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UDA

# WESTGATE PUBLIC REALM PLAN

*Saint Paul, Minnesota*

CSA  
2017



**PREPARED FOR**

**Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation**

**FUNDED BY**

**Saint Paul Design Center**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**WESTGATE PUBLIC REALM PLANNING PROCESS**

## INTRODUCTION

The Westgate Public Realm Plan articulates the common vision for the south end of the Westgate LRT Station Area including the city-owned land to be developed as new parkland with trail connections, as well as the Case, Weyerhaeuser and Sunrise Bank sites. Building on the recommendations from the 2008 Station Area Plan, the goals of this effort were to maximize open space, knit together existing and proposed land uses, and connect the site to the surrounding neighborhood, the Westgate LRT Station and the regional park and trail networks. In addition, the Westgate Public Realm Plan was intended to move development and public improvements forward by providing recommendations for integrated short and long-term investments in the public realm to be implemented over time.

### The project team developed the following five specific objectives for the process:

1. Facilitate discussions with the City, property owners, District Council, and residents.
2. Wire together current and future development projects with public realm improvements.
3. Illustrate options in 3-D drawings.
4. Put together a compelling grant application to secure funding for the proposed public realm improvements.
5. Develop a phasing plan to outline actionable next steps over time.

The Westgate Public Realm Plan focuses on the area bounded by University Avenue to the north, Eustis Street to the East, Wabash Avenue to the south and Emerald Street to the west. Emerald Street is the municipal dividing line between the cities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. Current community planning efforts have branded the broader area that straddles the municipal boundary as the Towerside Innovation District, developed to highlight the spatial and inspirational link to the University of Minnesota's award winning research, and to help inform the vision for new development in the area.

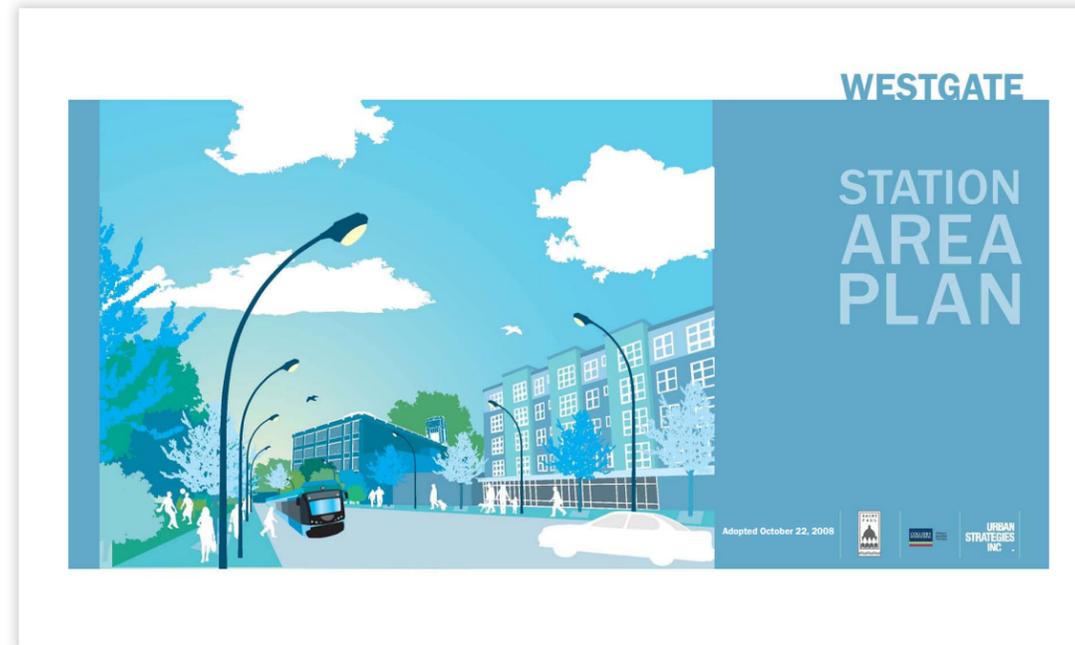
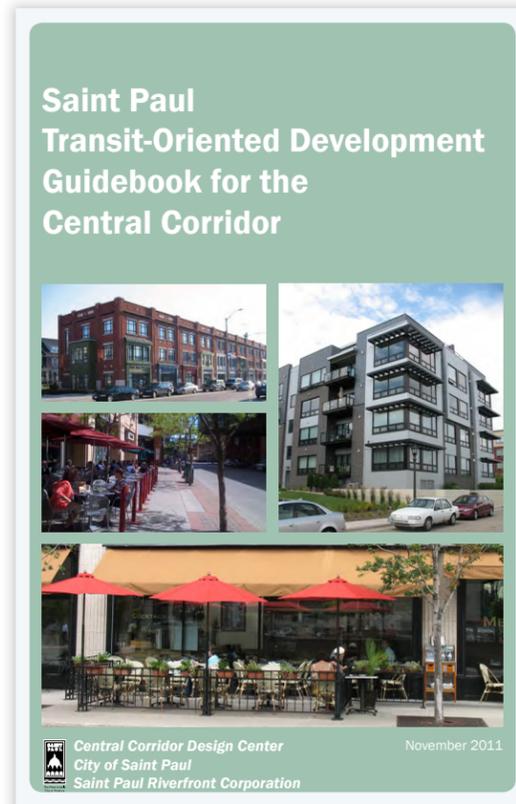
### The study area includes the following sites:

1. New city-owned park and trail connections to serve area residents as planned for in the Westgate LRT Station Area Plan.
2. Case Industrial Center: an existing one-story light industrial building that the owner, Suntide, plans to redevelop into new office space. Suntide also owns the adjacent parcel to the north at the corner of Franklin and Eustis, and Court International.
3. Sunrise Bank Corporate Headquarters.
4. Weyerhaeuser Site: Dominion has acquired the site and is proposing to develop high-density, workforce housing, senior housing and market rate housing. Dominion also owns the housing development at 808 Berry Place just north of Franklin between Ellis, Berry and Curfew.

With each of these development/redevelopment proposals at various stages of planning and implementation, the Westgate Public Realm Plan is a common framework for everyone to work within.

## ROLES

The City of Saint Paul engaged the Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation to complete the Westgate Public Realm Plan in early 2017. The Riverfront Corporation established a Project Management Team (PMT) comprised of representatives from key city departments, including Planning and Economic Development, Public Works, and Parks and Recreation, to guide the process and engaged property owners and community stakeholders to participate in the planning effort. The Riverfront Corporation engaged Urban Design Associates as a consultant to develop a public realm plan with input from key stakeholders.



The Westgate Public Realm Plan aimed to incorporate current development projects and the community's desire for a connected public realm into the recommendations from the 2008 Station Area Plan.

# INTRODUCTION

## PROCESS

The process for the Westgate Public Realm Plan was designed to engage key stakeholders including developers working in the station area, community members from surrounding neighborhood, civic groups and key city departments.

### The process included the following milestones:

- Meeting with the Project Management Team throughout the process
- April 13, Input conference call with Towerside Innovation District
- April 17-19, Design Workshop in Saint Paul
  - April 17, Community input meeting
  - Individual meetings with property owners and developers
  - April 19, Presentation of recommendations

The feedback received during these meetings was iteratively incorporated into the initial and final recommendations presented in this report.



## THE PROCESS

### STEP 1: LISTENING AND LEARNING

- Meet with the Project Management Team (PMT)
- Tour the Westgate LRT Station Area
- Facilitate discussions with stakeholders and key property owners
- Learn about plans and projects
- Summarize and repeat back what we heard

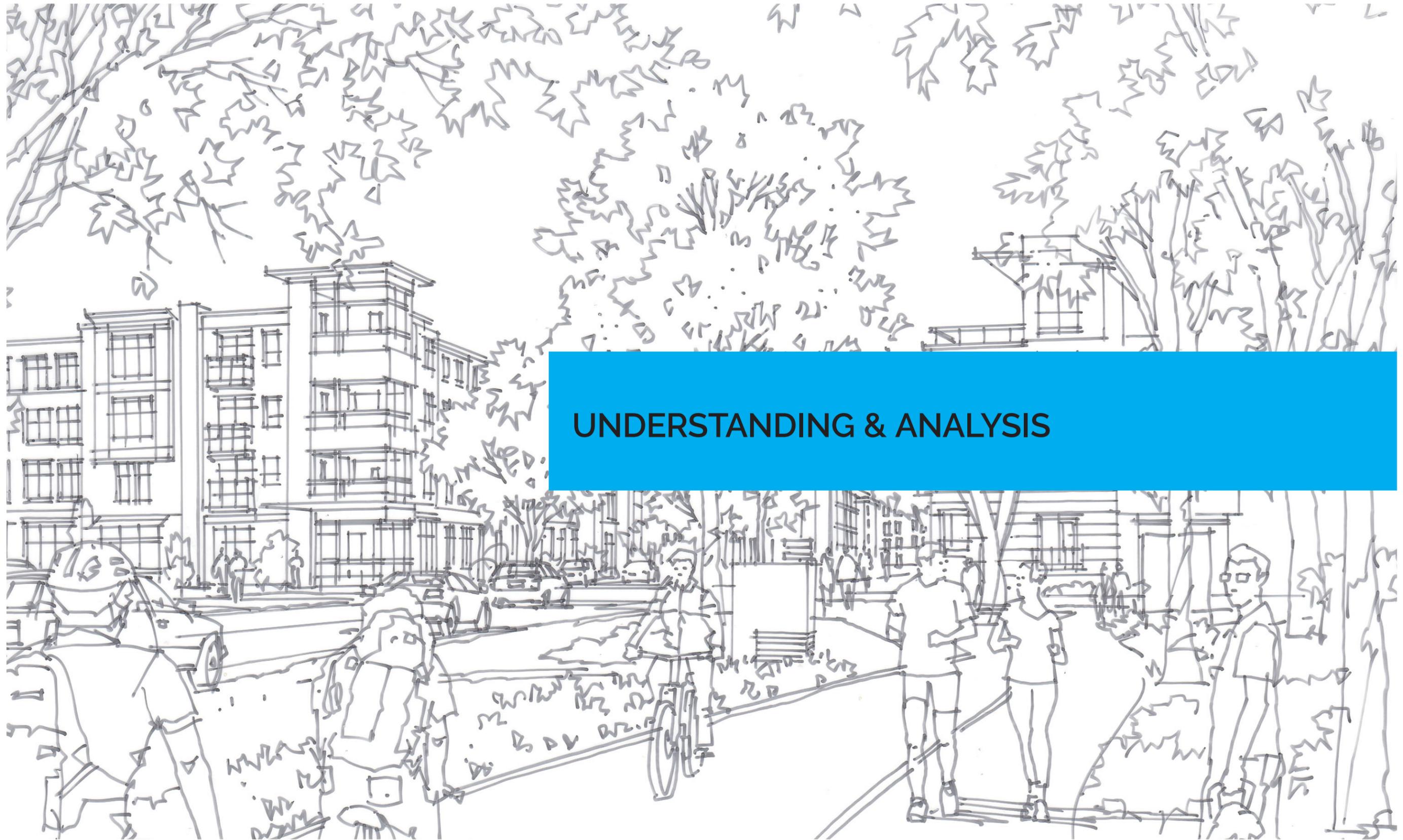
### STEP 2: EXPLORING IDEAS

- Translate what we heard into drawings of a Public Realm Plan
- Draw 3-D rendered illustrations to help people agree on the way forward
- Summarize and repeat back what we heard

### STEP 3: DECIDING ON A WAY FORWARD

- Provide content to the City and Dominionium for the Livable Communities grant application
- Translate the Plan into implementable steps

