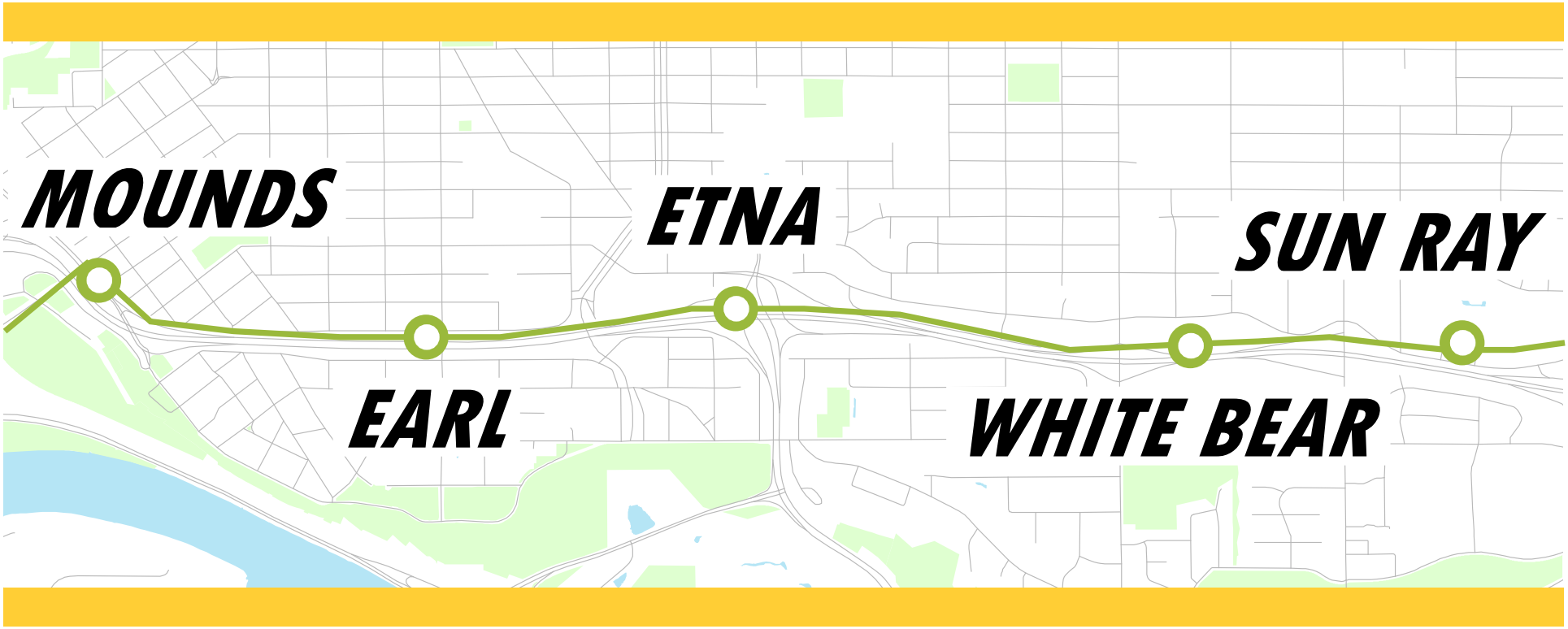

SAINT PAUL
The Most Livable City in America

GOLD LINE
STATION AREA PLANS

Draft for City Council review

APPROVED xx 2015

August 2015

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INTRODUCTION

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PLAN OBJECTIVES & STRUCTURE

This plan aims to guide development and public realm improvements around the proposed Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations in Saint Paul. The approximately $500 million transit investment presents major opportunities and challenges that require a unified plan to optimize the facilities' impact on the city. This plan will become a reference for City regulation and investment near the Gold Line. This plan also identifies preferred BRT alignments and station locations, with the intent that these community-based preferences will inform decisions being made by other government entities.

The plan prioritizes the following principles, as informed by public input:

- Connect neighborhoods and businesses across Interstate 94 and use station area planning to unify Saint Paul's East Side communities.
- Develop multi-modal connections to stations.
- Provide safe stations and connections to them.
- Create opportunities for new development/redevelopment to accommodate residents attracted by the BRT amenity and build destinations and community assets.
- Create opportunities for existing businesses to benefit from transit.
- Protect existing housing from removal for the BRT guideway.

This plan is divided into corridor-wide issues and station area-specific issues. Corridor-wide issues are topics that merit a holistic approach, or that apply equally to all station areas. These issues include Plan Amendments, Transit-Oriented Development, Crossing Interstate 94, Housing, Stormwater Treatment, and Station Design & Public Art. The Plan Amendments section references other plans that need to be updated alongside this plan document. The Transit-Oriented Development section sets out the types of development that are envisioned for the station areas in the long-term, and is distinctly farsighted compared to the short- to medium-term forecasts described in the Market Study section. The Crossing Interstate 94 section takes a holistic, systematic look at connecting across a barrier that affects all station areas. The other sections address issues that apply equally to all station areas, as well. Station area boundaries are defined by the map on the first page of each station area chapter, and include the full right-of-way of any street that forms a boundary.

PLANNING PROCESS

In April 2014, the Saint Paul Planning Commission appointed a 10-member citizen task force to guide the planning process and recommend station area plans. The task force's work has been informed by substantial public outreach, including widely-advertised large open houses, smaller geographically-targeted open houses, tables at community festivals and institutional events, presentations to community groups, targeted door-knocking near proposed stations, and interviews with key stakeholders . Overall, City staff has spoken directly with about 500 people and notified thousands of the project.

Figure 2: Discussing Sun Ray area at Conway Recreation Center's National Night Out

GOLD LINE HISTORY

The Gold Line is under study by Washington and Ramsey Counties for various transit modes and routes from Saint Paul's Union Depot to Manning Avenue on the eastern end of Woodbury. Currently, the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) is Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) generally running along the north side of Interstate 94 (Figure # below); this plan document assumes that this LPA will be the option that is constructed.

Figure 3: Locally Preferred Alternative Route (courtesy of Washington County Regional Rail Authority)

BRT DEFINITION

BRT is a high-amenity mass transitway that provides bus service every 10-15 minutes, every day in both directions, and largely within a dedicated guideway (its own road). BRT features include level boarding, off-board payment, and shelters with amenities like heat, seating, and real-time bus information. With the dedicated guideway and station amenities, the Gold Line BRT will operate similarly to the Green Line Light Rail Transit (LRT), with similar customer amenities. Gold Line BRT could be open for service as soon as 2022.

Up to six (6) stations are being considered in Saint Paul, in the vicinities of Union Depot, Mounds Boulevard, Earl Street, Etna Street, White Bear Avenue, and the Sun Ray shopping center.

Figure 4: BRT example (courtesy of Los Angeles Metropolitan Planning Authority)

MARKET STUDY

In 2013-15, the Gateway Corridor Commission contracted HR&A consultants to produce a market study of the entire Gold Line corridor, including the portion in Saint Paul. The consultants conducted interviews with experts within and outside the corridor, and assessed the market potential and physical feasibility for development around each proposed station over the next 1-5 years. They also provided broader assessments for medium- to long-term development potential in some instances. Among the market study's key conclusions affecting this plan are:

- In the White Bear/Sun Ray market area, convenience retail demand exceeds actual sales by approximately $115 million annually.
    - The largest unmet demand is in general merchandise, health and personal care, and limited-service eating sectors.
- In the White Bear/Sun Ray market area, destination retail demand exceeds actual sales by approximately $188 million annually.
    - The largest unmet demand is in full-service restaurant, home improvement, and electronics sectors.
- There is a short-term market near all stations for low-rise housing such as townhomes, but not for more dense housing.
- The Sun Ray shopping center's ability to capture additional spending is limited by its poor integration with several potential spending sources nearby: the 3M corporate campus across McKnight Road, surrounding multi-family residential, and the library and recreation center to the north.
- The Mounds Station Area has long-term potential for mid-rise residential due to adjacency to Downtown Saint Paul, Metropolitan State University, and other neighborhood assets.
- The Earl Station Area has moderate medium- to long-term potential for larger-scale residential uses if public policy supports redevelopment.
- In the Etna Station Area, the property at the northwest corner of Etna Street and Wilson Avenue may have long-term potential for large-scale mixed-use development due to its size and proximity to the station, provided that the pedestrian environment is improved.
- The White Bear Station Area could provide an opportunity for higher-density residential if additional value can be created (perhaps through retail amenities or subsidy).
- The Sun Ray Station Area may support residential in the medium- to long-term with public support and an increase in retail vacancies to the point that profit potential is created for the landowner.
- There is little to no market for office development in the short-term, and other sites in Downtown Saint Paul and the eastern suburbs are more competitive for office in the medium- to long-term.
    - Combined with the knowledge that retail generally needs to locate on the ground floor, this indicates that multi-story buildings will probably need to include residential uses.

	MOUNDS	EARL	ETNA	WHITE BEAR	SUN RAY
RESIDENTIAL	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
CONVENIENCE RETAIL	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
DESTINATION RETAIL	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
OFFICE	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

Figure 5: Development Potential by Station Over the Next 1-5 Years

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

Saint Paul's Gold Line station areas are expected to see substantial growth in the coming decades. In May 2014, the Metropolitan Council preliminarily forecasted that the "Urban Center," including Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and several inner-ring suburbs, will add 162,000 residents and 142,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. It is anticipated that a significant portion of that growth will occur in Saint Paul, particularly directed along transitway corridors such as the Gold Line. Adjusted and refined forecasts are expected later in 2015. Whereas the Market Study looked at short- and medium-term growth, the Metropolitan Council's horizon is long-term. The five new proposed BRT station areas in Saint Paul contained about 20,000 people living within a ½ mile radius in 2010. Overall, some 9% of them used transit to commute to work and 16% had no vehicle available. Owner-occupancy was 41%, while 51% of housing units were rented and 9% were vacant. People of color constituted 58% of the population, and 28% of people spoke a language other than English at home. The median household income by station area ranged from $34,890 (Mounds) to $38,851 (Earl). The breakdown of age, race, and language data by station area is shown in the following tables.

LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME BY STATION AREA (WITHIN 1/2 MILE)

	ALL	MOUNDS	EARL	ETNA	WH BEAR	SUN RAY
ENGLISH	72%	74%	74%	65%	75%	69%
SPANISH	9%	5%	10%	16%	5%	8%
ASIAN / PACIFIC	15%	21%	13%	18%	15%	10%
ALL OTHERS	4%	1%	3%	2%	5%	12%

POPULATION AGE BY STATION AREA (WITHIN 1/2 MILE)

	ALL	MOUNDS	EARL	ETNA	WH BEAR	SUN RAY
0 - 4	9%	11%	9%	9%	9%	8%
5 - 9	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	6%
10 - 14	7%	8%	7%	7%	7%	6%
15 - 24	16%	17%	15%	17%	17%	15%
25 - 34	17%	16%	16%	17%	17%	17%
35 - 44	13%	13%	12%	12%	13%	14%
45 - 54	12%	12%	12%	11%	13%	13%
55 - 64	9%	9%	10%	8%	9%	10%
65 - 74	5%	4%	5%	4%	4%	6%
75 - 84	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	4%
85+	2%	1%	3%	3%	1%	2%
TOTAL POP.	20,075	3,778	6,051	4,883	4,479	3,954

RACE BY STATION AREA (WITHIN 1/2 MILE)

	ALL	MOUNDS	EARL	ETNA	WH BEAR	SUN RAY
WHITE ALONE	50%	45%	54%	46%	47%	53%
BLACK ALONE	17%	22%	14%	13%	18%	20%
AMERICAN INDIAN ALONE	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER	20%	20%	20%	25%	21%	15%
SOME OTHER RACE ALONE	7%	5%	5%	10%	8%	6%
TWO OR MORE RACES	5%	6%	5%	4%	5%	5%
HISPANIC (ANY RACE)	15%	10%	14%	19%	15%	14%

CORRIDOR-WIDE ISSUES

PLAN AMENDMENTS

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

CROSSING INTERSTATE 94

HOUSING

STORMWATER

STATION DESIGN & PUBLIC ART

CONSTRUCTION MITIGATION

PLAN AMENDMENTS

The **Comprehensive Plan** identifies the White Bear and Sun Ray station areas as Mixed Use Corridors and Neighborhood Centers, both transit-oriented designations that call for land use intensity commensurate with adjacency to a transitway such as the Gold Line. However, the other station areas have less transit-oriented designations. The Earl and Etna station areas are designated as Established Neighborhoods, which calls for single-family and duplex residential units with scattered neighborhood-serving commercial, service, and institutional uses. The Mounds station area includes Residential Corridors along both Maria Avenue and 3rd Street, which calls for medium-intensity residential uses up to 30 units per acre, surrounded by Established Neighborhoods. The Comprehensive Plan should be amended to identify the Earl and Etna station areas as Neighborhood Centers. The Mounds Station Area designations should remain due to the presence of the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District, which guides new construction to relate to the size, scale, massing, and height of the predominantly 2-story buildings.

The **2004 Sun Ray-Suburban Small Area Plan** covers an area completely within the White Bear and Sun Ray station areas. It should be decertified in conjunction with the adoption of this plan document.

