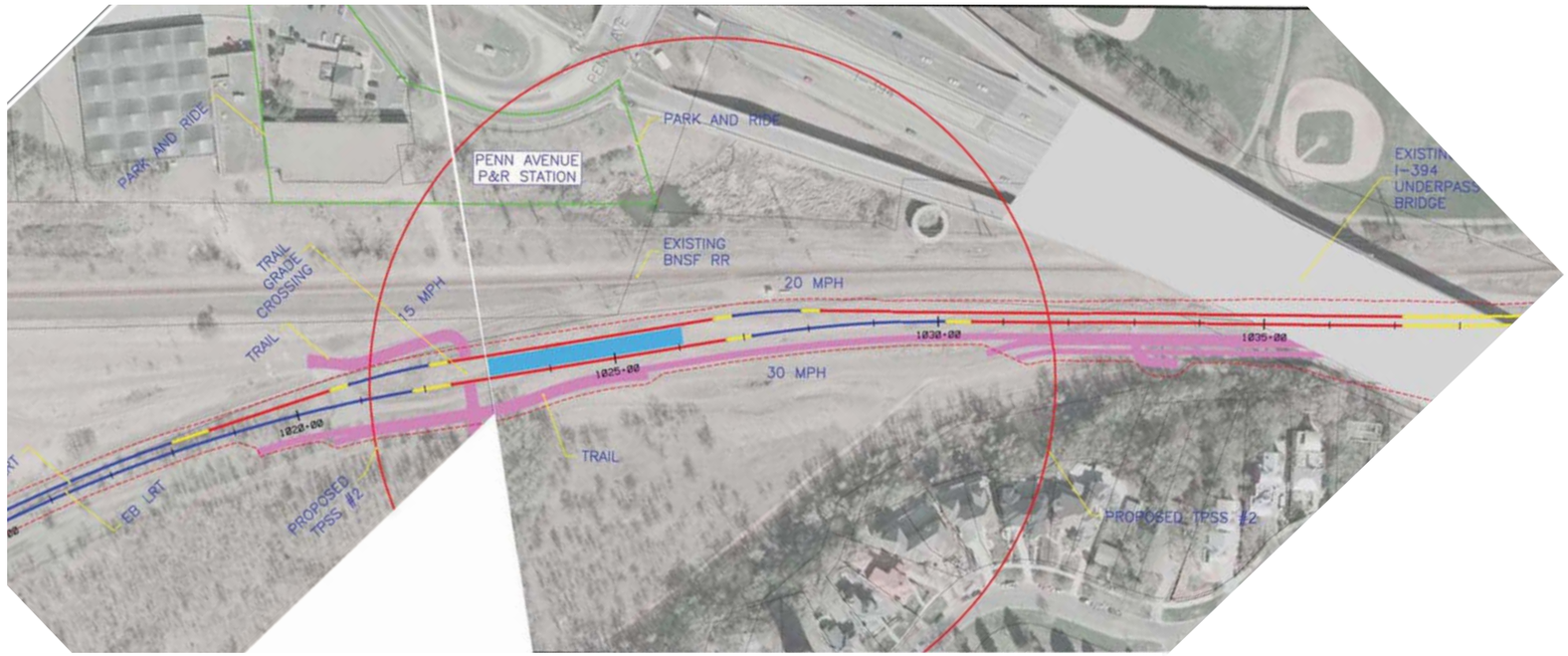
- There is no vehicular access to the Cedar Lake Yards site
- There are no utilities to the Cedar Lake Yards site
- In order for passenger trains to be stored at Cedar Lake Yards, they must pass through Linden Yards on an additional track
- The additional track would not fit under the as-proposed Van White Boulevard Bridge

For the reasons cited above, the station area planning study illustrates development over the top of the rail layover facility at the Linden Yards site. This accommodation is responsive to the City of Minneapolis adopted Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan, the City of Minneapolis resolution to sell Linden Yards for the purposes of the rail layover facility, as well as the ongoing Hennepin County rail layover facility study.

Conceptual Engineering & Locally Preferred Alternative (CE/LPA), 2010

Conceptual Engineering (CE), included in the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) selected by the Metropolitan Council in 2010, represents a preliminary step in design of the actual transit infrastructure itself. Portions of this document most important to station area planning are transit alignment, station location, and at-grade/elevated/sunken crossings; these elements will have a direct bearing on future station area character and development opportunity.

Most important for station area planning purposes is the platform location in relation to Penn Avenue, and the at-grade trail crossing. Station area planning recognizes that a large portion of station users are likely to come from Bryn Mawr north of I-394; minimizing the horizontal and vertical distance between Penn Avenue and platform is of high importance to reduce travel time to the station.



Penn Station location, CE/LPA, 2010.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), 2010

The DEIS documents the possible impacts of the LRT project on both the natural and built environments. As of the writing of this document, the DEIS is currently under FTA review.

Summary Analysis

Community Assessment

Community members appear split regarding the future function and ridership at this station, noting that access issues may mean that many adjacent residents choose to use Van White or 21st Street stations instead.

Residents are also concerned with maintaining not only access to, but efficient function of, the existing regional trail system in this area. Some stakeholders have stated a very strong desire for grade separation between bike and rail, so that heavily-used commuter trails are not negatively impacted. The community also has a very strong desire for the LRT process to provide better, safer connections to the Cedar Lake Trail from the north side of the existing freight rail line.

Design Team Assessment

The design team views station access, and its impacts on future ridership, as the single most critical issue at the Penn Station. With little opportunity for direct vehicular access to the platform itself, pedestrian connections from the north, south and east are critical. Connections must be ADA-compliant, and must minimize the distance to the station to the greatest degree possible. Looking particularly at grade-separated crossing of freight rail, the team is concerned with the cost of such necessary improvements contrasted against potential ridership.

Penn Station

Penn Station is an opportunity to improve the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood's access to transit, lakes, trails and the Minneapolis parks system.

Top Issues

- **Southwest LRT project assumes park-n-ride at this station**
- **Difficult to access station area, for all modes**
- **Pedestrian & bike access across freight rail**

Principles

- **No LRT parking**
- **Provide safe crossing of freight rail and LRT**
- **Minimize impact of any new development**
  - **visual**
  - **traffic**

Opening Day Recommendations

With Pedestrian Underpass

The following recommendations identify elements essential to the safe, efficient function of the transit station: pedestrian and bike connections, multi-modal transfer, passenger drop-off/pick-up, and wayfinding. These elements are the minimum recommendations of this station area strategic planning study, for implementation on opening day. It should be noted that these recommendations are outside the current Southwest Transitway LRT project as defined in the conceptual engineering drawings. While some elements may be constructed as part of the LRT project itself, other elements must be funded, designed and constructed by other entities, and will require close coordination between the City, the County, and Metro Transit, as well as local stakeholders and neighborhood groups. Further recommendations contributing to a larger transit-oriented district, projects and enhancements that may take many years to fully realize, are contained in the next section.

The station area planning effort identified two alternatives for pedestrian access across the freight rail tracks. A pedestrian underpass utilizing the existing pedestrian/bike helix to bring patrons from highway grade to valley floor offers a lower-cost solution than the alternative pedestrian overpass shown on the next pages. An underpass pushes the station platform slightly further north. This location may be more convenient for some residents and less convenient for others, but is generally less centrally located in respect to the adjacent eastern neighborhoods.

Roadway

- Construct auto drop-off/pick-up pull off on bluff south of Penn Ave/Wayzata Blvd intersection

- Sign existing parking area at Kenwood Pkwy, adjacent to Kenwood Trail spur, as auto drop-off/pick-up

This parking area could potentially be reserved for transit use at a.m. and p.m. peak hours only, with other hours open to general parking. Changes to Kenwood Pkwy should be minimized.

Pedestrian Connection (sidewalk)

- Correct existing breaks in the sidewalk system.

Sidewalks are missing in the following locations, and are necessary to ensure safe pedestrian access to the station:

- Wayzata Blvd, south side only, from pedestrian bridge to Penn Ave intersection
- Madeira Ave, both sides

- Install pedestrian wayfinding signage.

This station's depressed location in the valley, not visible from adjacent neighborhoods, makes wayfinding signage particularly important. Signage should be installed at the following locations:

- Kenwood Trail & Kenwood Pkwy
- Penn Ave & Wayzata Blvd
- Top of helix @ Penn Ave
- Bryn Mawr Park—Morgan Ave South
- Bryn Mawr Park –under I-394 trail

- Construct fence prohibiting illegal, at-grade crossing of freight rail line

The introduction of light rail could increase the frequency of unsafe, illegal freight rail crossings by pedestrians and cyclists.

Bicycle Connection (trail/bike lane)

- Construct trail underpass at Cedar Lake/Kenilworth Trail

As a federally-funded bicycle commuter freeway, the Cedar Lake Regional Trail is heavily used by commuters and recreationalists alike. It is important to maintain the highest, most efficient level of service possible on this key bike corridor.

Transit Connection

- Reroute bus 25 to create stop on Kenwood Parkway, at top of Kenwood Trail spur

This route change will ensure the shortest walking distance to the platform, promoting transit ridership.

Parking Management

Station area strategic planning does not recommend transit parking at this location.

Platform

- Slide platform location north of the position shown in the LPA documents.

This more-northern location, still on tangent track, minimizes walking distance to the station, for patrons coming from the ped/bike helix as well as the Kenwood Trail spur.

Land Use

Station area strategic planning identified no immediate land use changes necessary for LRT introduction. Strategic, long-term land use recommendations are contained in the 'Sample Transit-Oriented District' section.

Penn Station: Opening Day Recommendations. Pedestrian access across the freight rail tracks is critical to transit ridership. This option illustrates a pedestrian underpass at the foot of the existing ped/bike helix.

Opening Day Recommendations

With Pedestrian Bridge

The following recommendations identify elements essential to the safe, efficient function of the transit station: pedestrian and bike connections, multi-modal transfer, passenger drop-off/pick-up, and wayfinding. These elements are the minimum recommendations of this station area strategic planning study, for implementation on opening day. It should be noted that these recommendations are outside the current Southwest Transitway LRT project as defined in the conceptual engineering drawings. While some elements may be constructed as part of the LRT project itself, other elements must be funded, designed and constructed by other entities, and will require close coordination between the City, the County, and Metro Transit, as well as local stakeholders and neighborhood groups. Further recommendations contributing to a larger transit-oriented district, projects and enhancements that may take many years to fully realize, are contained in the next section.

As noted on the previous page, the station area planning effort identified two alternatives for pedestrian access across the freight rail tracks to the station. This option, a pedestrian overpass, would costs singificantly more than the previous alternative. This cost would need to be evaluated against the station's potential ridership, to determine ultimate feasibility. With a slightly more southern station location, station access is more central for eastern bluff residents.

Roadway

- Construct auto drop-off/pick-up pull off on bluff south of Penn Ave/Wayzata Blvd intersection

- Sign on-street auto drop-off/pick-up area on Kenwood Pkwy, adjacent to new ped/bike access trail (Douglas Ave intersection)

This parking area could potentially be reserved for transit use at a.m. and p.m. peak hours only, with other hours open to general parking. Changes to Kenwood Pkwy should be minimized.

Pedestrian Connection (sidewalk)

- Correct existing breaks in the sidewalk system.

Sidewalks are missing in the following locations, and are necessary to ensure safe pedestrian access to the station:

- Wayzata Blvd, south side only, from pedestrian bridge to Penn Ave intersection
- Madeira Ave, both sides
- south side of Douglas Ave, from Logan to Oliver

- Construct fence prohibiting illegal, at-grade crossing of freight rail line

The introduction of light rail could increase the frequency of unsafe, illegal freight rail crossings by pedestrians and cyclists.

- Install pedestrian wayfinding signage.

This station's depressed location in the valley, not visible from adjacent neighborhoods, makes wayfinding signage particularly important. Signage should be installed at the following locations:

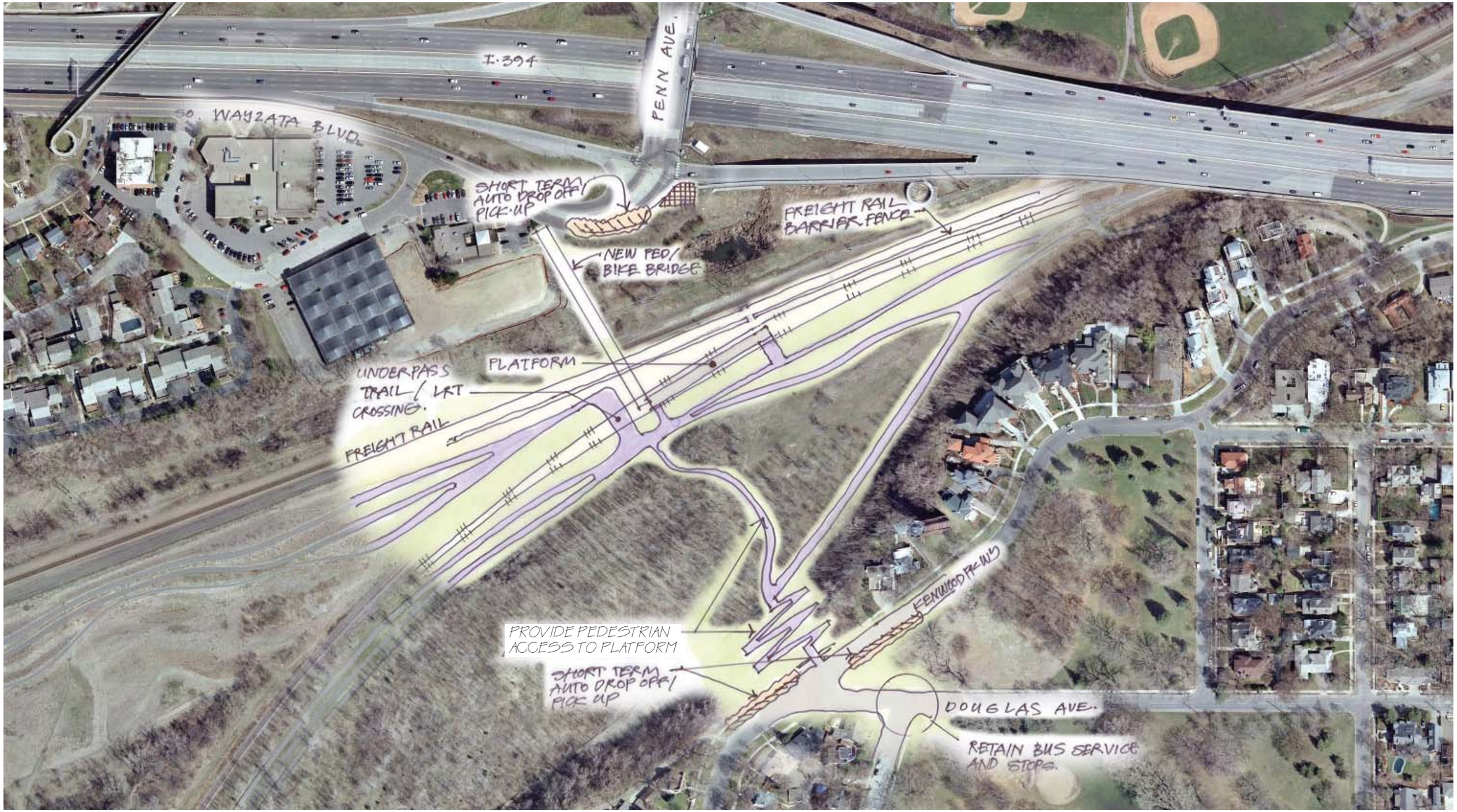
- Kenwood Trail & Kenwood Pkwy
- Penn Ave & Wayzata Blvd
- Kenwood Ave & Douglas Ave (new pedestrian/bike trail)

- Construct pedestrian bridge over freight rail line

Bridge should provided ADA-compliant access for pedestrians and cyclists, and must be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Bridge can land on light rail platform, or immediately adjacent to it.