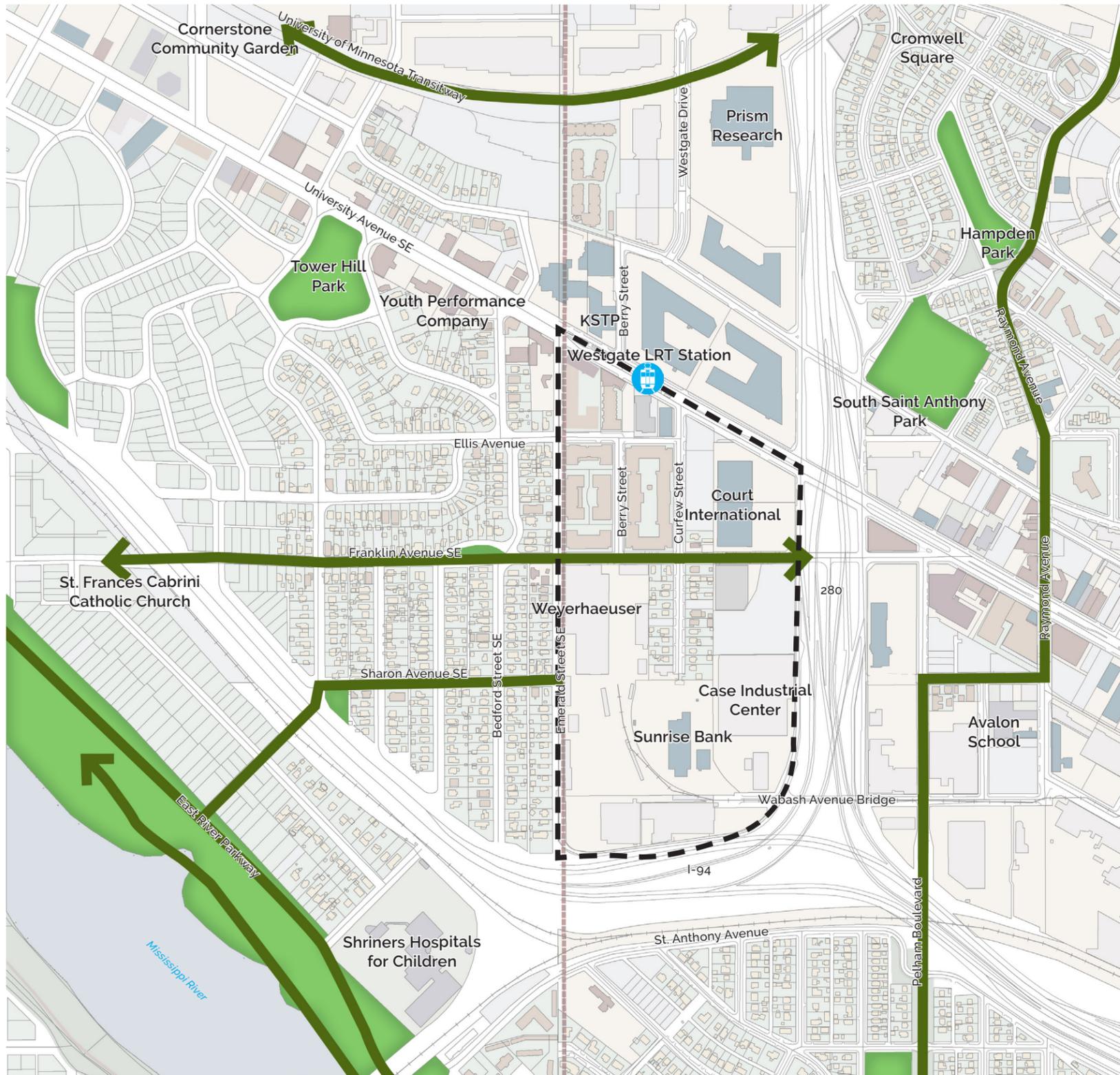
# THE PROCESS



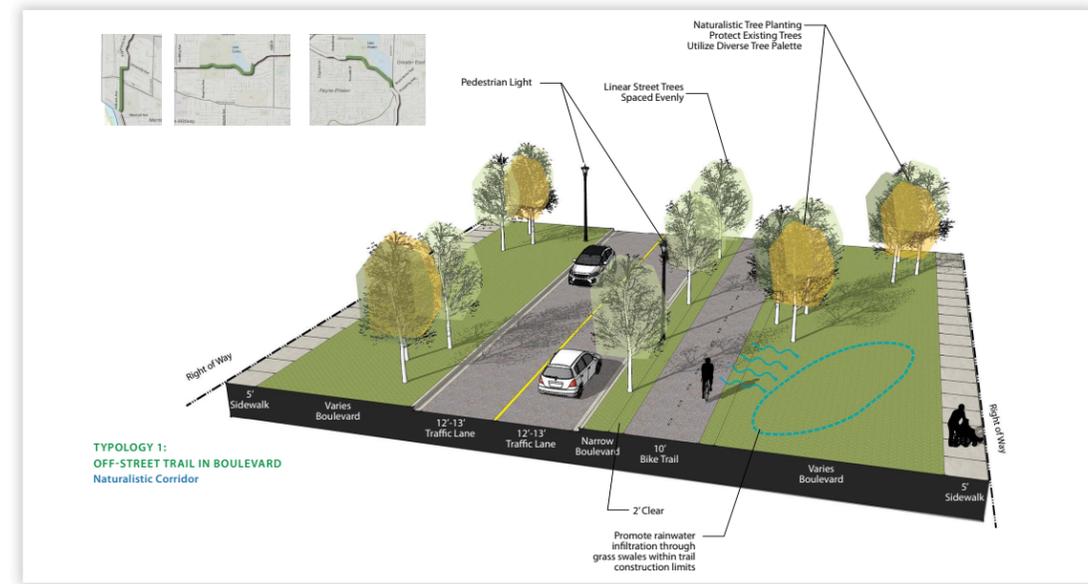
**UNDERSTANDING & ANALYSIS**



# EXISTING CONDITIONS



**Grand Round and Saint Paul Park System Map** The existing Grand Round Trail will be connected to the neighborhood by the Pelham Boulevard bikeway.



**Pelham Boulevard Section** The new Pelham Boulevard bikeway will provide a safe bicycle connection to Grand Round.

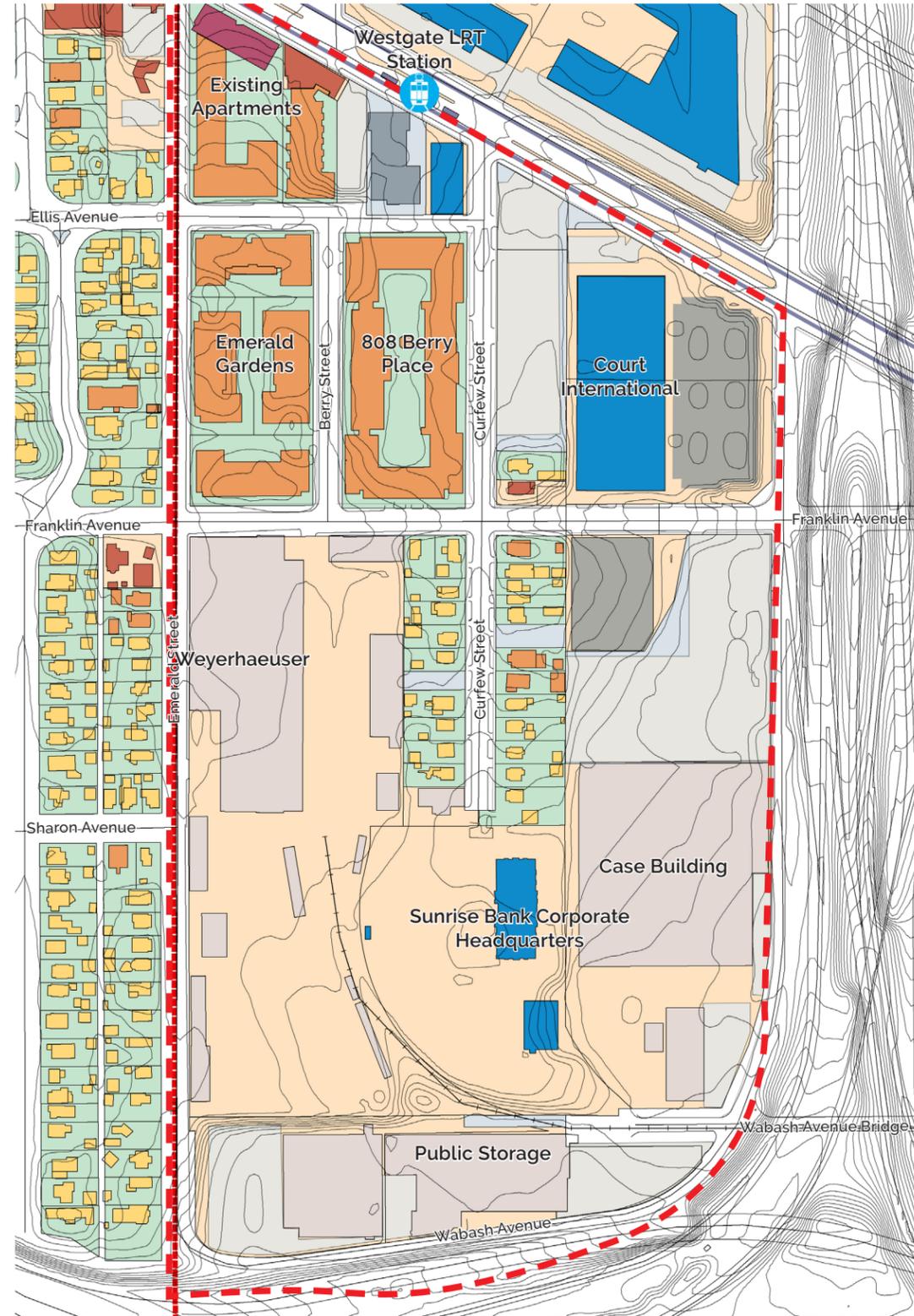
■ BICYCLE ROUTE 
 ■ PARK 
  STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

# EXISTING REGIONAL OPEN SPACE CONNECTIONS



Sunrise Bank Corporate Headquarters Building was built after this photo was taken.

## EXISTING SITE



- SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- PARKING GARAGE STRUCTURE
- MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- INDUSTRIAL BUILDING
- RETAIL BUILDING
- OFFICE BUILDING

# EXISTING LAND USES



Emerald Street and Sharon Avenue Intersection



Emerald Street



Weyerhaeuser Site



Weyerhaeuser Site



Weyerhaeuser Site Railroad Tracks



Wabash Avenue at Public Storage and Sunrise Bank Sites



Emerald Gardens



Sunrise Bank Building



New Sunrise Bank Building



Weyerhaeuser Site

# EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

## TRAIL CONNECTIONS

- River access and connections to the Grand Round is the most important effort
- Include wayfinding from Westgate LRT Station to the new park and trail
- Make the public realm truly feel public
- Use the Wabash rail bridge for the trail connection to Pelham if possible

## PARK SPACES

- Design a park that is safe and attractive for all ages
- Highlight and enhance the neighborhood character by including iconic elements and public art
- Create flexible passive park space that can be programmed by the community
- Plan for access to sun and shade in the park with comfortable seating and gathering areas

## NEW HOUSING

- Break the blocks down with visual connections and pedestrian pathways through

## STREETS

- Create pedestrian friendly neighborhood street with on-street parking, sidewalks, lighting, and trees
- Include traffic calming measures to increase walkability and bikeability



# COMMUNITY INPUT — APRIL 17, 2017



**PUBLIC REALM PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**



Illustrative Plan



**Proposed Open Space** New 1.25 acre park, a festival street, and Wabash Avenue and rail-to-trail adds public space for residents and visitors, while connecting to regional parks and trail systems.

## OVERALL VISION

The overall vision for the Public Realm Plan incorporates each of the on-going development projects with the objectives of the Station Area Plan and the community and stakeholder feedback received through the process. It represents a unique opportunity to tie together public and private spaces to create a rich network of trails, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, parks, gathering spaces, and public streets.

