



Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan
Crystal, Minnesota | July 2016

Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan

PREPARED FOR
City of Crystal
Hennepin County

FUNDED BY
Hennepin County

CONSULTANT TEAM
Urban Design Associates
Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates
SB Friedman Development Advisors
ZAN Associates

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Commissioner Mike Opat
Hennepin County, District 1

Mayor Jim Adams
City of Crystal

Laura Libby
*Council Member, City of Crystal,
Ward 1 and 2*

Elizabeth Dahl
*Council Member, City of Crystal,
Ward 1*

Jeff Kolb
*Council Member, City of Crystal,
Ward 2*

Olga Parsons
*Council Member, City of Crystal,
Ward 3 and 4*

Casey Peak
*Council Member, City of Crystal,
Ward 3*

Julie Deshler
*Council Member, City of Crystal,
Ward 4*

HENNEPIN COUNTY, DEPT OF COMMUNITY WORKS AND DEPT OF PLANNING

Darlene Walser
*Bottineau Community Works
Program Manager*

Andrew Gillett
Principal Planning Analyst

Denise Engen
Principal Planning Analyst

Brent Rusco
Administrative Engineer

Karen Nikolai
Administrative Manager

Joseph Gladke
Assistant Department Director

CITY OF CRYSTAL

John Sutter
Community Development Director

Dan Olson
City Planner

COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP

Gene Bakke

Reva Chamblis

Julie Deshler

James Einfeldt-Brown

Lynn Haney

Ron Johnson

Tom Jungroth

Erin Kolb

Nancy LaRoche

Olga Parsons

Casey Peak

John Slama

Denny Walsh

Justin Youngbluth

HEALTH EQUITY & ENGAGEMENT COHORT

African American Leadership
Forum (AALF)

African Career & Education
Resources (ACER)

Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
(AMS)

La Asamblea de Derechos Civiles

CAPI USA

LAO Assistance Center of
Minnesota (LAC)

Minnesota African Women's
Association (MAWA)

Minnesota Center for Neighborhood
Organization (MCNO)

Nexus Community Partners

Northwest Human Services Council
(NHHSC)

BOTTINEAU COMMUNITY WORKS TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Kim Berggren
City of Brooklyn Park

Emily Carr
City of Brooklyn Park

Todd Larson
City of Brooklyn Park

Cindy Sherman
City of Brooklyn Park

Dan Olson
City of Crystal

Emily Goellner
City of Golden Valley

Jeff Oliver
City of Golden Valley

Jason Zimmerman
City of Golden Valley

Rebecca Farrar
City of Minneapolis

Beth Grosen
City of Minneapolis

Don Pflaum
City of Minneapolis

Jim Voll
City of Minneapolis

Rick Pearson
City of Robbinsdale

Chad Ellos
Hennepin County

Denise Engen
Hennepin County

Brent Rusco
Hennepin County

Darlene Walser
Hennepin County

Pierce Canser
Metro Transit

Amy Geisler
Metro Transit

Kathryn Hansen
Metro Transit

Michael Krantz
Metro Transit

Michael Mechtenberg
Metro Transit

Shelley Miller
Metro Transit

Alicia Vap
Metro Transit

Mike Larson
Metropolitan Council

Eric Wojchik
Metropolitan Council

Jan Youngquist
Metropolitan Council

Adam Arvidson
*Minneapolis Park and Recreation
Board*

Dean Carlson
*Minneapolis Public Housing
Authority*

Ryan Wilson
*Minnesota Department of
Transportation*

Larry Hiscock
Nexus Community Partners

Ann Rexine
Three Rivers Park District

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Hennepin County Bottineau LRT/Metro Blue Line Extension Bicycle Study: Crystal Station

Consolidated Stakeholder/Community Meeting Minutes (Crystal Station Area Planning Process)

Executive Summary

The METRO Blue Line Extension, also known as the Bottineau Light Rail Transit (Bottineau LRT), is a proposed 13-mile extension of the existing METRO Blue Line light rail transit line in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota that will extend from downtown Minneapolis through north Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park, serving the northwest Twin Cities metro. The Metropolitan Council received approval from the Federal Transit Administration in August 2014 to enter the federal New Starts program and is currently in the Project Development phase. Service is anticipated to begin in 2021 with Bass Lake Road in Crystal being one of the LRT stops. The station design calls for a light rail station platform and associated improvements, the development of The Promenade, a wide pedestrian path along Bass Lake Road, and a redevelopment proposal for Becker Park

This transit project will have an impact on land use around the LRT station, including Crystal's commercial core. The Hennepin County Bottineau LRT Community Works program was established in 2015 to leverage this important regional transit investment by partnering with cities along the Bottineau LRT line to help plan for, and implement, critical changes “beyond the rails” — future land use, pedestrian, bike, and bus connections, and critical programs and policies to support communities living along the line.

A vigorous community engagement process was initiated in spring 2015 to discuss and make recommendations on a future vision for the area surrounding the Bass Lake Road LRT station. The City of Crystal and Hennepin County facilitated discussions and public workshops that sought input from residents, businesses, community representatives, community groups, elected officials, and the Bottineau Community Works Technical Advisory Committee. This report summarizes the collective recommendations of the stakeholders.



THE PROMENADE ALONG THE NORTH SIDE OF BECKER PARK



BECKER PARK



THE FROLICS IN BECKER PARK

Bottineau LRT Overview

This section of the report gives a brief overview of the Bottineau LRT transit initiative, including initial goals of the Bottineau LRT Community Works program. An explanation of station area planning is also provided.

Analysis

The station area planning process was underpinned by a robust community and stakeholder engagement effort. A summary of this process and the comments from the community are presented in this section. The consultant team also completed baseline market and urban design assessments. These broad discussions and studies provided insight into the strength, challenges, and opportunities around the Bass Lake Road LRT station in Crystal.

Transportation Networks

With a new LRT station proposed in Crystal, it is important to look closely at all the supporting transportation networks. An important consideration in the station area plan is access to the new station for all transit riders, whether by foot, bike, vehicle, bus, or some combination. This section of the report outlines recommendations for enhancing the existing transportation networks to ensure they support all modes of transportation.

Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan

The vision for the station area is to create an entrance and strong pedestrian connections to downtown. The community would like to see the retail hub at West Broadway and Bass Lake Road and Becker Park become improved versions of what they are today — a unique commercial center and civic park surrounded by desirable residential neighborhoods. The station area plan identifies opportunity sites, improvements to Bass Lake Road between the LRT station and West Broadway Avenue, park ideas, and redevelopment options around the LRT station. Land use suggestions, placemaking, and strategies to achieve health equity are also discussed.

Implementation

The implementation section looks beyond the planning process and outlines a process for putting the plan into effect. This section includes a summary of public and private initiatives, policy recommendations, and the next steps needed to translate the vision into reality.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY The LRT will be located next to existing railroad tracks and could bring new economic development opportunities



PEDESTRIAN PROMENADE The stretch of Bass Lake Road between the LRT station and West Broadway should be enhanced with pedestrian promenades on both the north and south sides

Bottineau LRT Overview

The METRO Blue Line Extension, also known as the Bottineau Light Rail Transit (Bottineau LRT), is a proposed 13-mile expansion of the existing METRO Blue Line in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota that will extend from downtown Minneapolis through north Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park, serving the northwest Twin Cities metro. The Bottineau LRT will link to local and express bus routes, and will seamlessly connect to the regional transitway system at Target Field Station in downtown Minneapolis.

The Hennepin County Bottineau LRT Community Works program was established in 2015 to leverage this important regional transit investment by partnering with cities along the Bottineau LRT to help plan for, and implement, critical changes “beyond the rails.” Initial goals of the program are to:

- » Re-envision the Bottineau Corridor as a multi-modal transit corridor that supports LRT, bus, pedestrian, and bicycle connections.
- » Maximize and strategically align public and private investments in the corridor to support transit oriented development (TOD) through catalytic investments in life-cycle housing, commercial development, and public infrastructure.
- » Promote economic opportunity by improving access to jobs and supporting business recruitment and expansion along the corridor.
- » Enhance livability in the corridor by improving public spaces, supporting the creation of healthy communities, and connecting people to key destinations, including employment centers, educational institutions, and regional amenities.