- Construct ADA-compliant pedestrian access from Douglas Ave (east bluff) to station.

This multi-use trail is critical for providing station access from the Kenwood neighborhood. Access from the existing Kenwood Trail spur provides adequate service for the Lowry Hill neighborhood and the northern portions of the Kenwood neighborhood, but would be out-of-direction and unreasonably distant from the station for a significant portion of the station area.



Penn Station: Opening Day Recommendations. Pedestrian access across the freight rail tracks is critical to transit ridership. This option illustrates an elevated pedestrian bridge.

Bicycle Connection (trail/bike lane)

- Construct trail underpass at Cedar Lake/Kenilworth Trail intersection

As a federally-funded bicycle commuter freeway, the Cedar Lake Regional Trail is heavily used by commuters and recreationalists alike. It is important to maintain the highest, most efficient level of service possible on this key bike corridor.

- Install NiceRide station

A bike share station on the station platform will enhance connectivity and mobility within the station area.

Transit Connection

Station area strategic planning identified no immediate transit changes necessary for LRT introduction.

Parking Management

Station area strategic planning does not recommend transit parking at this location. Parking management on neighborhood streets may be implemented at some point in the future, if residents feel transit parking is an issue.

Platform

The platform location identified in the LPA documents is in alignment with station area planning goals.

Land Use

Station area strategic planning identified no immediate land use changes necessary for LRT introduction. Strategic, long-term land use recommendations are contained in the next section.

Development in the Valley?

This station area strategic planning process did evaluate the potential for development on publicly-owned property on the valley floor, southeast of the LRT platform. In keeping with the neighborhood character and views, low-rise residential was judged to be the most likely opportunity.

Roadway access to the valley floor, particularly for emergency vehicles, would be difficult and place an unacceptably high level of new traffic on existing local streets. This option was discarded.

Penn Station: Conceptual Sketch. Opening Day with pedestrian underpass to station, looking north to downtown from base of western bluff.

Penn Station: Conceptual Sketch. Opening Day with pedestrian bridge to station, looking north to downtown from base of western bluff.

Public Comment

Open house attendees emphasized the need for the existing bike path, heavily used by downtown commuters, and future LRT to be grade separated at their Penn Station crossing.

Questions & Comments

- **The LRT-bike path crossing should be grade-separated.**
  Current DEIS drawings illustrate an at-grade crossing. Public comment, however, indicates that this process should consider recommending a separated crossing.
- **This is a good place for a Nice Ride station.**
- **Reduce walk-time by moving pedestrian bridge closer to Penn Avenue.**
- **There is plenty of room for a park-n-ride on the western bluff.**
- **There should not be a park-n-ride.**
  Final decision regarding the inclusion of park-n-ride facilities will be made during the preliminary engineering (PE) process.
- **How will the Kenwood neighborhood access the station?**
- **Maintain the prairie character of the area.**
- **This station should be eliminated.**
  Final decision regarding constructing or eliminating specific stations will be made during the preliminary engineering (PE) process.

Sample Transit-Oriented District

The graphic at right illustrates one of many ways the Penn station area might look in the future, embodying transit-oriented development principles. This drawing is not a plan, per-se, but simply a graphic representation of the physical form that could evolve within a framework of pedestrian-focused, transit-supportive policies.

The goal of this station area strategic planning process is not to decide which parcels will redevelop, when they will redevelop, or even what specific land use they will have. All of these particulars will be decided by market demand, and by the private landowner. Rather, the goal of this process is to identify the land use and planning principles most relevant to this particular station area, and to begin to formulate a framework of visioning principles that will act as a base for future, more detailed planning efforts.

Roadway

Station area strategic planning identified no additional, long-term roadway recommendations beyond those identified in the preceding Opening Day Recommendations.

Pedestrian Connection (sidewalk)

- Enhance the Penn Ave pedestrian experience through improved streetscape, including the Penn Avenue bridge.

Enhancements might include, but not be limited to pedestrian lighting, wider sidewalk on Penn Ave bridge, street trees on block prior to Penn Ave bridge.

Bicycle Connection (trail/bike lane)

Station area planning identified no additional, long-term bicycle recommendations beyond those identified in the preceding Opening Day Recommendations.

Transit Connection

Station area planning identified no additional, long-term transit recommendations beyond those identified in the preceding Opening Day Recommendations.

Parking Management

- Consider reduced parking requirements, shared parking and other parking management tools.

In order to promote density and capitalize on transit connectivity, reduced parking requirements, shared parking, parking caps (maximums instead of minimums) or phased parking requirements (a lower parking cap or lower parking requirements as the area reaches redevelopment build-out) should be considered.

The City of Minneapolis's zoning code already sets parking maximums for most uses. In station areas in particular reduced parking numbers should be encouraged. In addition, application of the Transit Station Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District should be considered. This zoning overlay further reduces the minimum and maximum parking requirements. It also allows for parking to be located an additional 500' from the use served and reduces parking lot dimensions.

Care should be taken that parking policy is not so stringent as to discourage market-based development. Enforcement will be required.

Penn Station: Sample Transit-Oriented District.. Mixed-use development on the bluff above the station may promote additional ridership.

Platform

Station area planning identified no additional, long-term transit platforms beyond those identified in the preceding Opening Day Recommendations.

Land Use

- Redevelop western bluff with higher-density, more transit-supportive uses.

Development should ideally include horizontally and vertically mixed uses. A single tenant, such as a corporate headquarters, would also be a transit-appropriate use.

Zoning

- Rezone properties to transit-friendly districts, and apply appropriate overlays, as development proposals are submitted.

The western bluff sites abutting the station (and most likely to redevelop) are currently zoned I1 (light industrial, mixed use not allowed) and OR2 (office-residential). While this zoning is not ideal for future transit oriented development, a full scale rezoning study (typically the analysis of 40 acres or more) is not warranted. In addition, zoning changes made before redevelopment is proposed could result in making some existing businesses non-conforming. Instead transit-friendly (existing or new, depending upon redevelopment timing) zoning districts should be considered when a development is proposed.

Next Steps

Context & Planning Assumptions

- Park and ride allocation currently in LRT project; station area strategic planning does not recommend park and ride at Penn Station.

Planning Process

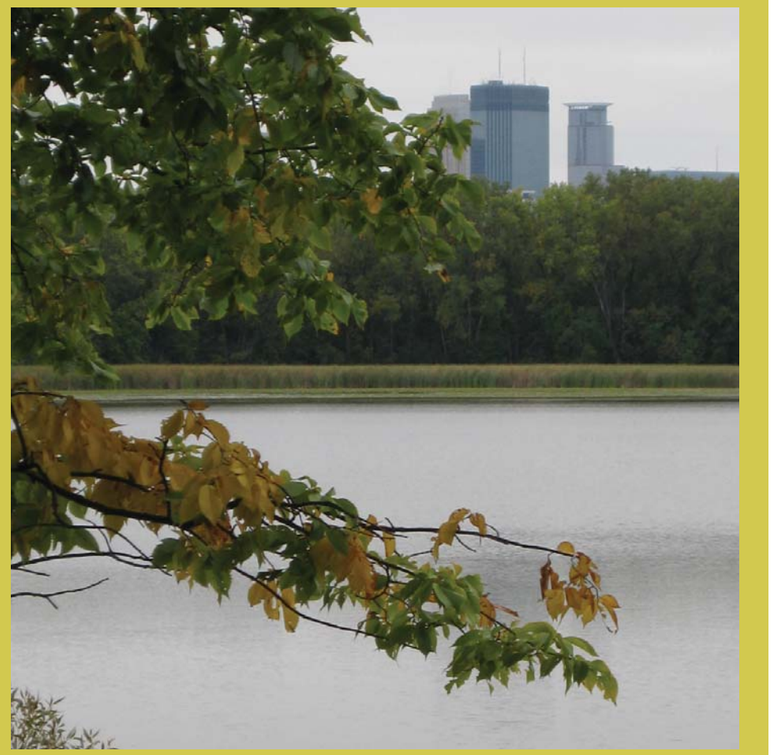
The tables at right summarize the recommendations contained in the preceding 'Opening Day Recommendations' and "Sample Transit Oriented District' sections. A number of broader steps, listed below, will be needed to set the framework for the more specific steps identified at right.

- Provide input to preliminary engineering for LRT effort with Met Council
- Carry out station area, but non-LRT infrastructure enhancements such as close gaps in pedestrian & bike circulation
- Adopt appropriate transit-area policies at the City/County level
- Create a development-friendly environment
    - Discuss disposition toward redevelopment with owners of vacant parcels on western bluff
    - Explore parcel assembly & acquisition
    - Consider RFP's
    - Identify funding mechanisms, incentives & public participation

Specific Recommendations to be Implemented by LRT Opening Day	Additional Study & Design during Preliminary Engineering	Policy Change	Lead Jurisdiction
Auto pick-up/drop-off	x		SW LRT Project
Wayfinding signage	x		SW LRT Project
Fence prohibiting illegal freight rail crossing	x		SW LRT Project
Trail underpasses: south of station	x		SW LRT Project
Trail underpass at existing ped helix (underpass option)	x		SW LRT Project
Re-route bus 25 (underpass option)	x		Metro Transit
Modify station platform location (underpass option)	x		SW LRT Project
Missing segments of sidewalk system (ped bridge option)	x		City
ADA-compliant access from east bluff to station (ped bridge option)	x		SW LRT Project, City
Ped/bike bridge (ped bridge option)	x		SW LRT Project
NiceRide station	x		City

Specific Recommendations to be Implemented as Needed	Additional Study & Design during Preliminary Engineering	Policy Change	Lead Jurisdiction
Improve streetscape on Penn Ave bridge	x		City
Redevelop western bluff with higher density,mixed-use building	x		private developer

21st Street Station

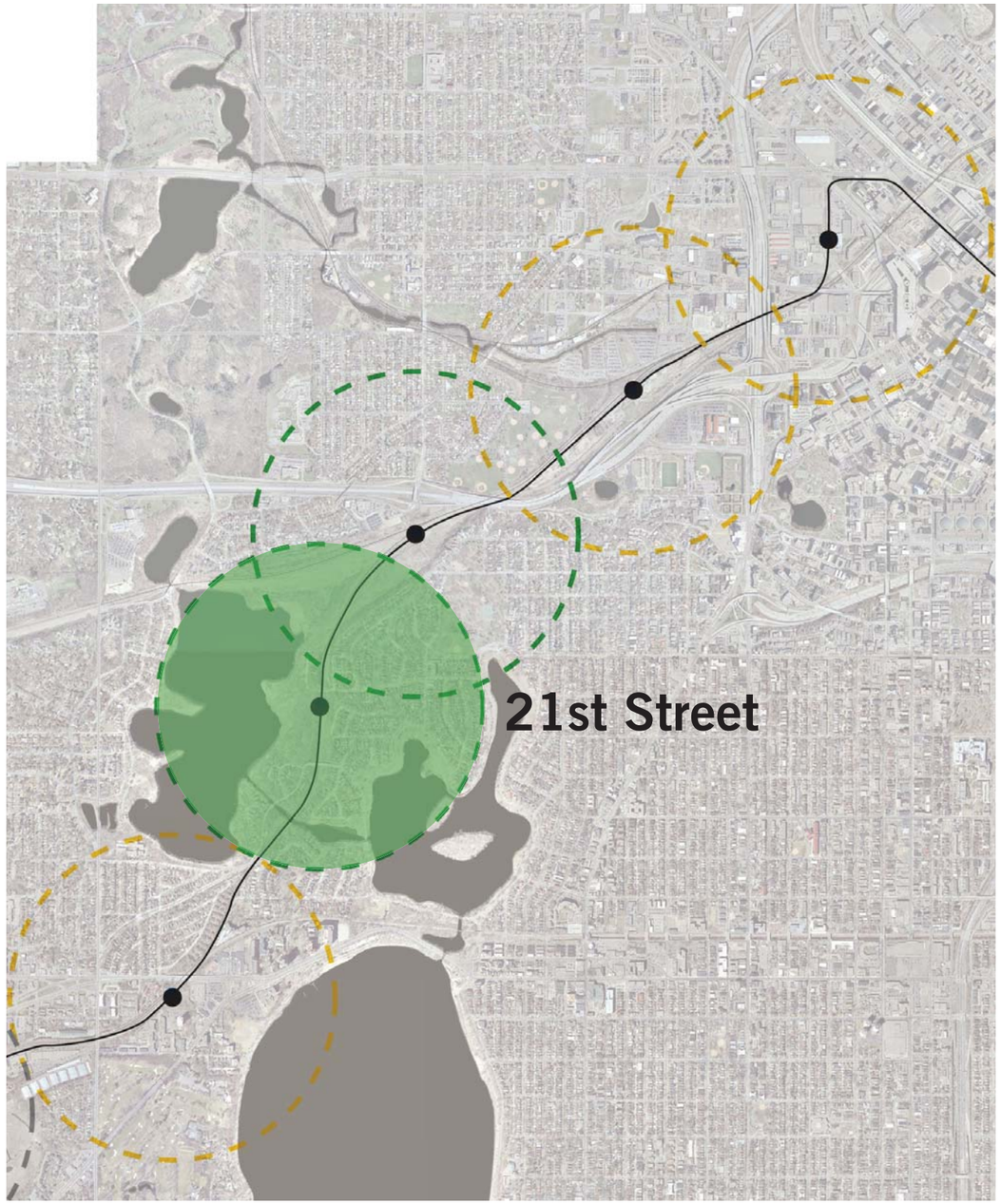


Station Area Strategic Planning

- **Existing Conditions**
- **Previous & Current Planning Efforts**
- **Summary Analysis**
- **Opening Day Recommendations**
- **Next Steps**