The **Saint Paul Bicycle Plan** should be amended to include connections directly to the BRT stations and a new north-south bicycle connection near the Etna Street alignment between Wilson Avenue and Burns Avenue, as proposed in this plan document. The new bicycle/pedestrian bridge proposed for the Kennard Street alignment is already contained within the Bicycle Plan.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is land use of an intensity and design that is positioned to optimally benefit from major transit investments like Gold Line BRT, and in turn supports the transit investment synergistically. TOD in the Gold Line station areas will have the following characteristics:

- A mix of land uses that concentrates activity near the BRT station.
- A fine-grained street and sidewalk network, with block lengths that reflect the historical block lengths of Saint Paul (typically 280 to 600 feet).
- Pedestrian-oriented building and site design for commercial, institutional, and mixed uses, including continuous building façades located close to the sidewalk with appropriate lower-level detailing, clear windows along the ground floor street-side façades that encourage "eyes on the street", parking that is visually de-emphasized and located behind or to the sides of buildings, and main entrances oriented toward the sidewalk and street.
- A pleasant pedestrian realm, with street trees and ample space (at least 14 feet wide in ares of high pedestrian activity, plus room to accommodate active street-level uses like cafes and restaurants).
- On-street parking to buffer pedestrians from vehicle traffic, calm vehicle speeds, and provide short-term parking close to retail/office entrances.
- Structured parking, as needed, that is lined with active commercial uses on the ground floor. Integrating residential uses into the upper floors' exteriors should also be considered.
- Safe accommodation and integration of mulitiple modes, including pedestrians, transit, and bicycles.

Figure 6: Example of continuous building facades with pedestrian-oriented windows and detailing.

More specifically, TOD in the Gold Line station areas will fall into one of three categories: Low-Intensity TOD, Medium-Intensity TOD, and High-Intensity TOD.

Low-Intensity TOD will contain all of the general characteristics of TOD already noted, and will consist of low-rise buildings generally 2 to 3 stories in height. Non-residential uses will primarily serve neighborhood needs.

Figure 7: Example of Low-Intensity TOD

Medium-Intensity TOD will contain all of the general characteristics of TOD, and will consist of low- and mid-rise buildings generally 2 to 4 stories in height. Non-residential uses will serve neighborhood needs and provide services to the broader community, and will contribute to creating a "destination" and "sense of place."

Figure 8: Example of Medium-Intensity TOD

Figure 9: Example of High-Intensity TOD

High-Intensity TOD will contain all of the general characteristics of TOD, and will consist of mid- and high-rise buildings generally 2 to 5 stories in height, though potentially taller depending on the setting. Non-residential uses will provide services to the neighborhood and the broader community, and will contribute to creating a "destination" and "sense of place". Sidewalks near the BRT station will be at least 6 feet wide in order to accommodate higher levels of pedestrian traffic. Pedestrian zones should be at least 14 feet wide, to provide ample space for trees and sidewalk cafes.

CROSSING INTERSTATE 94

I-94 is a 200'-wide barrier that lies immediately south of the proposed BRT guideway. I-94 divides communities and impedes connections to BRT. People on foot or on bikes can currently cross I-94 in eight (8) places within the plan's study area: the Mounds Boulevard bridge (where there are sidewalks on the west side only), the pedestrian bridge at Maple Street/Mound Street, the Earl Street bridge, the Johnson Parkway underpass, the pedestrian bridge east of Etna Street at the Barclay Street alignment, the White Bear Avenue bridge, the Ruth Street bridge, and the McKnight Road underpass. Several of these crossings have been identified through public input as being unsafe and uninviting to people who are walking or biking, particularly the Mounds Boulevard bridge, the Earl Street bridge, the Barclay pedestrian bridge, and the McKnight Road underpass. Also, a need for more crossings has been identified near activity centers around the White Bear and Sun Ray stations, though elevation changes and single-family properties backing to I-94 prevent effective new crossings in some places.

- Provide improved pedestrian and bike facilities on the Mounds Boulevard bridge. This should include a dedicated bikeway and wide sidewalks that provide opportunities to stop and enjoy views toward Downtown Saint Paul and the Mississippi River.
- Explore a new traffic signal at the intersection of the I-94 exit and Mounds Boulevard, southwest of the Surrey Avenue cul-de-sac, to improve connections to the Mounds Boulevard bridge and allow people walking or biking to avoid the unsafe intersection of Mounds Boulevard and 3rd Street.
- Maintain the Maple/Mound Street pedestrian and bike bridge in approximately its current location. If it is replaced, the new bridge should have an enhanced design similar to the newer pedestrian bridges over I-94 west of Downtown Saint Paul.
- Provide new north/south pedestrian and bike facilities along the Etna Street alignment between Burns Avenue and Wilson Avenue.
- Do not reconstruct the Barclay pedestrian bridge in its current location – its function should be provided instead by the new Kennard bridge and improved north-south pedestrian facilities at the I-94/ Highway 61 interchange.

Figure 10: Proposed I-94 Crossings

- Maintain the Johnson Parkway connection in its current location.
- Provide improved pedestrian and bike facilities at the Earl, White Bear, Ruth, and McKnight bridges or underpasses as they are reconstructed. This should include dedicated bikeways and wide sidewalks to help connect areas south of I-94 to the stations.
- Provide a new pedestrian/bike bridge at the Kennard Street alignment west of White Bear Avenue.
- Explore a bikeway connection running alongside the Gold Line transitway that connects the bicycle crossings of I-94. Such bikeway should not require removal of buildings.
- Any new bridge should have an enhanced design similar to the newer bridges over freeways found elsewhere in the metro area.

Figure 11: Pedestrian bridge over I-94 west of Downtown Saint Paul

HOUSING

Quality housing for a mix of incomes and a variety of ages is desired in order to help build strong, sustainable communities along the Gold Line. The existing housing costs in the plan's study area are generally low enough that there has not been a need for much legally binding affordable housing to-date, and some areas have an abundance of subsidized housing in the form of Section 8 vouchers. In the short- to medium-term, providing for a mix of incomes may actually require avoiding subsidized affordable housing construction in certain areas. However, affordable housing will probably become more scarce over time as the BRT investment affects the market. BRT is anticipated to increase land values, and has the potential to accordingly cause residential rents to increase as well. Ensuring there is enough space for development and redevelopment to accommodate new residents attracted by the BRT investment (through the Land Use Change sections of subsequent chapters) can also help keep existing housing units affordable, particularly for middle-income residents.

- The BRT alignment and station locations should avoid removal of affordable housing, whether naturally occurring or legally binding.
- Encourage maintenance of existing residential property.
- Facilitate housing provision for a variety of ages and life stages.
- Facilitate subsidized affordable housing for portions of new residential development where there is a local need identified at the time of development. Evaluate local affordability using measures that incorporate housing and transportation costs ("H + T") at various income levels.
    - Do not support subsidized affordable housing in areas that contain an abundance of naturally affordable and subsidized affordable units so as to avoid concentrating poverty.
- Replace affordable housing that is removed for redevelopment.

Figure 12: Stormwater treatment integrated with landscaping along the Green Line

STORMWATER

Land use changes and public realm investments present opportunities for improvements to stormwater treatment throughout the Gold Line corridor.

- Consider Stacked Shared Green Infrastructure (SSGI) for stormwater treatment in any development. SSGI is a system for shared stormwater treatment that provides multiple functions and benefits, such as open space provision and development cost savings, as compared to underground stormwater treatment on a lot-by-lot basis.
- Explore integrating stormwater treatment into public realm investments, such as boulevard tree installation.

STATION DESIGN & PUBLIC ART

The stations and surrounding areas present opportunities for public art that enlivens public spaces and enhance a sense of community.

- Stations should be designed with high quality materials in a manner that provides user safety and comfort and relates to the surrounding communities.
- Incorporate public art into the station design. Artwork should reflect the local history and character, and be designed in consultation with the community.
- Use artwork as a gateway feature that builds neighborhood identity at locations such as at the corner of 3rd Street and Mounds Boulevard, or marking the transition from the Sun Ray shopping center to its surrounding neighborhood.

Figure 13: Art at the Green Line's Fairview Station

CONSTRUCTION MITIGATION

Construction of the Gold Line will take several years and have a significant impact on many homes and businesses, including those that will benefit greatly from the finished line. Measures to mitigate construction impacts should be considered.

- The construction project should seek ways to mitigate negative impacts on residential and commercial properties.
- The City should implement or partner with other agencies to implement a loan program for businesses affected by construction.

STATION AREA PLANS

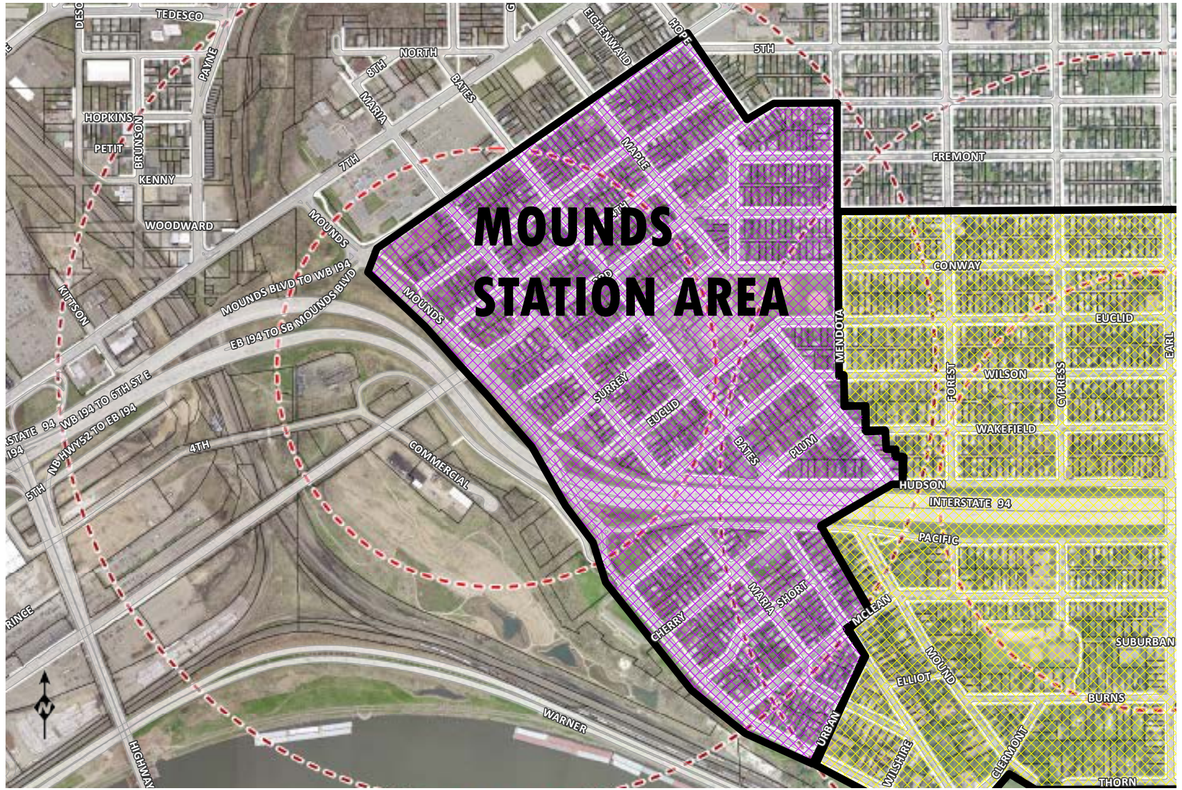
MOUNDS

EARL

ETNA

WHITE BEAR

SUN RAY



MOUNDS STATION AREA PLAN

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STATION AREA

The Mounds Boulevard Station Area is characterized by its proximity to downtown, its historic character, the Metropolitan State University campus, and Mounds Park. It includes the Dayton's Bluff local historic district, the 7th Street and 3rd Street corridors, Dayton's Bluff Elementary School and Recreation Center, small commercial remnants north of I-94, and the massive barriers of I-94 and Mounds Boulevard. The area is mostly built up, with only isolated vacant sites and parking lots.

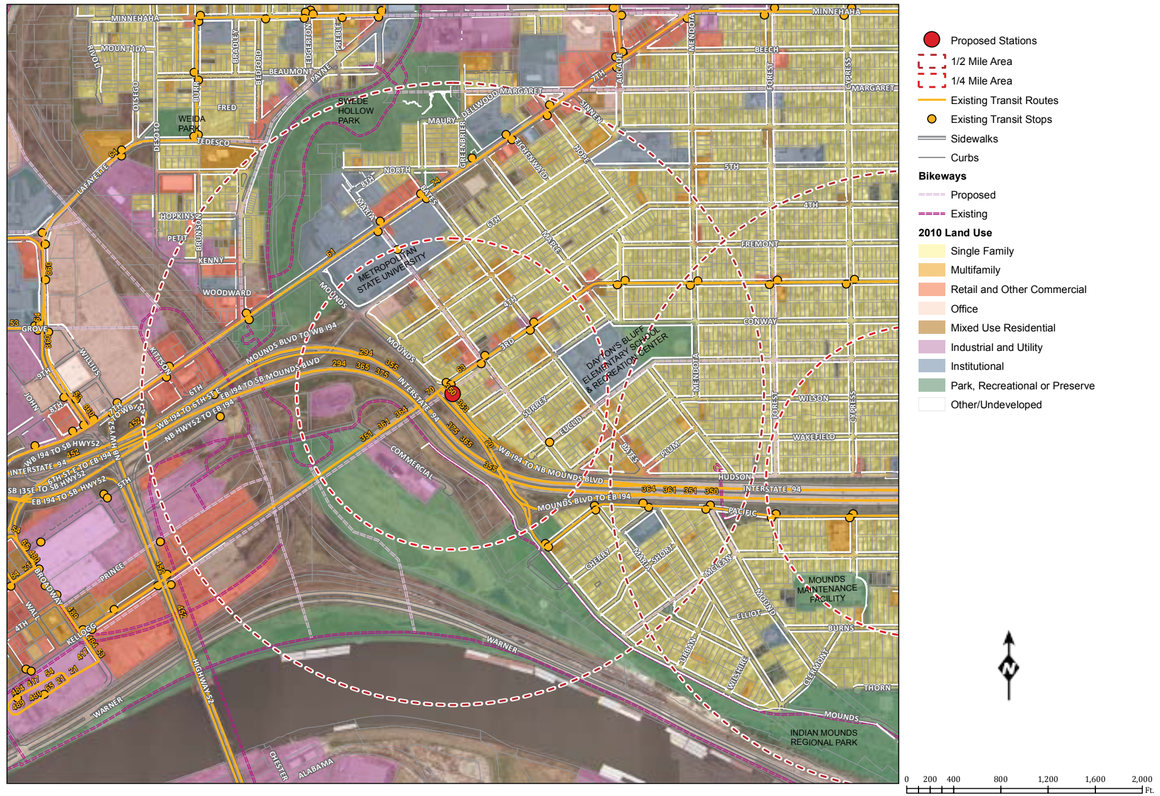
Figure 14: Historic Homes in the Mounds Station Area

BRT ALIGNMENT & STATION LOCATION

The BRT alignment should avoid property impacts and should be located and designed in a manner that optimizes compatibility with the historic district. Pedestrian connections should be strongly considered in this decision in order to make the station truly accessible and usable by potential transit users from both sides of I-94.

