



Traditional “**main street**” buildings along University host small businesses and community facilities. Over the last decade a wave of new businesses have opened, offering a range of goods and services. These businesses are transforming the area into a regional destination.



The **Hanover townhouse complex** sits between the Western Sculpture Park and Central Village Park. Its current configuration leaves it feeling cut off and isolated from the surrounding neighborhood.



North of University Avenue, the area is comprised of blocks of **early 20th century housing** served by rear alleys. In recent years, this area has been severely hit by foreclosures and vacancies.



Jackson Elementary, anchoring the northern end of the station area is an emerging focus of community activity and youth services.



Central Village Park is poorly connected to its surroundings, with little visual identity. Park users describe the feeling of intruding upon a semi-private or exclusive park enclave, rather than being welcome guests.

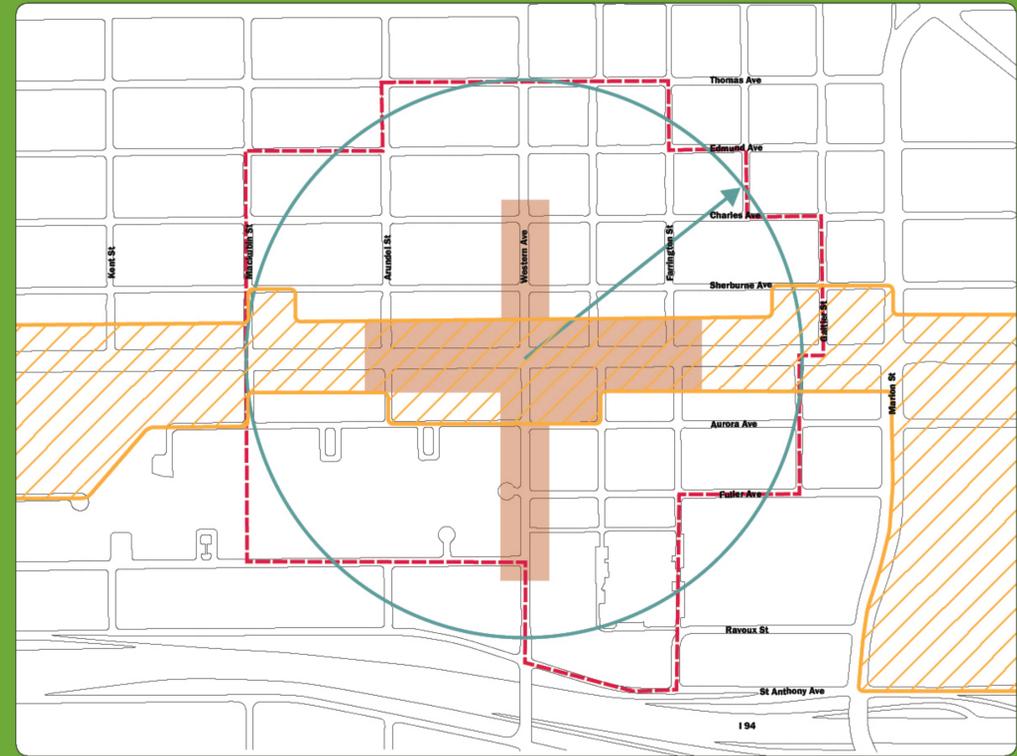


The suburban style layout of the **Central Village** housing development introduced a new built form and street layout into the surrounding urban fabric. Numerous cul-de-sacs limit street connections to link the neighborhood south of Aurora to University and east of Western.



The Western Station Area today represents a culturally diverse “**main street**” neighborhood defined by open spaces and diverse housing styles.

- Retail / Service
- Low-Rise Residential
- Institutional
- Office / Commercial
- Mid-Rise Residential
- Open Space



The diagram above illustrates the lenses of understanding applied to the Western Station Area.