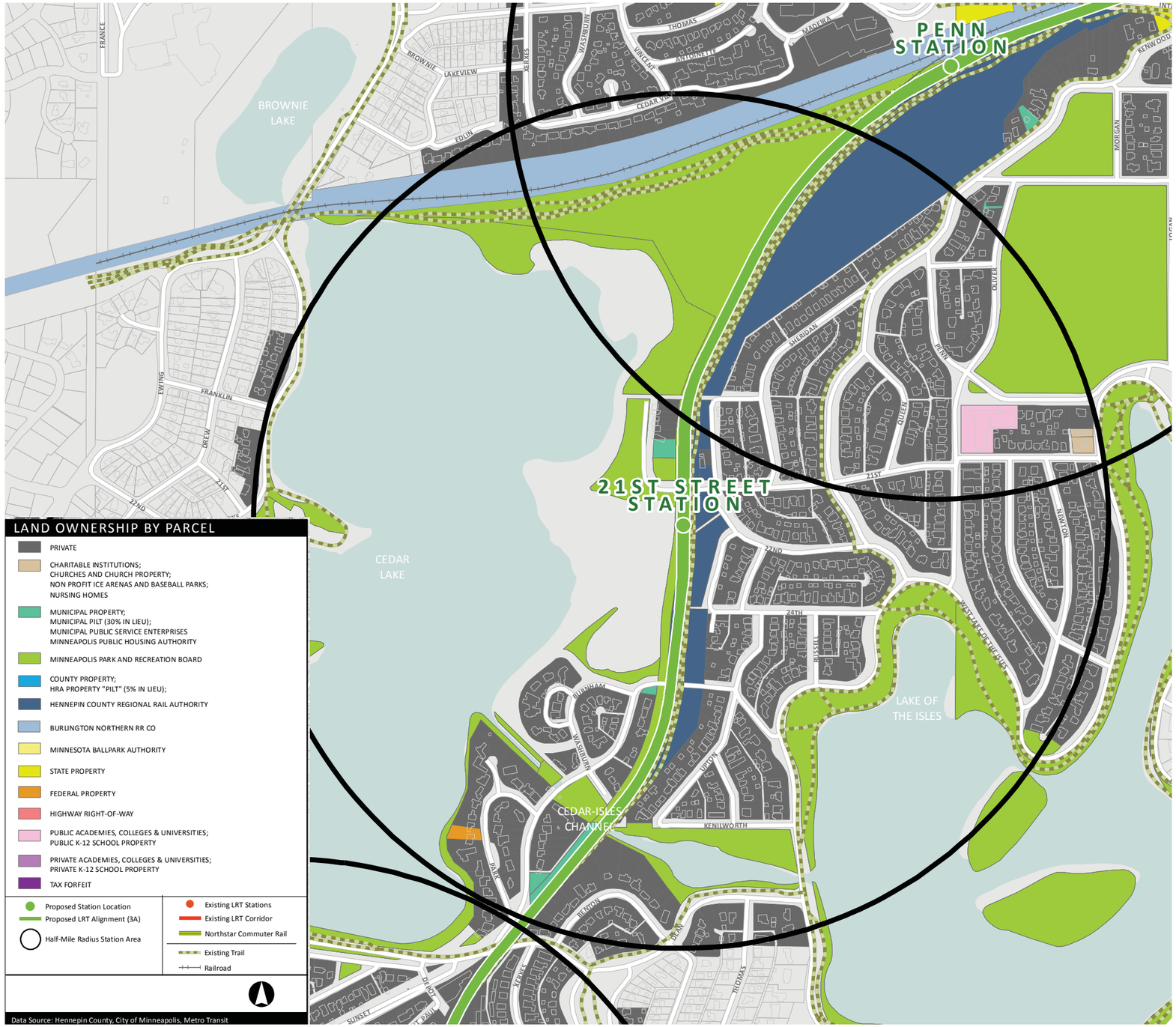
Existing Conditions

The 21st Street station is located between Cedar Lake and the stable Kenwood neighborhood. The station is anticipated to serve primarily local residents commuting to the downtown core for work or special events. The station also has potential to serve as a recreational destination for users of Cedar Lake, as well as users of the adjacent regional trails.



Land Ownership

The 21st Street station area is composed almost exclusively of private residential properties, with a corridor-adjacent strip of property owned by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA). Area within the ½-mile radius that does not fall into the above two categories is park property, including a significant amount of lake area.

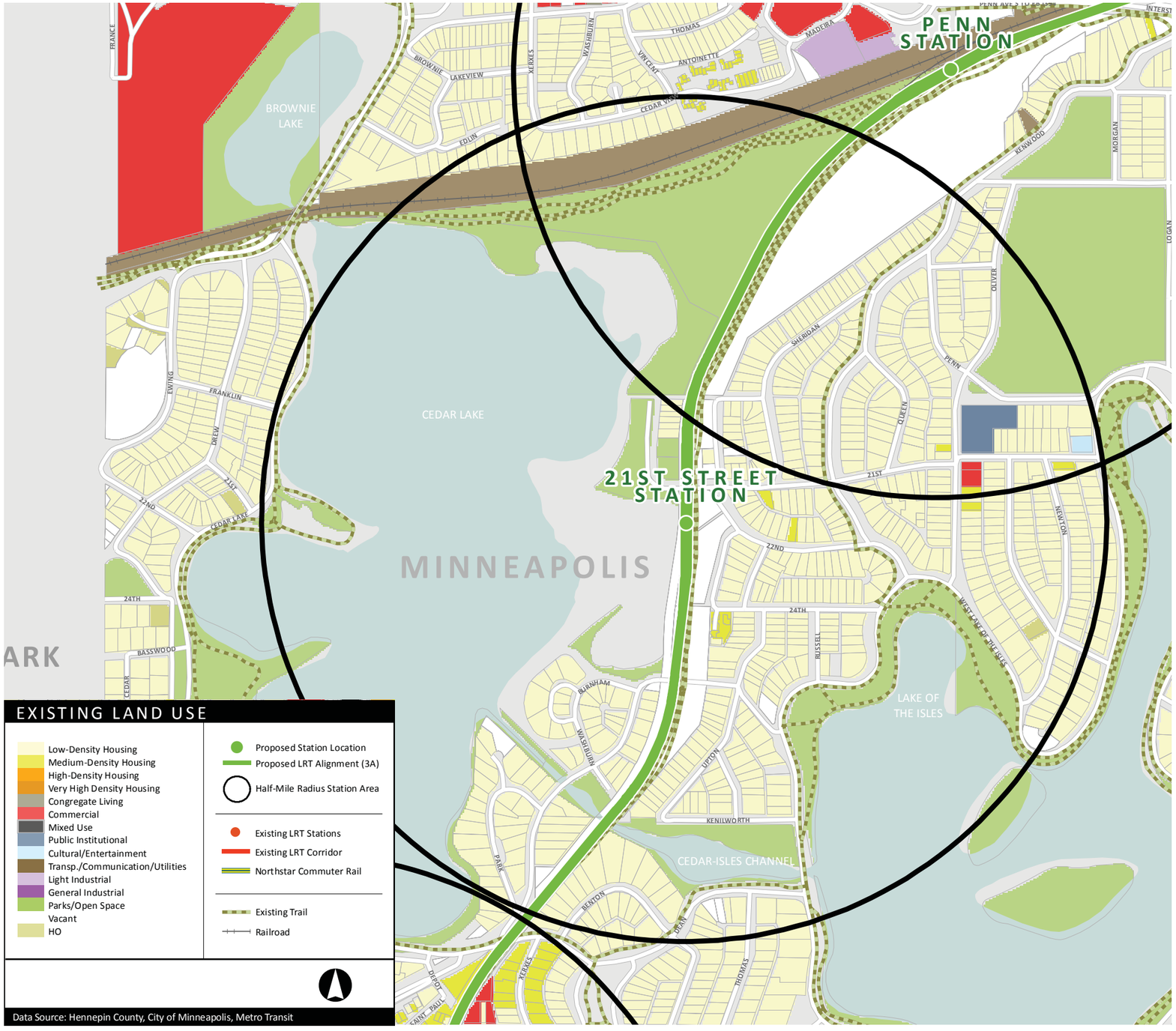


Land Use

As suggested by ownership patterns described on the preceding page, land uses within the area are predominantly split between single family residential and parkland, including actual lake surface. Residential properties are very stable, and are some of the most sought-after addresses in the City. The community is tightly-knit and committed to maintaining its character, amenities, and property values.

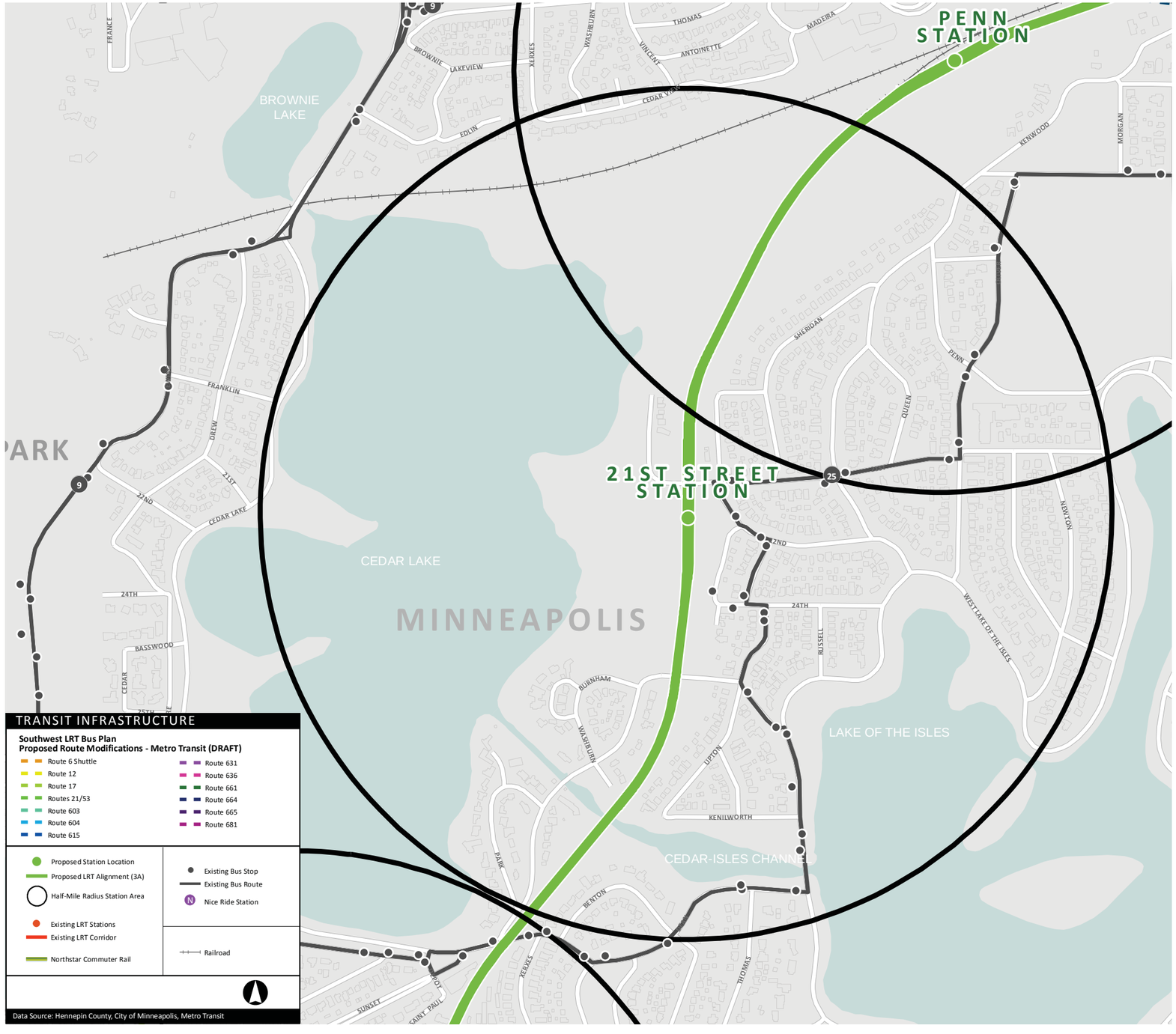
The LRT corridor is bordered to the east by the well-used Kenilworth multi-use trail. Homes adjacent to the corridor on both the west and east side back to the corridor.

It should be noted that a historic rail depot did exist in this location during Minneapolis's early years. 'Hidden Beach' on Cedar Lake directly west of the proposed station is a quiet beachfront area.



Transit

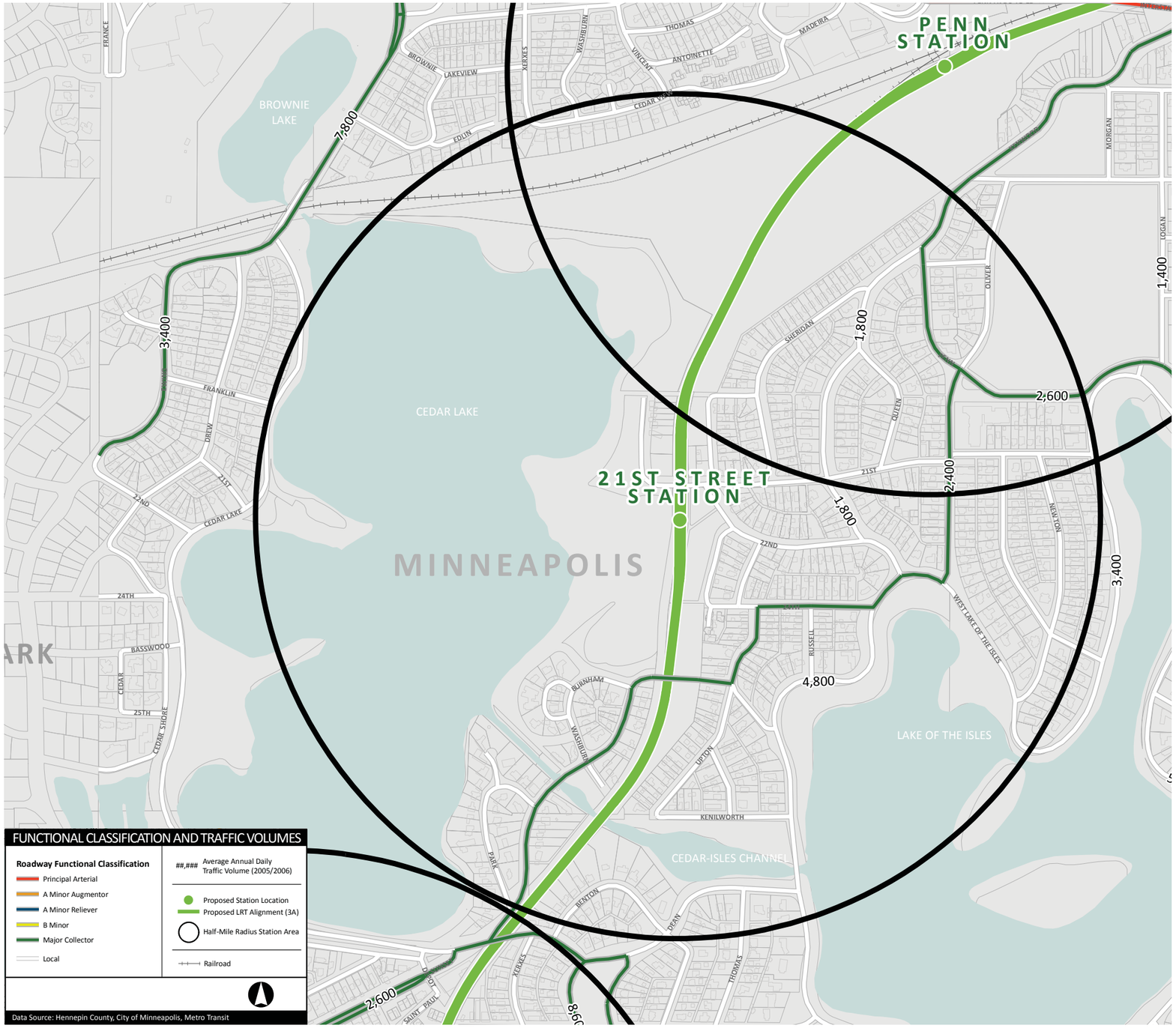
The station area is served by a single bus route, route 25, which operates on Douglas Ave, Oliver Ave, 21st St, 22nd St and Sheridan Ave. The closest existing bus stop is approximately 300 feet from the proposed station. This proximity suggests that no major routing changes would be necessary in response to light rail introduction.



Roadways & Parking

The station area does not have direct highway access, and the irregular nature of the land between the adjacent Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles means that local streets are curvilinear and not gridded. This circuitous vehicular access suggests that the station will be used primarily by local residents; riders from the larger community will likely choose one of the more intuitively accessible stations immediately north or south of 21st Street Station.