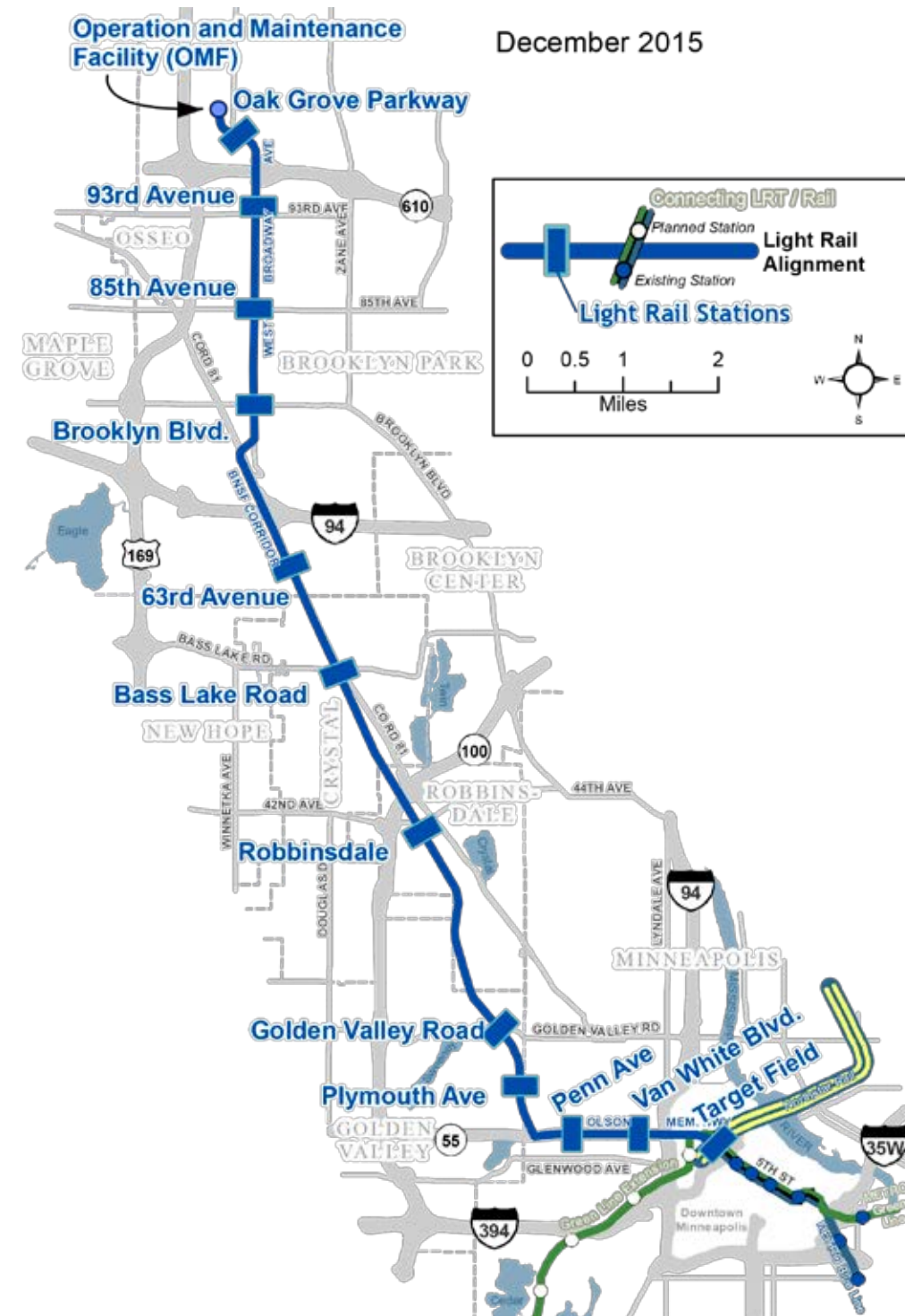


Fig. 1 METRO BLUE LINE EXTENSION

This station area planning project was funded and coordinated by Hennepin County through the Bottineau LRT Community Works program. Additional funding was provided by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota for health equity-focused community engagement.

Regional Open Space Network

The Blue Line Extension roughly parallels the Mississippi River. The cities along the line already have a system of large regional and municipal parks, such as Elm Creek Park, Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park, and Palmer Lake Park, as well as a constellation of smaller parks. Trail and creek systems (such as the Rush Creek Regional Trail and Shingle Creek) connect these parks to one another and back to the River. The new stations provide a tremendous opportunity to strengthen east-west connections and give transit riders access to the network at multiple points along the line. The Station Area Planning process prioritized these connections and explored ways to link pedestrian and bicycle routes to the open space network.

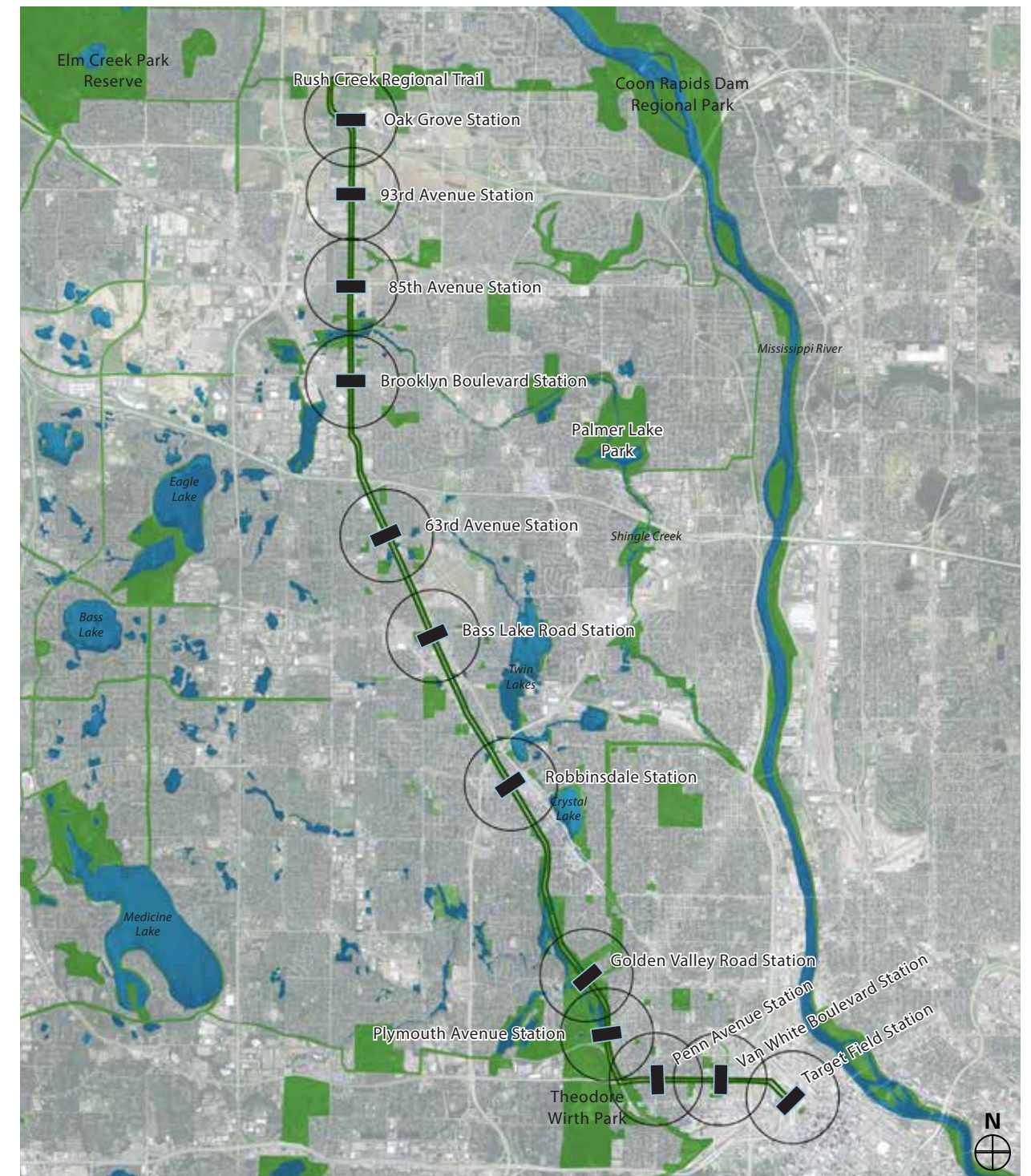


Fig. 2 REGIONAL OPEN SPACE NETWORK

Station Area Planning

Station area planning is the first step in the planning and implementation process for changes that will occur “beyond the rails.” It is designed to be coordinated with, and run parallel to, the planning and engineering of the LRT line. Station area planning is a community-based process that examines the area within a ½-mile radius, or a ten-minute walk, of a proposed LRT station. The goal is to create a short-term and long-term vision that reflects the community’s goals, ensures that the LRT infrastructure is effectively integrated with the surrounding community, and helps the community take advantage of this new transit investment. The result is a vision for the area, coupled with a set of recommended actions and policy changes for cities, agencies, and local communities to consider as they move forward to realize that vision.