- Mobility Enhancement Zone
- Area of Change
- 5-minute Walking Radius (1/4 mile)
- Station Area Planning Boundary

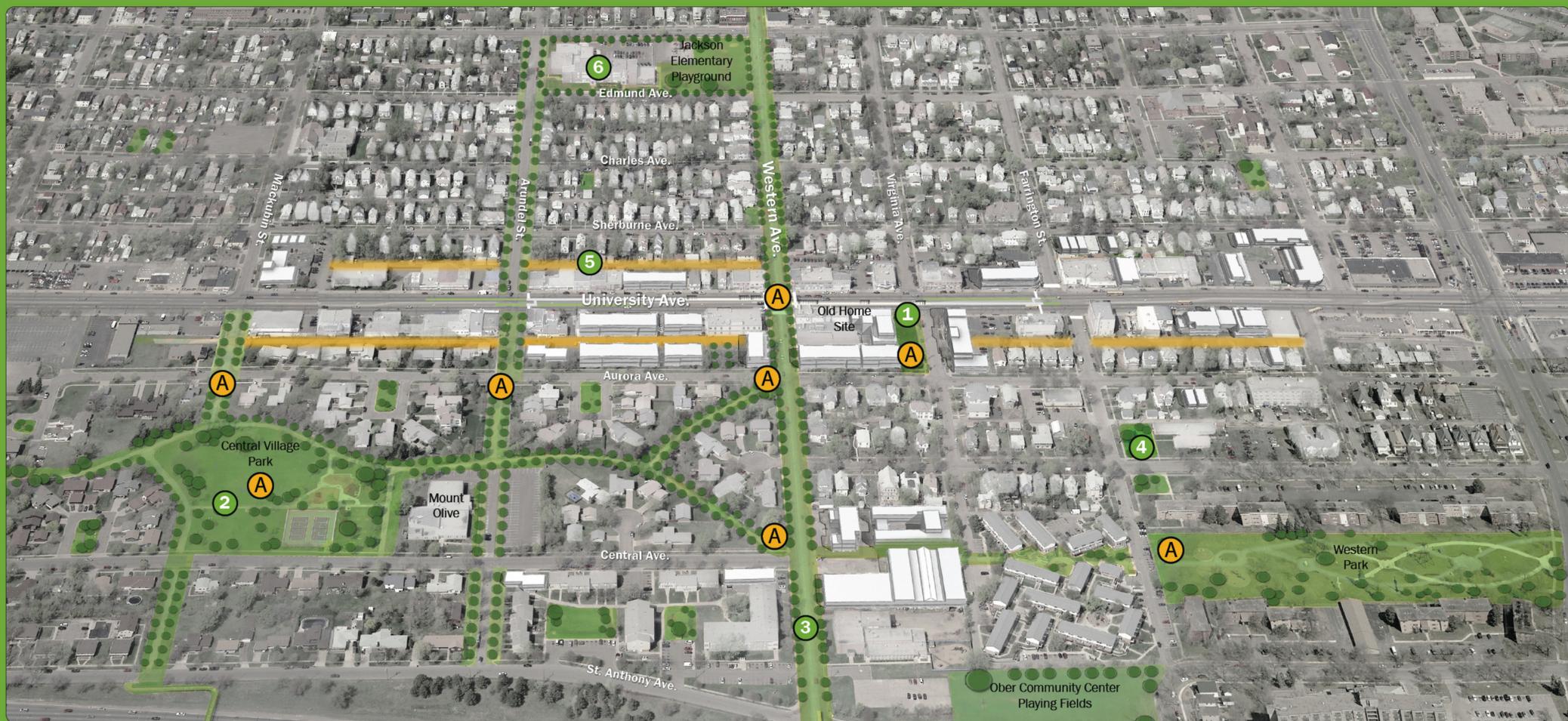
The Western Station Area 2035: The rendering illustrates one possible long-term scenario for achieving community, placemaking and transit-supportive opportunities. It describes a vision for the Western Station Area as a traditional “main street” neighborhood of stable residential areas organized around a strengthened and attractive “main street” with a mix of small restaurants and businesses. The colors represent distinct Character Areas that are addressed in Chapter 4 of the Station Area Plan.



A Vision for the Western Station Area:

A safe and healthy neighborhood containing a mix of housing types capable of supporting a range of household sizes. New buildings and uses along the avenue will continue to support and strengthen the “main street” character of the area while expanding services to meet the daily needs of the local community. As part of the World Cultural Heritage District, the area will be a destination for visitors from across the region.

The Public Realm Plan identified here demonstrates one possible configuration of an improved network of open spaces and pedestrian routes. It illustrates an enhanced Western Avenue connecting Jackson Elementary south to the Child Development Center at the northeast corner of St Anthony and Western, an enhanced and extended Central Park, improved connections between Jackson Elementary and the LRT, a new park at the intersection of Virginia and University, community green spaces and enhanced alleys.