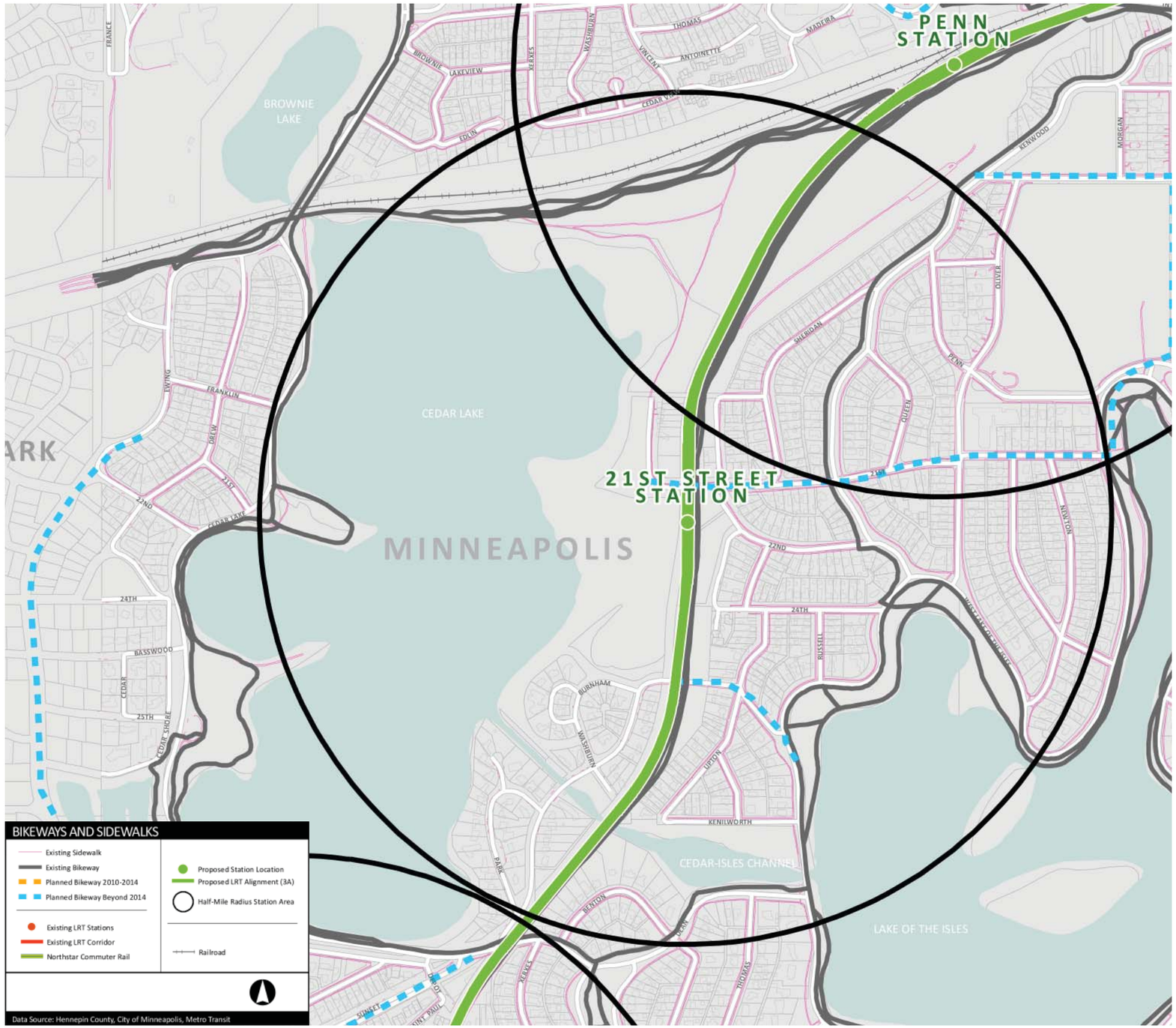
On-street parking is available on most local streets within the neighborhood, and is not restricted by residential permits or time limits.



Sidewalks & Trails

The Kenilworth multi-use trail runs north-south through the station area, sharing the future LRT corridor with existing freight rail (which will be removed from this section of the corridor when light rail is constructed). The trail is heavily used by both recreationalists and commuters, on foot and on bikes. This bike trail connects to the Cedar Lake trail just north of the station area, as well as to Minneapolis' renowned Grand Rounds bike trail circling adjacent Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles, as well as the entire Chain of Lakes. Two east-west bike routes on 21st St and Sheridan Ave are planned by the City of Minneapolis in the long term (after 2014).

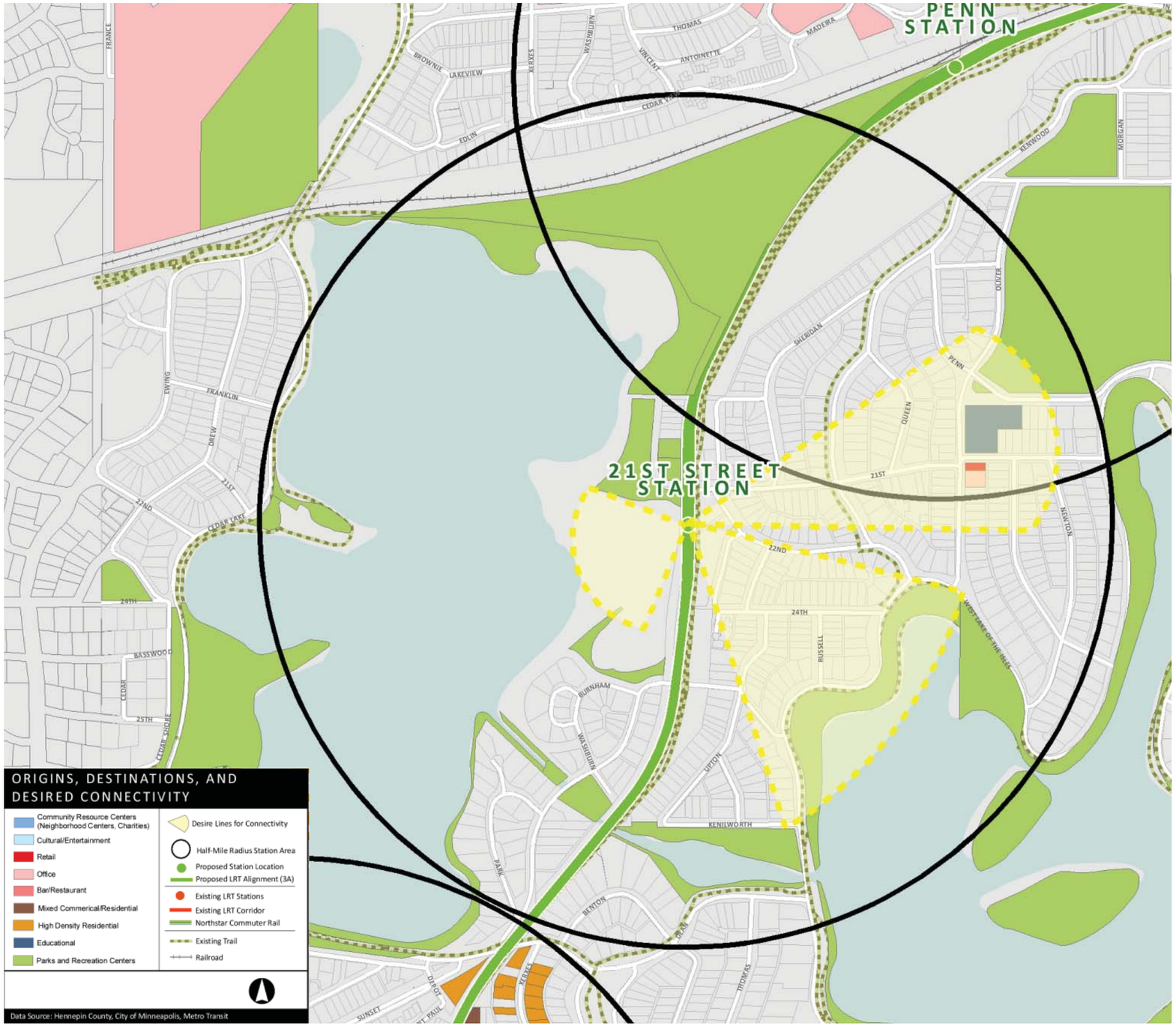
Sidewalks within the adjacent neighborhood form a nearly complete system, with only a few gaps of no more than a block or so.



Origins, Destinations & Connectivity

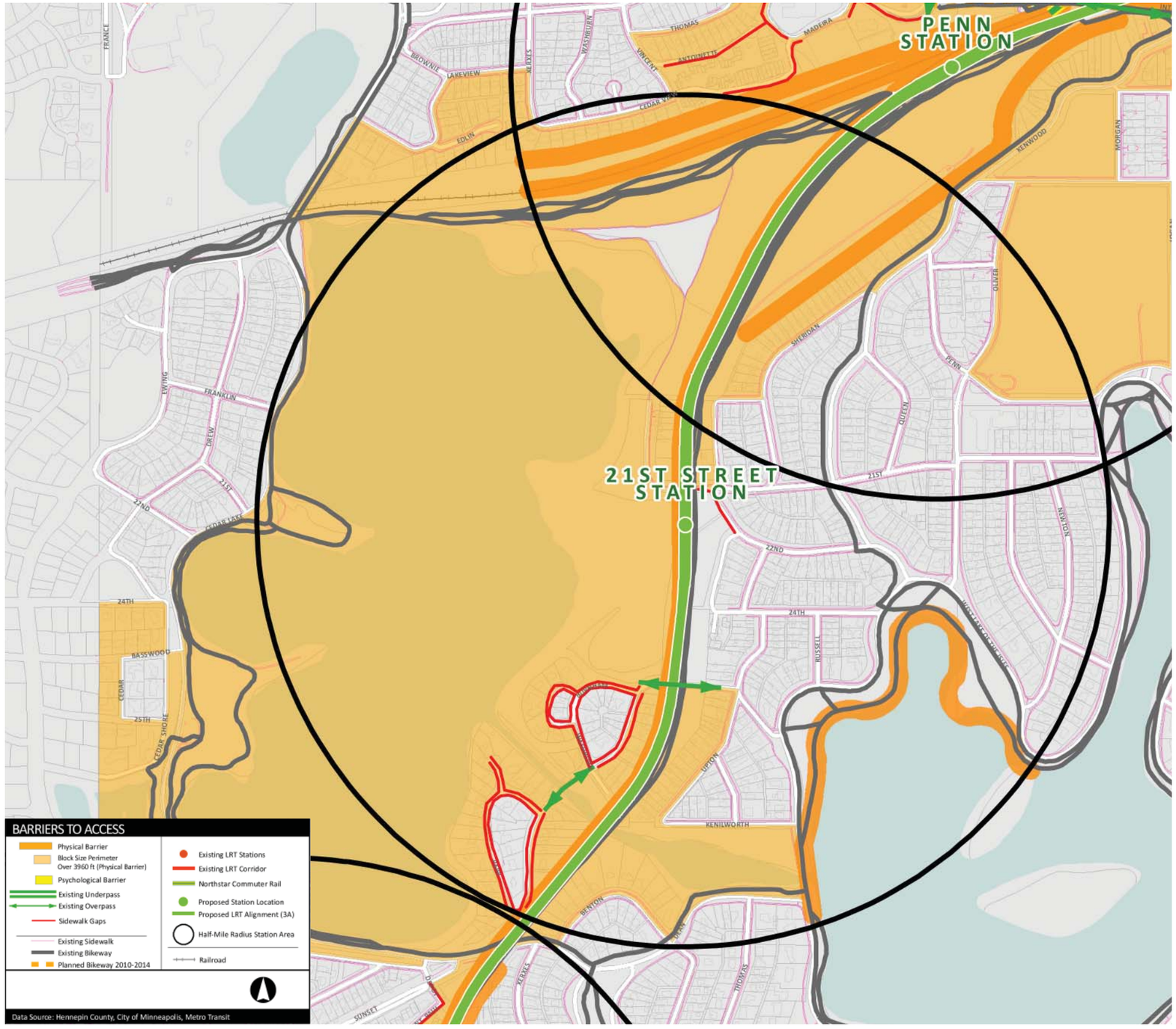
21st Street will be an almost exclusively origin-driven station, providing amenity for local residents to travel into downtown Minneapolis for business or leisure. While Hidden Beach will be accessible from this station, the majority of recreational uses on Cedar Lake take place on the Lake's western shore; this portion of the lake offers more recreational amenity and is part of the City's Grand Rounds bike system.

Access will be the single most important element requiring refined planning in advance of station opening. Opening-day station facilities must provide, at a minimum, bike and pedestrian access, as well as kiss-n-ride drop-off.



Barriers to Access

Occupying almost the entire western half of the ½-mile radius station area, Cedar Lake is the most significant barrier to station access. As noted in the preceding discussion on Roadways, the circuitous nature of local streets within the station area are also likely to reduce the number of riders from outside the immediate station area who use this station.



Previous & Current Planning Efforts

No neighborhood-specific planning efforts have taken place in the 21st Street Station area. Broad-level planning guidance for this and all station areas contained in this strategic station area planning effort is contained in the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan (2000) and the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth (2009). The latter is an update to the year 2000 document.

Conceptual Engineering & Locally Preferred Alternative (CE/LPA), 2010

Conceptual Engineering (CE), included in the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) selected by the Metropolitan Council in 2010, represents a preliminary step in design of the actual transit infrastructure itself. Portions of this document most important to station area planning are transit alignment, station location, and at-grade/elevated/sunken crossings; these elements will have a direct bearing on future station area character and development opportunity.

CE/LPA drawings show the 21st Street station platform directly south of the existing rail intersection with 21st Street. The station area planning process does not recommend any changes to this location.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), 2010

The DEIS documents the possible impacts of the LRT project on both the natural and built environments. As of the writing of this document, the DEIS is currently under FTA review.

21st Street Station location, LPA, 2010.

Summary Analysis

Community Input

Community concerns center primarily around technical engineering issues, including visual/noise impacts and at-grade crossings (citing safety reasons at 21st Street and traffic congestion concerns at Cedar Lake Parkway.) These concerns will be addressed during the DEIS comment period and the preliminary engineering (PE) phase of design.

From a land use and planning point of view, stakeholders oppose any change in existing land uses to privately and publicly owned parcels, including the HCRRA-owned parcel abutting the station.

Design Team Analysis

As noted in the background chapter, not every station can or should be a town center. Some station areas may experience only modest redevelopment in response to LRT introduction, while others may see no development at all and be best served by introducing only the minimum infrastructure needed to offer transit service. The 21st Street station is of this latter category, and planning efforts should focus on pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented enhancements such as closing gaps in the sidewalk system and signage to assist in wayfinding to the station.

21st Street

21st Street Station is an opportunity to provide neighborhood LRT service while preserving local character and neighborhood connections to the natural features of the area.

Top Issues

- **Southwest LRT project assumes park-n-ride at this station**
- **Stable, desirable residential**
  - **not likely or desired to change**
- **Traffic, parking on neighborhood streets**

Principles

- **This process recommends no park-n-ride at this station**
- **Maintain neighborhood character**
- **Minimize neighborhood impact: visual, traffic**

Opening Day Recommendations

The following recommendations identify elements essential to the safe, efficient function of the transit station: pedestrian and bike connections, multi-modal transfer, passenger drop-off/pick-up, and wayfinding. These elements are the minimum recommendations of this station area strategic planning study, for implementation on opening day. It should be noted that these recommendations are outside the current Southwest Transitway LRT project as defined in the conceptual engineering drawings. While some elements may be constructed as part of the LRT project itself, other elements must be funded, designed and constructed by other entities, and will require close coordination between the City, the County, and Metro Transit, as well as local stakeholders and neighborhood groups. Further recommendations contributing to a larger transit-oriented district, projects and enhancements that may take many years to fully realize, are contained in the next section.