Based on the community and stakeholder input, the following key elements were incorporated into the Plan

- Trail connection along vacated railway
- Dedicated walking and biking connections to the Station platforms
- Flexible park space connected to the trail system
- Network of 'found' places to explore
- Complete street network

- EVENT/FESTIVAL STREET
- PUBLIC PARK
- SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- PARKING GARAGE STRUCTURE
- FUTURE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITE
- MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- INDUSTRIAL BUILDING
- RETAIL BUILDING
- OFFICE BUILDING

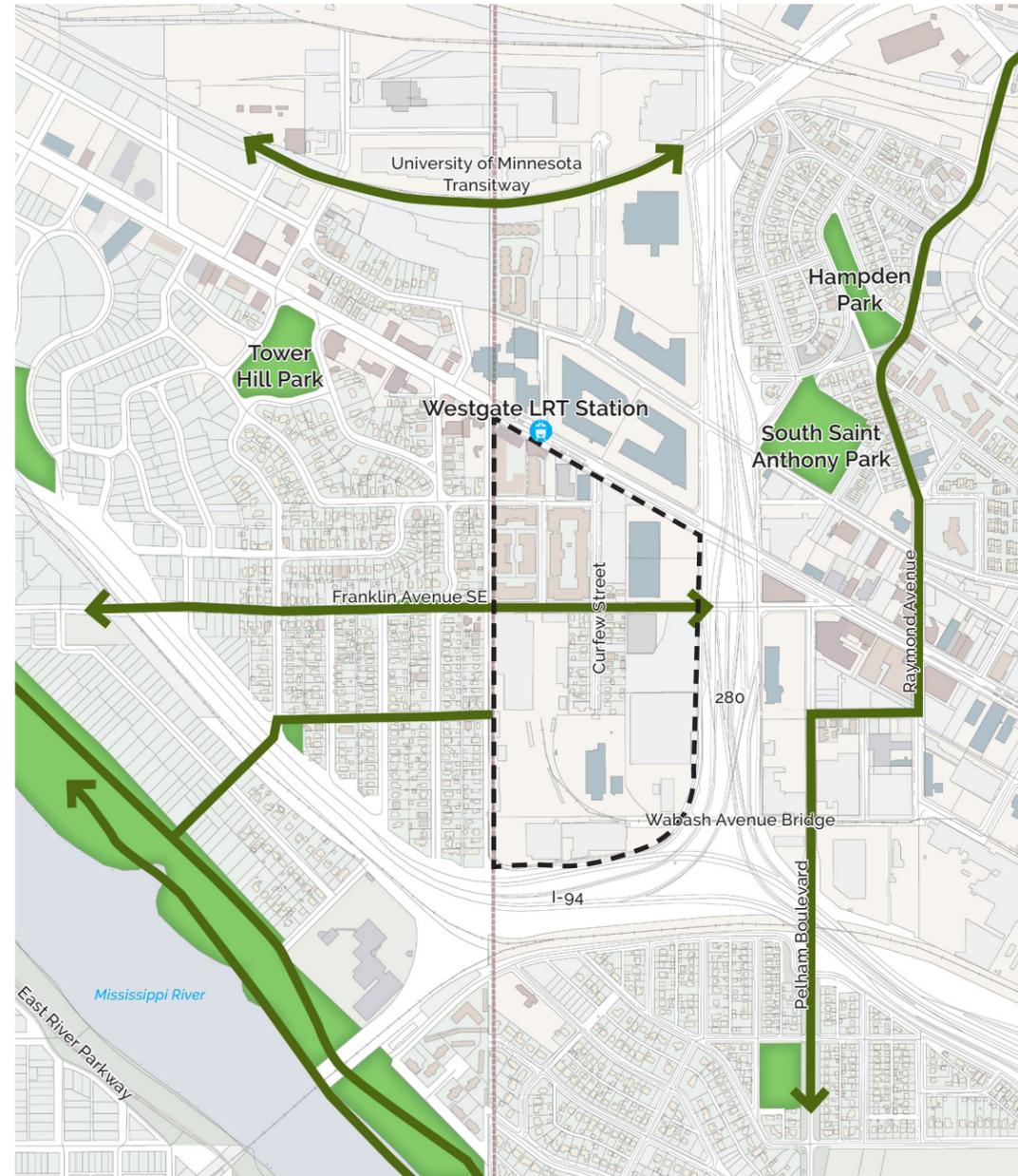
# OVERALL VISION: PUBLIC REALM RECOMMENDATION

**EXISTING REGIONAL OPEN SPACE**

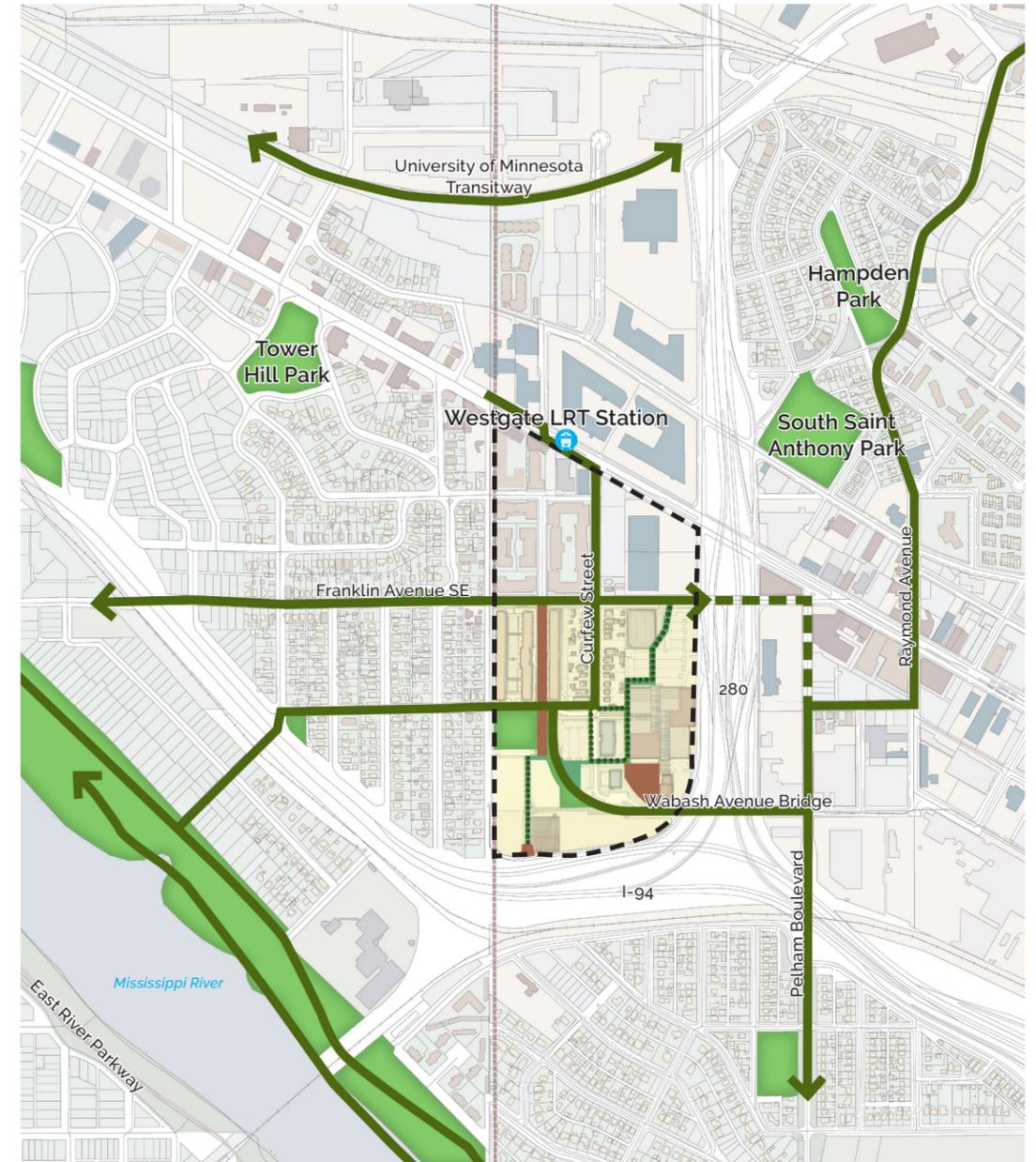
Many regional connections and public parks are near the project site, including East River Parkway and the new Pelham Boulevard bikeway, which will provide a safer bicycle connection to Grand Round.

**PROPOSED REGIONAL OPEN SPACE**

Adding pedestrian and bicycle connections to Franklin Avenue to the north and to Pelham Boulevard to the east join the site to regional parks and trail system. These pedestrian and bicycle connections would be located on Curfew Street, Berry Street, Myrtle Avenue, and Wabash Avenue.



Existing Regional Open Space



Proposed Regional Open Space

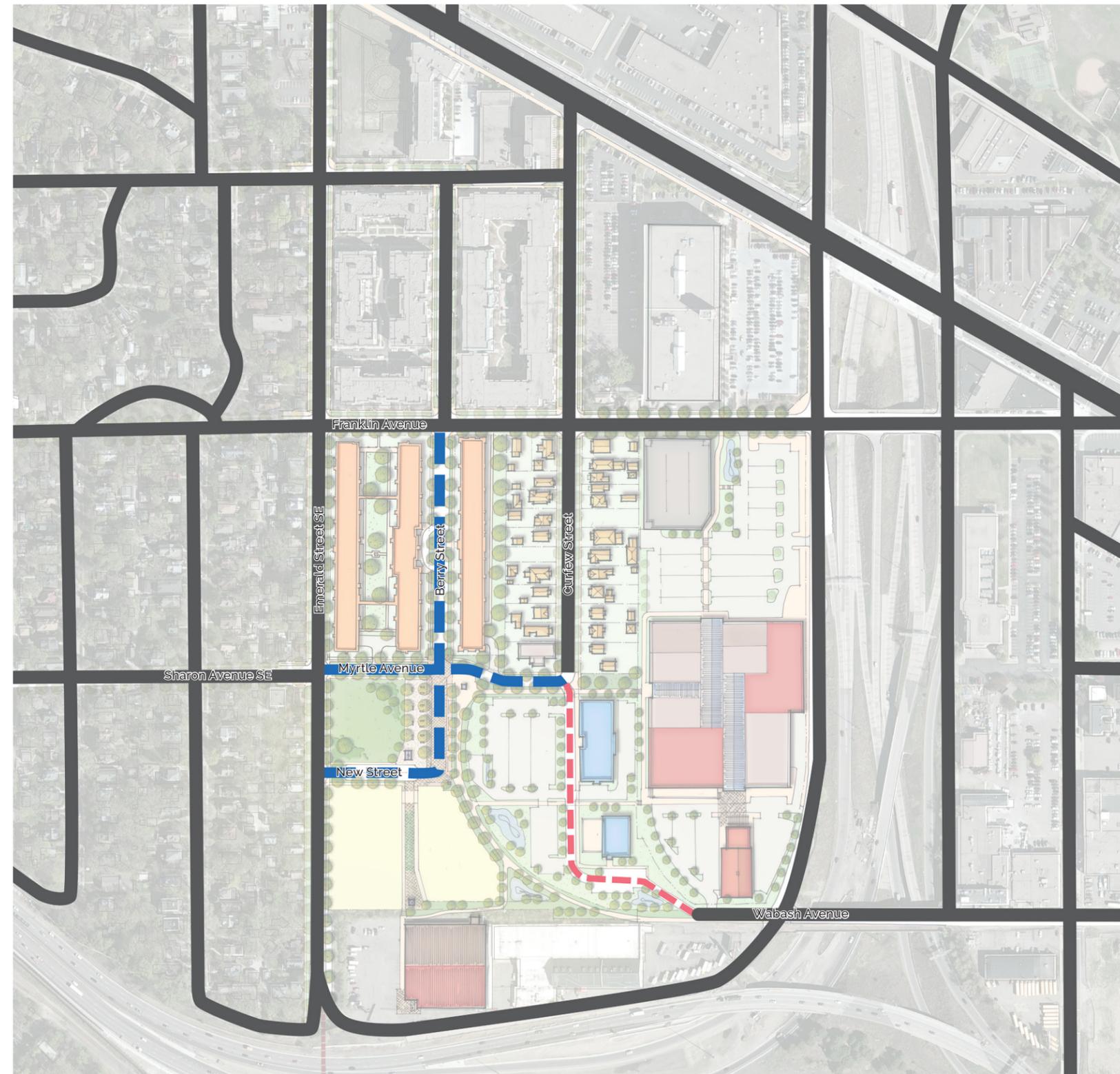
- DEVELOPMENT AREA
- BICYCLE ROUTE
- SECONDARY BICYCLE ROUTE
- EVENT/FESTIVAL SPACE
- PARK
- PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION
- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

# REGIONAL OPEN SPACE CONNECTIONS

## COMPLETE STREET GRID

The public street extensions to existing street grid will complete the Westgate LRT Station Area's street network: the Myrtle Avenue extension will join Sharon Avenue to Curfew Street, lengthening Berry Street will link Franklin Avenue to Myrtle Avenue, and Berry Street will continue south as a festival street to the new street south of the park. Lastly, a private drive on Sunrise Bank's property connects Wabash Avenue to Curfew Street.

- Myrtle Avenue extension will connect Emerald Street to Curfew Street.
- Berry will be extended south from Franklin Avenue to the new street that will be build along the south side of the new park.
- A private drive on Sunrise Bank's property connects Curfew Street to Wabash Avenue.