Streetscape Improvements / Landscaping

1 A Community Gathering Space at Virginia Avenue



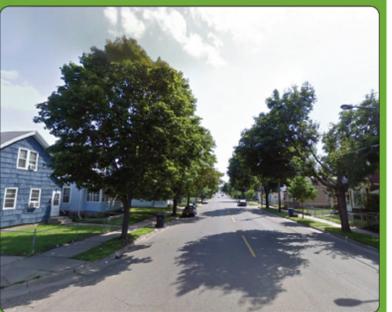
A highly visible civic space could be developed as component of redeveloped Old Home site. The space would serve as a complementary component to new uses there and enhance connections north to the LRT.

2 An Enhanced Central Park Linked to the LRT



An enhanced Central Park would create strengthened connections between surrounding areas and better delineating public areas.

3 Western Ave as an Important Pedestrian Spine



A series of streetscape improvements along Western would help to connect areas north and south of the Avenue to the LRT.

4 Making the Most of Neighborhood Green Space



The existing small-scaled underutilized green spaces represent an opportunity for community led initiatives such as gardening or neighborhood art installations.

5 Enhancing the Existing Alleys



A series of targeted alley improvements will enhance parking access to neighborhood businesses while reducing concerns related to neighborhood safety.

6 Enhancing the Walk to Jackson Elementary



A series of targeted streetscape improvements around Jackson Elementary School will help to make it safer and more comfortable for people to walk to and from the school and connect south with the LRT.

A Public Art Opportunities



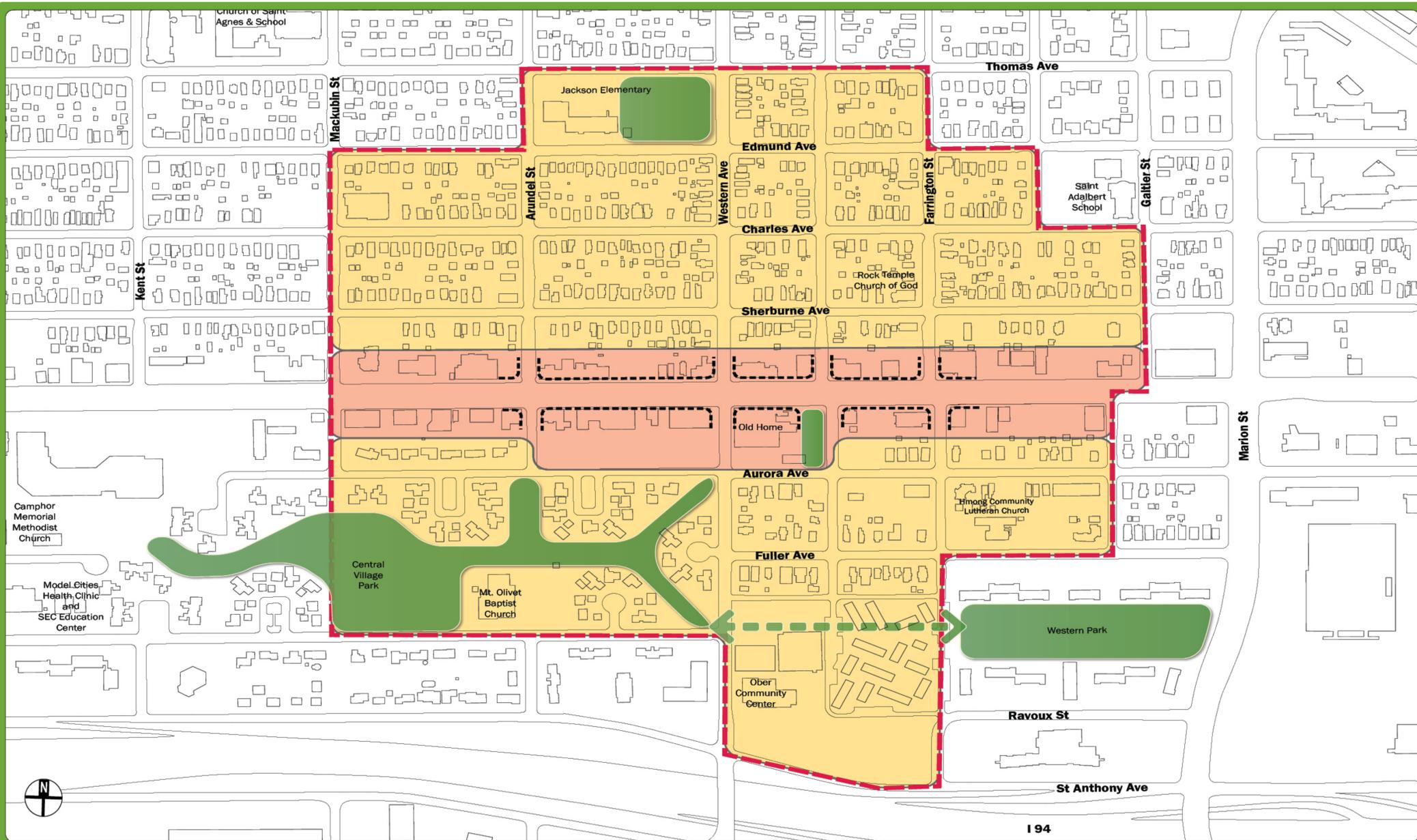
The entry points to Central Village Park at Western and Mackubin offer locations for public art that emphasize the area's garden-like character and signal the park's presence (left). A community sanctioned mural program (right) could help to transform blank walls and enhance the character of the alleys.