- Avoid property impacts, particularly to affordable housing and historic buildings.
- Modify the I-94 exit ramp and Mounds Boulevard as part of the BRT project in order to increase space for a BRT guideway and avoid property impacts, as well as to enhance the environment near the station. Considered improvements should include a re-routing of the I-94 exit ramp to a new traffic signal on Mounds Boulevard southwest of the Surrey Avenue cul-de-sac and elimination of the right turn lane from Mounds Boulevard to 3rd Street.
- Locate the station and alignment to improve pedestrian connections to/from Indian Mounds Regional Park to the south. A new traffic signal on Mounds Boulevard southwest of the Surrey Avenue cul-de-sac and improvements to the Mounds Boulevard bridge over I-94 should be among the considered improvements.
- Avoid running busses on Maria Avenue unless necessary to avoid property impacts.
- Locate the station on the neighborhood side of Mounds Boulevard, rather than on the 3rd Street bridge into downtown.

(on facing page) Figure 15: Base Map of Mounds Station Area


Proposed Stations
1/2 Mile Area
1/4 Mile Area
Existing Transit Routes
Existing Transit Stops
Sidewalks
Curbs
Bikeways
Proposed
Existing
2010 Land Use
Single Family
Multifamily
Retail and Other Commercial
Office
Mixed Use Residential
Industrial and Utility
Institutional
Park, Recreational or Preserve
Other/Undeveloped
0 200 400 800 1,200 1,600 2,000 Ft.
WELDA PARK
SYLVIE HOLLOW PARK
METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY
DAYTON'S BLUFF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL & RECREATION CENTER
MOUNDS MAINTENANCE FACILITY
INDIAN MOUNDS REGIONAL PARK
MOUNDS BLVD TO WB I94
MOUNDS BLVD TO EB I94
WB I94 TO 5TH ST
EB I94 TO 5TH ST
NB HWY52 TO WB I94
WB I94 TO SB HWY52
INTERSTATE I94
SB I35E TO SB HWY52
EB I94 TO SB HWY52
WB I94 TO NB MOUNDS BLVD
MOUNDS BLVD TO EB I94
MINNEHAHA
MOUNTAIN
BEAUMONT
FRED
HOPKINS
PETT
KENNY
WOODWARD
GROVE
HOWE
HILLTOP
5TH
7TH
MAURY
NORTH
MARIA
MOUNDS
FREMONT
CONWAY
WILSON
WAKEFIELD
HUDSON
PAVIOR
BURNS
ELIOT
THORN
PRINCE
WALL
RELLOR
WARNER
CHESTER
ALABAMA
HIGHWAY 52
COMMERCIAL
LAWTERE
BEECH
MARGARET
SYCAMORE
ROLLINGWOOD
PARKER
PARK
LOUDON
ELFSTED
PAYNE
PERRY
DUNLOP
DUSSEAU
BRESCOE
LEDESCO
MAIN
ROBERT
WABASHA
JACKSON
SANFORD
DAYTON
ROBERT
PLATO
MARION
MAPLE
ROSE
ROSEWOOD
WALSH
ROSEMOUNT
ROSEMOUNT
ROSEMOUNT

FUTURE CHARACTER

The station area will maintain and enhance its historic character within the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District, and will present pedestrian orientation in any new development/redevelopment. Medium-Intensity TOD will characterize the 3rd Street/Maria Avenue intersection and help establish Maria Avenue as a pedestrian spine connecting Metropolitan State University and the BRT station.

LAND USE CHANGE

The Mounds Station Area presents limited options for land use change due to the existing development and the commitment to historic preservation realized through the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District. Land use change prompted by the market for BRT-accessible development should be limited to the west and north quadrants of the 3rd Street/ Maria Avenue intersection. Established residential areas will maintain their existing character, though minor intensity increases such as infill townhomes should be accommodated, contingent on conformance with relevant historic district guidelines.

- Zoning and design standards within the Primary TOD Zone, as defined in Figure #, should support Low-Intensity TOD.
- Buildings with historic character should be preserved.
- Established residential areas outside the Primary TOD Zone should maintain their character.
    - Infill multi-family units of a lower density, such as townhomes, should be permitted outside the Primary TOD Zone. Accessory dwelling units should be considered.

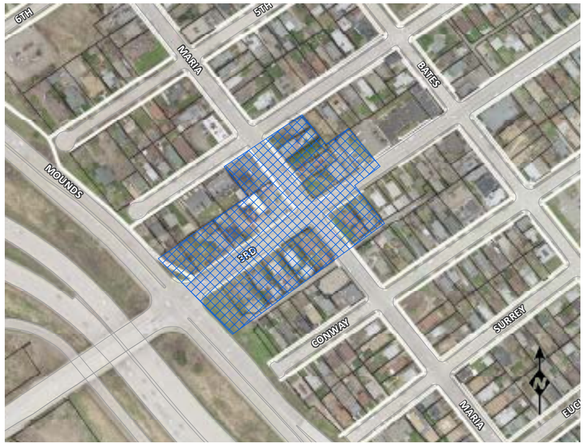


Figure 16: Mounds Station Primary TOD Zone

- Infill development, demolitions, and exterior modifications in the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District should conform to the program for preservation, as applied through Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) review.
- Any potential expansion by Metropolitan State University is not addressed by this plan.

PUBLIC REALM & CONNECTIVITY

OPEN SPACE

The station area has adequate parks and open space provision, including the Dayton's Bluff Recreation Center, and access to Indian Mounds Regional Park, the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, and Swede Hollow. If the station is placed near Mounds Boulevard, it should be designed to provide a gateway feature for the neighborhood. A public plaza near the station could help create a strong public identity for the station.

- Explore privately owned public spaces (POPS), such as pedestrian plazas or seating areas, as part of any development adjacent to the station.

Figure 17: POPS near the Green Line's Lexington Station

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESSIBILITY

The station area includes two major barriers to station accessibility: I-94 and Mounds Boulevard. I-94, which was constructed in the 1950s, has left a gap of over 200' that separates the neighborhood's two halves. Mounds Boulevard from 3rd Street to I-94 currently functions as an extension of the I-94 access ramps, with no traffic signals and high traffic speeds. The two major barriers must be overcome to make the BRT station useful to the surrounding neighborhood. Also, safety and lighting have been a consistent public concern expressed regarding this station area , especially along Maria Avenue and Mounds Boulevard. Safe passage to the elementary school and recreation center should also be a priority.

BIKE/WALK CONNECTIONS

Bicyclists and pedestrians in this area can cross I-94 via an 8'-wide, 380'-long bridge between approximately Maple Street and Mound Street. Mounds Boulevard is crossed either at 3rd Street or 7th Street, though the 3rd Street intersection has been identified by many residents to be unsafe due to traffic speeds, a lack of visibility, and the sheer size of the at-grade crossing (about 120').

- Explore a new traffic signal at the intersection of the I-94 exit and Mounds Boulevard, southwest of the Surrey Avenue cul-de-sac.
- Provide improved pedestrian and bike facilities on the Mounds Boulevard bridge. This should include a dedicated bikeway and wide sidewalks that provide opportunities to stop and enjoy views toward Downtown Saint Paul and the Mississippi River.
- Provide wayfinding signage that directs BRT users to local institutions and attractions.
- Provide sidewalks on both sides of streets within ½ mile of the anticipated station location.

- Repair uneven sidewalks within ½ mile of the anticipated station location.
- Provide pedestrian-scale lighting that follows applicable historic district guidelines on the following streets:
  - 3rd Street southwest of Maria Avenue, continuing past Mounds Boulevard to the intersection with Maria Avenue
  - Mounds Boulevard southeast of 3rd Street, extending through the bridge over I-94, and including any new traffic signal area
  - Maria Avenue southeast of 7th Street
  - Conway Street southwest of Maple Street
  - Surrey Street southwest of Bates Avenue
  - Euclid Street southwest of Maple Street
  - Wilson Avenue southwest of Bates Avenue
  - Hudson Road

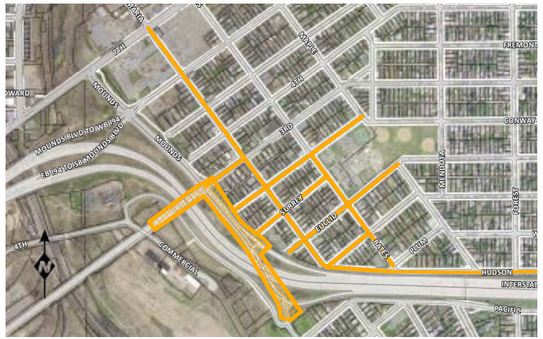


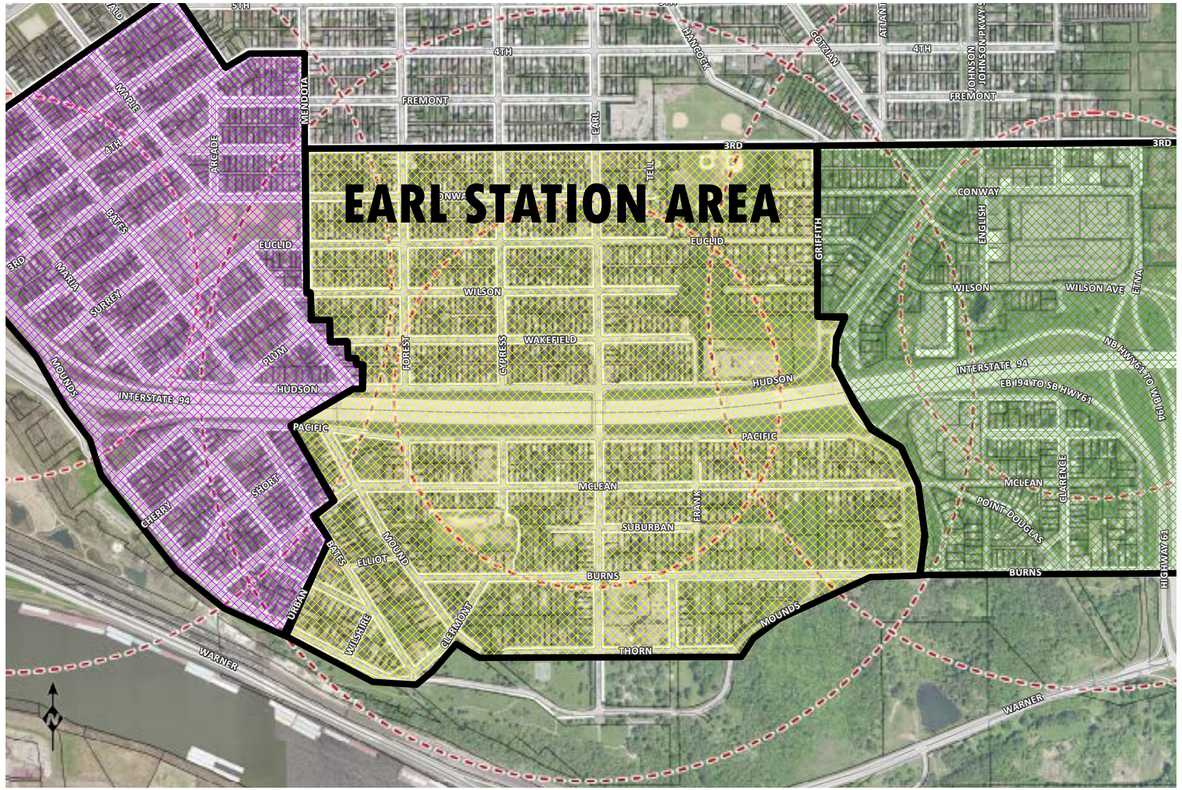
Figure 18: Pedestrian-scale Lighting Priorities

Figure 19: Illustration of potential traffic signal and other Mounds Boulevard improvements

VEHICLE ACCESS

The station area has partial access to I-94 through the westbound off-ramp and the eastbound on-ramp, though these ramps are used more heavily by traffic generated by Downtown than by the neighborhood. Auto access between the neighborhood's two halves is provided by Mounds Boulevard. However, northbound traffic from the neighborhood often experiences long delays getting across the I-94 bridge due to the constant flow of traffic at certain times. Access to Downtown is provided by the 3rd Street bridge and the 7th Street bridge.

- Explore a new traffic signal at the intersection of the I-94 exit and Mounds Boulevard, southwest of the Surrey Avenue cul-de-sac, in order to provide breaks in traffic headed toward eastbound I-94.
- Explore a roundabout at the eastbound I-94 on-ramp, particularly if the traffic signal is not provided.
- If "hide and ride" behavior becomes a problem in the neighborhood, consider permit parking or other means of discouraging the behavior.