Existing neighborhood context and comment do not favor development or redevelopment beyond the minimum amenities needed for providing safe and efficient LRT service at this station. For this reason, no sample transit oriented district and was prepared for this station.

Roadway

- Create auto drop-off/pick-up on 22nd Street, both sides, between Thomas and 21st St

On the east side of the street, use signage to designate 3 – 4 spaces for drop-off only. These spaces may be reserved during a.m. and p.m. peak hours only, with other hours for general parking. On the west side of the street use signage or construct pull-off spaces to reserve 3-4 spaces for transit use. Again, these spaces may be restricted during peak transit hours, with other hours for general parking.

Pedestrian Connection (sidewalk)

- Construct 'missing' pieces of sidewalk.

The following gaps in the sidewalk system must be completed in order to provide full, uninterrupted station access

- 24th St, north side of street from midblock between Sheridan and Thomas, to Kenilworth Trail
- 24th St, south side of street from Sheridan to Kenilworth Trail (north and south sidewalks may merge west of 24th street terminus)
- 22nd St, west side between Thomas & 21st
- 21st St, from 22nd to Kenilworth Trail

- Introduce wayfinding signage at:
  - Penn Ave & 21st St
  - Penn Ave & Lake of the Isles Pkwy (2 locations)

Bicycle Connection (trail/bike lane)

- Maintain trail stop signs at Kenilworth Trail/21st St intersection

- Install signage on trail, at both ends of LRT platform, advising cyclists of heavy pedestrian crossings

Transit Connection

Station area strategic planning does not recommend transit parking at this location. Parking management on neighborhood streets may be implemented at some point in the future, if residents feel that transit parking is an issue.

Parking Management

Station area planning identified no immediate parking management necessary for LRT introduction.

Platform

The platform location identified in the LPA documents is in alignment with station area planning goals.

Land Use

Station area planning identified no immediate land use changes necessary for LRT introduction.

Zoning

The 21st street station is surrounded by low density residential zoning. Since redevelopment is not envisioned, rezoning is not necessary.

New Development at 21st?

This station area strategic planning process did evaluate the potential for development on HCRRA-owned property immediately east of the LRT alignment.

The narrow width of the parcel would accommodate townhomes with parking 'tucked' into the first floor of each unit. Garages would be accessed from existing Thomas Avenue.

Neighborhood residents strongly opposed the introduction of any additional development of any type. This option was discarded.

21st Street Station: Conceptual Sketch looking south along Kenilworth Trail.

Public Comment

There is strong neighborhood concern regarding LRT's potential impact on neighborhood character, traffic and property values. Residents have also voiced significant concern over the potential volume and frequency transit bells, whistles and horns.

Questions & Comments

- **LRT will increase crime and drugs in our neighborhood.**
- **We need to protect the beauty of our neighborhood and the Cedar Lake area.**
- **There should be no park-n-ride here.**
- **This station will bring too much drive-through traffic and daytime parking on our streets.**
- **There should be no new development.**
- **LRT should tunnel under Cedar Lake Pkwy.**
  Current CE/LPA drawings illustrate a structure over Cedar Lake Pkwy. Final vertical alignment will be decided during the preliminary engineering (PE) process.
- **LRT will create noise all night, and residents will not be able to sleep.**
- **We need an exemption to bells at 21st St.**
- **Can the bells not ring at night?**
  Volume and operating procedures for audible warning devices will be made by the transit operator as part of the engineering process.
- **This station should be eliminated.**
  Final decision regarding constructing or eliminating specific stations will be made during the preliminary engineering (PE) process.

Next Steps

Context & Planning Assumptions

- Park and ride allocation currently in LRT project; station area strategic planning does not recommend park and ride at 21st Street Station.

Planning Process

The table at right summarizes the recommendations contained in the preceding 'Opening Day Recommendations' section. A number of broader steps, listed below, will be needed to set the framework for the more specific steps identified at right.

- Provide input to preliminary engineering for LRT effort with Met Council
- Monitor trail usage & potential user conflict
- Monitor neighborhood parking and implement parking management measures if necessary

Specific Recommendations to be Implemented by LRT Opening Day	Additional Study & Design during Preliminary Engineering	Policy Change	Lead Jurisdiction
Auto pick-up/drop-off	x		SW LRT Project
Missing segments of sidewalk system	x		City
Wayfinding signage	x		SW LRT Project
Trail signage indicating heavy pedestrian crossings	x		SW LRT Project, City
NiceRide station	x		City

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West Lake Station

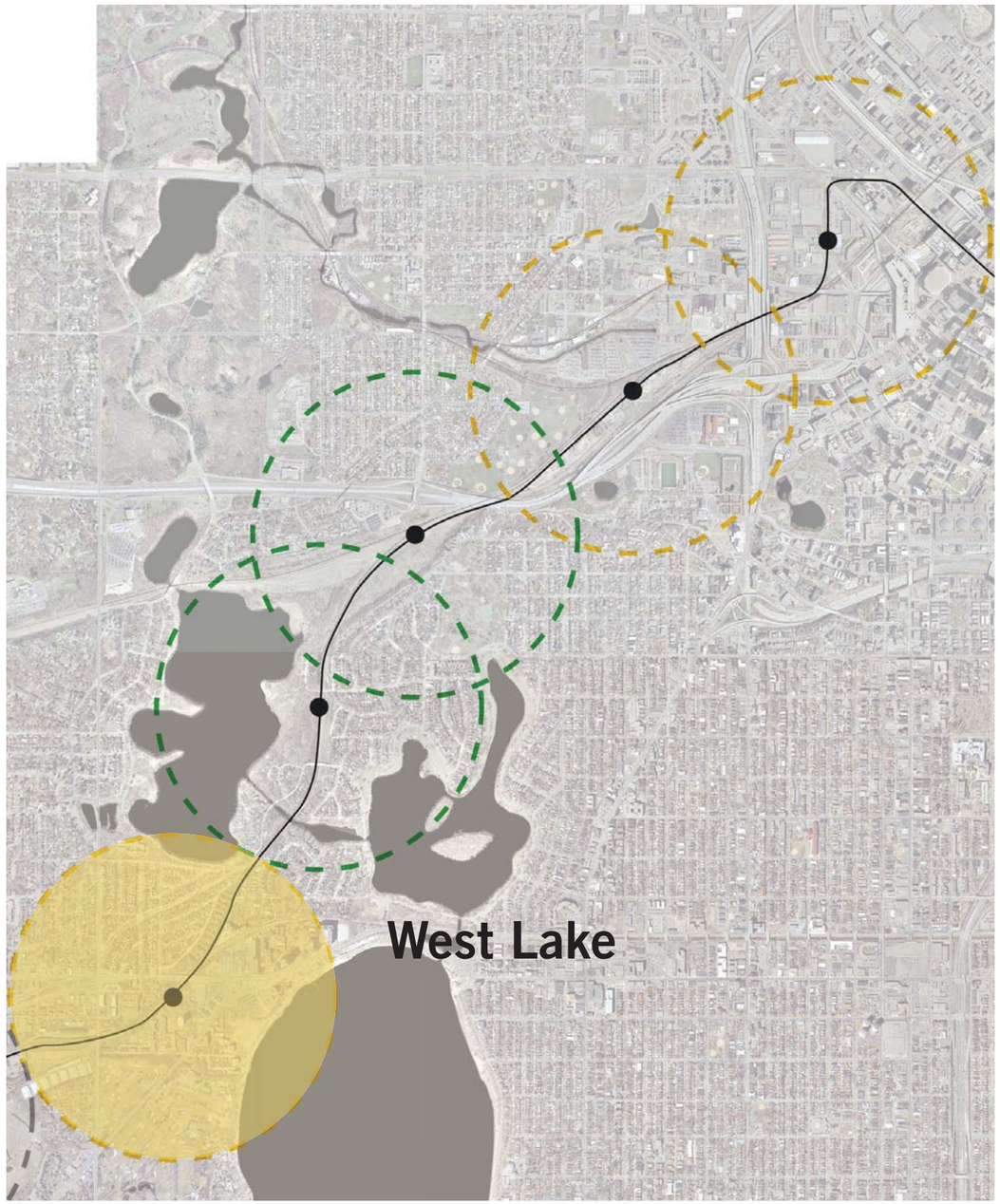
Station Area Strategic Planning

- Existing Conditions
- Previous & Current Planning Efforts
- Summary Analysis
- Opening Day Recommendations
- Sample Transit-Oriented District
- Next Steps

Existing Conditions

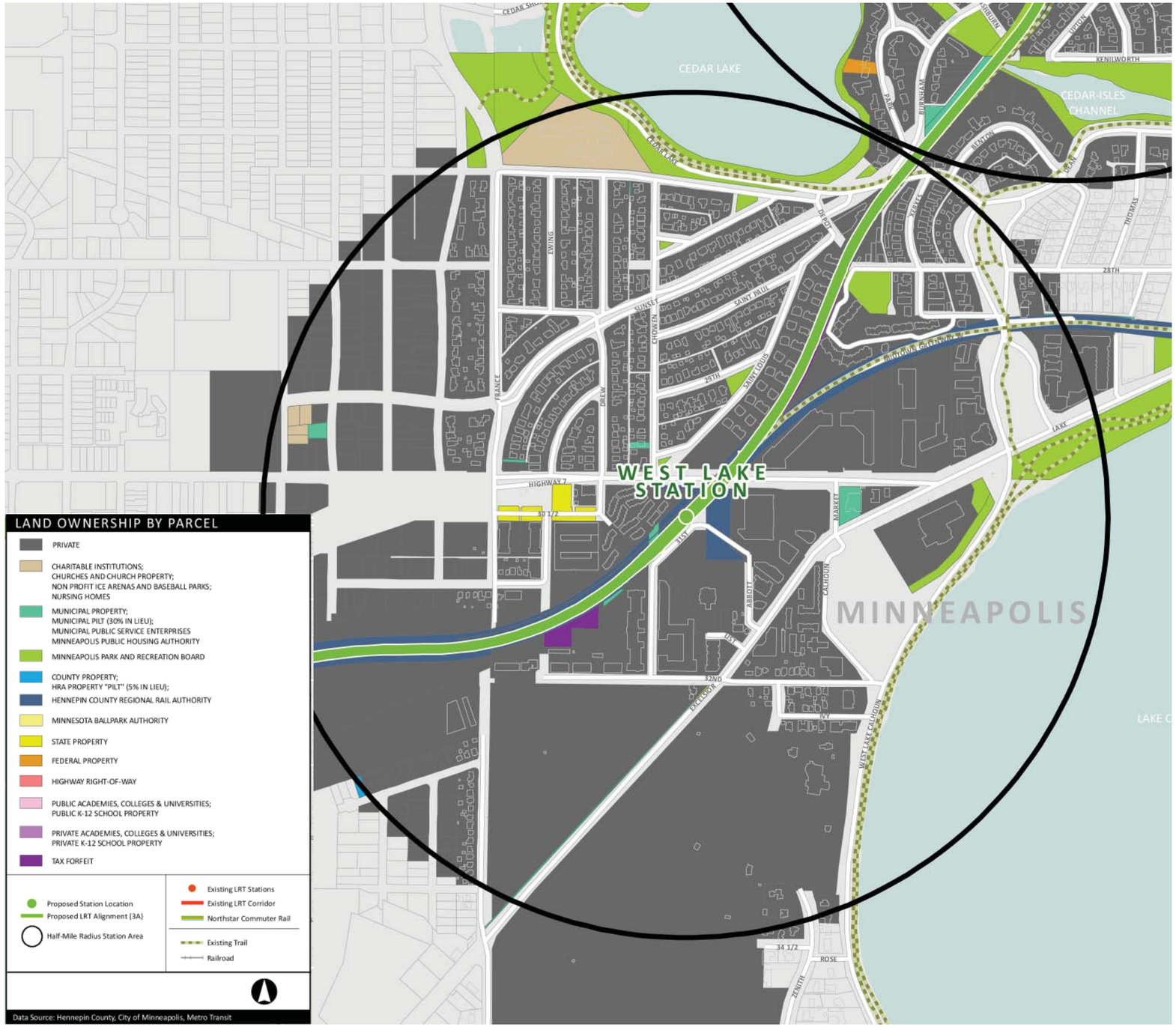
The West Lake station is located within an active, very successful mixed use area. Land uses are dominated by commercial and residential, with some office uses on the perimeter of the station area. Tenants are varied, and include a grocery store, liquor store, drug store, bookstore, and various quick and sit-down eateries. Housing is predominantly medium- and high-rise buildings, with both for-rent and for-sale products. Some townhome development is also within the station area.

The variety and intensity of uses within this successful mixed-use node lends well to LRT introduction, but is also responsible for congestion on the existing roadway system. While LRT introduction stands to enhance and intensify existing uses, roadway capacity and potential enhancements will also be a chief concern in planning for future development.



Land Ownership

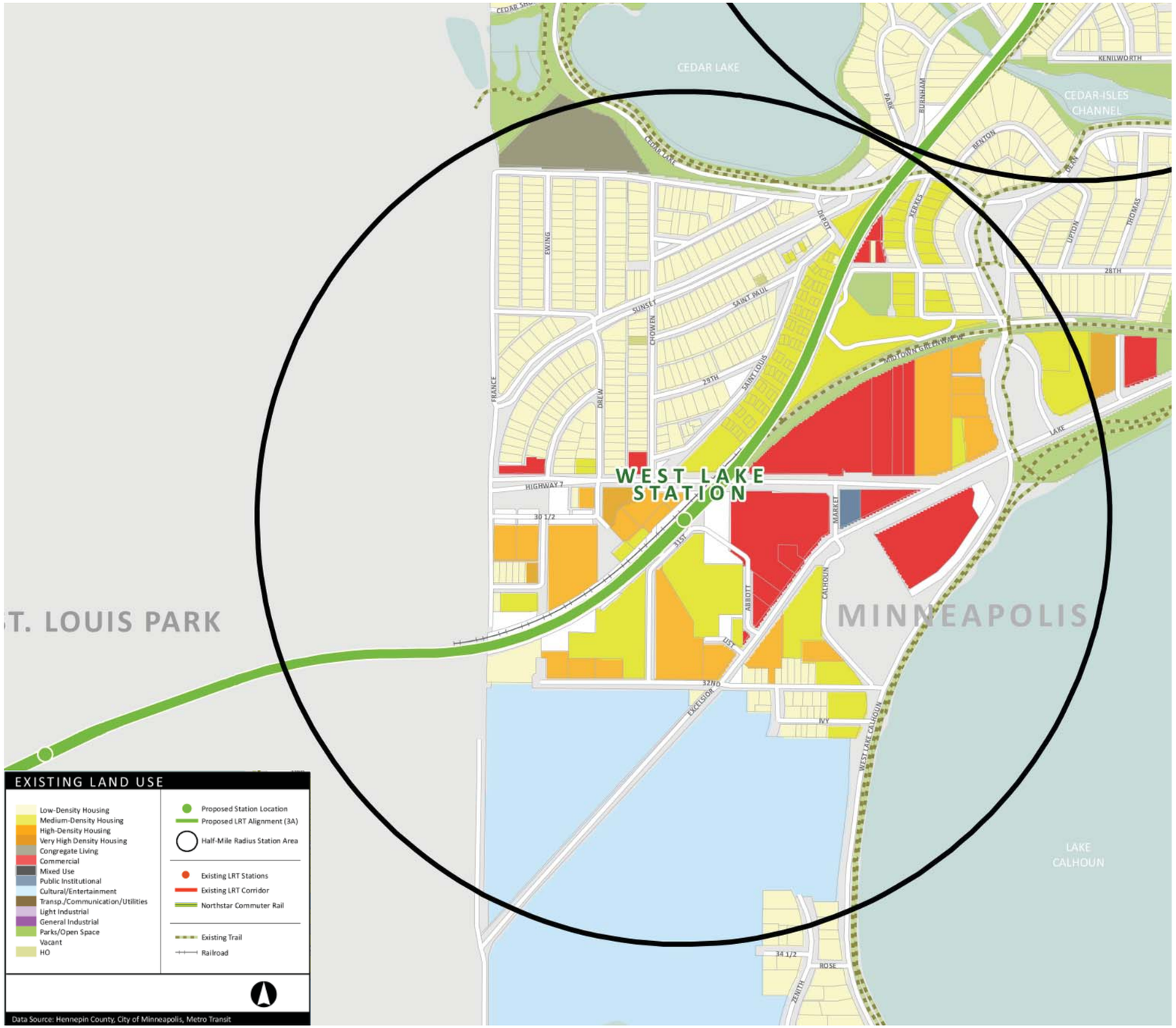
The bulk of parcels within the West Lake station area are privately owned, with a small number of properties owned by municipal, parks and charitable interests. The station area also includes portions of Cedar Lake and Lake Calhoun.