A Selection of Public Art Concepts from the Plan

- A series of landmark works distinguishing different cultural zones; awnings and storefront improvements; and streetscape amenities such as seating and unique bike racks created by artists could deliver expressions of public art along the corridor.
- Temporary or seasonal public art by emerging artists could highlight neighborhood green initiatives including urban gardens and stormwater gardens.
- Virginia Park, envisioned as a key new gathering space adjacent to the LRT at the vacated Old Home Dairy site, could be planned with artist(s) on the professional design team and/or feature works of public art as well as supply flexible spaces for cultural events and performances.
- The entry points to Central Village Park at Western and Mackubin offer locations for public art that emphasize the area's garden-like character and signal the park's presence.
- Establishing a safe connection across Western Avenue could link Western Sculpture Park and Central Village Park enabling the fuller use of these resources as called for by the Western Park Neighborhood Assessment and Plan (2004-2006) undertaken by Public Art Saint Paul. A continuum of artful spaces including sculptures, historic markers, benches and other amenities designed by artists could identify and reinforce this connective spine.
- A community supported mural program engaging local youth in public art practice by mentoring with professional artists, could enliven blank facades and mitigate the character of the neighborhood alleys.

The Western Station Area is comprised of 2 Character Areas each with their own potential.



- Strengthening the Avenue
- Sensitive Neighborhood Infill
- Priority Active Frontage
- Proposed Park Space
- Key Open Space Connection
- Station Area Planning Boundary

① Strengthening the Avenue



A reinforced and restored University Avenue that is pedestrian friendly and contains a mix of services catering to both the local and wider community represents one of the greatest opportunities for strengthening the Western Station Area.



The reuse of the Minnesota Milk Building represents an opportunity for the creation of a new community gathering/event space along the Avenue. This facility could take advantage of the unique spaces within the building to create a destination event space that can be used by members of both the local and wider Saint Paul community.

② Sensitive Neighborhood Infill



New buildings should respect and fit in with the development pattern, scale and height of adjacent properties. This may include rehabilitation of existing single family homes; the construction of new single-family and multiple family townhomes; and the construction of new accessory units. East of Western, this may include multi-unit low-rise residential dwellings and small scale retail uses.



A series of targeted alley improvements will enhance parking access to neighborhood businesses. Where alleys do not exist a focus on restoration and re-configuration aimed at restoring a continuous access route across the rear of the properties should be pursued.