The Bass Lake Road Station Area planning process is a joint effort of Hennepin County and the City of Crystal. The process began in spring 2015 and concludes with the publication of this report in summer 2016. This report presents the summary of that effort, and documents the resulting station area plan for the station at Bass Lake Road and County Road 81. Definitions of key terminology used in the report can be found in the Glossary at the end of this document.

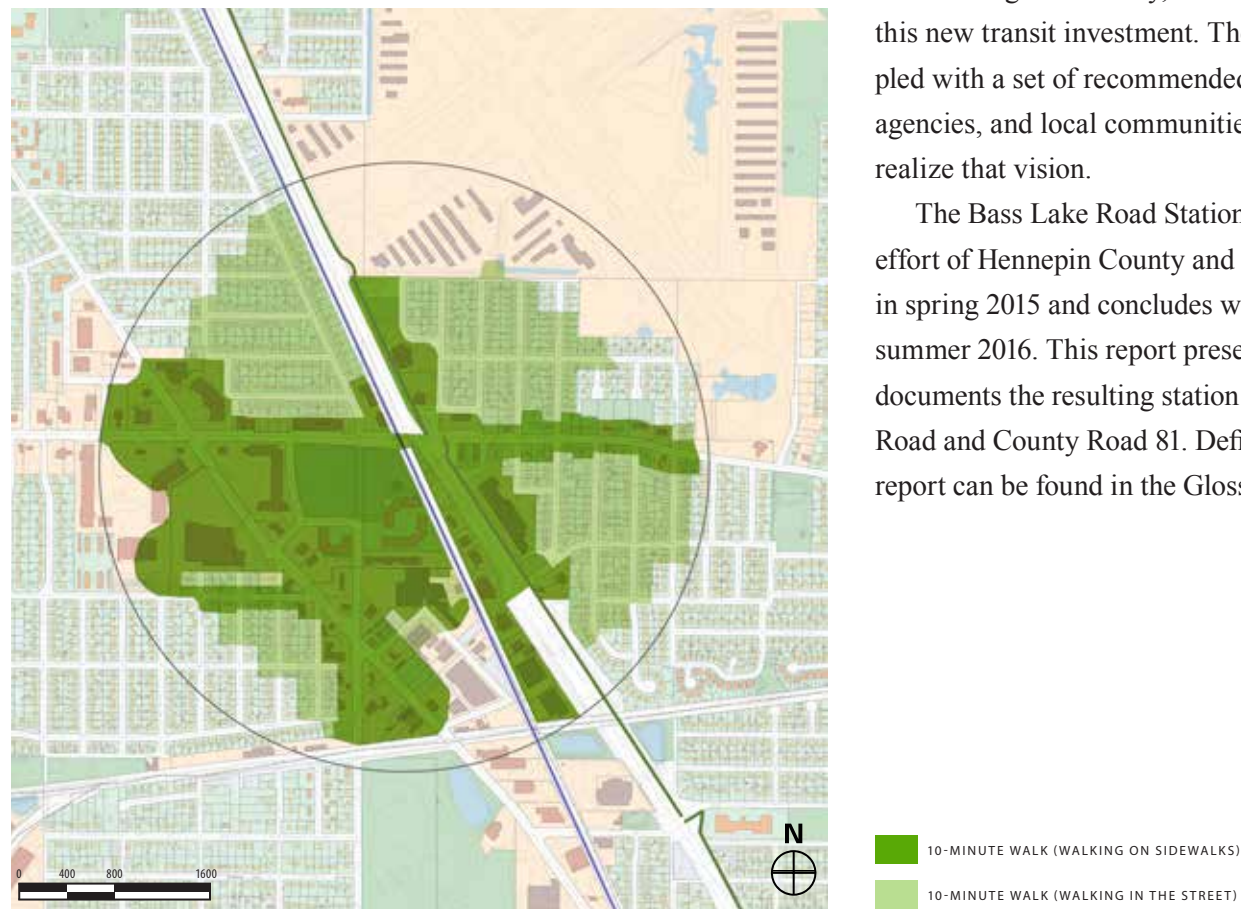


Fig. 3 10-MINUTE WALKSHED

BENEFITS OF STATION AREA PLANNING

SUPPORTS NEIGHBORHOODS

Constructing a new LRT line can be a big change for local communities. Station area planning helps ensure that cities can proactively plan for those changes, take advantage of the benefits, and create plans that reflect the community’s vision for its future. Station area planning preserves and builds on the best qualities of existing neighborhoods, makes recommendations for appropriate improvements, and supports the local vision for the future of these areas.

MAKES THE MOST OF LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT INVESTMENT

Riders are key to making a successful LRT investment. The easier it is for people to get to the train, the more people will use it. Station area planning supports transit by designing complete streets which make it easier for people to walk and bike to the station and connect to key destinations and trails. The plan also covers the types of future land use and potential development that should be considered given this new transit investment. The more opportunities there are for people to work, live, shop, attend school, or visit other key destinations within the station areas along Bottineau LRT, the more people will use LRT. The federal government looks at these factors, as well as station area planning efforts, when it is rating LRT projects. These ratings determine which projects from around the Country will have priority to receive federal funding to build light rail.

SUPPORTS HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Healthy communities are walkable, bikeable, and vibrant. They connect people and places, making it easier to get around without a car. They also include community gardens, farmers’ markets, and grocery stores that provide healthy foods, and places like parks where people can recreate and socialize. Residents have the training and education they need to access local jobs, and there is housing, shops, and services that match their needs. Ensuring that these conditions are available to all people, regardless of age, race, or wealth contributes to health equity, which is a priority to Hennepin County and one that the county has been working on in Bottineau communities for a number of years.

TABLE 1 Benefits of Station Area Planning

Analysis

The planning process is supported by, and grounded in, a strong community engagement effort. The City of Crystal and Hennepin County took the lead in facilitating community meetings and workshops to get input and feedback from a wide range of stakeholders. This section of the report begins with a summary of those engagement activities and what was learned.

The Health Equity section provides an overview of the findings from a previous study, the Bottineau Transitway Health Impact Assessment, which found that the Bottineau LRT project presents an opportunity to begin improving health in the communities along the light rail extension. As a result, health equity considerations were included as a special area of focus during the planning process. A cohort of community organizations, the Health Equity & Engagement Cohort (HEEC), was formed early on to conduct targeted engagement of populations experiencing disparities in health outcomes and to assist in developing strategies for moving forward.

A preliminary real estate market analysis was also completed to inform the planning efforts. This study looked at the development potential associated with the Bass Lake Road LRT stop. An urban design analysis that documents existing individual land uses and connections was also done as part of the station area planning process and both are summarized in this section of the report.

Together, these broad discussions and studies help paint a picture of Crystal today and begin to outline a vision for the future.



Members of the Crystal community gather to give input



Members of the community met with the team to discuss options



EXISTING BECKER PARK The existing park includes two softball fields, a community building, and a few passive places for people to sit and gather, but overall, the park is not fully utilized by a broad range of community members throughout the year

Summary of Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Community engagement began in July 2015 with a concerted effort by the City of Crystal to identify and invite people who live, work, or are otherwise interested in the station area to join a Community Working Group (CWG) to help guide the planning effort, assist with community outreach and engagement, and review design concepts and draft plans. As part of Hennepin County’s health initiatives in the Bottineau Corridor, a cohort of community organizations, called the Health Equity & Engagement Cohort (HEEC), was formed to assist in engaging populations that are traditionally underrepresented in standard public outreach processes. The HEEC members for this phase of station area planning included: African Career & Education Resources Inc. (ACER), African American Leadership Forum (AALF), CAPI USA, La Asamblea de Derechos Civiles, Lao Assistance Center of MN (LACM), MN African Women’s Association (MAWA), and Northwest Hennepin Human Services Council.