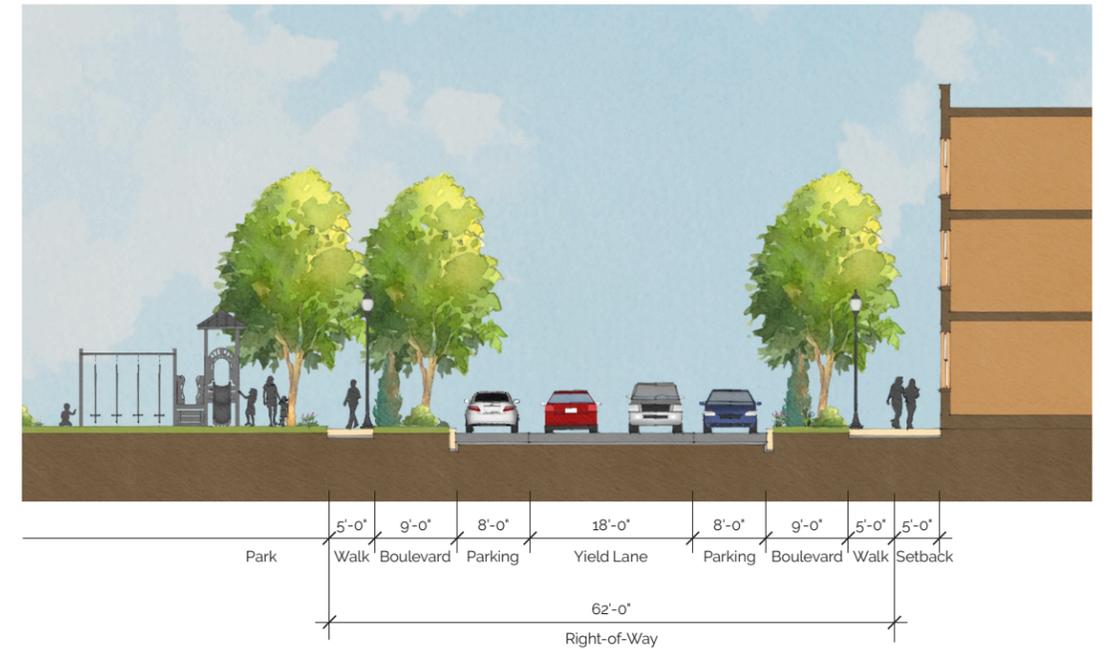
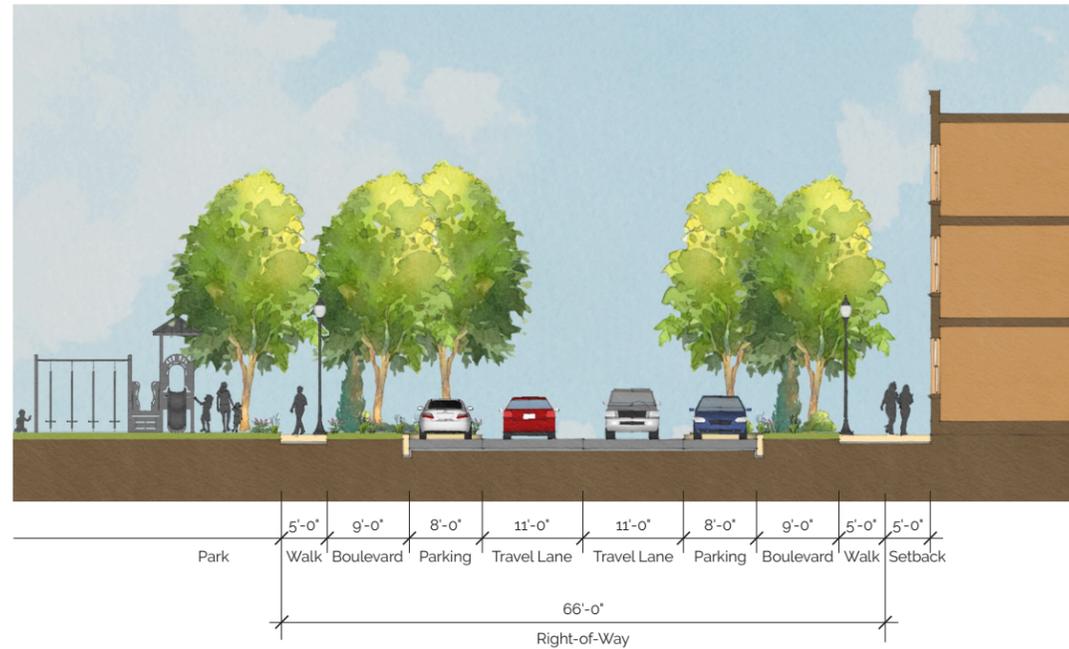
# STREET NETWORK

**PRINCIPLES FOR STREETS WITH BUMP-OUTS**

- Bump-outs should be provided in locations with high pedestrian traffic to reduce distance needed to cross the street
- Locate bump-outs where uses are known for both sides of the street, ideal for residential streets
- Do not locate bump-outs where streets will be used for festivals
- Use bump-outs on streets where bike infrastructure will not be needed in the future

**PRINCIPLES FOR STREETS WITHOUT BUMP-OUTS**

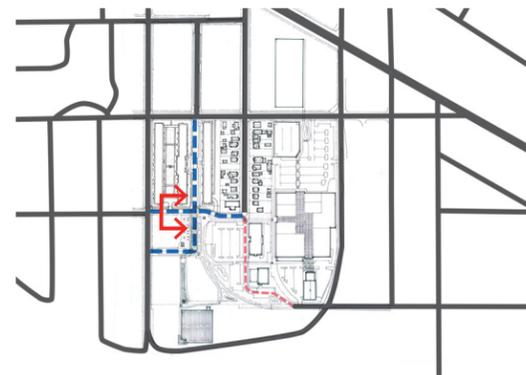
- Continuous parking lanes can be used to create a more flexible street that is still pedestrian friendly
- Use continuous parking lanes on festival streets or on streets that may connect to future bike infrastructure
- Use continuous parking lanes if adjacent land uses are unknown or further in the future



Myrtle Avenue with bump-outs

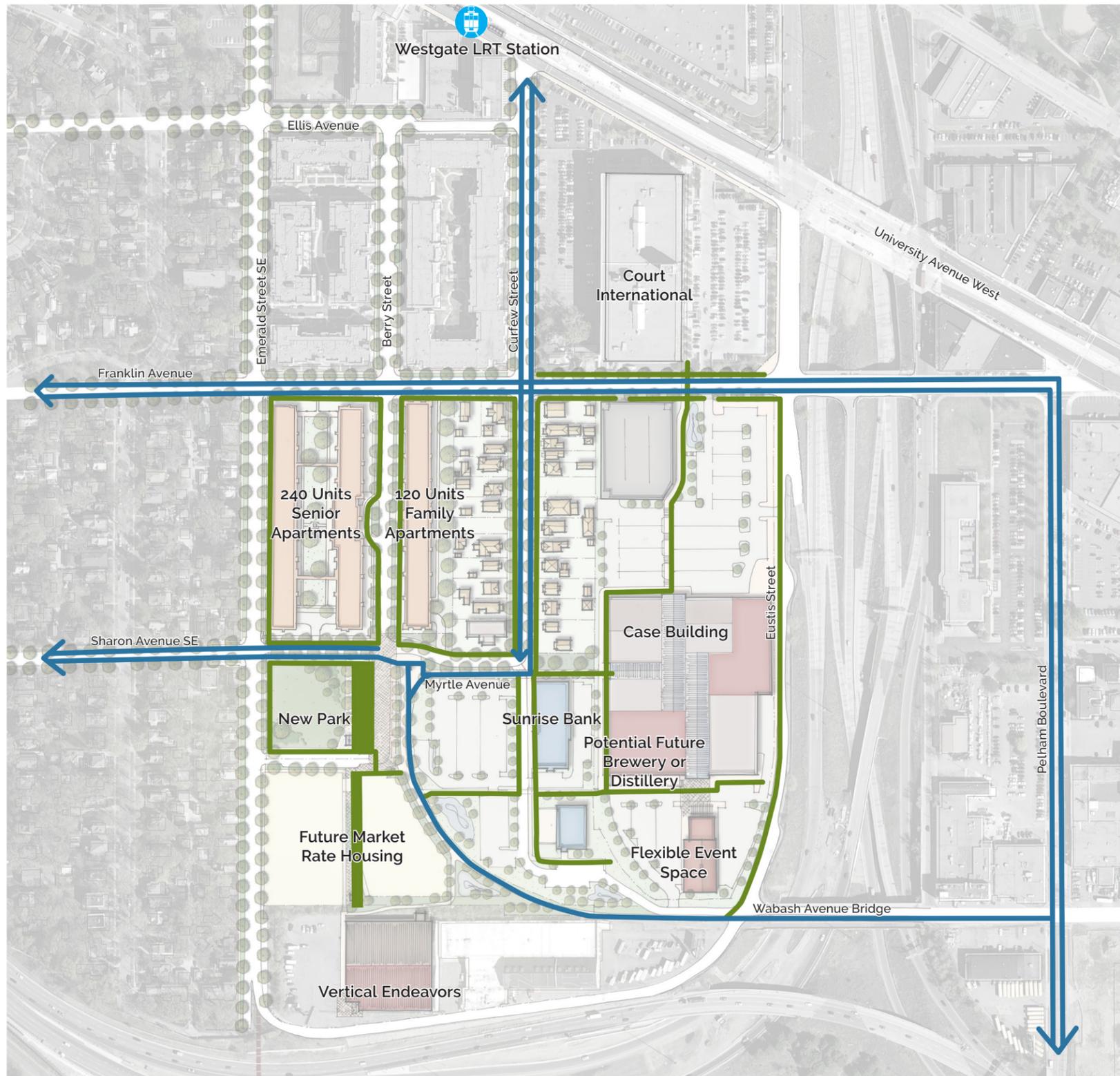


Myrtle Avenue without bump-outs



Street Key Myrtle Avenue street section location

# MYRTLE AVENUE STREET SECTION



The Public Realm Plan will complete and connect the bicycle and pedestrian network for the Westgate LRT Station Area. The important projects are listed below:

#### Pedestrian Connections

- All proposed new streets will have sidewalks on both sides of the street to enhance walkability
- The primary pedestrian connection to the station will be on Berry Street
  - Berry will connect the festival street space adjacent to the park to the staircase at Ellis Avenue
  - ADA Accessible Routes need to be studied
  - Signage at the station could direct people down Berry to the park space and trailhead
- Additional pedestrian connections created by property owners through the Sunrise and Sunside parcels will enhance the network and provide additional options for pedestrians

#### Bicycle Connections

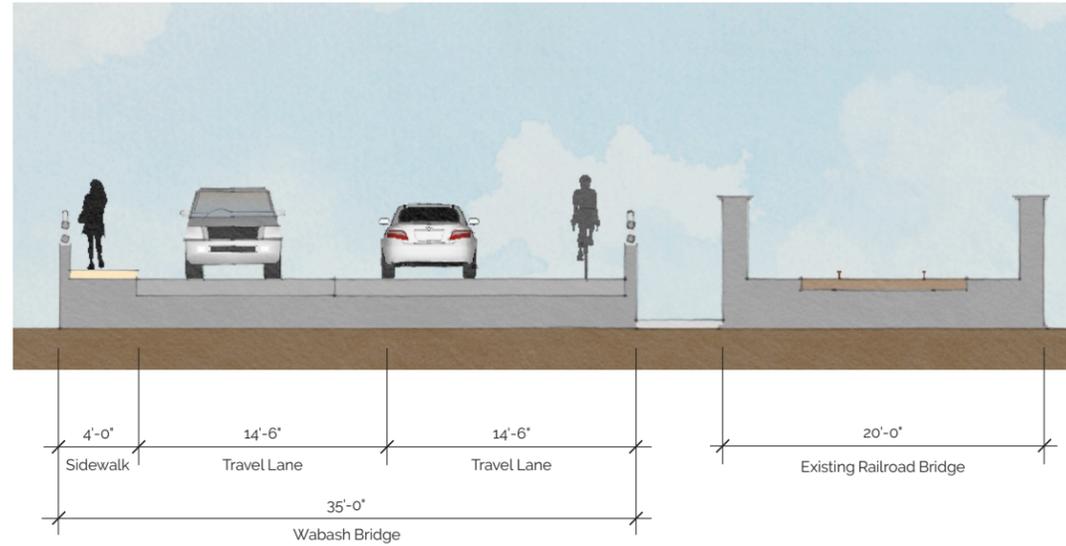
- Because of the grade separation of the station and the park, the ideal bicycle route to the station should be on Curfew Street
  - Curfew is a quiet, residential street, with slow moving traffic and ample space for bicycles to ride in the street safely
  - Curfew connects to the bike lanes at Franklin and provides cyclists with the safest crossing and fewest necessary turns to reach the station
  - Curfew connects to Myrtle Avenue and any future connections to the west
- The proposed trail connection on Wabash Avenue Bridge will connect to the new Pelham Boulevard bikeway. The Wabash Avenue trail and Pelham bikeway safely links the Westgate LRT Station Area to Grand Round trail system.

## BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

The Wabash rail bridge presents an opportunity to connect the bicycle and trail network to the east. The bridge is currently owned and maintained by MnDOT. The space where the rails are located would be ideal for a separated bike facility, however, this would require cooperation between the City and MnDOT. If use of that space cannot be negotiated, the road width is wide enough for marked shared (sharrow) lanes, but not wide enough for dedicated striped lanes. Long-term, pedestrian accommodations on the Wabash Avenue bridge should also be improved.