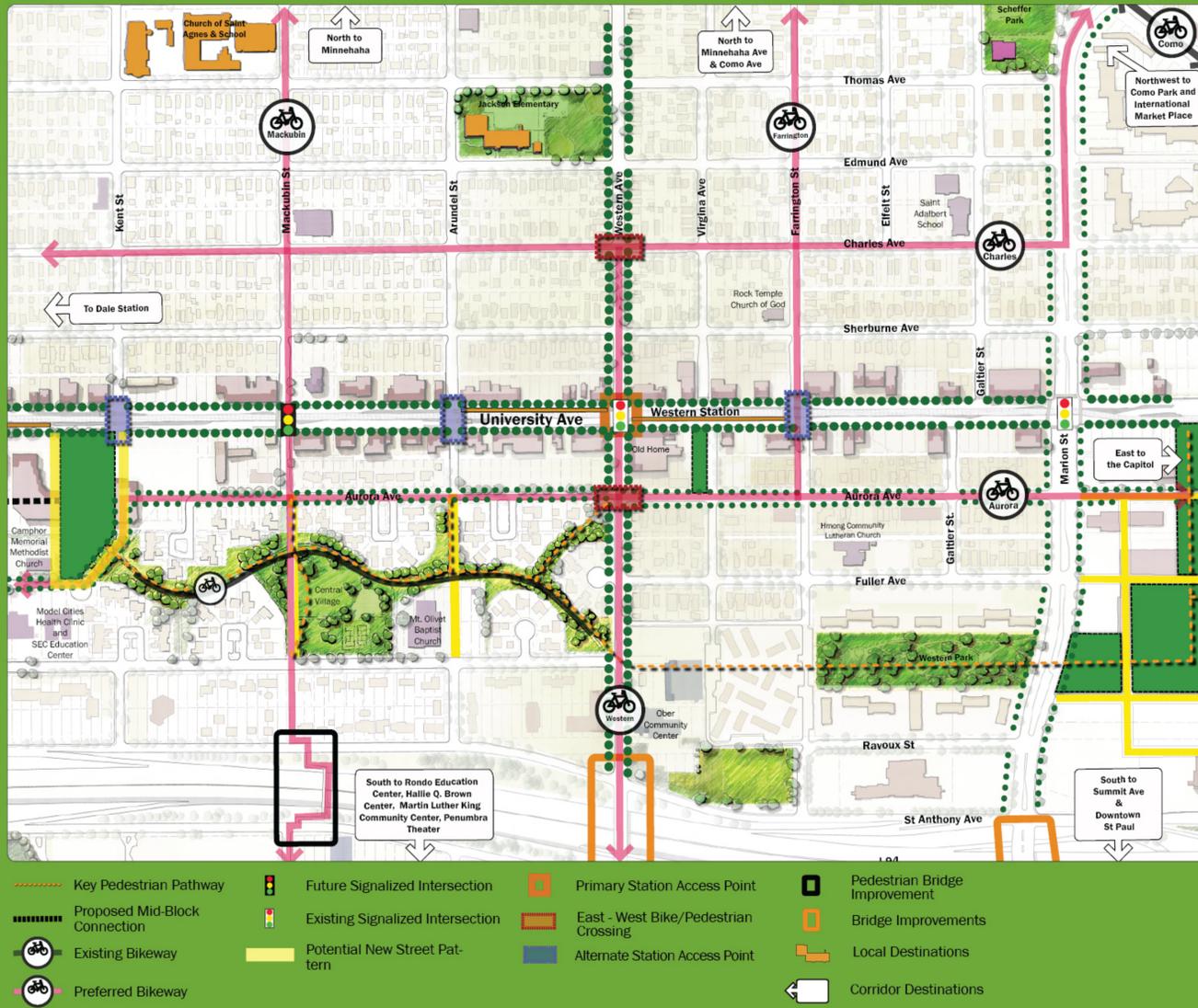
- Targeted Alley Enhancements
- Priority for Alley Restoration
- Re-configuration of driveways to establish shared parking and access



The preservation of a small formal pathway or linear green-way linking the Central Village Park, east to Western Park (top) would help to formalize and strengthen the existing path through the Hanover townhouse complex improving safety for users and extending the neighborhoods unique green-way system. Low-rise buildings such as this example (bottom) from the Grand Street neighborhood in Saint Paul could accommodate long-term care and community facilities while preserving the scale and character of the neighborhood.

A key objective critical to the success of LRT is to create greater options for mobility within and beyond the Central Corridor. Recommendations for improving movement options are structured into two key themes: **Connections** and **Mobility Enhancement**