Three community-wide meetings were held to get input and feedback from the larger community. At the initial meeting on September 29, 2015, community members and stakeholders were invited to share their thoughts and ideas about the strengths and weaknesses of the area surrounding the proposed LRT station, as well as a vision for the future.

A design workshop was held from November 3–5, 2015. The workshop focused on specific designs for the station area. It featured a series of focus group sessions where technical experts, community leaders, members of the business community, residents, the CWG and HEEC, and other stakeholders were invited to share their ideas, concerns, and vision for the area and provide feedback on initial design concepts. Several design concepts were developed and presented for feedback at the second community-wide meeting held on November 5, 2015.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT		
COMMUNITY STRENGTHS/ POTENTIAL LRT BENEFITS	CHALLENGES/LRT CONCERNS	VISION FOR THE FUTURE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Becker Park as a community gathering place (playground, ball fields, courts, Frolics) » Commercial at Bass Lake and West Broadway (Target, Buffalo Wild Wings, Starbucks, etc.) » LRT improves connections and access (to the airport, higher education, and downtown) » Crystal Airport » Crystal Medical Clinic » Centrally located » Strong walkable residential neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Pedestrian crossings on County 81 are difficult and do not feel safe » Undesirable uses, such as the pawn shop and liquor store » Vacant and underutilized buildings » Traffic congestion » Not an inviting entrance to the city » Inadequate parking » Absentee landlords and poorly maintained property » Poor lighting » Some communities are isolated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop 2-3 story walkable mixed-use with retail on the ground floor » Connect bike paths along the corridor » Safe and easy crossings of Highway 81 and Bass Lake Road » Support for immigrant businesses and help unite the community » Clean, safe, and comfortable station » Create a plaza around station » Convenient retail (dry cleaning, post office, etc.) » Reconceive Becker Park to be a community hub with year-round, multi-use activities » Improve housing choices for the community
		
		

TABLE 2 STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND VISIONS Summary of input provided by the community

Based on that community feedback as well as additional technical analysis, these plans were then tested and refined. Final design concepts were presented at a third community-wide meeting on January 25, 2016 during which community residents and stakeholders reviewed and provided additional feedback.

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), comprised of representatives from public agencies involved in the project, was also engaged and met throughout the process to review and provide comments and direction on technical information for the project from the standpoint of their agencies.



CRYSTAL COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



CRYSTAL COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



CRYSTAL COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



CRYSTAL COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Health Equity

Hennepin County incorporated health considerations as a special area of focus in station area planning, recognizing that transportation systems and the characteristics of our neighborhoods have a substantial impact on community health, and that populations within the Bottineau Corridor experience significant disparities in health outcomes.

In 2013, Hennepin County published the Bottineau Transitway Health Impact Assessment (HIA), which documented dramatic economic, environmental, and social inequities in the Bottineau Corridor compared to the rest of the region. These inequities have resulted in substantial disparities in health outcomes (chronic disease and life expectancy) in some Bottineau communities. The Bottineau LRT offers an opportunity to begin improving health in these communities.

The following are the HIA recommendations for station area planning:

- » Conduct additional analysis to identify low-income and transit reliant populations along the proposed route that could easily connect to light rail via the bus or another transit service.
- » Engage populations living in the Bottineau Corridor during station area planning and incorporate engagement strategies to reach traditionally underrepresented groups such as low-income, minority, immigrant, and non-English speaking populations.
- » Focus Bottineau Corridor cities' residential and commercial growth in the station areas and implement requirements that encourage higher density, mixed-use development and benefit existing communities.
- » Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements into station area plans to improve traffic safety and facilitate access to the transit stations by foot and bike.



Pedestrian and bicycle access for all are priorities of the plan



Engagement strategies aimed to reach underrepresented groups



Providing spaces for all ages is an important aspect of equity

» Preserve existing affordable housing and support the development of affordable and mixed-income housing near transit locations.

The HIA recommendations above address key health factors called “social determinants of health.” These factors are characteristic of virtually every community and affect our health, for better and for worse. Good station area planning can help tip these social determinants of health in a community’s favor so the physical design of the area around the LRT stations, as well as the human capital programs associated with that design, become assets that contribute to improving overall community health.

The community in the Bass Lake Road Station Area matches the average for the City of Crystal and Hennepin County, with a few key differences as noted below and in Table 3. Children, seniors, and transit reliant populations have the most to gain from improved transit access and positive changes to walking and biking in the station area. As Table 3 shows, these populations make up a substantial portion of station area residents. Children comprise 22% of residents in the ½-mile station area, and seniors account for 11% of residents in the station area. Safe walking and biking connections will be crucial for the wide range of people who will connect at the station. Residents expressed concern for how children and seniors will be able to safely traverse the station area, especially crossing County Road 81 and Bass Lake Road.

Low income residents and residents living in poverty, who make up 14% of the population in this station area, also have the potential to benefit greatly from high frequency LRT transportation in their neighborhood. The LRT can provide access to education and employment opportunities and reduce the need for car ownership, which is a significant financial burden for lower income residents.

At 36% people of color, Bass Lake Road station area has a higher percentage of persons of color compared to the average in Crystal and to the rest of Hennepin County. In general, populations of color and immigrant populations experience disparities in key determinants of health such as employment, income, and healthy food access. The Bottineau LRT has the potential to reduce these disparities for people living in or visiting the station area by improving a number of the factors that affect community health.

CRYSTAL COMMUNITY PROFILE			
	½-Mile Station Area	Crystal	Hennepin County
Population	2,405	22,151	1,152,388
Persons under 18 years	22%	22%	22.4%
Persons over 65 years	11%	14%	12.2%
Persons of Color	36%	22%	23.6%
Zero car households	4%	7%	10.5%
Living in Poverty	14%	10%	12.8%

Data Sources:
 2010 Census, Summary File 1 100% Data: Total Population, Population Under 18, Population 65 and Over, Minority Population
 American Community Survey 2007–2011 5-year Summary File: Low-Income Population, Percent Zero Car Households

TABLE 3 Crystal Community Profile

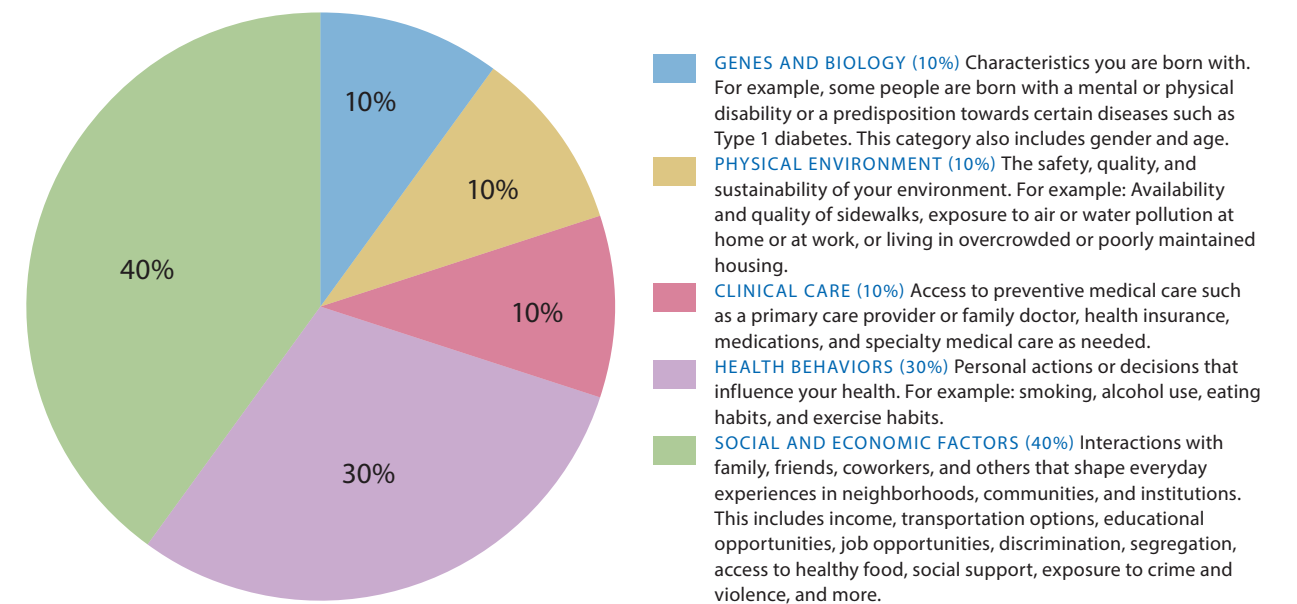


Fig. 4 SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
 Source: Determinants of Health Model based on frameworks developed by the Minnesota Department of Health at http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/healthequity/ahe_leg_report_020414.pdf and the following papers: Tarlov AR. Ann N Y Acad Sci 1999; 896: 281-93; and Kindig D, Asada Y, Booske B. JAMA 2008; 299(17): 2081-2083.