EARL STATION AREA PLAN

STATION AREA 30

BRT ALIGNMENT & STATION LOCATION 30

FUTURE CHARACTER 32

PUBLIC REALM & CONNECTIVITY 34

STATION AREA

The heart of the Earl Station Area is an old commercial node built around a former streetcar stop at the Earl Street bridge connecting across I-94. One and two-story commercial buildings front Hudson and Earl near the intersection. Surrounding the node in this traditional streetcar neighborhood is a mix on single-family and multi-family housing, and a major senior housing development to the east on Hudson Road. South of I-94 is predominantly single-family housing, though with a small convenience store and some multi-family and senior housing along Earl Street. The station area is served by several recreational areas including Indian Mounds Regional Park, the Mounds Maintenance Facility playground, and the Dayton's Bluff Recreation Area. Earl Street provides the primary gateway from the proposed station location to the regional park.

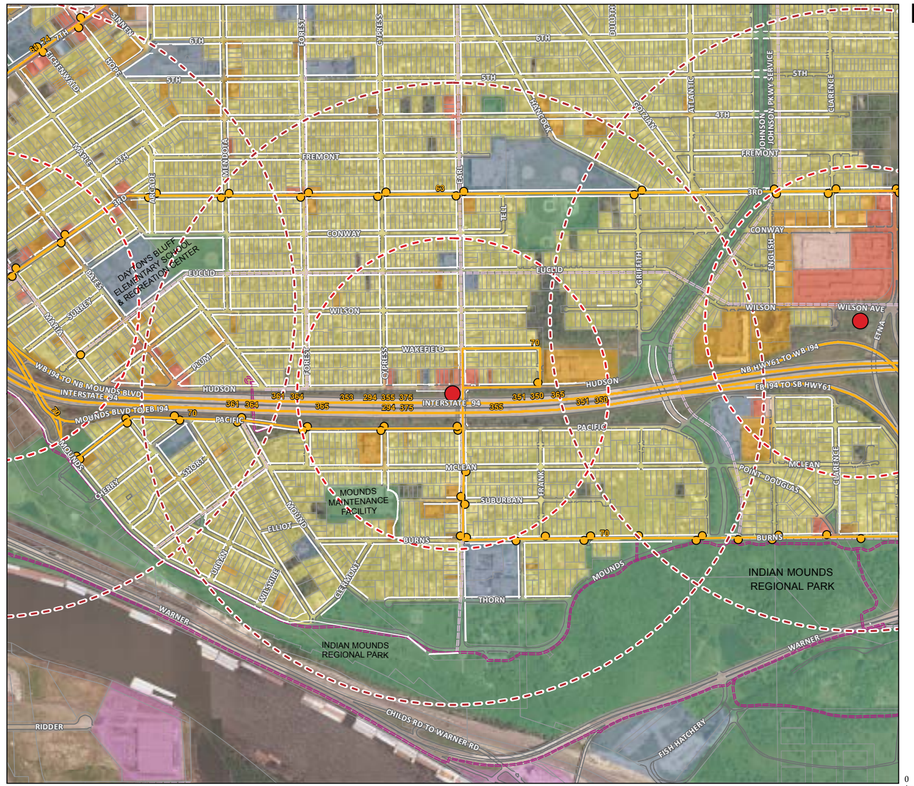
Figure 20: Intersection of Earl & Hudson

BRT ALIGNMENT & STATION LOCATION

The BRT alignment and station location should be designed for convenient pedestrian access and to accomodate the needs of local businesses.

- The station should be located at neighborhood level, and parking should remain on both sides of Hudson Road.
  - Although two-way auto traffic on Hudson is preferred, one-way traffic would be an acceptable trade-off for allowing the BRT station to be at street level and on-street parking to remain, particularly in the first block east and west of Earl Street.
- The station should be as close as possible to the Earl Street bridge to allow for easy access across I-94 and visibility from the community south of I-94.
- Avoid property impacts, particularly to affordable housing and historic buildings.

(on facing page) Figure 21: Base Map of Earl Station Area



EARL STATION AREA

- Proposed Stations
- 1/2 Mile Area
- 1/4 Mile Area
- Existing Transit Routes
- Existing Transit Stops
- Sidewalks
- Curbs

Bikeways

- Proposed
- Existing

2010 Land Use

- Single Family
- Multifamily
- Retail and Other Commercial
- Office
- Mixed Use Residential
- Industrial and Utility
- Institutional
- Park, Recreational or Preserve
- Other/Undeveloped

0 200 400 800 1,200 1,600 2,000 Ft.

FUTURE CHARACTER

The station area will remain a strong, primarily residential neighborhood, focused around an inviting and diverse mixed-use "streetcar" node. The mixed-use node may be expanded in the medium- to long-term to accommodate demand for Medium-Intensity TOD and potentially allow for shared parking solutions. Lower-density infill housing will strengthen the character of the existing residential neighborhoods. Improvements to Earl Street will provide a stronger connection between the neighborhood's two halves, and between the commercial node and the Indian Mounds Regional Park.

LAND USE CHANGE

Investment in the Earl Station Area should preserve the integrity and character of the stable residential neighborhood, rehabilitating the existing commercial building stock and filling in the gaps within the commercial node with medium-scaled mixed-use buildings and lower- to medium-scaled residential uses. Close to the station the land use strategy emphasizes design performance, transit-supportive qualities, active first floor uses and shared parking solutions. In the surrounding neighborhood the land use strategy emphasizes sensitive neighborhood infill with opportunities for life-cycle housing. Together, these approaches will strengthen the traditional streetcar node quality and reinforce the fabric of the area as a transit-supportive community with housing and a range of daily commercial services.

- Zoning and design standards within the Primary TOD Zone, as defined in Figure #, should support Medium-Intensity TOD.
- Buildings with historic character should be preserved.
- Established residential areas outside the Primary TOD Zone should maintain their character.
    - Infill multi-family units of a lower density, such as townhomes, should be permitted outside the Primary TOD Zone. Accessory dwelling units should be considered.
- The undeveloped area north of Hudson Road and west of Johnson Parkway should be considered for lower-density infill development.
- Both sides of Earl Street from I-94 to Indian Mounds Regional Park should also be considered for modest density increases, such as townhomes.

Figure 22: Earl Station Area Primary TOD Zone

Figure 23: Example of Medium-Intensity TOD

Figure 24: Earl Street bridge toward Indian Mounds Regional Park. The park is only ¼ mile away, but is not visually connected to the bridge.

PUBLIC REALM & CONNECTIVITY

OPEN SPACE

The station area has adequate parks and open space provision, including Dayton's Bluff Recreation Center, Indian Mounds Regional Park, and the Mounds Park Maintenance Facility playground. However, none of these amenities is located immediately adjacent to the station, so pedestrian and bike connections will be important. Small public spaces closer to the station could help create a strong public identity for the station.

- Explore privately owned public spaces (POPS), such as pedestrian plazas or seating areas, as part of any development adjacent to the station.
- If the Earl Street bridge is reconstructed, consider including design features that visually unify the bridge with the Indian Mounds Regional Park to the south. Also consider bringing these features southward along Earl Street.

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESSIBILITY

The Earl Station Area is built around the traditional street grid of Saint Paul. The exception to this is I-94 which bisects the station area. The utility of the BRT depends upon it being easily accessible to those living and working in the station area. Another characteristic for usable BRT is the ability to walk safely to the station. Earl, in particular, requires attention because it is the only street that crosses I-94, it hosts a bus route, and provides an important neighborhood connection to Indian Mounds Regional Park.

BIKE/WALK CONNECTIONS

Generally, the streets around the station are well connected and provide safe walking environments. However, Earl Street and Hudson Road could be improved as they will be the most heavily traveled streets for pedestrians. Bicyclists and pedestrians in this area can cross I-94 via Earl Street in the study area's center, via the Johnson Parkway underpass on the eastern end, or the 380'-long pedestrian bridge on the western end connecting to approximately Maple Street and Mound Street. Earl Street and the pedestrian bridge have both been identified through public input as needing upgrades for effective bicyclist and pedestrian use.

- If the Earl Street bridge is rebuilt, consider enhanced landscaping on the bridge and design ties to the Indian Mounds Regional Park.

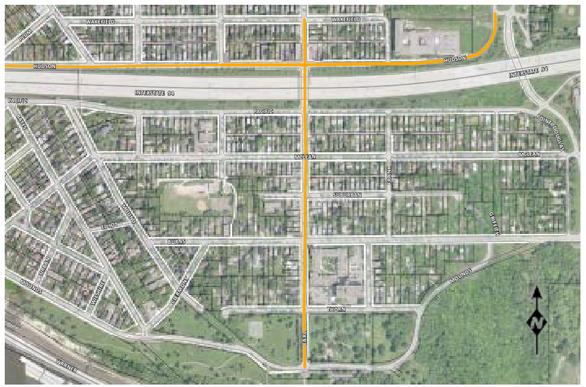


Figure 25: Pedestrian-scale Lighting Priorities

- Strengthen the pedestrian and bicycle connections along Earl Street from the station to Indian Mounds Regional Park, making Earl Street an effective gateway to the park.
- Provide wayfinding signage that directs BRT users to local institutions and attractions.
- Maintain the Johnson Parkway underpass in its current location.
- Maintain the Maple/Mound Street pedestrian and bicycle bridge in approximately its current location. If it is replaced, the new bridge should have an enhanced design similar to the newer pedestrian bridges over I-94 west of Downtown Saint Paul.
- Provide sidewalks on both sides of streets within ½ mile of the anticipated station location.
- Repair uneven sidewalks within ½ mile of the anticipated station location.
- Provide pedestrian-scale lighting on the following streets:
  - Earl Street from Wakefield Street to Indian Mounds Regional Park.
  - Hudson Road.
- Develop Earl Street from Hudson Road to Indian Mounds Regional Park as a gateway connection to the park with facilities such as landscaping and pedestrian-scale lighting, with a unified design that visually ties the station to the park.
- Consider lighting, sidewalks, or other improvements to create a safe environment in the undeveloped area north of Hudson Road and west of Johnson Parkway.

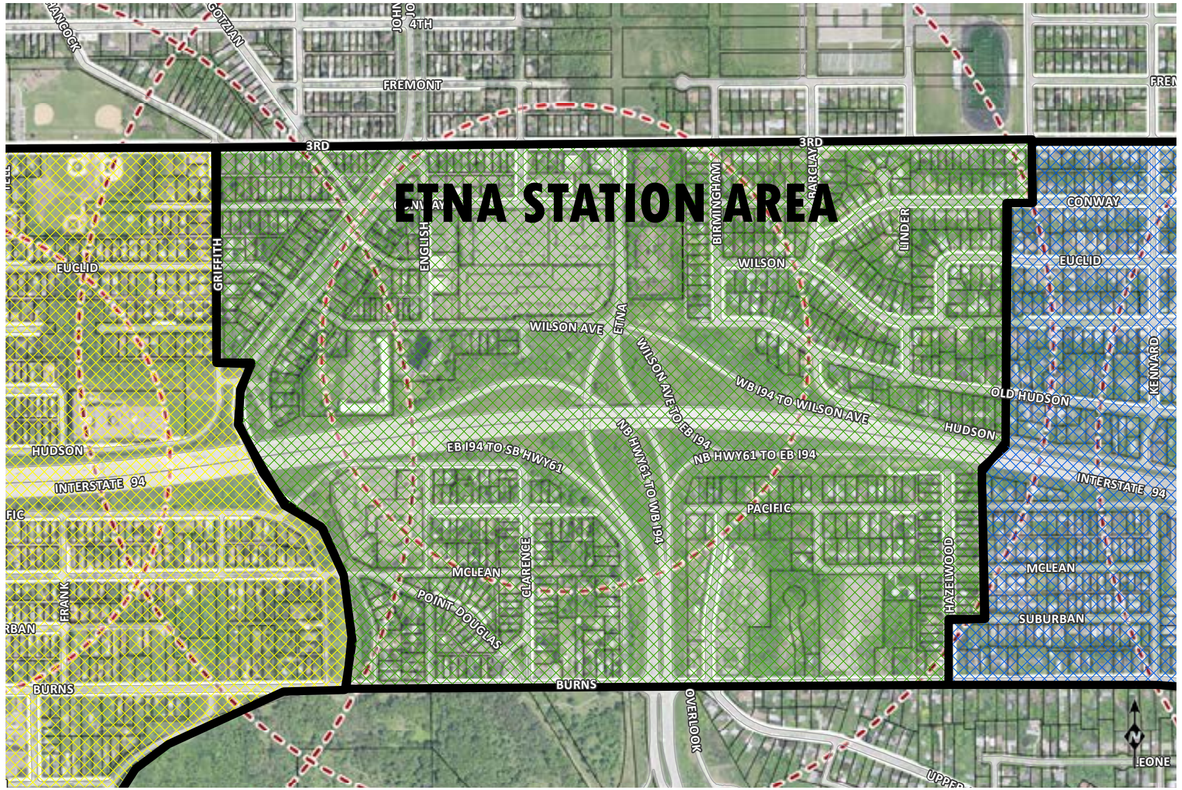
VEHICLE ACCESS

The station area does not contain any vehicular access points to I-94. The local street grid mostly provides good vehicular access, though with I-94 presenting a significant barrier between north and south portions of the neighborhood. However, it is recognized that placing the proposed station at neighborhood level will probably cause the loss of either on-street parking or two-way vehicular travel on Hudson Road near Earl Street. This plan prioritizes parking near Earl Street, so the probable resulting conversion to one-way traffic along at least a portion of Hudson Road will require additional signage and could create neighborhood impacts.