### Recommendations

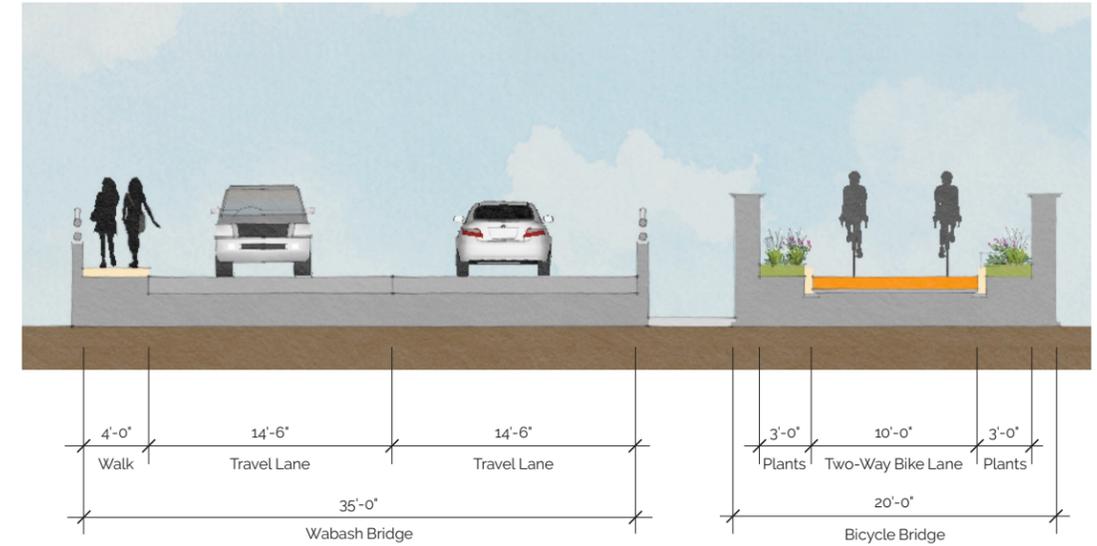
- Advance the conversation with MnDOT about options for the Wabash Avenue bridge.
- Locate the multi-use path in the separated rail bridge if possible.



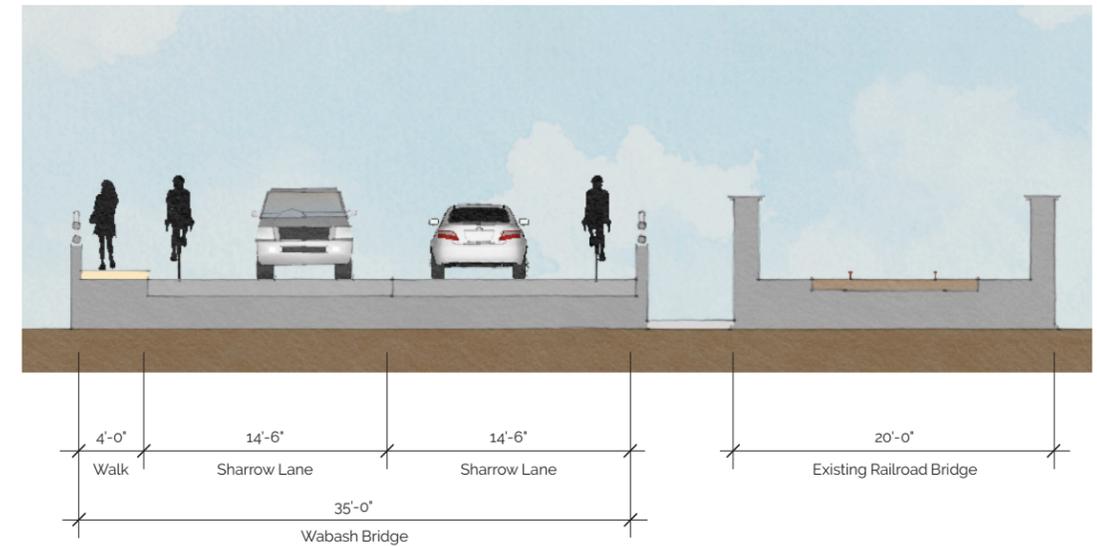
**Existing Conditions** Wabash Bridge has two travel lanes and a sidewalk on the north side. Bicyclists currently ride in travel lanes, which are unmarked, and adjacent is an unused railroad bridge.



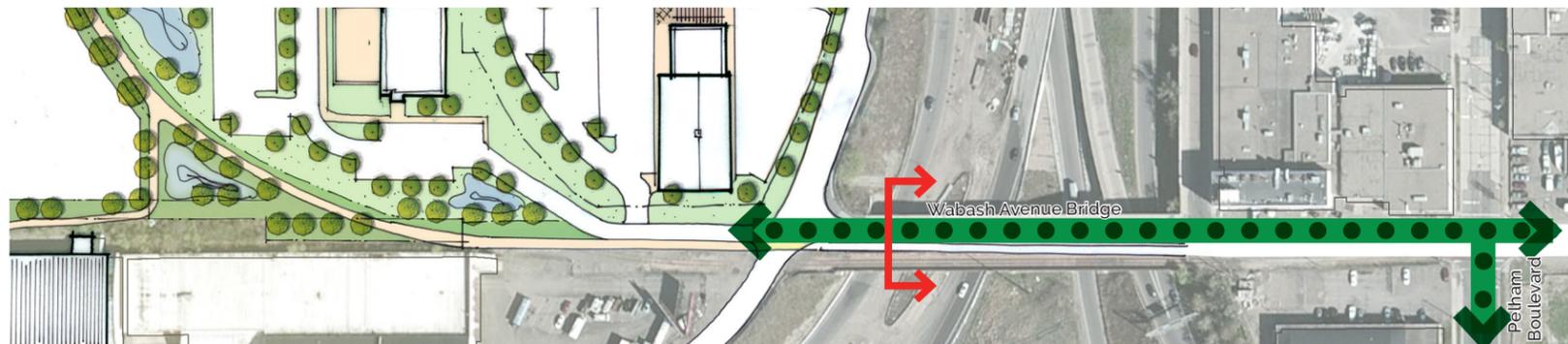
**Photo** Existing Wabash Bridge and adjacent railroad bridge.



**Alternative 1** Existing Wabash Bridge remains the same and the adjacent railroad bridge would be redesigned to a two-way bike lane with planters.



**Alternative 2** Wabash Bridge driving lanes remain the same width, but are marked with sharrows, indicating bicycles share the lane. No alternations are made to the adjacent railroad bridge.

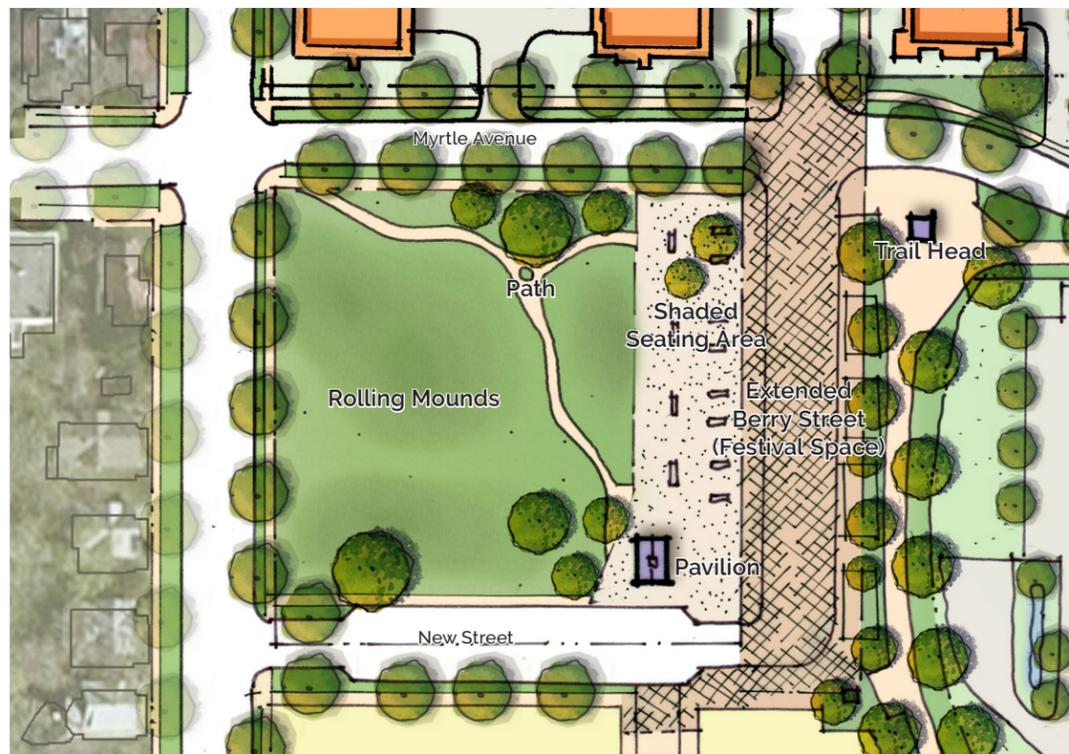


# WABASH RAIL BRIDGE — ALTERNATIVES



### FLEXIBLE LAWN ALTERNATIVE

- Flexible, sunny lawn space
- Shaded areas with benches and places to sit



### PATHWAYS AND ROLLING MOUNDS ALTERNATIVE

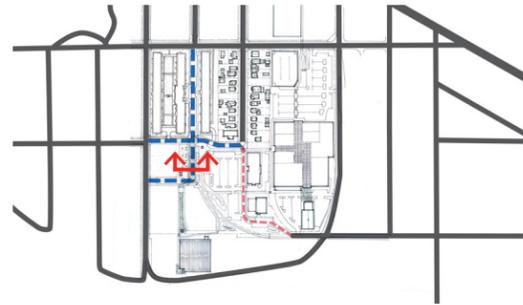
- Gentle topography changes create places of play until long-term funding is secured for the park
- Rolling hills and native plants provide a low cost, low maintenance, temporary solution for the neighborhood park



# THE PARK ALTERNATIVES

## KEY ELEMENTS

- Shared street area can accommodate markets, events, and small concerts
- Shared street area connects the park to the trail
- The festival street design prioritizes pedestrians over vehicles.
- Extending Berry Street re-establishes the street grid
- The special street pavement makes the street seem more pedestrian friendly and feel like a public space that is not solely for vehicles



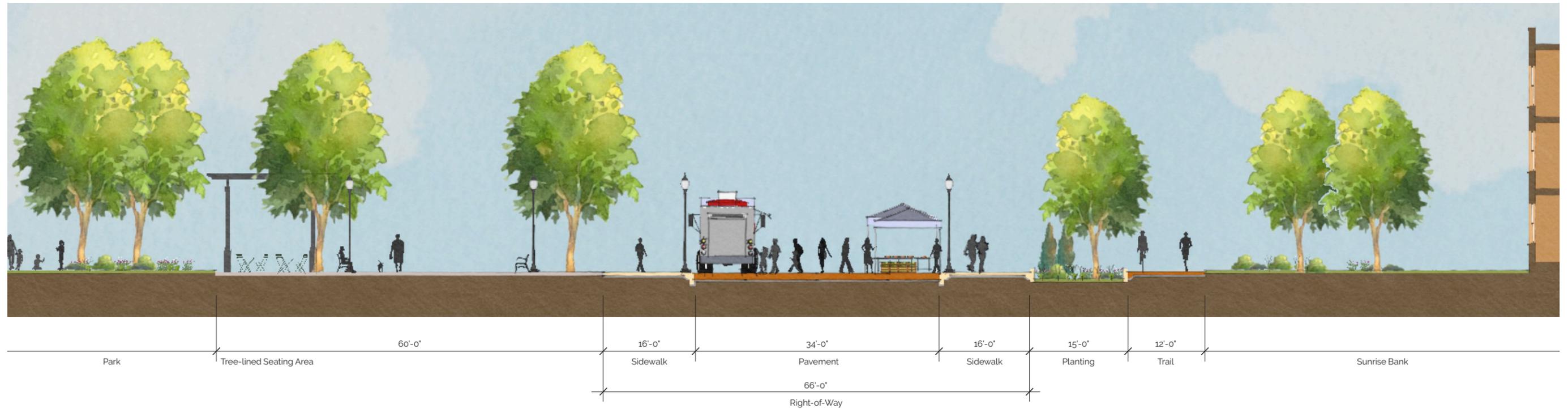
Street Key Festival street section location



CC Chas Redmond



CC Robert Couse-Baker ("RCEB")