Market Analysis

A high level preliminary real estate market analysis was performed by SB Friedman Development Advisors for various uses around the Bass Lake Road Station on the METRO Blue Line Extension through the city of Crystal (the “Study Area”). A market study analyzes the economic, financial, physical, and demographic conditions of a community and the market’s ability to support additional real estate development without public sector support or intervention.

In addition to the market, there are a wide range of policy and financial tools that policy makers can use to support real estate development that would not otherwise occur. Housing affordability is one example. Due to the total costs of new construction, the private market on its own will not produce affordable housing, so these programs are dependent on political support and financial commitment from all levels of government. This analysis focuses solely on market conditions.

The market recommendations in this plan came out of the following work:

- » Evaluated existing conditions within the Study Area;
- » Assessed competitive supply, including planned projects for residential, retail, and office development within the relevant market areas;
- » Evaluated demand for residential, retail, and office uses;
- » Considered the potential impacts of catalytic infrastructure improvements within the Study Area, namely the proposed METRO Blue Line Extension along the Bottineau LRT Corridor; and
- » Identified potential development opportunities, including product types and scale.

Findings for this study focus on the ½-mile area around the Bass Lake Road Station (the “Bass Lake Road Station Area”). Except for the purposes of evaluating competitive supply, the Study Area does not include land more than a ½-mile from the station, as the location near transit would cease to be a major factor in the land’s development.

KEY ASSETS

The Bass Lake Road Station has a unique siting in the region and relationship to existing retail and open space. The City of Crystal has an opportunity to increase transit oriented development. Strengths of this location include:

- 1 **Demographic Change.** Reflecting national trends, Hennepin County’s population is becoming older overall. From 2016 to 2025, persons in their 70s will have the greatest growth of any age group in the county. Some senior citizens will likely prefer to both downsize their homes and reduce the level of time and energy required to maintain a house. This demographic shift may increase the appeal of walkable multifamily housing adjacent to transit.
- 2 **Existing Retail.** There is a strong retail cluster around Bass Lake Road and West Broadway Avenue. This could be considered an amenity to future residents of transit oriented housing.
- 3 **Open Space.** Becker Park is adjacent to the planned Bass Lake Road Station and would be an amenity to future residents of transit oriented housing.

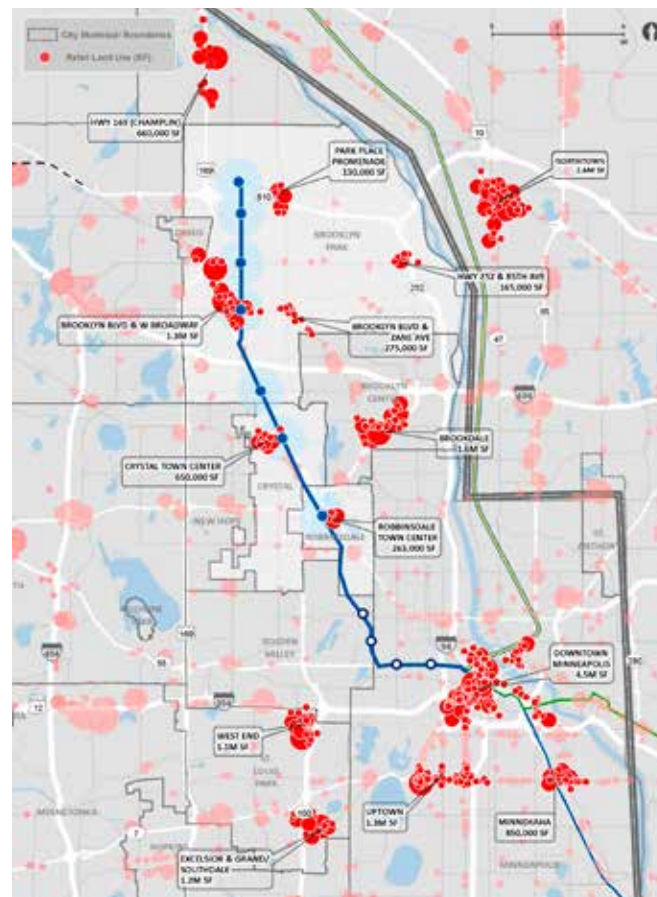


Fig. 5 SELECTED REGIONAL RETAIL CLUSTERS AND MAJOR CENTERS
Source: CoStar, Esri, SB Friedman

CORRIDOR-WIDE COMPETITIVE SUPPLY AND PLANNED PROJECTS

To develop preliminary insights into development potential in the Study Area, market conditions of three real estate products were analyzed at a regional scale — either county-wide or near the Bottineau LRT Corridor. The specific opportunities and challenges within the Study Area were then assessed, which helped inform the final conclusions. Because of similarities in its economic profile and recent development, the area around the existing METRO Blue Line through Minneapolis was used as an indicator of the amount of development that could occur after the expansion of the METRO Blue Line. The competitive environment and development context for each of the three product categories are summarized in Table 4.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Based on analysis of competitive supply, demographic trends, demand, and existing conditions within the Bass Lake Road Station Area, the market study has preliminarily identified potential opportunities for near-term and long-term development within the Bass Lake Road Station Area. The strongest market potential in the near-term appears to be for attached housing. However, even with some market demand, new development will only be realized once developers can identify suitable and properly priced sites. Finding a suitably large site near Bass Lake Road that is ready for redevelopment will be one of the greatest challenges in the near-term.

COMPETITIVE SUPPLY AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL FOR BOTTINEAU CORRIDOR STUDY AREA			
	RESIDENTIAL	RETAIL AND RESTAURANTS	OFFICE
Competitive Supply in past 25 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Throughout the north suburban Bottineau LRT Corridor, only approximately 300 units of multifamily rental apartments have been built over the past 25 years, the vast majority being senior housing. » Brooklyn Park is currently adding 480 units of market-rate apartments near the future Oak Grove station. The project was made financially feasible due partially to public Tax Increment Financing (“TIF”) assistance and tax abatement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Regional-level retail has tended toward locating in the western and southern suburbs lining I-494, up to and including Maple Grove. Locally, Brooklyn Boulevard has extensive power center retail, the Brookdale Mall site is being redeveloped, and smaller clusters exist in downtown Robbinsdale and around the Crystal Shopping Center. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Target’s North Campus has been the only large corporate office development near the Bottineau LRT Corridor. » In Crystal, the newest smaller office building is the Crystal Medical Building. There are other older, smaller (less than 20,000 square feet) office buildings in the city. All of these buildings have fairly low vacancy rates (under 15%).
Future Development Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Residential demand throughout the Bottineau LRT corridor is expected to grow, similarly to the growth that occurred in South Minneapolis after the existing METRO Blue Line opened. With the assistance of public funds to support some affordable housing units, housing development went from 132 units built from 1990–2003 to 1,048 units built from 2004–2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Along the Corridor, transit oriented retail would likely occur at a smaller scale than much of the existing Crystal retail to the west, which is highly auto-oriented and includes large building footprints with surface parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » If demand remains and a suitable site can be found, medical office development may become more feasible and could take a form similar to the Crystal Medical Office Building (5700 Bottineau Boulevard), containing 45,000 square feet over two floors.