- Preserve on-street parking on both sides of Hudson Road between Cypress Street and Frank Street. Also explore means of preserving on-street parking on both sides of Hudson Road farther from Earl Street.
- Near the commercial node at Earl/Hudson, make parking time-limited in order to support businesses and discourage "hide and ride" behaviors.
- If "hide and ride" behavior becomes a problem in the neighborhood, consider permit parking or other means of discouraging the behavior.
- Provide adequate signage to improve safety and reduce neighborhood impacts caused by any conversions of Hudson Road to one-way traffic.

TRANSIT CONNECTIONS

- Metro Transit should consider and evaluate new north-south connections to the Earl Station through its Service Improvement Plan process.
- Provide convenient transfer connections for riders from existing or new bus routes to the Earl Station.



ETNA STATION AREA PLAN

STATION AREA 38

BRT ALIGNMENT & STATION LOCATION 38

FUTURE CHARACTER 40

PUBLIC REALM & CONNECTIVITY 41

STATION AREA

The immediate station area is dominated by the Highway 61/I-94 interchange and hilly topography, which impede pedestrian and bicycle access. Notably, the 61/94 interchange lacks two auto movements: eastbound 94 to northbound Etna Street, and southbound Etna Street to westbound 94. Existing development includes the Metro 94 business center, major multi-family complexes, and single-family houses north of I-94, and a mix of multi-family and single-family uses south of the freeway. I-94 and Highway 61 each present major barriers that divide the communities in this area.

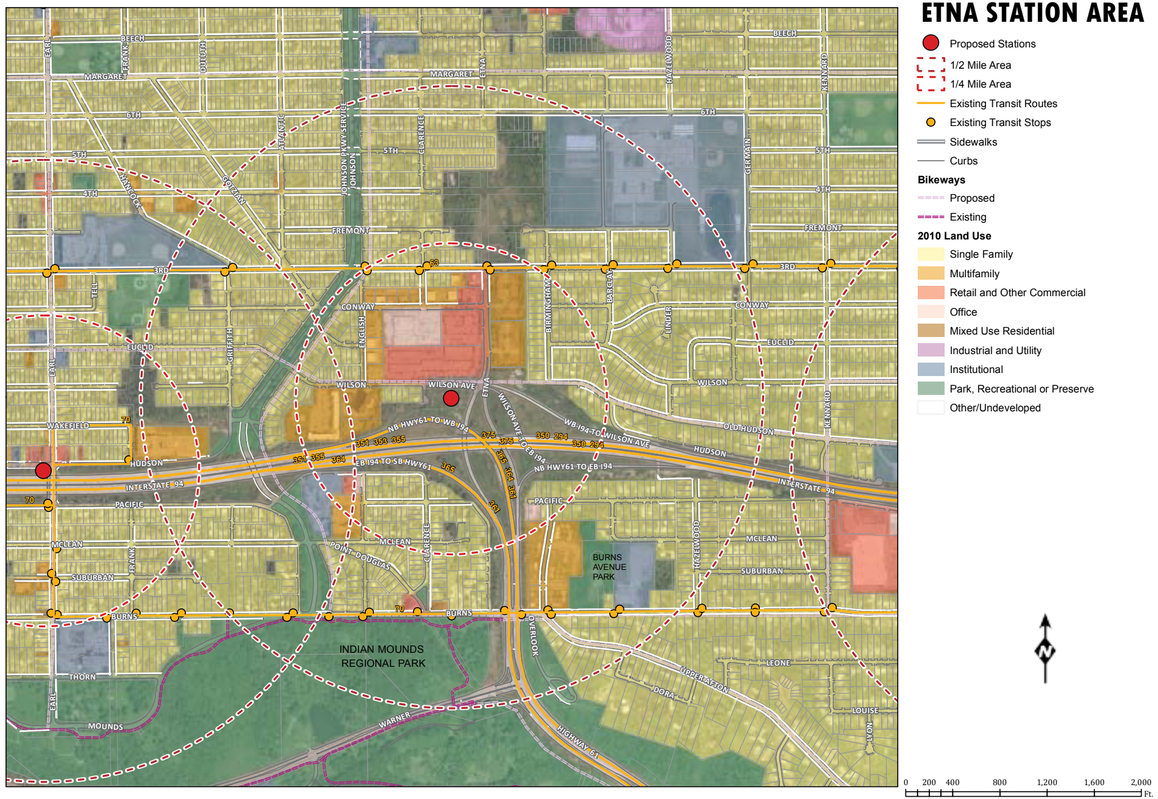
Figure 26: Etna Street and Wilson Avenue Intersection

BRT ALIGNMENT & STATION LOCATION

The BRT alignment should avoid property impacts and should involve a realignment of the Highway 61/Interstate 94 interchange. It should also avoid running busses in mixed-traffic in residential areas, such as along Johnson Parkway.

- Avoid impacts to the apartment properties west of Etna Street on the south side of Wilson Avenue.
- Realign the Highway 61/Interstate 94 interchange with the following priorities:
  - Improve pedestrian connections from all four quadrants of the interchange and create street-scale pedestrian environments. Pedestrians should be planned for first.
  - Add the two missing auto movements to create synergy with BRT for improved development prospects.
  - Create developable land by shrinking the interchange footprint and locating the BRT guideway close to the new roadways.
  - Avoid alignments that would run busses in mixed-traffic in residential areas.
  - The station should be located and designed for safety, including safety perception through "eyes on the street" and avoiding the sense of entrapment. The station should be at or near ground level.
- Avoid property impacts, particularly to affordable housing and historic buildings.

(on facing page) Figure 27: Base Map of Etna Station Area



FUTURE CHARACTER

The station area will have new High-Intensity TOD in any parcels created between Wilson Avenue and I-94. Such development will be multiple stories, designed with a pedestrian orientation, and allow for a mix of uses. Any redevelopment of the northwest corner of Wilson and Etna will have similar character. New connections between the area north of I-94 and the quadrants south of I-94 (on both sides of Highway 61) will forge a stronger sense of community in this physically divided station area.

LAND USE CHANGE

Land use change should occur immediately around the Etna Station through the creation of new developable land via interchange reconfiguration, and through the eventual redevelopment of the business park at the northwest corner of Etna and Wilson. The exact location of the BRT guideway and any reconfigured roads will influence the amount of developable land south of the Wilson Avenue alignment, both west and east of Etna Street. Established residential areas will maintain their existing character, though minor density increases such as infill townhomes should be accommodated.

- Zoning and design standards within the Primary TOD Zone, as defined in Figure #, should support High-Intensity TOD.
- Buildings with historic character should be preserved.
- Established residential areas outside the Primary TOD Zone should maintain their character.
    - Infill multi-family units of a lower density, such as townhomes, should be permitted outside the Primary TOD Zone. Accessory dwelling units should be considered.

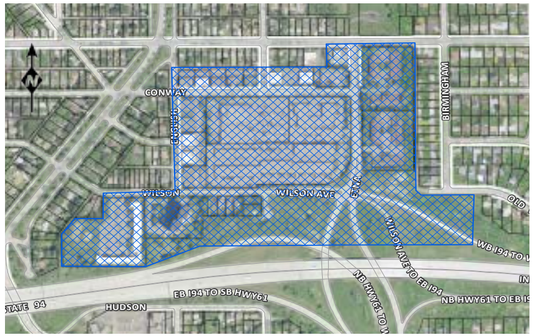


Figure 28: Etna Station Area Primary TOD Zone

Figure 29: Example of High-Intensity TOD

PUBLIC REALM & CONNECTIVITY

OPEN SPACE

The area north of I-94 near this station has previously been identified by the City of Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan (2010) as a parks service gap. The City owns a large amount of land north of 3rd Street that is used for stormwater treatment, but there are no current plans to create a park on that property. The following strategies can help meet the existing needs gap as well as provide open space for new users.

- Explore privately owned public spaces (POPS), such as pedestrian plazas or seating areas, as part of any development adjacent to the station.
- Explore establishing a neighborhood park in conjuction with any redevelopment that increases intensity of uses at the northwest corner of Etna and Wilson, whether that park be on the site itself or nearby.

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESSIBILITY

The Etna Street station area currently has severe accessibility and connectivity problems that need to be improved in order to make BRT successful and positively impact the neighborhood, namely I-94, Highway 61, hilly topography, and a lack of sidewalks. The western part of the station area has the effective I-94 crossing of Johnson Parkway. The eastern end has an ill-placed pedestrian bridge. Sidewalks are intermittent and many areas feel dark and unsafe.

Figure 30: Pedestrian bridge east of Etna Station is located far from main pedestrian activities

BIKE / WALK CONNECTIONS

Current barriers to effective bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure are formidable. They include include I-94 and its access ramps, Highway 61, the hill east of the Etna Street/Wilson Avenue intersection, a large wetland north of 3rd Street, and fencing around portions of the Metro 94 business park at the northwest corner of Etna/Wilson. The anticipated station location in the southwest corner of Etna/Wilson is effectively cut off from pedestrians and bicyclists in most directions, which will require significant bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure investments near this station. Major pedestrian and bicycle traffic generators in this area include apartments located northwest, southeast, and northeast of the 94/61 interchange, and commercial uses such as the convenience store and the day care located northwest of Etna/Wilson.

• Prioritize pedestrians and bicyclists in the realignment of the I-94/61 interchange and provide connections to all four quadrants of the interchange.
• Demolish the existing pedestrian bridge east of Etna Street at approximately the Barclay Street alignment, and do not reconstruct in place. The bridge does not connect activity centers and is, therefore, ill-placed. The bridge's functionality should be replaced by pedestrian and bicycling improvements at Highway 61/Etna Street to the west and Kennard Street to the east.
• Provide new pedestrian and bicycle facilities that connect Etna Street east up the hill to approximately the Old Hudson Road alignment.
• Provide wayfinding signage that directs BRT users to local institutions and attractions.
• Provide sidewalks on both sides of streets within ½ mile of the anticipated station location.
• Repair uneven sidewalks within ½ mile of the anticipated station location.
• Provide pedestrian-scale lighting along any sidewalks or bike paths created as part of a I-94/61 realignment and the new connection eastward from Etna Street on the Old Hudson Road alignment.
• Provide pedestrian-scale lighting along Wilson Avenue, Etna Street, Conway Street, Clarence Street, and English Street in the general vicinities identified in Figure #.

VEHICLE ACCESS

The I-94/61 interchange is not a full interchange - it lacks the south-to-west and east-to-north movements. The result is an inability to consistently support retail uses in the interchange's northwest quadrant, and both

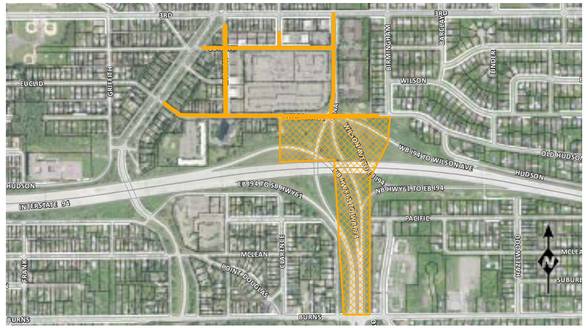


Figure 31: Pedestrian-scale Lighting Priorities

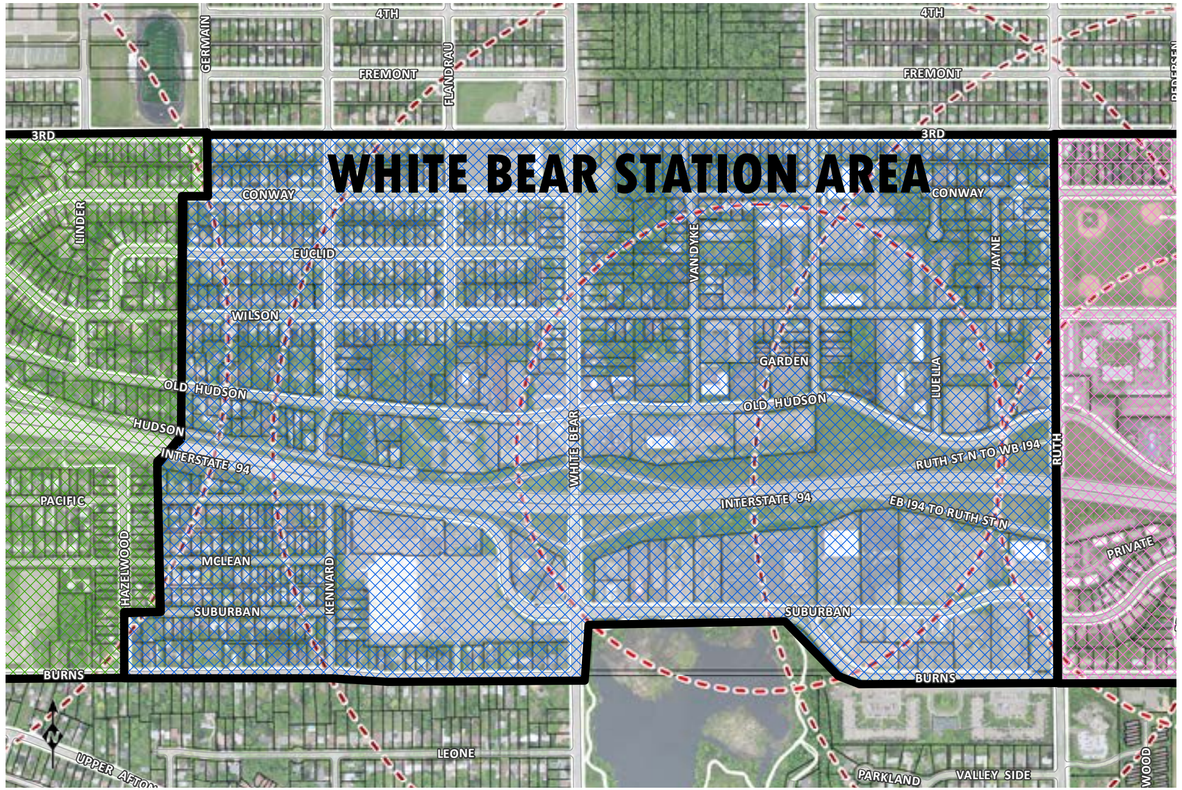
confusion and safety issues at the Highway 61/Burns Avenue intersection where many vehicles make U-turns in order to work around the missing interchange movements.