Land Use

Of the five Minneapolis stations, West Lake claims the most varied land use, with a mix of low-density residential, medium- and high-density residential, commercial, and recreational uses (including the Minikahda golf club, the Midtown Greenway, and Cedar Lake and Lake Calhoun). The area immediately adjacent to the station is dominated by medium- and high-density residential, as well as strip-type commercial and retail.

The station is located behind (west of) existing retail, and east of dense townhouse properties with internal circulation. In the immediate station area, 31st St/Abbott Ave form a loop road providing access to the eastern side of the LRT alignment. Ground-level uses abutting the Abbot Ave portion of the loop are structured residential parking, retail and retail parking. Properties abutting the 31st St portion of the loop are medium-rise residential.

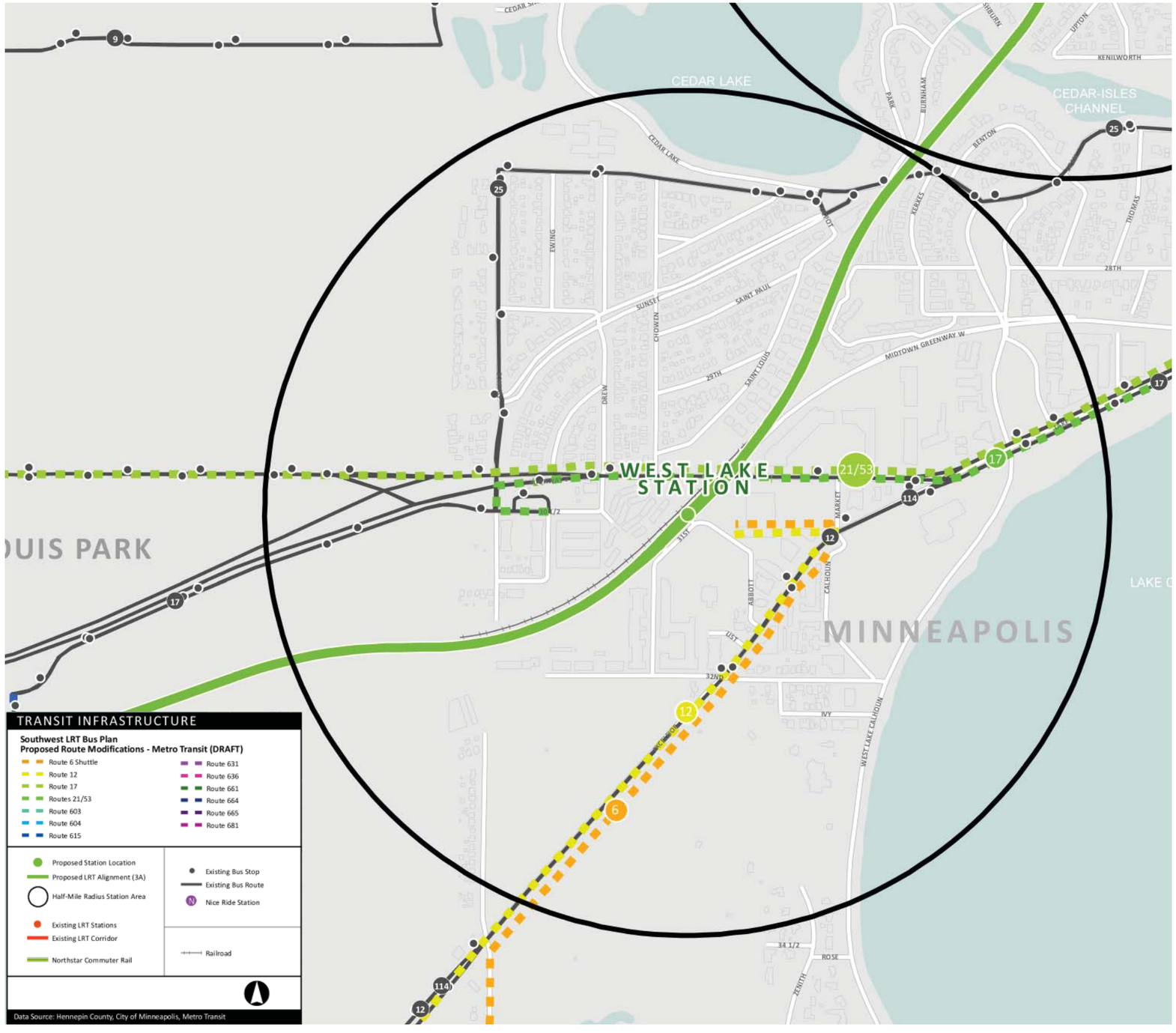


Transit

The station area is currently served by a number of major bus routes on both Lake St and Excelsior Blvd. From the west, Route 17 runs along West Lake St through the Excelsior Blvd intersection, continuing further east. From the south, Route 12 runs along Excelsior Blvd through the West Lake St intersection, continuing further east. Route 114 also runs along Excelsior Blvd on a limited basis. Route 25 runs along France Ave, connecting this area to the north, through the Kenwood neighborhood and beyond. Bus stops are located in close proximity to the proposed station area, providing good connectivity.

Also shown on the map at right are proposed route changes/extensions that will serve the West Lake station. Route 6, currently operating along France Ave and turning east at 39th St, will instead continue along France Ave and onto Excelsior Blvd, in order to serve the station. Route 12, already operating on Excelsior, will turn into the station itself. Routes 21 and 53, currently terminating at the Uptown Transit Center, will also extend westward along Lake Street to serve the new transit station.

Additional future plans include local streetcar service running parallel to the Midtown Greenway trail. The streetcar route is planned to terminate near the proposed West Lake LRT station, in order to provide the opportunity for a LRT-streetcar connection.

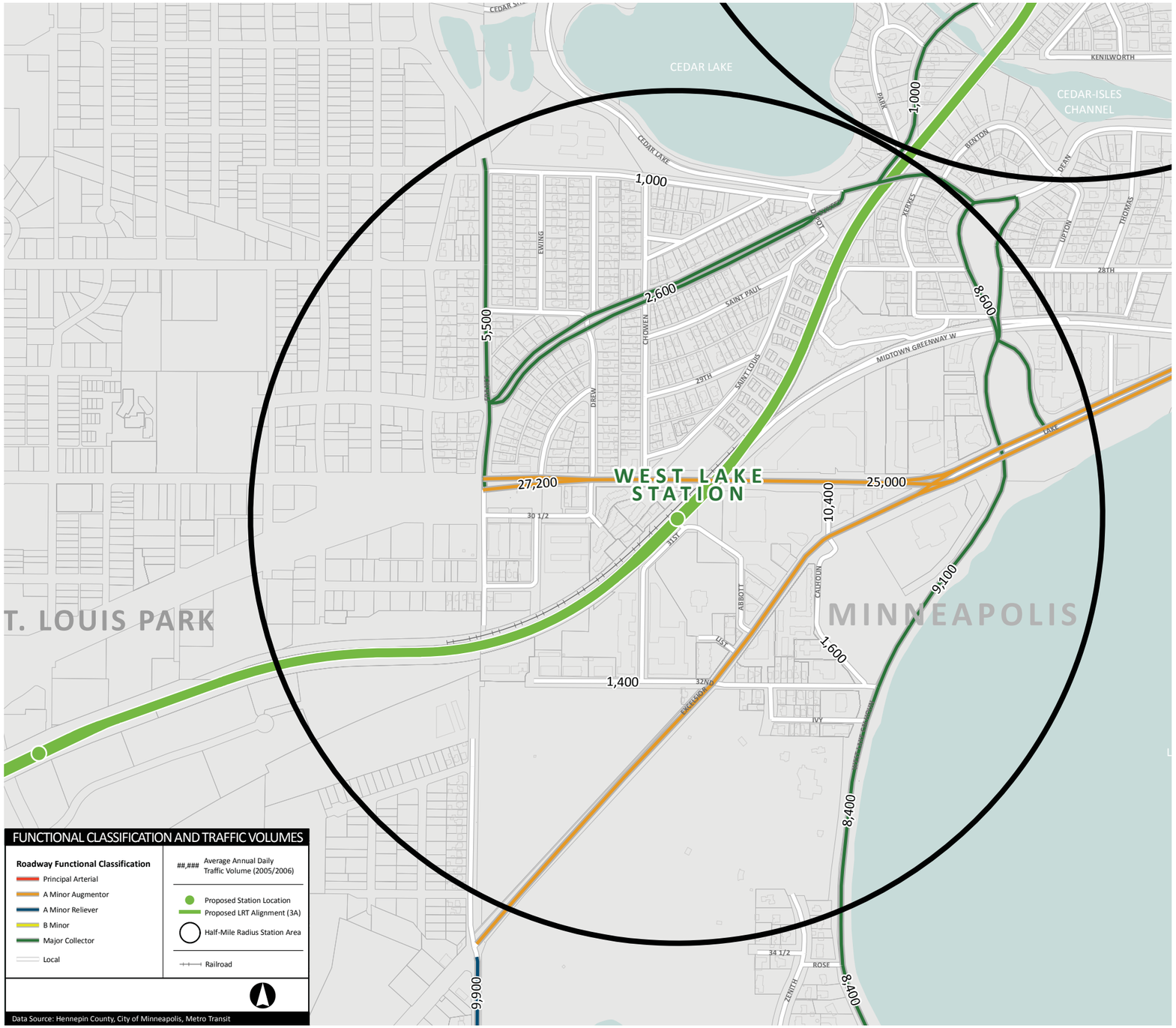


Roadways & Parking

The West Lake station area is in a mixed-use zone of residential, office and retail uses. The adjacent roadway network is comprised of two major roadways with a major junction point at the heart of the area, West Lake St and Excelsior Blvd. The land uses at this junction point are intense retail uses, which contribute to the congestion of this intersection. Overall, the roadway network adjacent to this station area experiences heavy peak hour congestion. Based on the existing daily traffic volumes, Excelsior Blvd is nearing capacity today. West of the station, West Lake St has some excess capacity given its daily traffic volume. The West Lake St / Excelsior Blvd intersection is the controlling factor for this areas capacity, with significant volumes on West Lake St east of this intersection. The confluence of traffic at the intersection causes peak hour congestion. In addition, the unique roadway configuration around the intersection causes patterns that result in varying turns and numerous conflicts. The area is overwhelmed due to the intersection configuration and high levels of pedestrian and bicycle activity.

There are other secondary roadways in this area that contribute to the circulation of traffic. In the neighborhood northwest of the station area, Sunset Blvd provides northerly access to Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake. France Ave provides northerly access into Minneapolis and southerly access into St. Louis Park. West of the station area, regional access is provided as SH 7 connects with West Lake St.

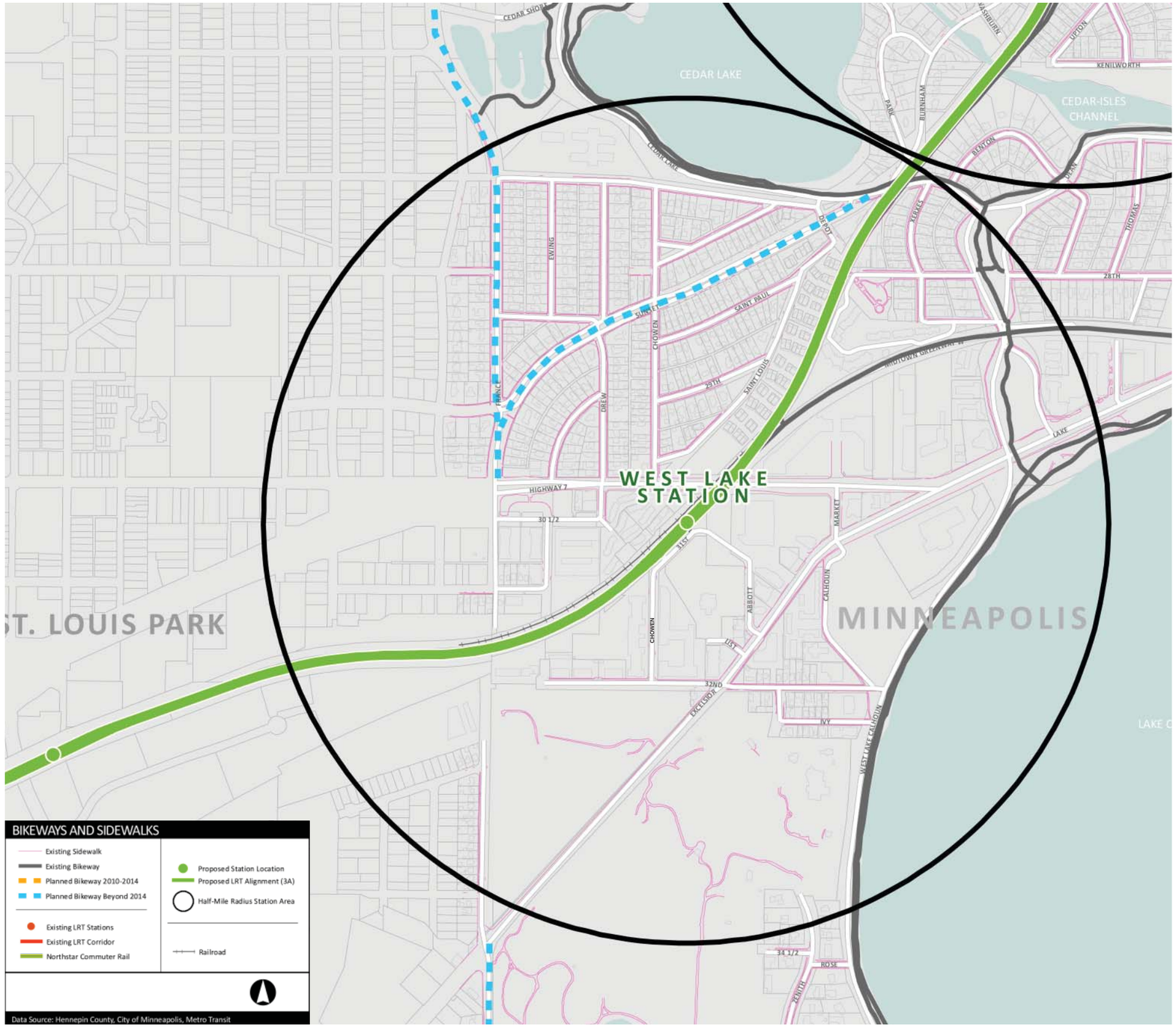
Access for the retail uses in the area is oriented to the major roadways, West Lake St and Excelsior Blvd. Closely



spaced access points contribute to operational and safety issues. The station area is located offset from the major roadways on local streets (Abbott Ave/Chowen Ave). This may provide an opportunity for controlled access via a signalized intersection at Excelsior Blvd and Abbot Ave.