TABLE 4 Competitive Supply and Development Potential for Bottineau Corridor Study Area

NEAR-TERM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL			
	RESIDENTIAL	RETAIL AND RESTAURANTS	OFFICE
Development Potential and Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » There may be potential for a multifamily building with 40–100 units, if an appropriate site can be found. Affordable or senior housing may be possible with financial assistance. Lower median incomes compared to stations that are north of Crystal may make market-rate development more challenging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Small-scale (tens of thousands of square feet) infill retail may have potential. Neighborhood retail including nail salons, dry cleaners, and convenience tenants may be feasible, depending on policy decisions and financial assistance from the city. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Medical/spec office could potentially occupy upper floors of a redevelopment project, or possibly at a site just north of the existing Crystal Medical Building (as a second phase). This development would be smaller scale (tens of thousands of square feet).
Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Development potential is greatly limited by existing residential uses surrounding the area, as well as the fairly new office building east of County Road 81, and a public park at the southwest corner of County Road 81 and Bass Lake Road. » Nearby auto-oriented retail development may be more economically viable in the near-term, and little suitable land is available around the station. 		

TABLE 5 Near-term Development Potential

Near-term (5-Year) Development Potential

There may be limited opportunities for development within the Bass Lake Road Station Area within the first five years after the opening of the METRO Blue Line Extension. Given the challenges associated with redevelopment, financial assistance from the city or other funders may be required to make some or all of these products financially feasible. These development products are summarized in Table 5.

Long-Term (10- to 20-Year) Development Potential

Early investments in the station area have the potential to shift perceptions of Crystal and impact development over the next 10 to 20 years. If early redevelopment projects and large, transformative infrastructure investments such as the light rail line and the reconfiguration of Becker Park are successful, there may be long-term opportunities for additional development in the Station Area. Below is a summary of the types of long-term development that is possible around each corner of the County Road 81 and Bass Lake Road intersection:

- » **Northwest & Northeast Corners** – Development in the long-term will follow the limited near-term development trends described above, unless one or more large property owners decide to redevelop and reposition a major site into transit oriented development. If there is interest in full redevelopment, housing (market-rate apartments, senior apartments, others) with some office and/or retail may become a possibility.
- » **Southeast Corner** – Small existing multifamily development on this corner may have potential to be redeveloped into new multifamily product in the coming decade, similarly to the northern corners.
- » **Southwest Corner** – Becker Park is a 14 acre public park located immediately southwest of the proposed Bass Lake Road station. Development of any portion of the site would require a policy change by the city.

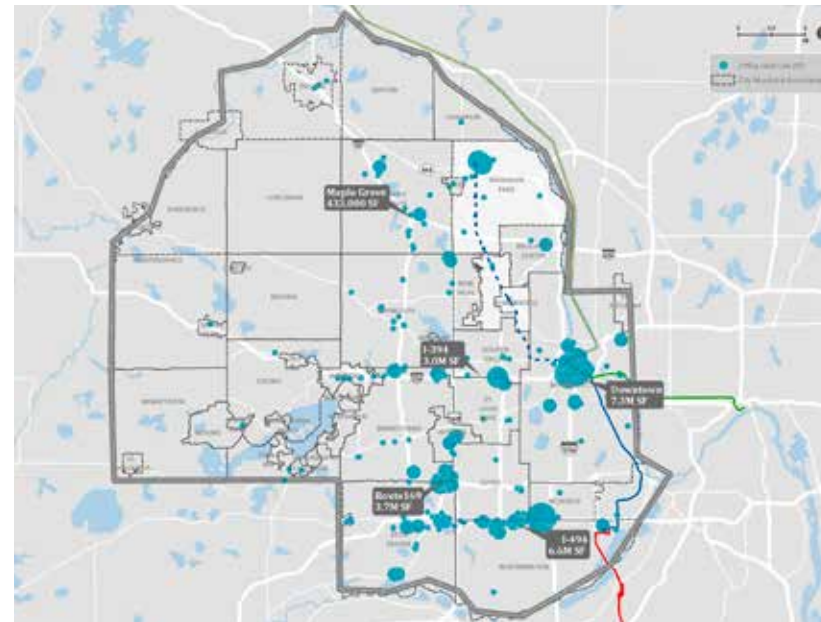


Fig. 6 REGIONAL OFFICE DEVELOPMENT, POST-1990
Source: CoStar, Esri, SB Friedman Development Advisors

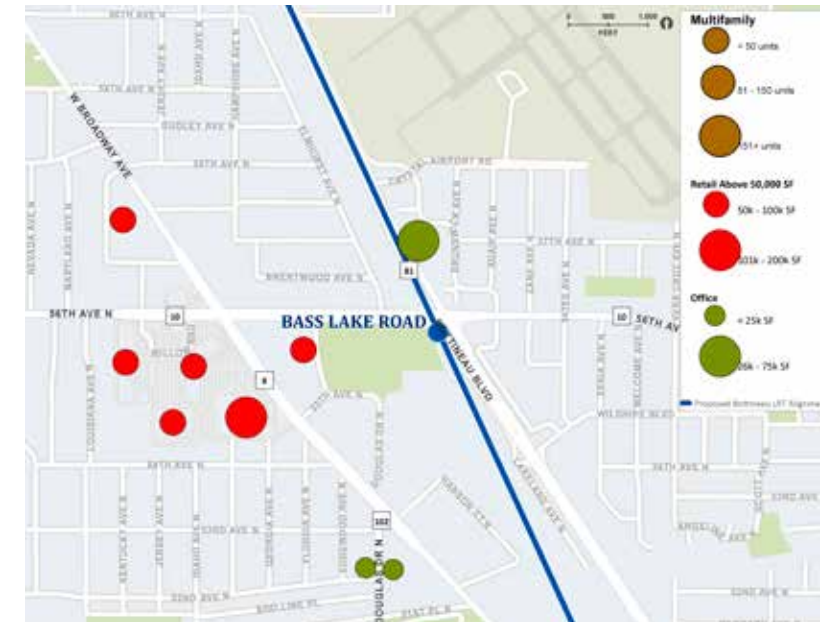


Fig. 7 DEVELOPMENT IN THE BASS LAKE ROAD STATION AREA, POST 1990
Source: CoStar, Esri, SB Friedman

Urban Design Analysis

Looking closely at all of the elements of a place — its “genetic code” — is a key part of understanding that place and unlocking well-reasoned recommendations. In the planning process, this task is accomplished through a series of drawings called UDA X-Rays®. Each x-ray diagram illustrates an individual land use or specific element of the city. Using this technique, patterns become visible that allow designers to better understand the existing circumstances. Approximately a dozen x-rays were prepared for Crystal. Representative examples are highlighted on the following page.

- ★ STATION
- ½-MILE RADIUS
- - - CRYSTAL CITY BOUNDARY
- SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- COMMERCIAL BUILDING
- OFFICE BUILDING
- INDUSTRIAL BUILDING
- INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING
- PUBLIC PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
- RESIDENTIAL LAND
- COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL LAND
- VACANT PROPERTY