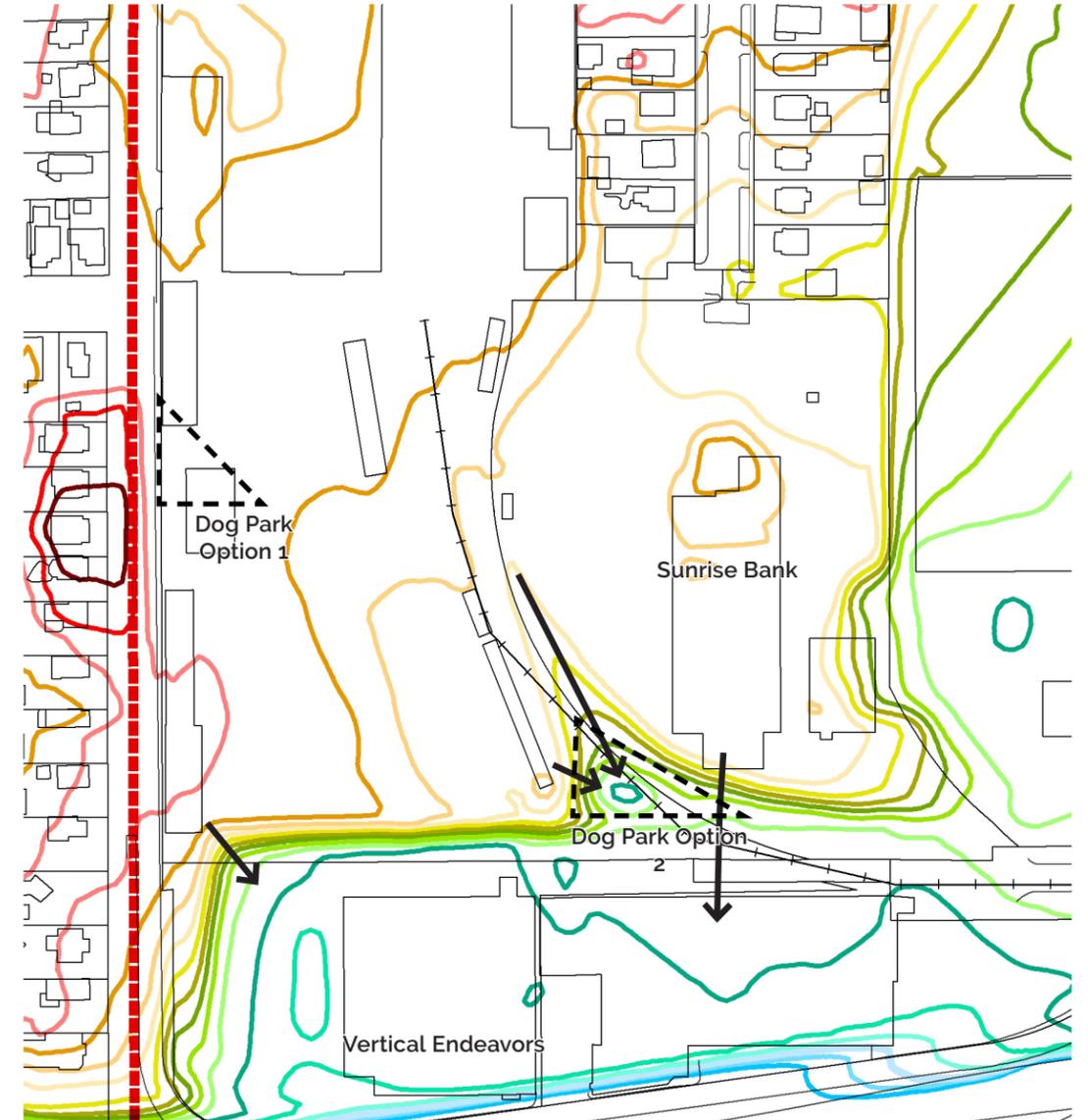
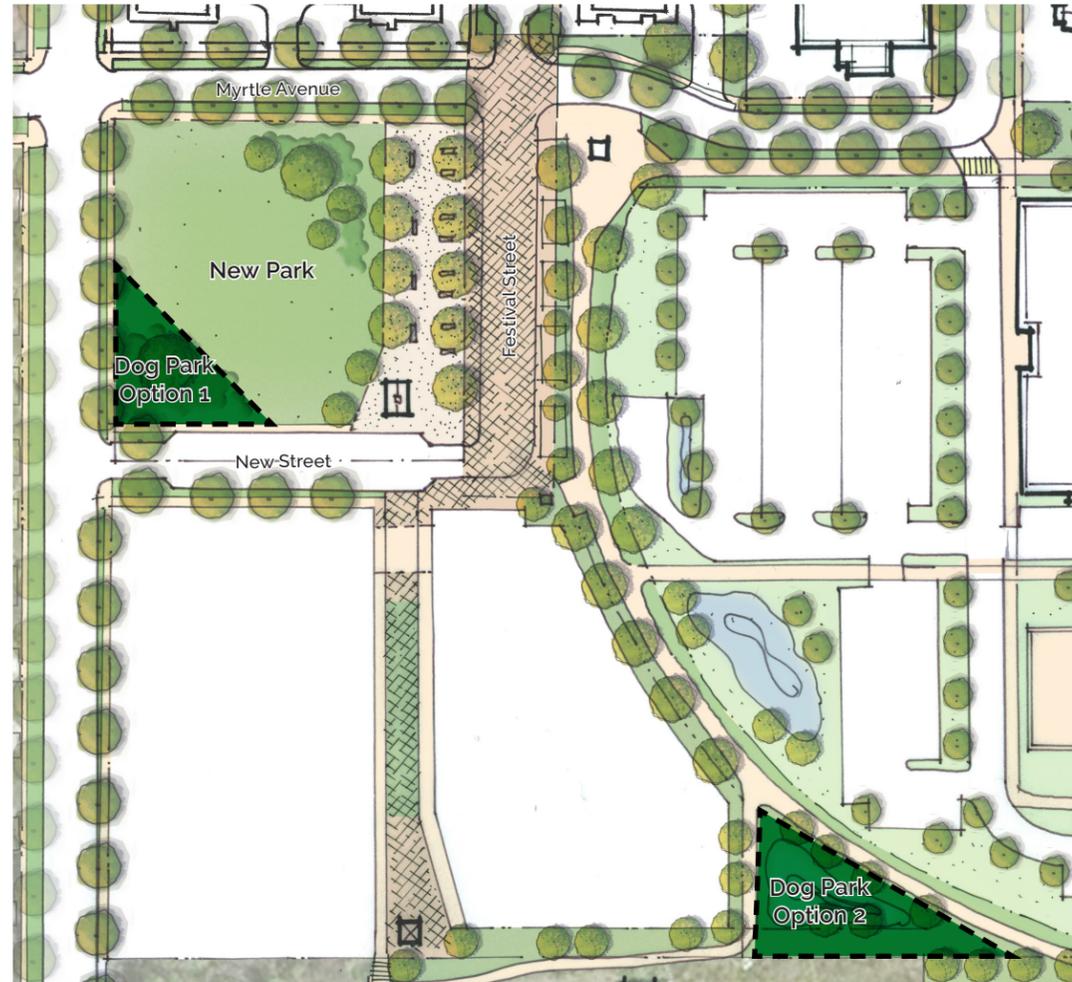
# BERRY STREET EXTENSION — FESTIVAL STREET

**DOG PARK LOCATION ALTERNATIVES**

1. In the park (separate and fenced)
2. In some of the triangular spaces along the trail

**SITE CHALLENGES FOR DOG PARK OPTION 2 LOCATION**

- The dog park option two is currently a stormwater basin, and if selected, this runoff would need to be managed with another basin or alternative stormwater management strategy.



Site Topography for Proposed Dog Park

- 898 FEET IN ELEVATION
- 896 FEET IN ELEVATION
- 890 FEET IN ELEVATION
- 886 FEET IN ELEVATION
- 880 FEET IN ELEVATION
- 876 FEET IN ELEVATION
- 870 FEET IN ELEVATION
- 866 FEET IN ELEVATION
- PROPOSED DOG PARK LOCATION

# POTENTIAL DOG PARK LOCATIONS

## NEW HOUSING

Dominium is developing 360 multi-family residential units to the north of the park.

### Alternative 1

Dominium's layout as of April 2017 is reflected to the right. The key elements include:

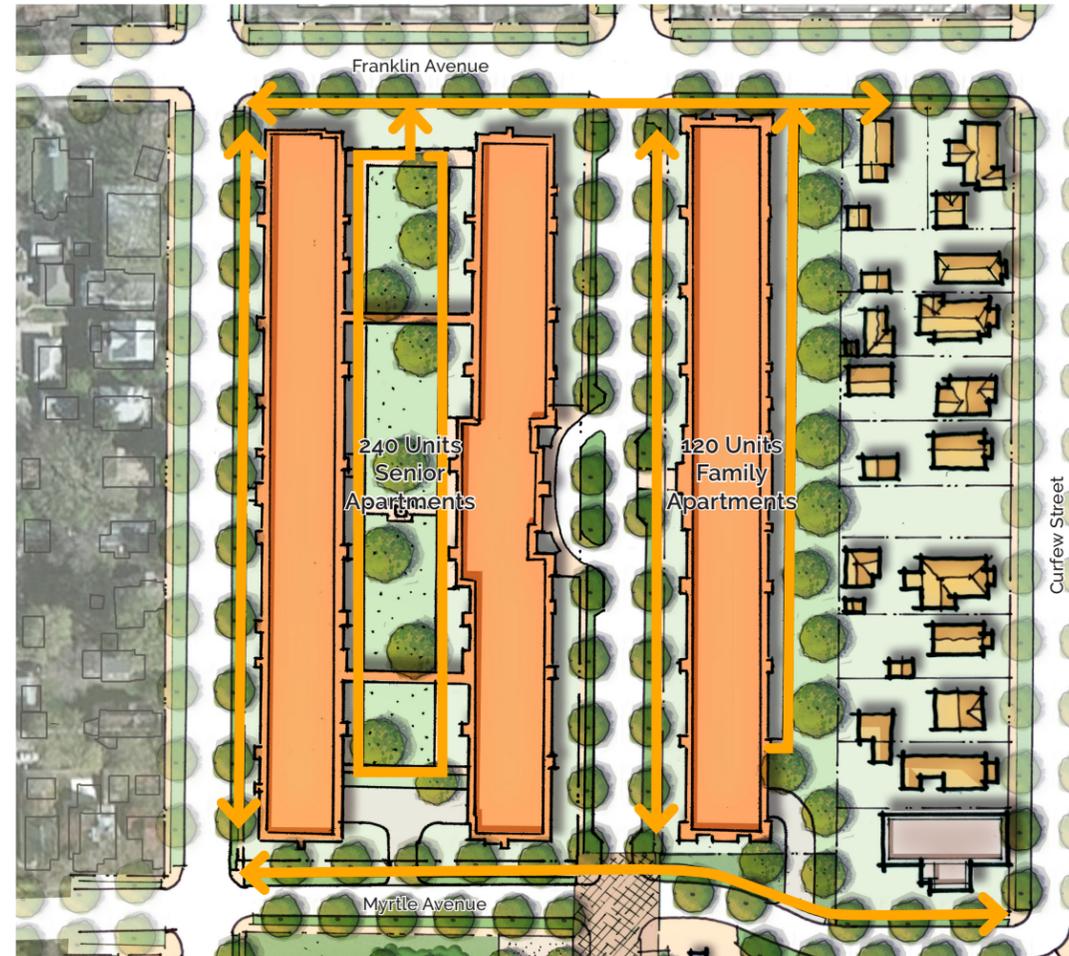
- 120 Family Units
- 240 Senior Units
- Fronting on Emerald and Berry Streets
- Porches and residential character at the street

While buildings front Emerald and Berry Streets, the park does not receive frontage and there would be views of the rears of the buildings and the parking garage entrances from the park. Residents also expressed a desire to break down the scale of the buildings and allow circulation through the block.