Sidewalks and Trails

Sidewalk connections in the immediate station area are sporadic, largely due to land use and parcel configuration and size. As with other stations, the Kenilworth trail shares the future LRT corridor with existing freight rail. Residents north of Lake St, in particular, have noted that existing access to the Kenilworth trail is informal and dangerous, users often (illegally) cross the active freight rail tracks at grade. The Midtown Greenway also terminates in the station area, joining the Kenilworth trail just north of the proposed station and offering east-west pedestrian and bicycle amenity.

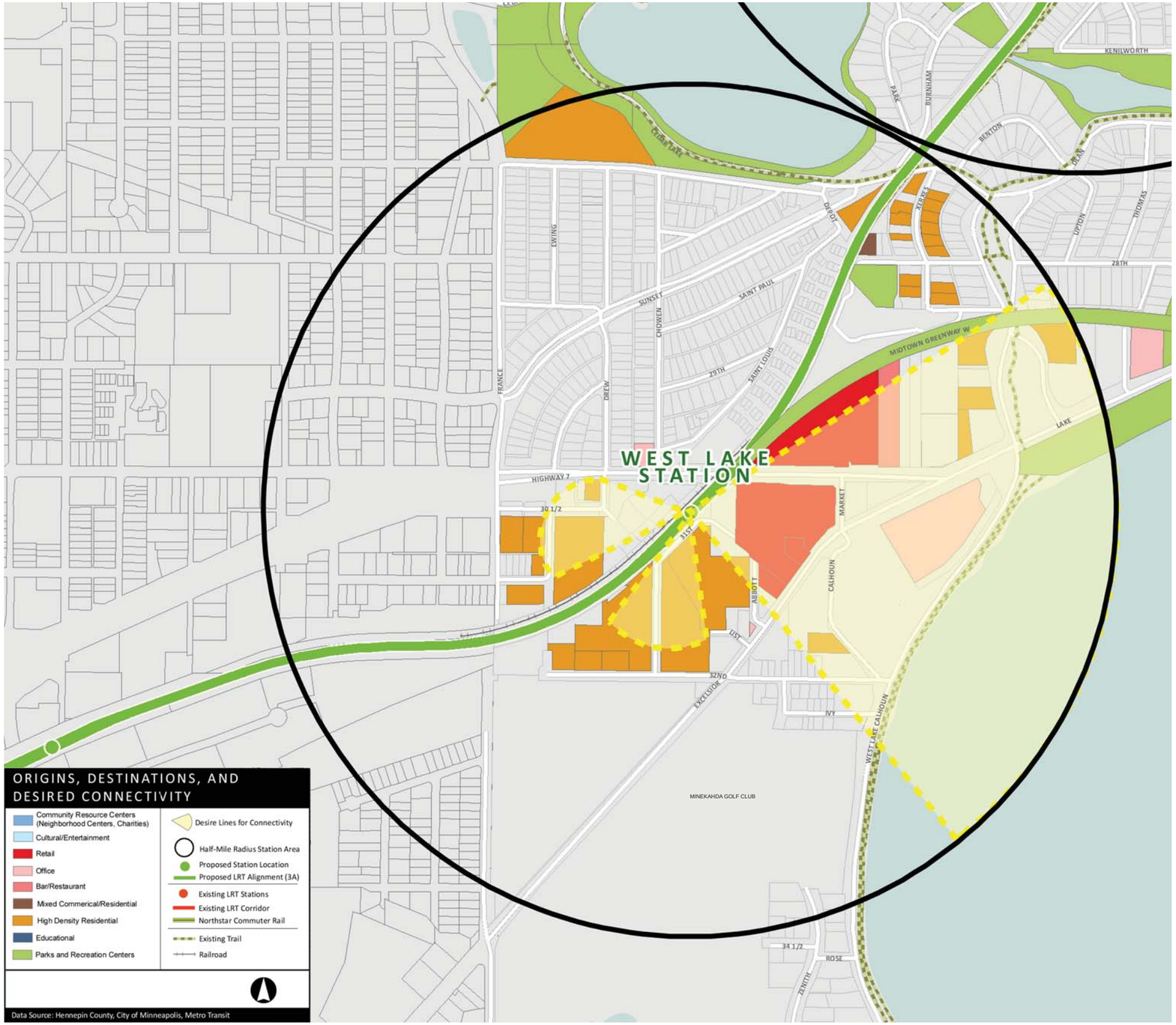


Origins, Destinations & Connectivity

The West Lake station area has a significant amount of residents living in both multi-family and single-family housing, which will generate LRT ridership. Uses are well-arranged, with multi-family properties closest to the station, and lower density single family properties further from the station.

Nearby parks, most notably Lake Calhoun and the Minekahda Golf Club, provide recreational amenity and act as local destinations.

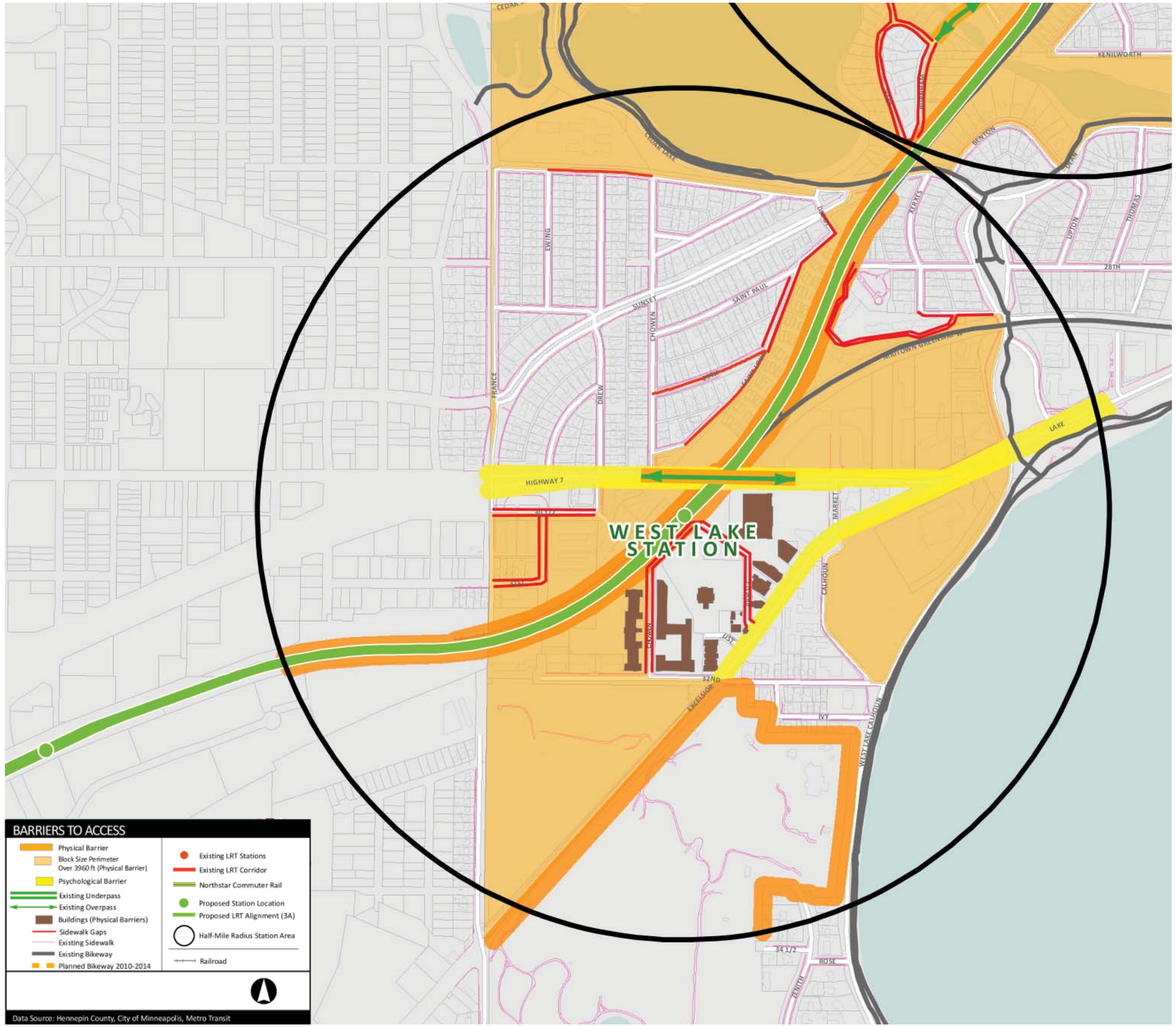
The Calhoun Village and Calhoun Commons retail nodes are extremely well-used local retail destinations, and may influence transit riders' choice of origin station by providing a convenient combination of work commute and errand/shopping on the way home.



Barriers to Access

Roadway congestion is the station's most significant vehicular barrier. The introduction of denser land uses or transit parking would both require formal analysis and mitigation of resulting traffic impacts. There is also the potential for signficiant conflict between vehicles and buses, as the number of drivers seeking to drop off or pick up transit riders increases along the primary station-serving bus route of Chowen Ave and Abbott Ave.

Primary pedestrian barriers include wayfinding (the station is non-intuitively located at the 'back of house' of existing retail nodes) and sidewalk connectivity (sidewalks are entirely absent on the two roadways, Chowen and Abbott, immediately abutting the station.) Pedestrians seeking to access the station from the west and north will also encounter difficulty finding formal routes through large, privately owned blocks.

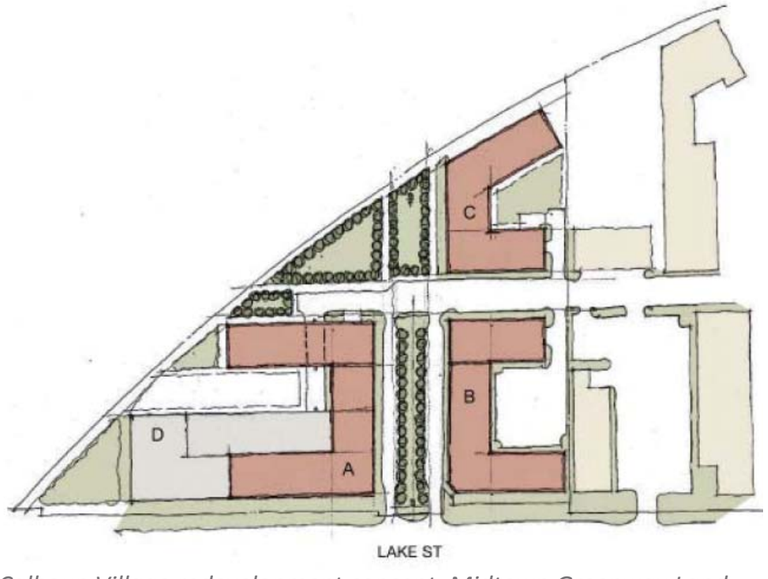


Previous & Current Planning Efforts

Midtown Greenway Land Use Development Plan, 2007

This visioning document provides policy direction for land use and development in the Midtown Greenway corridor for the next 10-20 years. Within the West Lake station area, the document illustrates a plan of how Calhoun Village, an existing commercial strip within the study area and directly northeast of the station platform, could redevelop into a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development fronting on the Greenway.

For planning purposes, the conceptual plan is evaluated in terms of station area planning principles. The plan aligns with station area goals, and is included in the station area options.

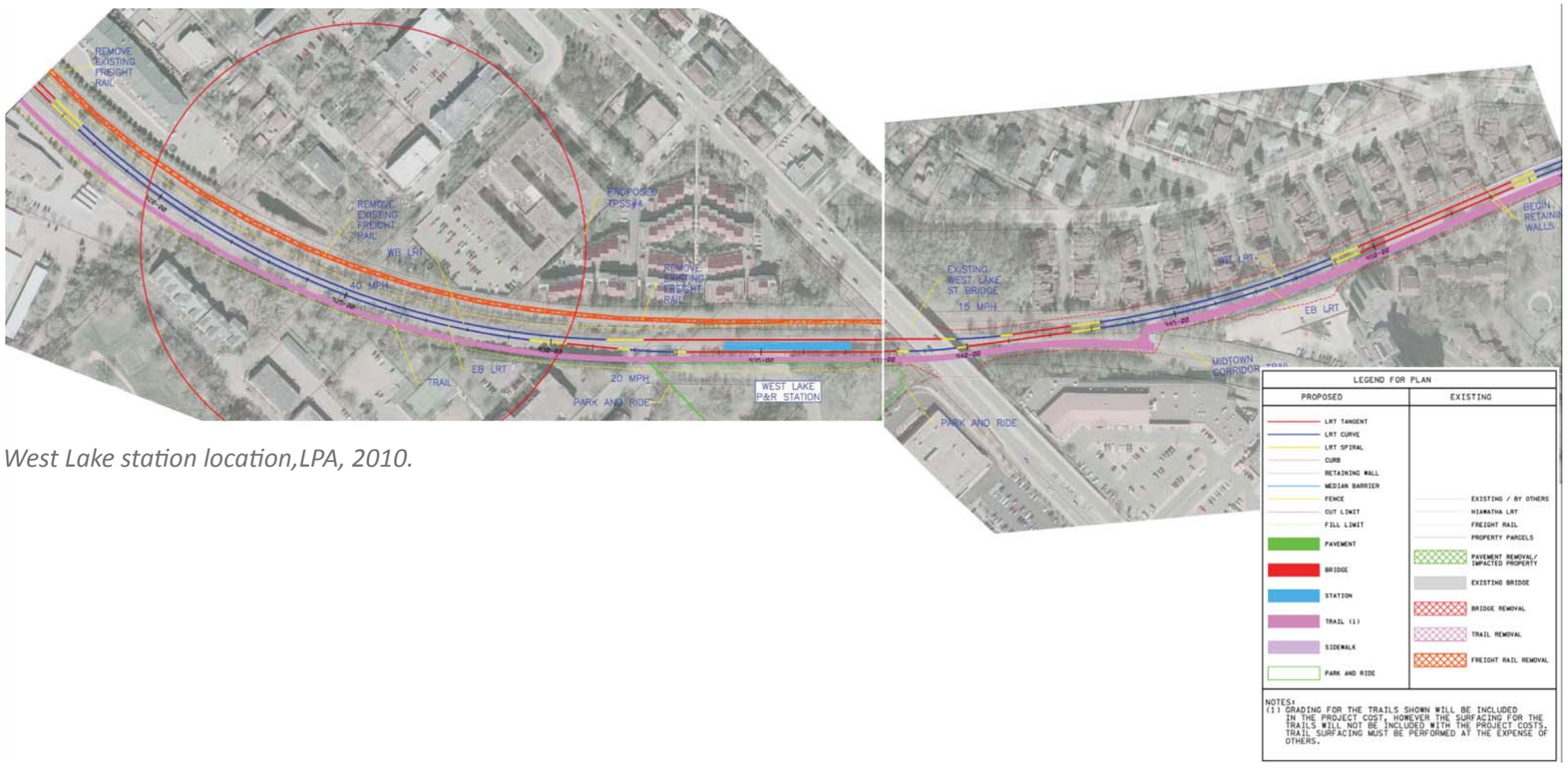


Calhoun Village redevelopment concept, Midtown Greenway Land Use Development Plan, 2007.