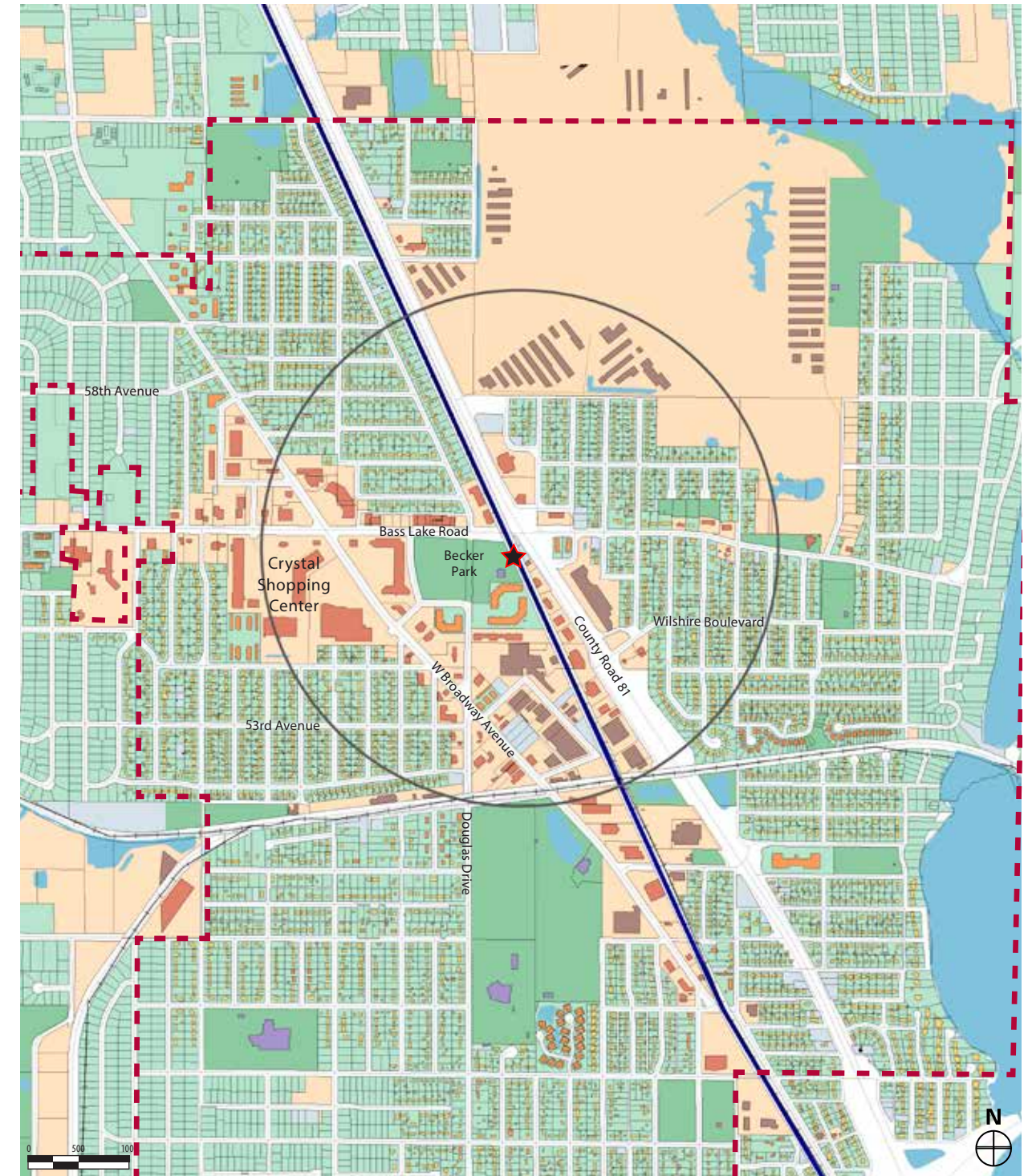


Fig. 8 PORTRAIT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS An illustrative drawing showing the existing development pattern in Crystal.



Fig. 9 **LOCAL STREET PATTERNS** The station area is characterized by a grid of local streets that is interrupted by West Broadway Avenue and two freight rail corridors. These major infrastructure elements have limited crossing points, funneling traffic onto a few crucial arterial streets, such as Bass Lake Road.



Fig. 10 **RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS** Residential uses occupy approximately half of the station area, filling most blocks created by the local street grid. Arterial streets, commercial/industrial land uses, and Becker Park create voids in the pattern.

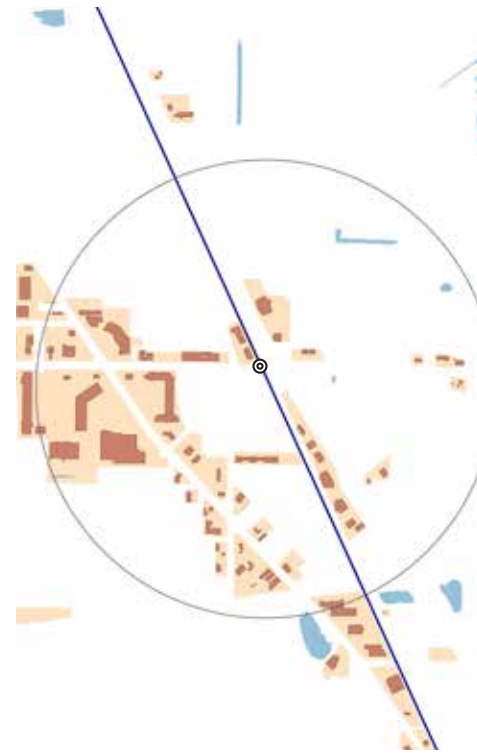


Fig. 11 **COMMERCIAL USES** Commercial uses are primarily concentrated around the intersection of West Broadway Avenue and Bass Lake Road. Shopping centers can be identified by their large building footprints. Secondary commercial uses extend south along West Broadway. County Road 81 is also a secondary commercial address.

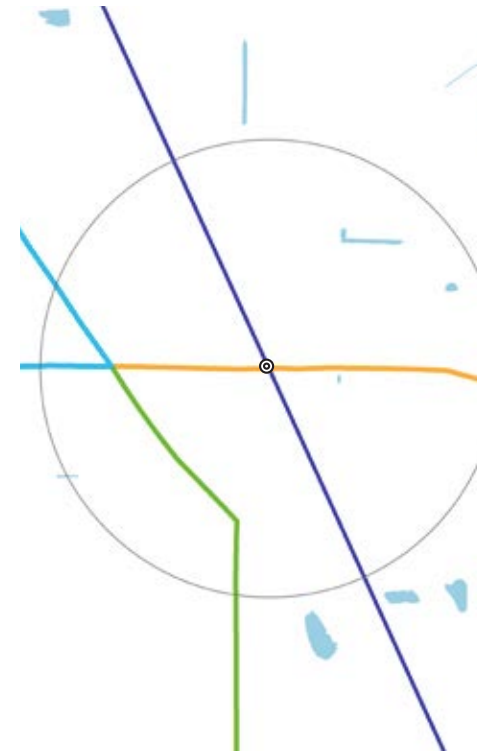


Fig. 12 **TRANSIT** Many existing bus routes serve city neighborhoods. Some of the bus stops are within walking distance from the intersection of Bass Lake Road and County Road 81. Prior to operation of the Blue Line Extension, Metro Transit will work with stakeholders to study how this system should be enhanced to best leverage the proposed LRT station.

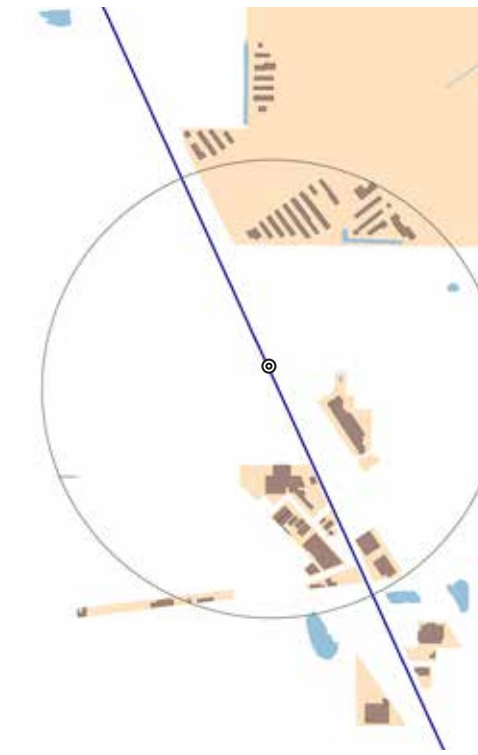


Fig. 13 **INDUSTRIAL USES** Industrial uses are focuses around the intersection of the two rail corridors (south of the LRT station). The freight rail line, warehouses, and manufacturing are the main industrial features. Public transit will share the north/south rail corridor with LRT on the east and cargo on the west.

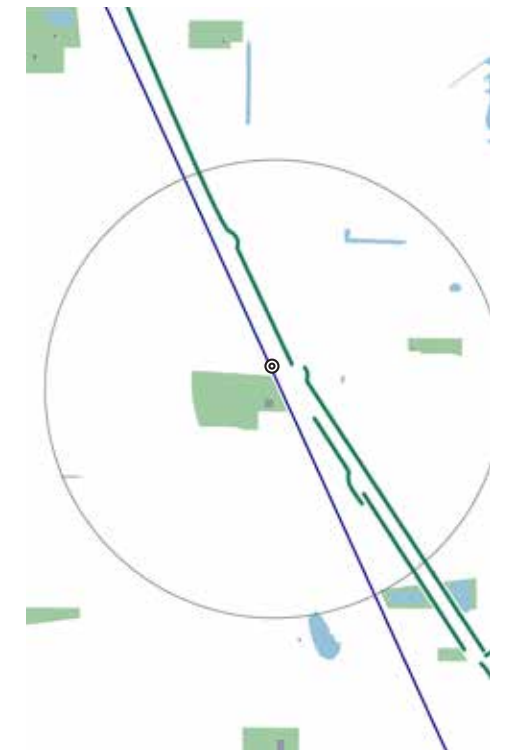


Fig. 14 **PARKS AND INSTITUTIONS** Crystal is a city of parks. One of the largest parks, Becker Park, is adjacent to the light rail platform. Other parks can be seen around the perimeter of the station area.