• Make the I-94/61 interchange a full interchange when it is rebuilt, including vehicular movements to/from all directions.
• If "hide and ride" behavior becomes a problem in the neighborhood, consider permit parking or other means of discouraging the behavior.

TRANSIT CONNECTIONS

• Metro Transit should consider and evaluate new north-south connections to the Etna Station through its Service Improvement Plan process.

ETNA STATION AREA PLAN



WHITE BEAR STATION AREA PLAN

STATION AREA 46

BRT ALIGNMENT & STATION LOCATION 46

FUTURE CHARACTER 48

PUBLIC REALM & CONNECTIVITY 49

STATION AREA

The station area is includes the last full-access freeway interchange before Downtown Saint Paul on westbound I-94: White Bear Avenue. As such, it is dominated by commercial uses on both sides of I-94, including several fast-food restaurants whose high vehicle turnover and individual driveway accesses present hazardous conditions for pedestrians and bikes. The area also has prominent vacant lots sandwiched among the commercial uses, a major agglomeration of 2- to 3-story multi-family residential buildings north of Old Hudson Road, and single-family housing farther from the interchange. On the north side of I-94 there are significant topography changes, with the intersection of Hazel Street and Hudson Road located 30 feet and 70 feet (respectively) below the adjacent bridges at White Bear Avenue and Ruth Street. I-94 itself presents a major barrier that divides the community in half.

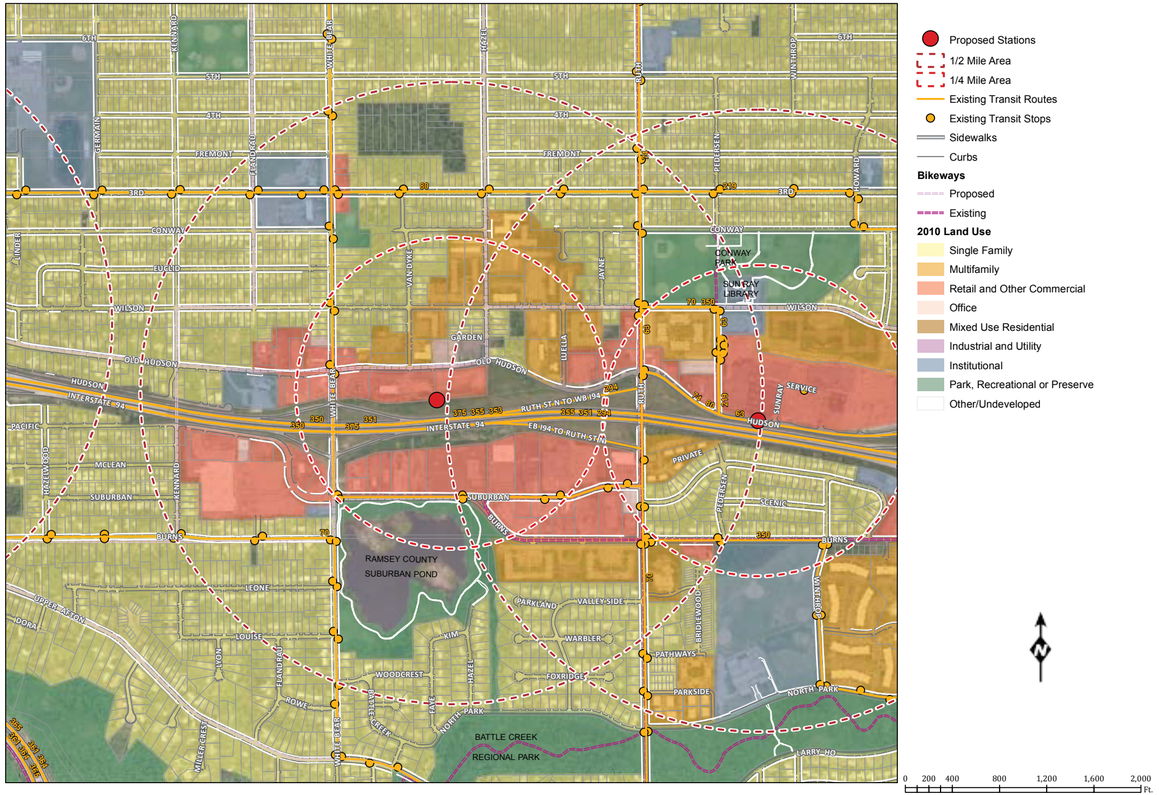
Figure 32: Indivicual driveway accesses and drive-throughs characterize Suburban Avenue

BRT ALIGNMENT & STATION LOCATION

The BRT alignment should be near the northern edge of Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) property, rather than close to I-94, in order to improve station visibility and access. The station should be located near the apartment and businesses east of Van Dyke Street and should have pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly access. With near-term development uncertain, the apartments and businesses east of Van Dyke Street provide the area's most effective "eyes on the street" for users' perception of safety.

- Locate the station south of the existing driveway approximately 170 feet east of Van Dyke Street (see Figure 37 on page 51).
- Provide quality pedestrian and bike access to the station from Old Hudson Road, potentially including a new street on the existing driveway's alignment lined with landscaping.
- Locate the BRT alignment near the northern edge of MnDOT property.
- Avoid property impacts, particularly to affordable housing and historic buildings.

(on facing page) Figure 33: Base Map of White Bear Station Area



FUTURE CHARACTER

The station area will provide High-Intensity TOD in its development and redevelopment on both sides of I-94. Such development and redevelopment will be multiple stories, designed with a pedestrian orientation, and allow for a mix of uses.

LAND USE CHANGE

The White Bear Station Area presents major opportunities for transit-oriented development and redevelopment that can take advantage of the BRT investment and encourage other neighborhood improvements. With its larger vacant lots and underutilized parking lots, this station area presents some of the East Side's best contiguous opportunities for a new development form at an intensity that supports businesses and the transit service itself. Established residential areas will maintain their existing character, though minor intensity increases such as infill townhomes should be accommodated. Vacant land owned by MnDOT to the south of Hudson Road and east of Hazel Street could provide additional developable land. Though short- to medium-term development is expected to occur north of I-94, the land south of I-94 presents some of the best long-term opportunities to accommodate TOD.

- Zoning and design standards within the Primary TOD Zone, as defined in Figure #, should support High-Intensity TOD.
- Buildings with historic character should be preserved.
- Established residential areas outside the Primary TOD Zone should maintain their character.
    - Infill multi-family units of a lower density, such as townhomes, should be permitted outside the Primary TOD Zone. Accessory dwelling units should be considered.

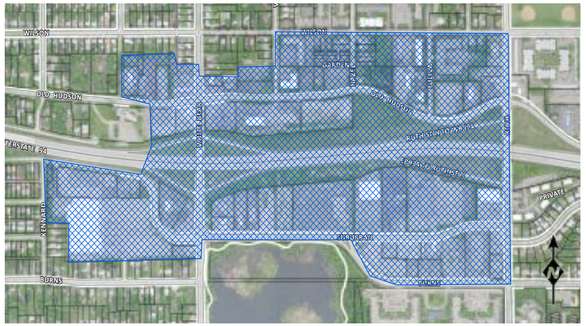


Figure 34: White Bear Primary TOD Zone

Figure 35: Example of High-Intensity TOD

PUBLIC REALM & CONNECTIVITY

OPEN SPACE

The station area has adequate parks and open space provision, including Conway Park & Recreation Center to the northeast. Battle Creek Regional Park is also located to the south outside the station area. Small public spaces closer to the station could help create a strong public identity for the station.

- Explore privately owned public spaces (POPS), such as pedestrian plazas or seating areas, as part of any development adjacent to the station.

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESSIBILITY

The proposed BRT station lacks good connectivity to Hudson Road and across I-94. The station needs to have strong pedestrian and bike connections to existing residents and the bridges over I-94 in order to make BRT successful and positively impact the surrounding neighborhoods and businesses.

BIKE/WALK CONNECTIONS

Bicyclists and pedestrians in this area can cross I-94 via White Bear Avenue and via Ruth Street. Since White Bear Avenue is a full interchange that will always carry large amounts of vehicular traffic and present pedestrian and bike safety issues at the crossings near the bridge, a new pedestrian/bike bridge should be provided to provide a safe connection between activity centers. This new bridge will also replace some of the function of the Barclay Street pedestrian/bike bridge that is recommended for removal in the Etna Station chapter of this plan. The preferred station location will have strong pedestrian and bike connections to the surrounding neighborhoods. Safety has been a consistent public concern regardless of station placement, and so adequate lighting must be provided in order to create a safe environment.

- Provide a pedestrian/bike bridge at the Kennard Street alignment. The new bridge should have an enhanced design similar to the newer pedestrian bridges over I-94 west of Downtown Saint Paul.
- Provide improved pedestrian and bike facilities on the White Bear Avenue and Ruth Street bridges over I-94. This should include a dedicated bikeway and wide sidewalks.
- Provide wayfinding signage that directs BRT users to local institutions and attractions.
- Create a new street connection from the station north to Old Hudson Road, including attractive pedestrian and bike facilities. This street connection should be provided before the opening of BRT service. (See Figure 37 on page 51.)
- Extend Hazel Street south of Old Hudson Road and connect the extension to the new street that connects the station directly to Old Hudson Road. The locations of these new streets should be coordinated with the site's development.

- Provide a direct pedestrian connection between the station and White Bear Avenue along the BRT guideway.
- Provide sidewalks on both sides of streets within ½ mile of the anticipated station location.
- Repair uneven sidewalks within ½ mile of the anticipated station location.
- Provide a bikeway connection to Hazel Street and the broader bikeway network.
- Provide pedestrian-scale lighting in the following areas:
  - Along any new streets and sidewalks created south of Old Hudson Road.
  - Hudson Road from Kennard Street to Ruth Street.
  - Van Dyke Street, Hazel Street, and Luella Street between Hudson Road and Wilson Avenue.
  - Wilson Avenue east of Van Dyke Street.
  - White Bear Avenue between Old Hudson Road and Suburban Avenue.
  - Ruth Street between Wilson Avenue and North Park Drive.

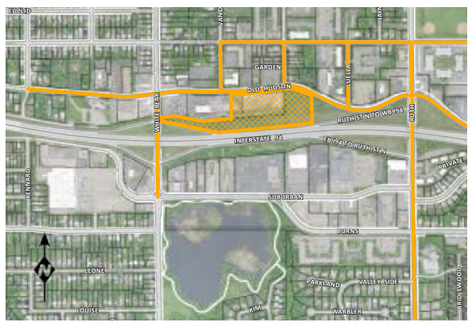


Figure 36: Pedestrian-scale Lighting Priorities

VEHICLE ACCESS

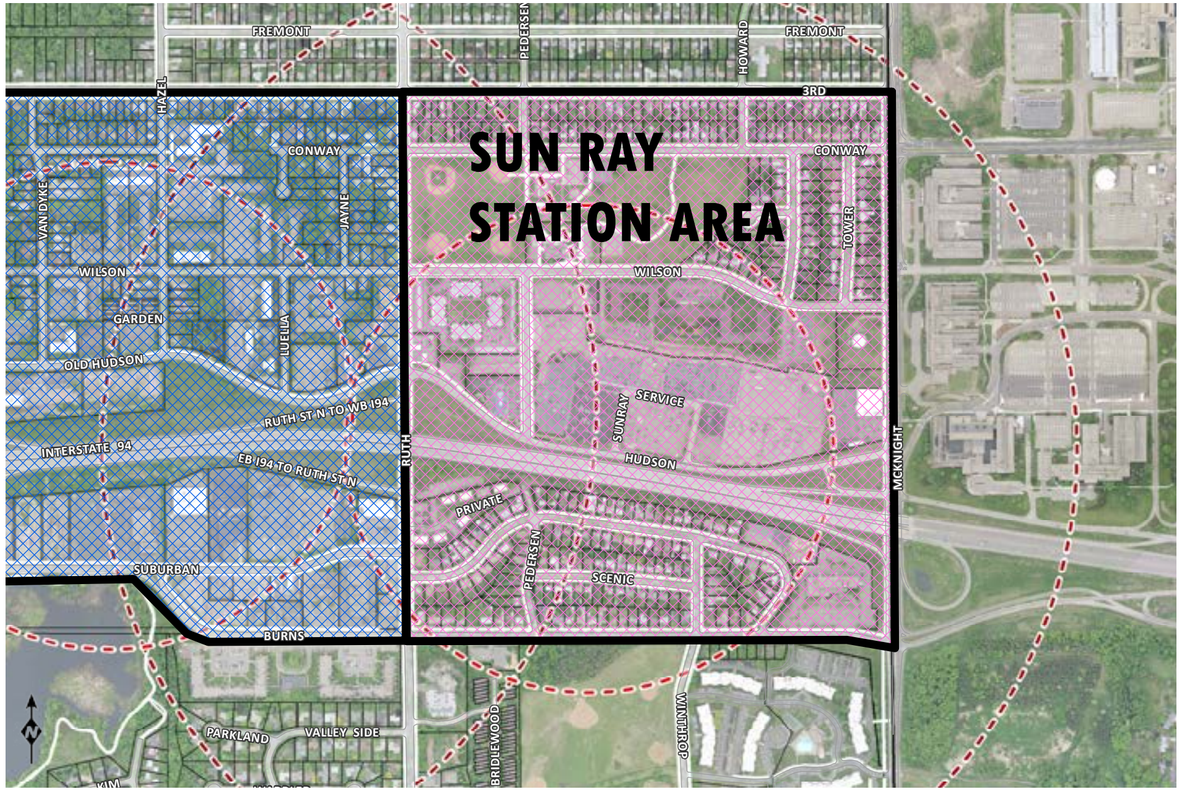
The vacant area south of Hudson Road east of Van Dyke Street presents a prime development opportunity because of the amount of contiguous vacant land and its adjacency to the proposed BRT station. Any development in this area should create a finer-grained street system, rather than mega-blocks, in order to present a quality transit-oriented and pedestrian-oriented development pattern that encourages an active streetscape and more intense uses that take full advantage of the transit-adjacent location.