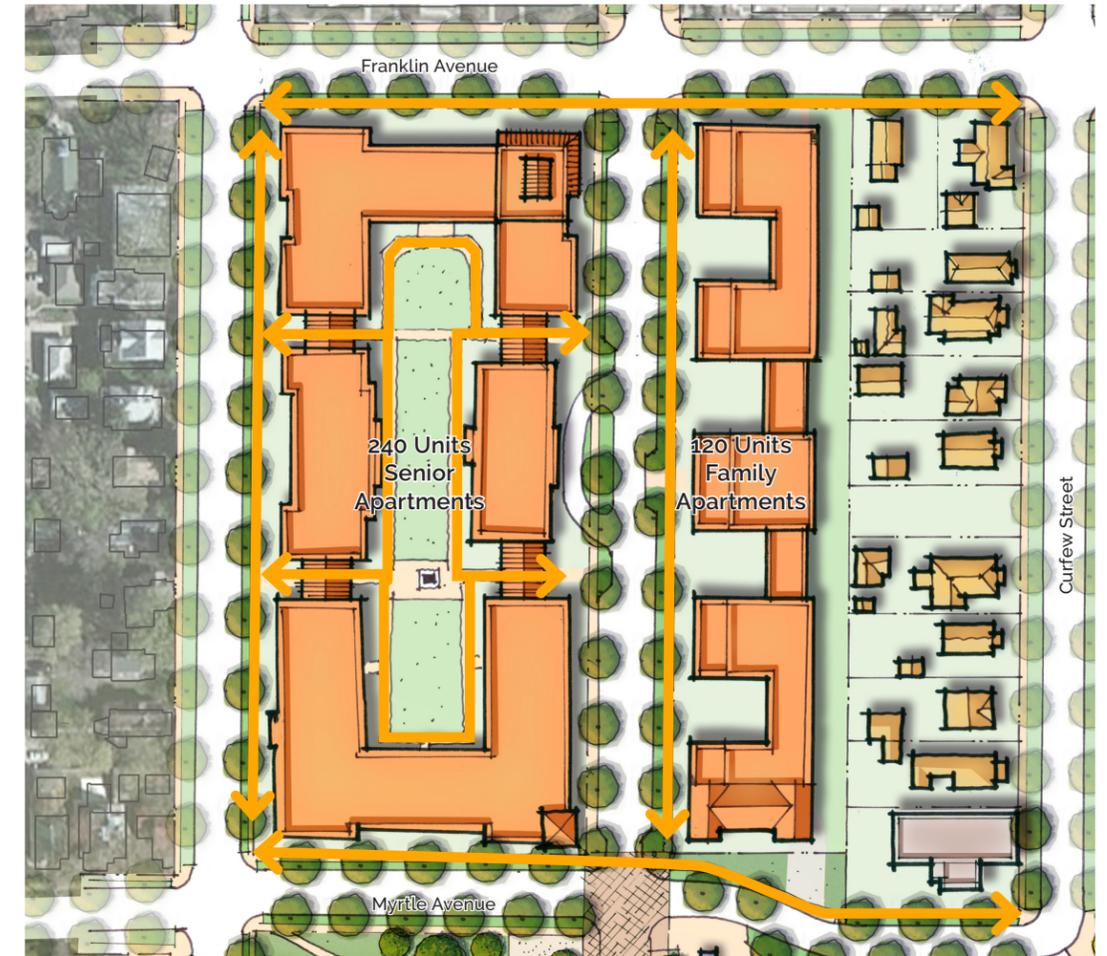
### Alternative 2

The consultant team demonstrated a hypothetical layout that would accomplish these goals. The basic elements of the plan remain the same, but this layout add the following design elements:

- Orients the senior apartment building to face the new park
- Provides frontage on Myrtle Avenue
- Creates more activity and safety near the new park.
- Prevents views to the rear of buildings, parking, and service from the park
- Relocates parking garage access drive to either Berry Street or Emerald Street



Alternative 1 Dominion Layout



Alternative 2 Public Realm Plan Preferred Layout



# WEYERHAEUSER SITE — NEW HOUSING (DOMINIUM)

## SUNRISE BANK PARCEL

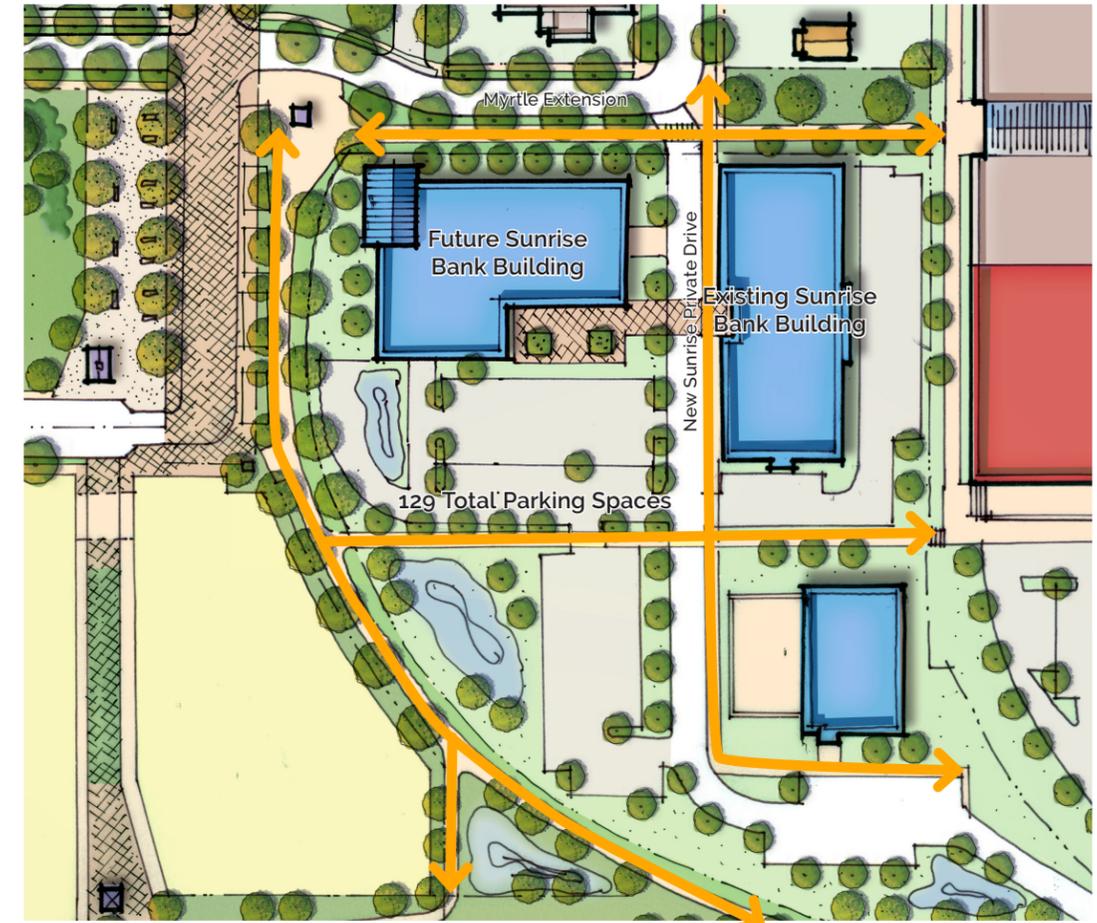
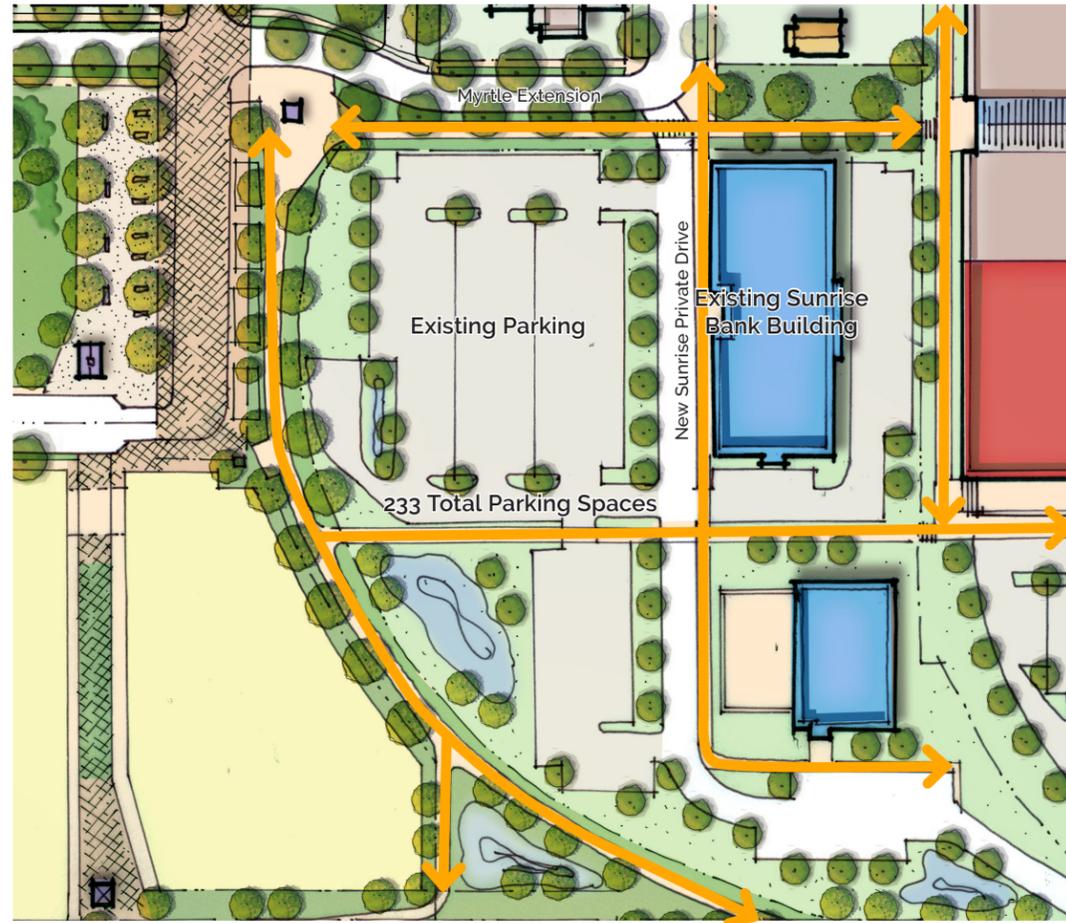
Sunrise Bank has been a partner and contributor to the Westgate LRT Station Area through the development of their corporate headquarters. The extension of the street grid will require coordination with Sunrise.

### First Phase Improvements

- Extend Myrtle Street to Curfew Street
- Potentially re-organize the parking drive aisles to improve internal circulation and wayfinding on the Sunrise Bank parcel
- Enhance pedestrian connections through the Sunrise parking lots

### Second Phase Improvements

- Sunrise has future plans to build a second headquarters building. There is an opportunity to use this addition to create a focal point at the trail head across from the park.
- Locate future Sunrise Bank building to anchor the trail and park, create a focal point
- Organize the Sunrise parcel as a campus of buildings that relate to one another with spaces and connections between