Connections

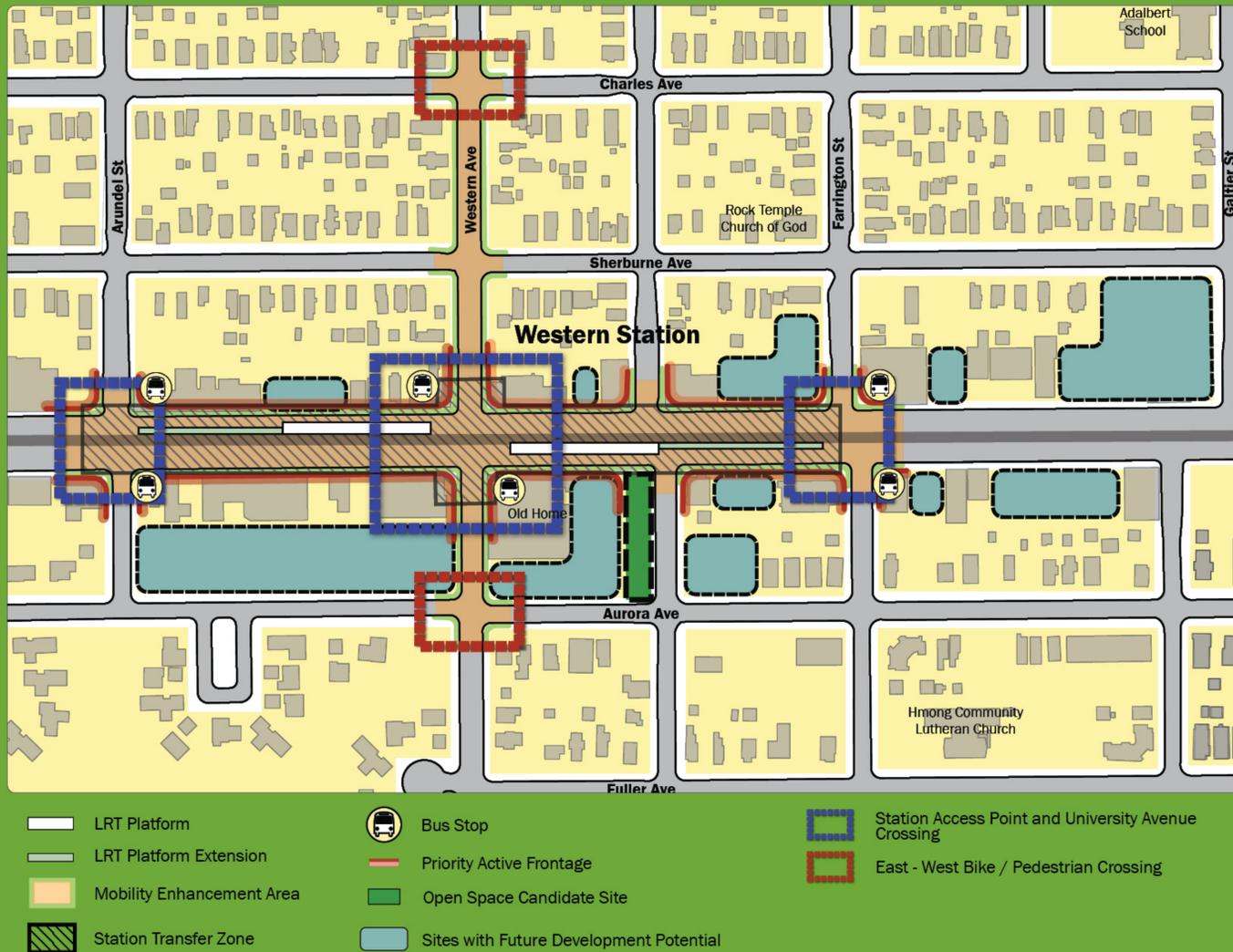


This *Connections* diagram identifies key routes and destinations outside and within the Station Area, and recommends ways in which the connectivity, safety, efficiency and quality of these routes can be improved for pedestrians and cyclists.

Key Ideas

- Upgrading the Western Avenue Spine to accommodate and encourage pedestrian and bicycle activity
- Re-establishing vacated alleys
- Where there are no alleys, re-configuring individual driveways and parking lots over time to create shared circulation and parking to the rear of the block.
- Widening the sidewalks at the Western Avenue bridge crossing between University Avenue and Selby
- Creating a straightened more direct bicycle route aligned with Mackubin Street through Central Village Park
- Connecting Central Village Park east with Western Park

Mobility Enhancement



This *Mobility Enhancement Area* diagram illustrates the current and future hub of movement patterns within the Western Station Area. The area represents the confluence of different activities and movement in the immediate vicinity of the Station Area, and thus requires additional consideration for the safety, convenience and amenity of the pedestrians moving daily through this future multi-modal hub. Within the Mobility Enhancement Area, the Station Transfer Zone is identified, where opportunities exist to use enhanced streetscape treatments, increased wayfinding and signage for pedestrians and cyclists, and integrated streetscaping.

Key Ideas

- Requiring streetscape improvements with any redevelopment of vacant or underutilized sites in the station area
- Providing enhanced pedestrian crossings at the intersection of Central Avenue and Western Avenue.
- Preserving a publicly accessible pedestrian path from the Central Village Park east to the Western Sculpture Park
- Increased wayfinding for bicycles and pedestrians