Conceptual Engineering & Locally Preferred Alternative (CE/LPA), 2010

Conceptual Engineering (CE), included in the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) selected by the Metropolitan Council in 2010, represents a preliminary step in design of the actual transit infrastructure itself. Portions of this document most important to station area planning are transit alignment, station location, and at-grade/elevated/sunken crossings; these elements will have a direct bearing on future station area character and development opportunity.

CE/LPA drawings show the West Lake station platform located just south of the West Lake Street bridge. This station area planning process recommends that the platform be shifted slightly north, and that vertical circulation be added between the West Lake St bridge and the platform. The change in platform location will minimize the distance between the proposed vertical circulation and the station platform, as well as improve accessibility from both north and south of West Lake Street.



West Lake station location,LPA, 2010.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), 2010

The DEIS documents the possible impacts of the LRT project on both the natural and built environments. As of the writing of this document, the DEIS is currently under FTA review.

Summary Analysis

Community Input

Local stakeholders identified three key issues for the West Lake station: traffic congestion, parking, and preservation of existing businesses. As discussed in more detail in the Existing Conditions section, the West Lake/Excelsior intersection is the limiting factor for traffic flow in this area. Residents note that this junction is already unacceptably delayed at peak hours, and stressed that the area cannot support any land use changes that would add additional traffic without also adopting mitigating measures.

Residents and business owners also expressed concern that unrestricted on-street parking, and off-street retail and commercial parking will prove attractive for transit users. Stakeholders underlined a need for a parking management strategy to ensure that local businesses do not suffer from transit introduction.

Design Team Analysis

The existing densities and mix of uses suggest that the West Lake station has great potential as a true, transit-oriented node. With a framework of uses and density already in place, the station area's greatest need, aside from (and not to downplay the importance of) a traffic management plan, is a true pedestrian-orientation. Planning efforts should promote a redevelopment vision that emphasizes non-vehicular connectivity and pedestrian-scale design.

This station area strategic planning process is not intended to yield a final answer on whether there will be a need for a park-n-ride facility at this station, and it is clear that more analysis of parking issues, existing and future, will be needed before a determination can be made.

West Lake

West Lake Street Station is an opportunity to serve a major commercial and residential node as well as the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes.

Top Issues

- **Southwest LRT project assumes park-n-ride at this station**
- **high-value, stable retail**
- **congested station area roadways**
- **potential for LRT connector in Midtown Greenway**

Principles

- **This process recommends further analysis before a park-n-ride decision is made**
- **This process recommends that any LRT parking be integrated with development**
- **Plan for increased density**
- **Maintain/enhance traffic level of service (LOS)**
- **Accommodate potential LRT connector**

Opening Day Recommendations

The following recommendations identify elements essential to the safe, efficient function of the transit station: pedestrian and bike connections, multi-modal transfer, passenger drop-off/pick-up, and wayfinding. These elements are the minimum recommendations of this station area strategic planning study, for implementation on opening day. It should be noted that these recommendations are outside the current Southwest Transitway LRT project as defined in the conceptual engineering drawings. While some elements may be constructed as part of the LRT project itself, other elements must be funded, designed and constructed by other entities, and will require close coordination between the City, the County, and Metro Transit, as well as local stakeholders and neighborhood groups.

Further recommendations contributing to a larger transit-oriented district, projects and enhancements that may take many years to fully realize, are contained in the next section.

Roadway

- Construct pull-out or sign curbside space for auto drop-off/pick-up on Chowen Ave curve

Drop-off must be designed to minimize vehicular conflict with buses.

Pedestrian Connection (sidewalk)

- Construct 'missing' pieces of sidewalk.

The following gaps in the sidewalk system must be completed in order to provide full, uninterrupted station access

- Chowen Ave, both sides
- West 32nd St, south side
- 31st St/Abbott Ave

Access from the station to Lake Calhoun should also be considered.

- Improve existing sidewalk to meet a minimum City standards.

Existing sidewalk on the west side of Excelsior Blvd, between 32nd & Abbott, is narrow and obstructed with poles in the center of the sidewalk. This sidewalk should be widened, and obstructing poles relocated.

- Introduce wayfinding signage at:
  - West Lake St bridge bus stops
  - Chowen & 32nd
  - Excelsior & 32nd
  - Excelsior & 31st/Abbott

Bicycle Connection (trail/bike lane)

- Install NiceRide station

A bike share station on the station platform will enhance connectivity and mobility within the station area.

Transit Connection

- Construct at-grade sidewalk connection from West Lake street to platform.

This connection will be critical for intermodal transfer between West Lake Street buses and LRT.

Parking Management

Current LPA documents identify West Lake station as a park-n-ride location. The decision to provide or not provide transit parking is beyond the scope of this station area strategic planning effort; this effort only provides complementary land use direction for each of these parking or a no-parking scenarios.

West lake Station: Opening Day Recommednations. Multi-modal transfer and clear station access are important to promoting ridership.

Park-n-Ride at West Lake

The mid-process presentation materials at the September open house did not show a park-n-ride lot, based in part on input received from nearby residents. These residents voiced concerns about how a park-n-ride might attract more cars to an area that already experiences difficult traffic conditions.

Following the September open house, the City and County received additional input from local businesses in the West Lake area who support a park-n-ride. These stakeholders believe that park-n-ride will be needed to make this station work for their customers and employees. While this input does not outweigh the concerns of nearby residents, both points of view must be taken into account.

The City and County also considered the goals of this station area planning process in relation to the CE/LPA. The City and County feel that it is important to show a concept that aligns with the park-n-ride assumptions in the LPA document, which is the most recent technical description of how a light rail line could reasonably be built and operated in this area. Having some level of park-n-ride was deemed essential in the DEIS, based on demand for parking and the need to respond to that demand in order to generate ridership and, ultimately, qualify for federal funding to build the project.

- If transit parking is provided, a district approach is preferred.

A parking district would provide a shared reservoir of parking for commercial and transit use in a single, central location. Parking should be thoughtfully located; optimal location is within the mixed-use district, rather than immediately adjacent to the station, to provide convenient location to all land uses and to promote local business by routing transit patrons by these retail establishments.

Interim surface parking may be an opening day option to provide parking prior to site redevelopment and parking district formation.

- If transit parking is not provided, provide parking management and enforcement of adjacent residential streets and commercial lots

Management tools for on-street parking may include resident-only (permit) parking or time-restrictions (such as a 2-hour limit). Commercial off-street parking may be similarly time-restricted. Enforcement is critical to the efficacy of these management tools.

Platform

- Move platform north to better serve the larger station area.

Platform location must be decided during transit engineering, and cannot be changed after LRT construction. The optimal station location would be directly under the West Lake Street Bridge, to better serve all four quadrants (bisected by the rail corridor and West Lake Street) of the station area. This station location would also facilitate both sidewalk and future vertical connectivity with West Lake Street bridge bus stops and the proposed Midtown Greenway streetcar, currently envisioned to terminate just north of the West Lake Street bridge.

Land Use

Station area planning identified no immediate land use changes necessary for LRT introduction. Strategic, long-term land use recommendations are contained in the next section.

West Lake Station: Conceptual Sketch, looking north at LRT platform toward West Lake Street bridge.

Public Comment

Open House participants expressed concerns regarding station parking and pedestrian connections. Many participants felt that the existing roadway network could not support the additional traffic that a park-n-ride would bring, but were also concerned about transit riders using retail spaces or parking on neighborhood streets, if no parking is provided. Residents also identified specific pedestrian connections that should be prioritized.

Questions & Comments

- **Improve pedestrian access to platform from north of Lake Street.**
- **No park-n-ride; traffic is already congested.**
- **Need vertical connection between Lake Street and LRT platform.**
- **Need to protect retail parking; make sure it is not used by transit riders, and that it remains free.**
- **Opening France Avenue between Lake Street and 32nd Street is a great idea and will ease congestion.**
- **Maintain the bikeway.**
- **We are concerned about light and noise impacts on the townhomes adjacent to the alignment.**

Sample Transit-Oriented District

The graphic at right illustrates one of many ways the West Lake station area might look in the future, embodying transit-oriented development principles. This drawing is not a plan, per-se, but simply a graphic representation of the physical form that could evolve within a framework of pedestrian-focused, transit-supportive policies.

The goal of this station area strategic planning process is not to decide which parcels will redevelop, when they will redevelop, or even what specific land use they will have. All of these particulars will be decided by market demand, and by the private landowner. Rather, the goal of this process is to identify the land use and planning principles most relevant to this particular station area, and to begin to formulate a framework of visioning principles that will act as a base for future, more detailed planning efforts.

Roadway

• Relieve roadway congestion and increase roadway capacity in order to support increased density.

- Reconnect France Ave
- Mitigate West Lake/Excelsior intersection
- Straighten Abbott/31st and signalize intersection at Excelsior

An infrastructure solution should be developed for the West Lake Street / Excelsior Boulevard intersection in order to improve traffic operations and access in this area. To alleviate pressure, France Avenue should be investigated for a possible north-south connection from Randall Avenue on the south to 31st Street on the north. This may relieve pressure from the West Lake Street / Excelsior Boulevard intersection. It should be noted that consideration of this connection may have regional travel impacts beyond the City of Minneapolis.

Monitor access to the station area to determine if Abbott Avenue needs traffic control improvement. Consider realignment of 31st Street to connect Abbott Avenue and Chowen Avenue.

Also consider realignment of the Excelsior Boulevard/32nd St intersection to create shorter, more direct pedestrian crossings. To do so, Minikahda Club access would be moved south of the intersection and changed to a right-in/right-out 'T" intersection configuration. This change would create a 4-way, instead of the current 5-way, intersection. Any changes to the Minikahda access would need to take into account the character of the existing entrance drive

• Widen Lake Street bridge to accommodate bus stops and vertical circulation

Pedestrian Connection (sidewalk)

Station area strategic planning identified no additional, long-term pedestrian connection recommendations beyond those identified in the preceding Opening Day Recommendations.

Bicycle Connection (trail/bike lane)

Station area strategic planning identified no additional, long-term bicycle connection recommendations beyond those identified in the preceding Opening Day Recommendations.

Transit Connection

Station area planning identified no additional, long-term transit recommendations beyond those identified in the preceding Opening Day Recommendations.

Parking Management

• Transition parking from surface to structure.

If transit parking is provided at this station, and if an interim surface parking approach was introduced, long-term parking goals should focus on moving parking from a surface lot to a shared, district structure. Land occupied by the interim lot should be developed with transit-supportive uses, with site design conducive to a pedestrian environment. Redevelopment of surface parking is particularly important if the surface lot abuts the transit station.

West lake Station: Sample Transit-Oriented District. Increased residential density promotes LRT ridership. Redeveloped retail nodes places buildings against the street and structures parking within the lot in order to create a pedestrian-scale, walking environment.

- Consider reduced parking requirements, shared parking and other parking management tools.

In order to promote density and capitalize on transit connectivity, changes to policy that allow parking tools such as reduced parking requirements, shared parking, parking caps (maximums instead of minimums) or phased parking requirements (a lower parking cap or lower parking requirements as the area reaches redevelopment build-out) should be considered. Care should be taken that parking policy is not so stringent as to discourage market-based development. Enforcement will be required.

Platform

Station area planning identified no additional, long-term transit platforms beyond those identified in the preceding Opening Day Recommendations.

Land Use

- Densify residential development.

National precedent shows high demand for both for-sale and for-rent residential units within walking distance of transit stations. Creating this density, or in the case of West Lake, increasing existing density, is a means to promote ridership and capitalize on the public transit infrastructure investment.

The inclusion of affordable housing in transit districts is important, ensuring that transit-dependent populations have access to public transportation and are not priced out of the area. Densification will likely require structured parking, and it is important to evaluate how this change will impact the supply of affordable housing units. Redevelopment plans should align with City housing policy and goals.

- Redevelop underutilized parcels.

Mixed-use with ground-floor retail/restaurant space would introduce additional vitality to the station area and create a context-consistent land use facing West Lake Street, while ensuring that existing businesses can remain.

- Establish a build-to line on Excelsior Boulevard and Abbott Avenue.

A number of parcels within the station area use a traditional retail format, with parking in front and against the street. This layout is convenient, but does not promote a good street edge or pedestrian scale. As parcels redevelop, they should feature street-fronting retail with parking, preferably structured, to the rear of the parcels. This more pedestrian-friendly style of development would narrow the perceptual width of both Excelsior Blvd and Abbott Ave and uphold the goals of the current pedestrian overlay zoning.

- Promote ped/bike connection to retail parcels

A number of parcels in the station area front the Kenilworth trail and the Midtown Greenway. Introducing clear visual sightlines and physical pedestrian and bike connections from the trails to retail nodes would provide amenity to trail users and promote increased activity in the area's retail.

Zoning

- Consider application of appropriate overlay districts.

In 2009, the City made several zoning changes affecting this area, most notably an increase in allowed residential density and floor area ratio (the relationship of the size of a building to the lot) in the 3CS district. Both retail nodes north and south of West Lake street fall into this zone district. This change allows for a large amount of high density mixed-use development in these areas, uses in keeping with the principles of a successful transit area.

Additional zoning changes in 2010 allowed for the implement the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan which calls for high-density, mixed-use development in the area.

Given these recent changes, major rezoning is not needed at this time. In the future, the City should consider applying the Transit Station Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District which prohibits auto-oriented uses such as gas stations and sets a minimum floor area ratio for new development. The application of the Transit Station Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District should be considered after further analysis of parking needs for the area is complete.

Next Steps

Context & Planning Assumptions

- Park and ride allocation currently in LRT project; station area strategic planning recommends further analysis before a decision is made on park and ride at West Lake Street Station.

Planning Process

The tables at right summarize the recommendations contained in the preceding 'Opening Day Recommendations' and "Sample Transit Oriented District' sections. A number of broader steps, listed below, will be needed to set the framework for the more specific steps identified at right.

- Provide input to preliminary engineering for LRT effort with Met Council
- Carry out station area, but non-LRT infrastructure enhancements: close gaps in pedestrian & bike circulation, including roadway modifications
- Adopt appropriate transit-area policies at the City/County level
- Create a development-friendly environment
  - Evaluate current land use needs & desires
  - Explore parcel assembly & acquisition
  - Identify catalytic projects (public/private)
  - Consider RFP's
- Identify funding mechanisms, incentives & public participation

Specific Recommendations to be Implemented by LRT Opening Day	Additional Study & Design during Preliminary Engineering	Policy Change	Lead Jurisdiction
Auto pick-up/drop-off	x		SW LRT Project
Missing segments of sidewalk system	x		City
Improve existing sidewalk to meet minimum City standards	x		City
Wayfinding signage	x		SW LRT Project
At-grade sidewalk connection from West Lake to station platform	x		City
Modify station platform location	x		SW LRT Project

Specific Recommendations to be Implemented as Needed	Additional Study & Design during Preliminary Engineering	Policy Change	Lead Jurisdiction
Reconnect France Avenue over rail corridor	x		City
Mitigate West Lake/Excelsior intersection	x		City
Straighten Abbott Ave/31st St and signalize Excelsior intersection	x		City
Widen West Lake St bridge to accommodate bus stops and vertical circulation	x		City
Transition parking from surface to (district) structure	x		City, BID, private developer
Densify residential development	x		private developer
Redevelop underutilized parcels	x		private developer
Build-to line on Excelsior Blvd and Abott Ave		x	City
Ped/bike connection to retail parcels	x	x	City, private developer