Sunrise Bank First Phase



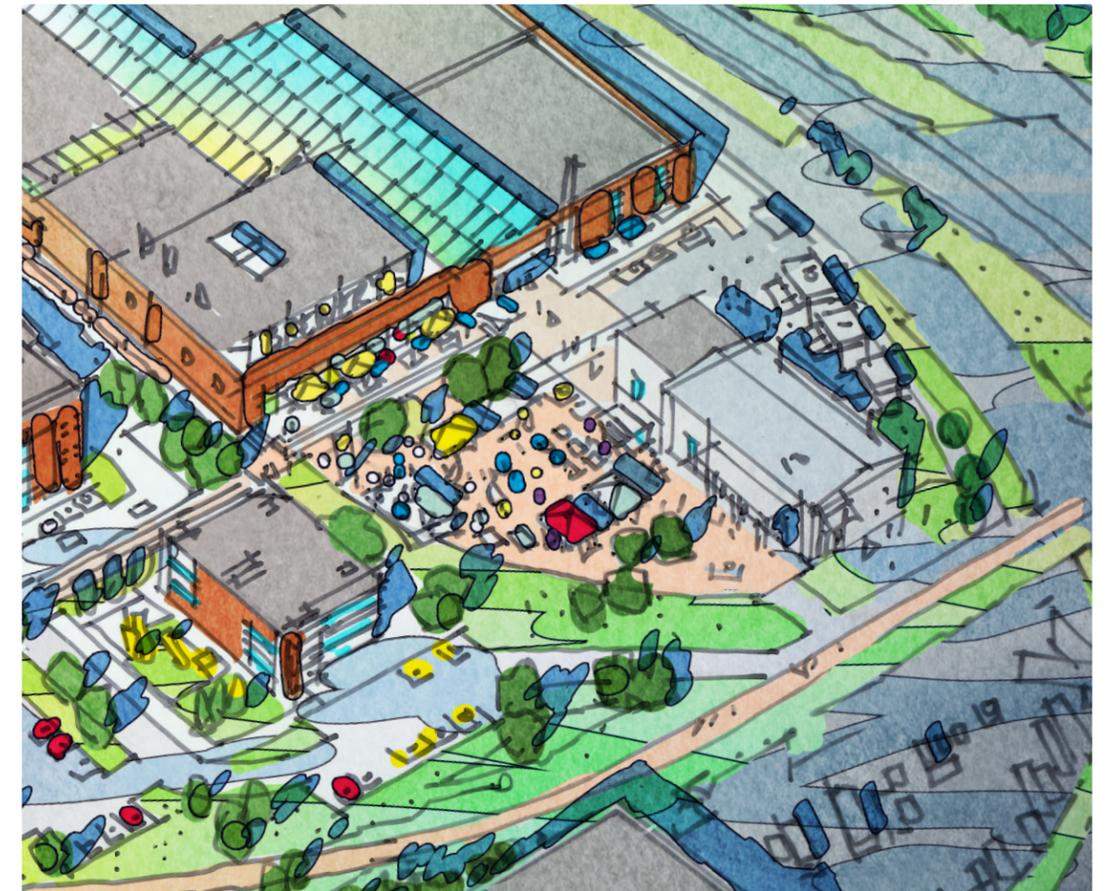
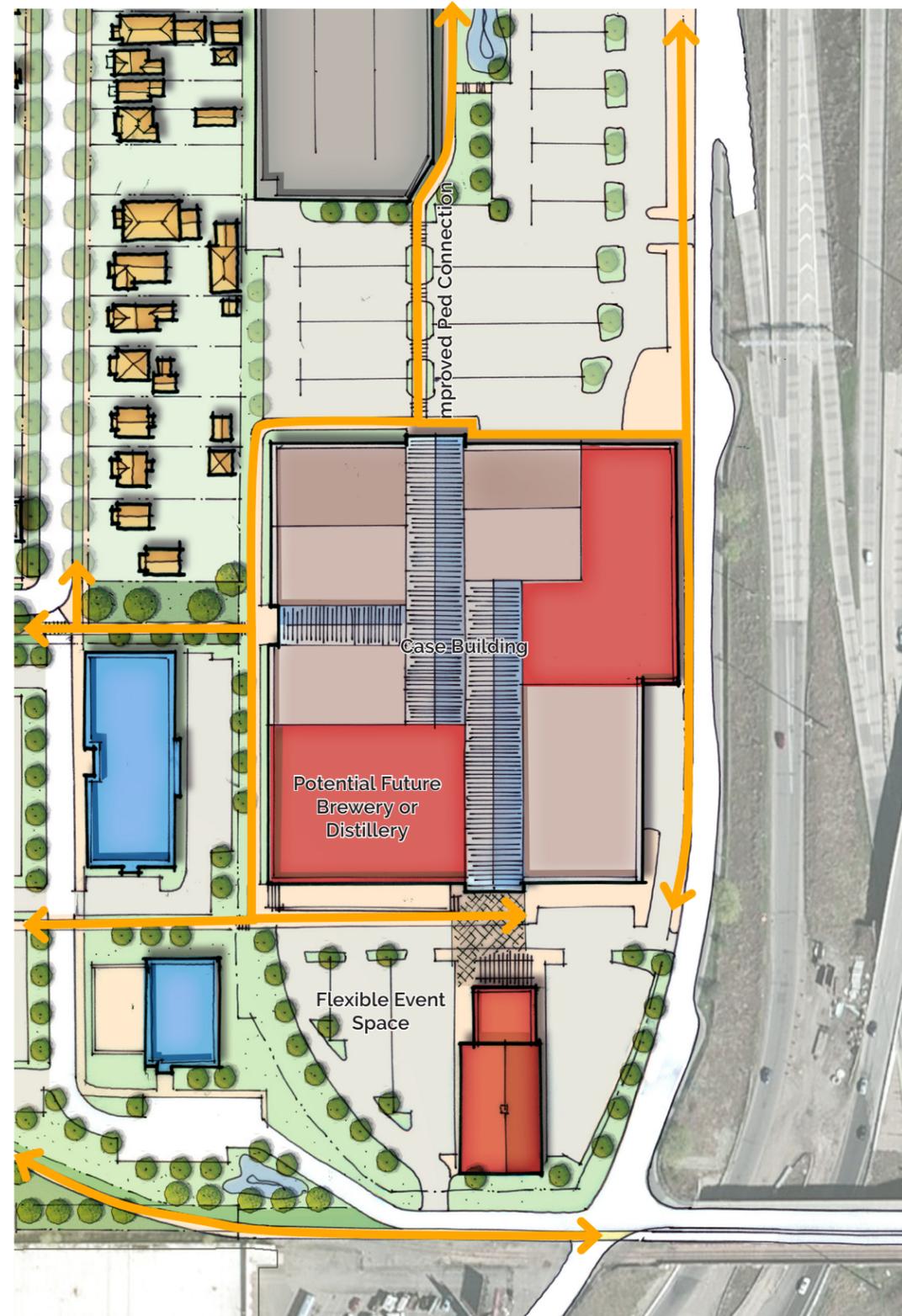
Sunrise Bank Second Phase

- EVENT/FESTIVAL STREET
- PEDESTRIAN PATHS
- PARKING GARAGE STRUCTURE
- FUTURE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITE
- INDUSTRIAL BUILDING
- RETAIL BUILDING
- OFFICE BUILDING

# SUNRISE BANK

Suntide Commercial plans to make improvements to the Case building that could greatly contribute to the Westgate Public Realm. The planning process identified the following possible projects:

- Enhance pedestrian connections to the north and west
- Incorporate the potential for breweries or distilleries with outdoor patio spaces
- Create a space for gathering, food trucks
- Create a new vaulted passageways through the building



- PEDESTRIAN PATHS
- SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- PARKING GARAGE STRUCTURE
- INDUSTRIAL BUILDING
- RETAIL BUILDING
- OFFICE BUILDING

## CASE/SUNTIDE — NEW EMPLOYMENT & DESTINATIONS

There is a parcel south of the park that is intended for future market rate housing. This plan sets forth the following priorities and requirements for the design of that future housing:

- Encourage a North-South pedestrian connection through the future market rate housing site to connect the park to Vertical Endeavors
- Build a stair or trail connection to outdoor space at Vertical Endeavors



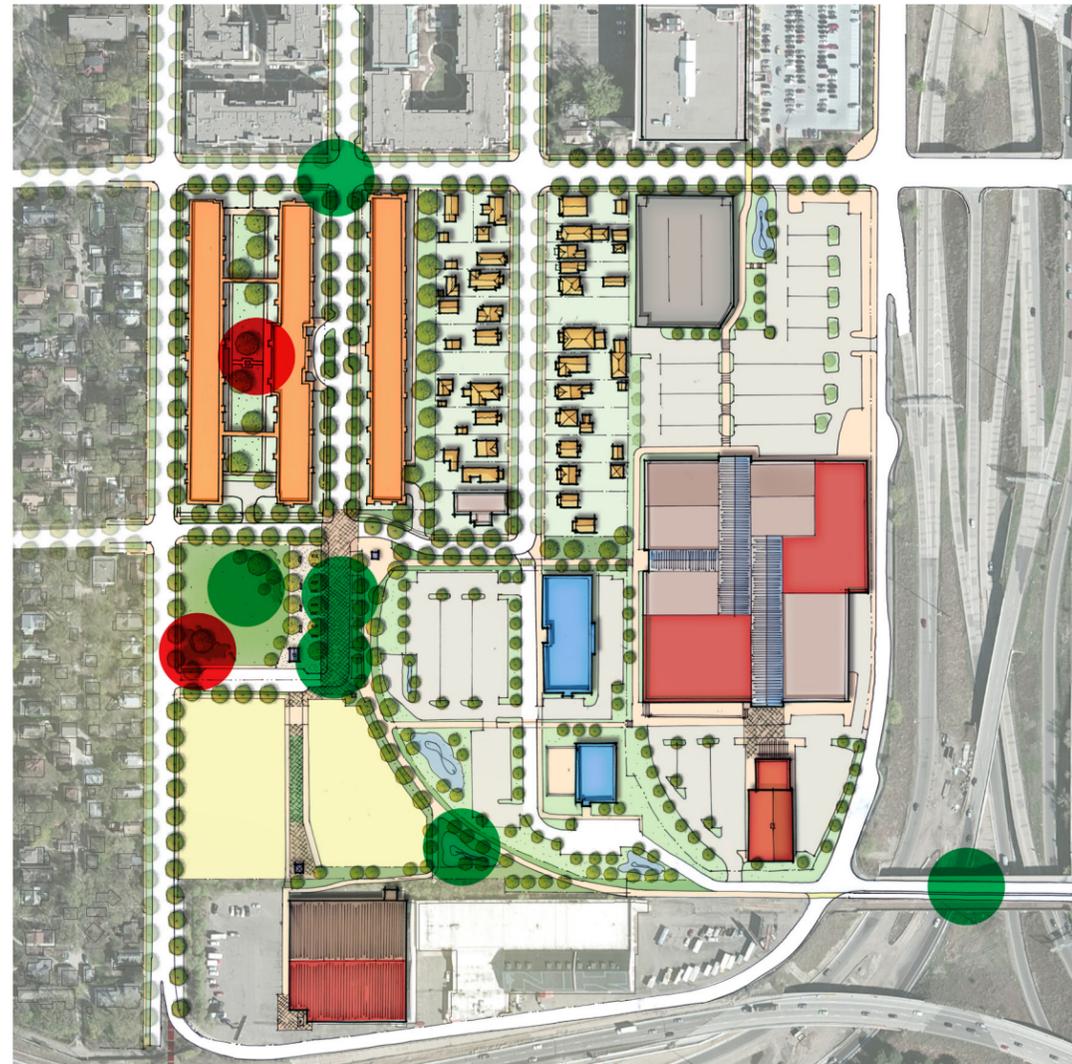
- EVENT/FESTIVAL STREET
- PUBLIC PARK
- FUTURE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITE
- INDUSTRIAL BUILDING
- RETAIL BUILDING

# SOUTHERN CONNECTIONS — FUTURE MARKET RATE HOUSING



# PROPOSED AERIAL VIEW LOOKING TOWARD WESTGATE LRT STATION

At the final presentation, stakeholders were invited to share feedback on what they liked and didn't like about the plan. They placed green dots on the best part of the design and red dots on things they didn't like. The summaries are below:



#### Likes

- Trail connection to Wabash Avenue
- Integrated public and private spaces
- Idea of a dog park for the neighbors
- Flexible gravel space between the park and festival street for shaded seating
- Special pavement or treatment on Berry Street adjacent to the park
- Siting of Sunrise Bank building along the trail
- Idea of a private street through Sunrise's parcel

#### Dislikes

- Dominionium building design
  - Long linear buildings create a wall to the neighborhood and prevents views and pedestrian passage through the block
  - Lack of mixed-use space at ground level on the park
- Parking on both sides of the street around the park



#### Additional Suggestions

- Public restroom facility in the park
- Mixed-use community space in the ground floor of the Dominionium senior housing building that could front onto the park and be publicly accessible
- Coordinate with Sunrise and Suntide to use parking capacity in evening and weekends for events
- Locate a Nice Ride station at the park
- Pedestrian-scale bollard lighting along the trail
- Look at options for pathways and rolling mounds in the park
- Extend the special pavement to the street south of the park
- Make the streets as narrow and pedestrian-friendly as possible

# FINAL PRESENTATION COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Because the projects in the Station Area will be implemented by multiple property owners, redevelopment will occur in multiple phases for each project. Developers should work together with the City and community stakeholders to ensure that each project is implemented in a way that aligns with the overall vision. The following key points are important to the timing and phasing of inter-related projects

- The public realm and streets around the park must be coordinated with Dominion's Phase 1 project
- The extension of Myrtle Street and the reorganization of Sunrise's parking lot must be coordinated
- Connections between Vertical Endeavors, Suntide, the park, and the future market rate housing need to be coordinated

Each color represents a public or private project, and each number within a project is a phase. The phasing number coordinates with its priority. The projects can happen in any order and are not prioritized.



**DOMINIUM**

1. Senior Affordable Housing (240 units)
2. Family Affordable Housing (120 units)
3. Future Market Rate Housing

**SUNRISE BANK OFFICE BUILDING**

1. Potential Parking Lot Reconfiguration
2. Future Second Building

**PUBLIC REALM**

1. Flexible Lawn and Berry Street Festival Street
2. Myrtle Avenue Extension
3. New Wabash Multi-purpose Trail
4. Wabash Rail Bridge

**SUNTIDE COMMERCIAL REALTY INC.**

1. Pedestrian and Exterior Improvements
2. Case Building Adaptation
3. Flexible Event Space

**VERTICAL ENDEAVORS**

1. Warehouse Adaptation
2. Private Trail Connection to New Wabash Multi-purpose Trail

# PROJECTS AND PHASING

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- City of Saint Paul Parks Department and Dominion will coordinate to address salvaging the railroad rails and ties, and Suntide will save graffiti and move it to party patio
- Donna Drummond from PED will be the city liaison with the property owners and the Saint Paul Design Center will host interdepartmental discussion on the next steps

## NEXT STEPS

- Coordinate with St. Anthony Park Community Council (SAPCC) related to their interest in public art and placing SAPCC bike racks on the site.
- Coordinate with Nice Ride related to their interest in locating a facility at Myrtle Avenue and Berry Street
- Investigate short-term and long-term biking solutions on Wabash. Reach out to MnDOT to discuss the Wabash Bridge and its use as a bike connection
- Update the station area plan to reflect the Westgate Public Realm Plan recommendations
- Take the updated station area plan through the Planning Commission and City Council process for adoption
- Pursue a full park design with the community when funding is available
- Create a governance structure to ensure coordination between the property owners and City



# RESPONSIBILITIES AND NEXT STEPS