- Provide a new street connection from the station north to Hudson Road, including attractive pedestrian and bike facilities. This street connection should be provided before the opening of BRT service.
- Extend Hazel Street south of Hudson Road and connect the extension to the new street that connects the station directly to Hudson Road. The locations of these new streets should be coordinated with the site's development.
- If "hide and ride" behavior becomes a problem in the neighborhood, consider permit parking or other means of discouraging the behavior.

TRANSIT CONNECTIONS

- MetroTransit should explore bus connections to this BRT station through its Service Improvement Plan (SIP).

Figure 37: Preferred station location and recommended improvements



SUN RAY STATION AREA PLAN

STATION AREA 54
DESIGN WORKSHOP 54
BRT ALIGNMENT & STATION LOCATION 56
FUTURE CHARACTER 57
PUBLIC REALM & CONNECTIVITY 58

STATION AREA

The station area is visually dominated by the 22-acre Sun Ray shopping center, which is oriented toward I-94 and the full interchange at McKnight Road. Other retail uses are located west of the shopping center, and there is a hotel south of I-94 along McKnight Road. A bus transfer station, two large apartment complexes, and a nonprofit office are located north of the shopping center. The area's other major activity center includes Conway Park, Conway Recreation Center, and the Sun Ray Branch of the Saint Paul Public Library, all located north of Wilson Avenue. I-94, McKnight Road, and the shopping center buildings present significant barriers to pedestrians and bikes that inhibit connections and a shared sense of community. The bowling alley and water tower east of the shopping center sit atop a hill, which presents another barrier to east-west movements in this area. 3M's international headquarters is located across McKnight Road in Maplewood.

SUN RAY DESIGN WORKSHOP

The Saint Paul Design Center held a community design workshop regarding the Sun Ray shopping center and surrounding area on February 5, 2015. That workshop, along with subsequent analysis and public input, resulted in a long-term concept for redevelopment and several short-term concepts. The illustrations in Figure # show the leading concepts, some of which are reflected in the goals and strategies of this chapter. See the Appendix for the full set of concepts.

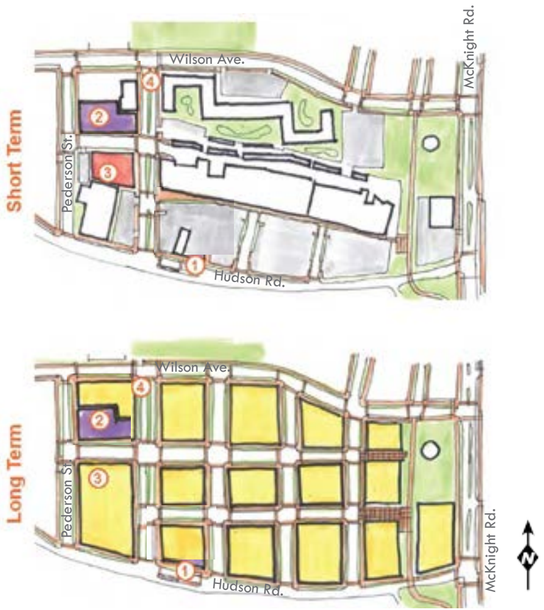
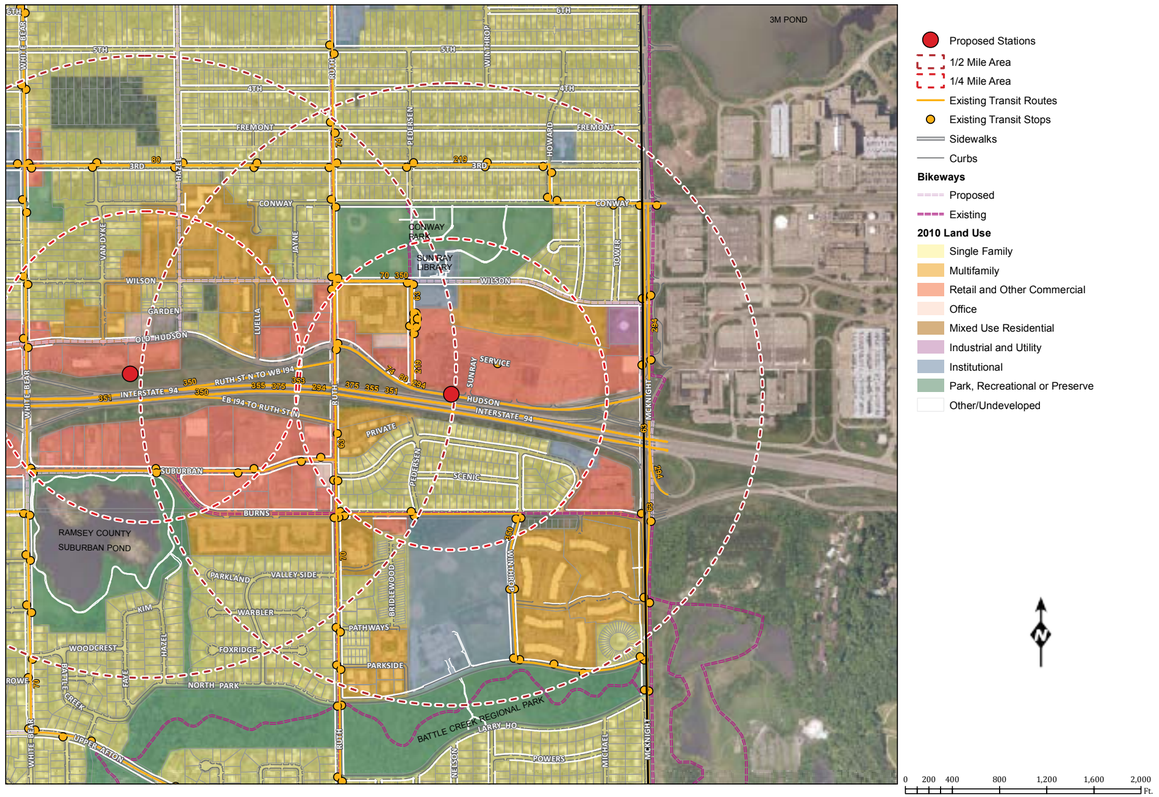


Figure 38: The Sun Ray design workshop conceptual illustrations include the BRT station near Hudson Road (1) a park & ride facility (2) in the short-term, and a full urban street grid in the long-term. The proposed north-south connection (4) from the BRT station to the library is shown here as a street, but should actually be a pedestrian and bicycle connection only. (3) is a potential new anchor store.

(on facing page) Figure 39: Base Map of Sun Ray Station Area



BRT ALIGNMENT & STATION LOCATION

The Sun Ray BRT station is the only one in Saint Paul proposed to have a park & ride facility, which is anticipated to contain approximately 350 spaces. Any park & ride facility should be placed and designed to allow for active uses to line its ground floor exterior. The BRT station itself should be located toward the west end of the Sun Ray shopping center in order to align with a future pedestrian connection to the north and improve its accessibility to pedestrians coming to/from the shopping center. The station location should be highly visible from the commercial uses and be placed to accommodate bus transfers.

- Locate the BRT station in or in front of the western 1/3 of the Sun Ray shopping center in a manner that allows for it to be the terminus for a new pedestrian connection that extends northward to the library and park. The station should be placed to accommodate bus transfers.
- The park & ride facility should be placed at or near the southeast corner of Pederson Street and Wilson Avenue, behind the Sun Ray shopping center. Vehicular access should be from the facility's south face and be of a minimum driveway width. It should be placed and designed so as to not remove the building at 2100 Wilson Avenue (currently occupied by St. Paul Youth Services).
- A multi-level ramp design is preferred for the park & ride facility, and it should be designed to accommodate active uses such as retail or office space lining its ground floor exterior. Integrating residential uses into the upper floors' exteriors should also be considered.
- Provide quality pedestrian and bicycle access to the station from the park & ride facility, the surrounding neighborhood, and the library/park activity center.
- Avoid property impacts, particularly to affordable housing and historic buildings.

Figure 40: Example of a parking facility with active ground floor uses

FUTURE CHARACTER

The station area will provide High-Intensity TOD in its Primary TOD Zone, land currently occupied mainly by suburban-style commercial developments on the north side of I-94. A mix of uses and a finer-grained street network will provide pedestrian activity and improved commercial vitality. Land use will become much more intense, and connections to area activity centers will be strong, pleasant, and safe.

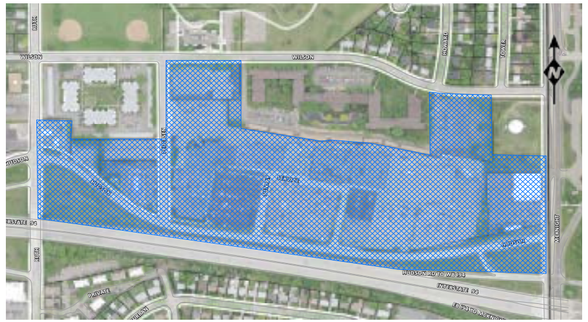


Figure 41: Sun Ray Station Area Primary TOD Zone

LAND USE CHANGE

Nowhere else along the Gold Line in Saint Paul is there a larger contiguous group of 1-story buildings and parking lots than in the Sun Ray station area, including the 22-acre Sun Ray shopping center and surrounding commercial properties. This low-intensity land use setting immediately adjacent to the proposed BRT station and park & ride presents tremendous potential for large-scale TOD in the medium- to long-term. In the short-term, the commercial uses are viable and the HR&A market study shows that retail demand is high, while multi-family residential demand is medium. Thus, land use change and intensification of the existing commercial developments will need to be phaseable, and will be driven by the private sector. Nonetheless, the long-term land use change will be major. Established residential areas will maintain their existing character, though minor intensity increases such as infill townhomes should be accommodated.

- Zoning and design standards within the Primary TOD Zone, as defined in Figure #, should support High-Intensity TOD.
- Established residential areas outside the Primary TOD Zone should maintain their character.
- Infill multi-family units of a lower intensity, such as townhomes, should be permitted outside the Primary TOD Zone. Accessory dwelling units should be considered.
- Buildings with historic character should be preserved.

Figure 42: Example of High-Intensity TOD (courtesy Opus Group)

PUBLIC REALM & CONNECTIVITY

OPEN SPACE

The station area has adequate parks and open space provision, including Conway Park & Recreation Center to the north and Battle Creek Regional Park outside the station area to the south and southeast, though the pedestrian and bicycle connections to these amenities need improvement. Small public spaces closer to the station could help create a strong public identity for the station.

- Explore privately owned public spaces (POPS), such as pedestrian plazas or seating areas, as part of any development adjacent to the station.

CONNECTIVITY & ACCESSIBILITY

The Sun Ray shopping center and its surroundings require significant streetscape changes in order to provide a transit-supportive setting and allow for safe, convenient connections between the BRT station and area destinations. Finer-grained pedestrian connections that have visual interest, are safe from vehicles, present "eyes on the street", and enhance commercial vitality will help create a strong, transit-oriented sense of "place" around this station. The proposed BRT station lacks good connectivity beyond the Sun Ray shopping center to the north, across McKnight Road, and across I-94. Improved connections across McKnight Road would also provide major economic development potential due to the heavy concentration of employees at 3M's headquarters.

BIKE / WALK

Bicyclists and pedestrians in this area can cross I-94 via Ruth Street and McKnight Road. Access through the shopping center is provided via a covered arcade walkway, though the connection is considered by many to be unsafe due to the lack of "eyes on the street" behind the center.

- Create a connection through the existing commercial buildings for pedestrians and bicycles only that serves as a direct north-south connection between the BRT station and the park/library activity center. The connection should be located and designed to facilitate convenient pedestrian connections, high pedestrian visibility and sense of safety, and commercially functional spaces. It should be implemented at the same time as the BRT station and park & ride, before the opening of BRT service.
- Explore opportunities to improve safety north of the shopping center buildings and south of the Bradley House apartments via design, security cameras, or other means.
- Explore opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle signalized crossings of McKnight Road between Wilson Avenue and I-94.
- Explore opportunities for more direct pedestrian and bicycle connections from the BRT station to signalized crossings of McKnight Road, such as through the water tower property, and to Battle Creek Park to the south.
- Explore providing a pedestrian ramp up the hill east of the shopping center to the bowling alley property, near the current staircase. Such pedestrian ramp should improve accessibility for mobility-limited pedestrians.
- Provide improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities on the Ruth Street bridge over I-94 and along the McKnight Road underpass. This should include a dedicated bikeway and wide sidewalks.

- Provide wayfinding signage that directs BRT users to local institutions and attractions.
- As the private sector chooses to redevelop the Sun Ray shopping center, provide an urban street grid with pedestrian amenities and buildings placed near the sidewalks.
- Provide sidewalks on both sides of streets, including new streets, within ½ mile of the anticipated station location.
- Repair uneven sidewalks within ½ mile of the anticipated station location.
- Provide pedestrian-scale lighting in the following areas:
  - Along any new streets and sidewalks created between Hudson Road and Wilson Avenue.
  - Pederson Street between Hudson Road and Wilson Avenue.
  - Hudson Road.
  - Wilson Avenue.
  - McKnight Road between from Wilson Avenue south to Battle Creek Park.
  - Ruth Street between Wilson Avenue and North Park Drive.

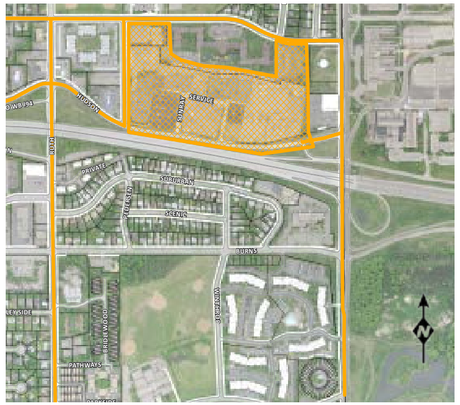


Figure 43: Pedestrian-Scale Lighting Priorities

VEHICLE ACCESS

Intensified redevelopment of the Sun Ray shopping center will require a finer-grained street system with vehicular access provided to all blocks. Vehicular access across McKnight Road to the bowling alley lot and the shopping center is currently difficult and confusing, and should be improved.

- As the Sun Ray shopping center redevelops, provide a finer-grained street system with vehicular access provided to all blocks.
- Maintain safe and viable truck delivery access to large-scale retail uses.
- If "hide and ride" behavior becomes a problem in the neighborhood, consider permit parking or other means of discouraging the behavior.

TRANSIT

- Transfers to/from other busses should be accommodated within or immediately adjacent to the proposed BRT station rather than keeping the transfer point behind the Sun Ray shopping center. The transfer area should be safe and visible.

IMPLEMENTATION

GOLD LINE BRT PROJECT

FUNDING DECISIONS

SPECIAL FUNDING DISTRICTS

REZONINGS

GOLD LINE BRT PROJECT

Recommendations regarding BRT station location, park & ride location, and BRT alignment will be provided to the Gold Line Project Office for consideration as the project design and evaluation progresses. These decisions rest with the Project Office in conjunction with the federal government, not the City of Saint Paul, and will take other factors into account. However, it is generally recognized that the BRT location and alignment decisions can both impact and be impacted by station area planning, and that the two processes working together synergistically will produce the most positive benefits for the city and the transitway. This plan will also provide guidance for the City of Saint Paul's municipal consent of the project.

FUNDING DECISIONS

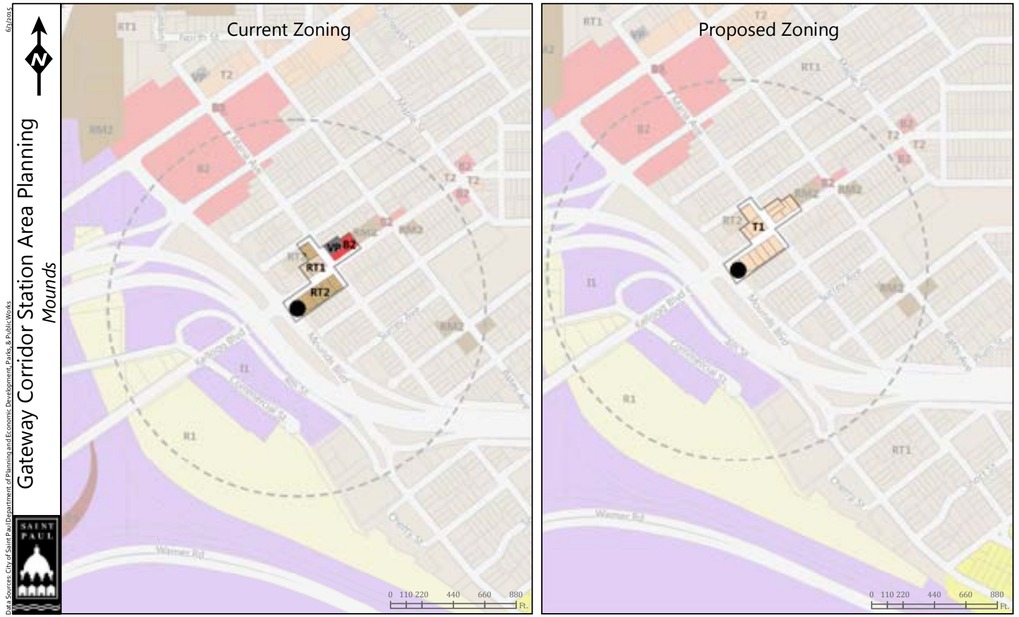
City funding decisions such as Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) projects, Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) investment, and economic development incentives are required to be in compliance with adopted City plans. As such, this plan document will guide those decisions. Also, this plan will guide and support applications for outside funding sources to help implement the plan, such as Livable Communities grants.

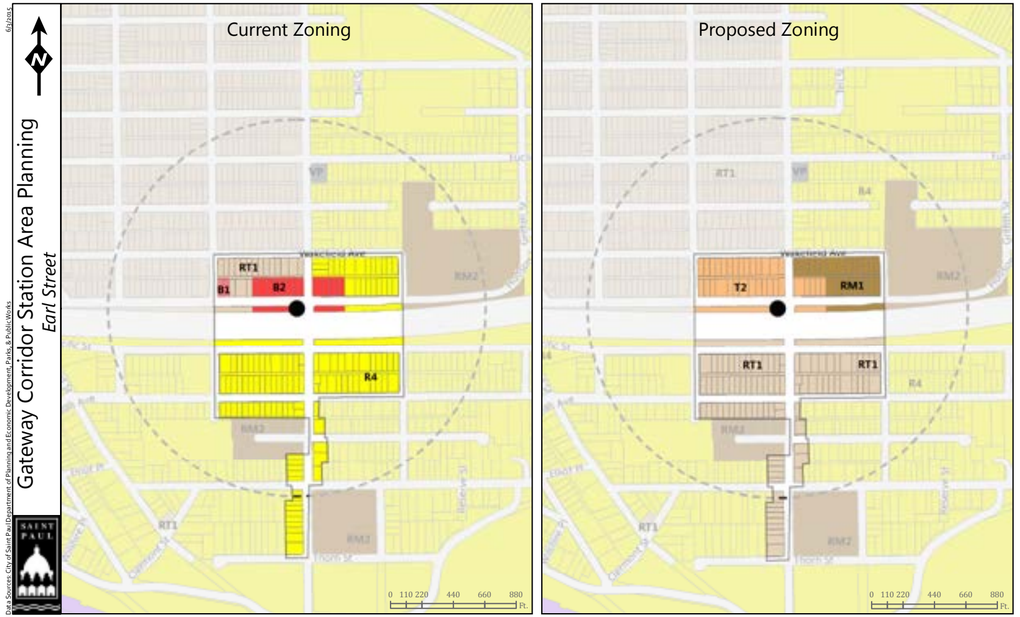
SPECIAL FUNDING DISTRICTS

Special funding districts can provide financial mechanisms for implementing the station area plans. The City should consider establishing sidewalk improvement districts for the entire study area or portions of it, as authorized by Minn. Statutes 435.44. Such districts facilitate sidewalk improvements by spreading assessments over a larger area, recognizing the benefits of connectivity to the broader sidewalk system, rather than focusing assessments only on properties adjacent to the improvements. Also, tax increment financing districts may be helpful to leverage redevelopment, especially if the laws change to allow their broader use for economic development purposes.

REZONINGS

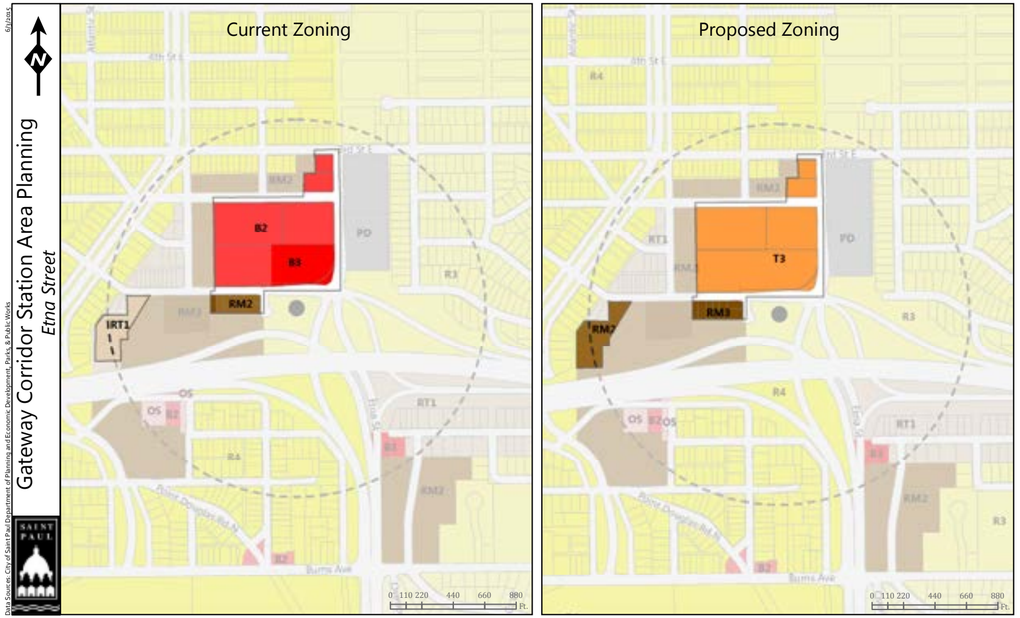
Zoning is the primary means of municipal land use regulation, addressing permitted uses, intensity, site design, and building design. The following rezonings are proposed to implement this plan document.





Zoning

- RL One-Family Large Lot
- R1 One-Family
- R2 One-Family
- R3 One-Family
- R4 One-Family
- RT1 Two-Family
- RT2 Townhouse
- RM1 Multiple-Family
- RM2 Multiple-Family
- RM3 Multiple-Family
- T1 Traditional Neighborhood
- T2 Traditional Neighborhood
- T3 Traditional Neighborhood
- T3M T3 with Master Plan
- T4 Traditional Neighborhood
- OS Office-Service
- B1 Local Business
- BC Community Business (converted)
- B2 Community Business
- B3 General Business
- B4 Central Business
- B5 Central Business Service
- IT Transitional Industrial
- I1 Light Industrial
- I2 General Industrial
- I3 Restricted Industrial
- VP Vehicular Parking
- PD Planned Development
- CA Capitol Area Jurisdiction
- Proposed Stations
- 1/4 Mile Area



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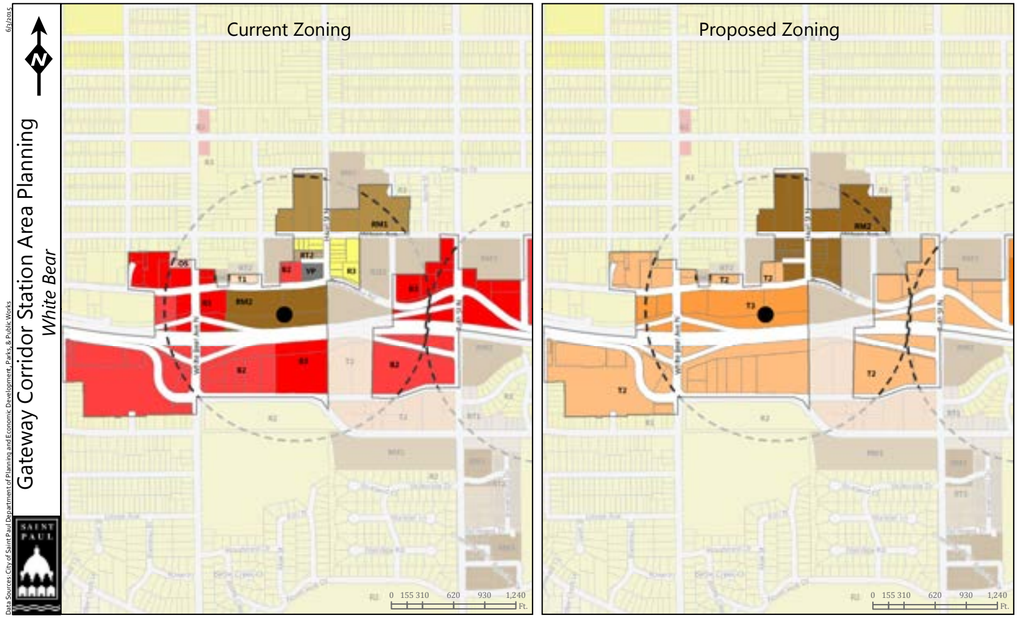

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GOLD LINE STATION AREA PLANNING TASK FORCE

Juan Cervantes, business owner (State Farm agency)
Christopher Sonny Melendez, District 1 resident
Trevor Oliver, co-chair, Planning Commissioner
Garneth O. Peterson, District 1 resident
Marjorie Pitz, District 4 resident, home business owner
Paul Sawyer, co-chair, District 1 resident
Doug Swalboski, business owner (Culver's)
Tong Thao, District 4 resident
Barbara A. Wencl, Planning Commissioner
Gordon Westerberg, District 1 resident

CITY OF SAINT PAUL - KEY STAFF

Whitman Barrett, Planning & Economic Development/CURA
Michelle Beaulieu, Planning & Economic Development
Leila Bunge, Planning & Economic Development
Bill Dermody, Planning & Economic Development
Mark Finken, Public Works
Anton Jerve, Planning & Economic Development
Kathryn Purdham, Planning & Economic Development
Mark Riegel, Public Works/MN GreenCorps

SAINT PAUL DESIGN CENTER (RIVERFRONT CORPORATION)

Sam Carlsen
Brian Fewell
Tim Griffin, Director
Tracey Kinney