Land Use

Crystal has a mix of the land uses that one would expect to find in a suburban city: commercial, office, industrial, institutional, residential, and parks. The city is a blend of quiet residential neighborhoods inset between transportation corridors and parks. With its large commercial core, the station area acts as the retail hub for most residents and is seen as the city's downtown.

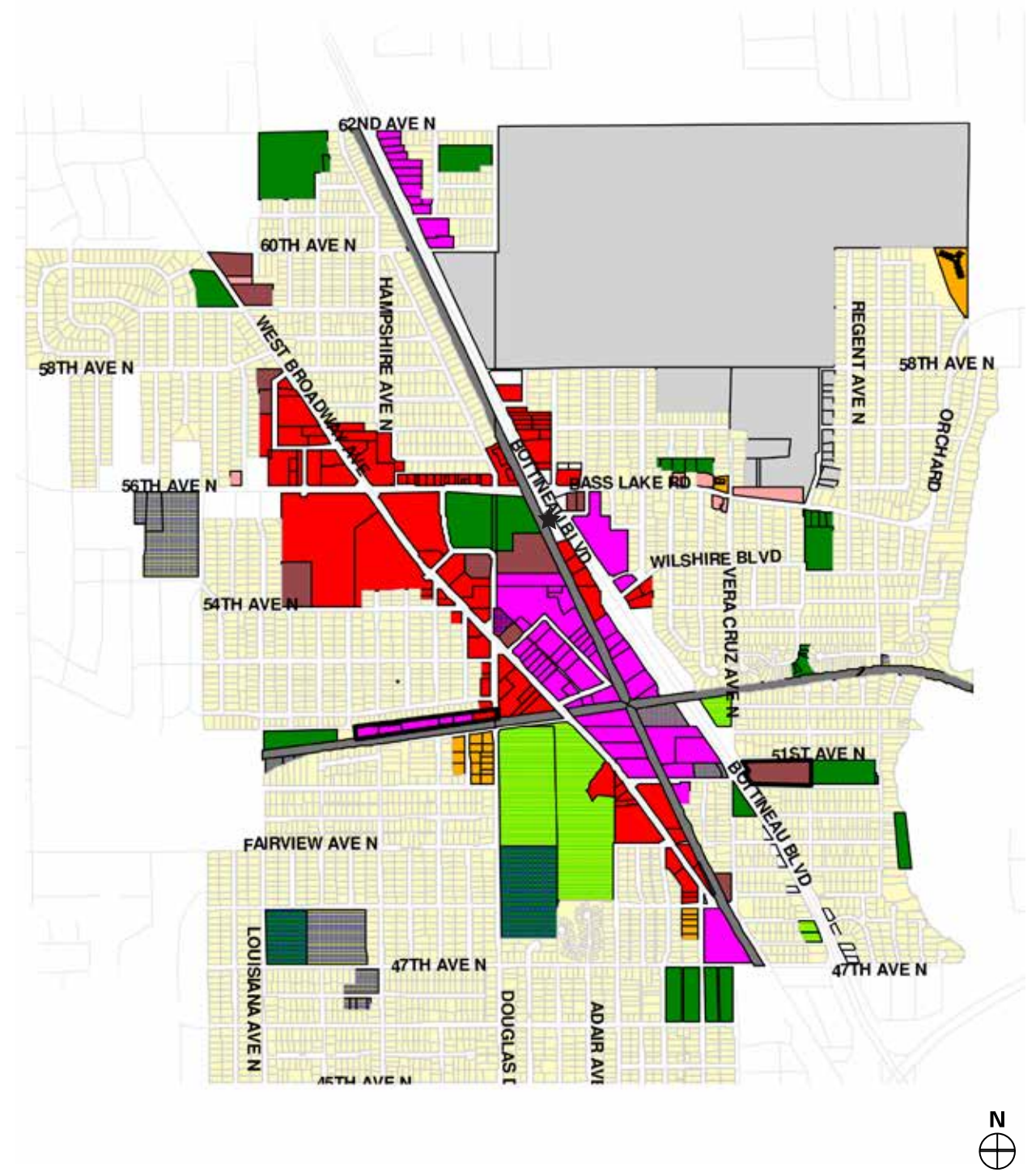
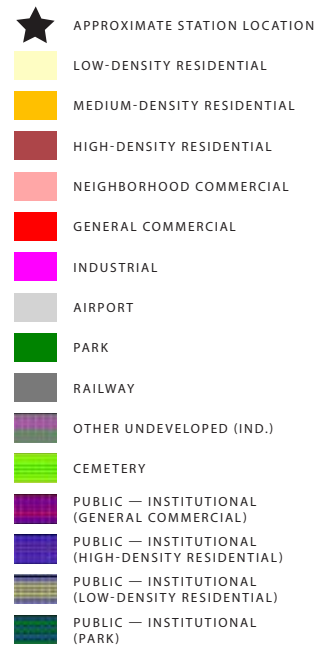


Fig. 15 EXISTING LAND USE PLAN From City of Crystal Comprehensive Plan.

Transportation Networks

American cities are currently experiencing a fundamental shift in the ways residents and visitors elect to get around. An influx of new and improved transportation options, changes in travel behavior (especially among young people and transit reliant populations), and advancements in mobile technology have altered the transportation landscape. We have more options than ever, and this trend is likely to accelerate.

With a new LRT station proposed in Crystal at Bass Lake Road, it is important to look closely at all the supporting transportation networks. Access to the new station for all transit riders, whether by foot, bike, vehicle, bus, or some combination, is an important consideration in the station area plan to help transit riders. These “last mile” connections help people get from their home to the transit stations, or from the station to work, school, shops, or other destinations that lie outside the 10-minute walk area.

The street network is relatively complete and supports good accessibility for vehicles. However, there are segments of the sidewalk system that do not connect. As operation of the METRO Blue Line Extension approaches, Metro Transit will work with stakeholders to address current and future bus routing to connect the new LRT station.

The goal in all cities along the Bottineau LRT is to have layers of complete transportation networks that are seamlessly linked together, making it easy for people to access destinations throughout the region. Built-out systems for pedestrians, bikes, vehicles, and shared-use modes will provide transportation choices that may not be available today. Done with care, these transportation webs can increase ridership, improve quality of life, and become a new driver for economic development.



BIKE SHARE SYSTEM A service in which bicycles are made available for shared use to individuals on a very short-term basis



CAR SHARE A model of car rental where people rent cars for short periods of time, often by the hour



TRANSIT/BUS Buses on Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis



LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT Existing METRO LRT

Pedestrian Network

Providing safe, comfortable access to transit for foot traffic is a central part of making the Bottineau LRT successful. A complete pedestrian network supports increased access to transit, expanded ridership, and community health through physical activity.

The rule of thumb is that people are willing to walk approximately 10 minutes, or roughly a 1/2-mile, on a regular basis to access light rail transit. The area that people can easily walk to within a certain period of time is called a walkshed. Around the Bass Lake Road LRT station, the 10-minute walkshed almost reaches the full 1/2-mile from the station platform due to the rectilinear street pattern, but large commercial parcels and limited access along County Road 81 and across the freight rail corridor prevent consistent walkability (see 10-Minute Walkshed below). The main challenge for walkers is that high traffic volumes and speeds at certain intersections make it very stressful to cross.

The Station Area Plan recommendations build on the City of Crystal's existing sidewalk network, which gives preference to sidewalks on major streets while having few or no sidewalks along residential streets. Priority projects have been identified based on resident input, station access needs, and known gaps in the network. The main points of concern identified by residents and stakeholders for improved pedestrian/bike crossings are primarily concentrated along Bass Lake Road. General recommendations for pedestrian improvements, as well as specific recommendations for these main points of concern, are outlined on the following page.

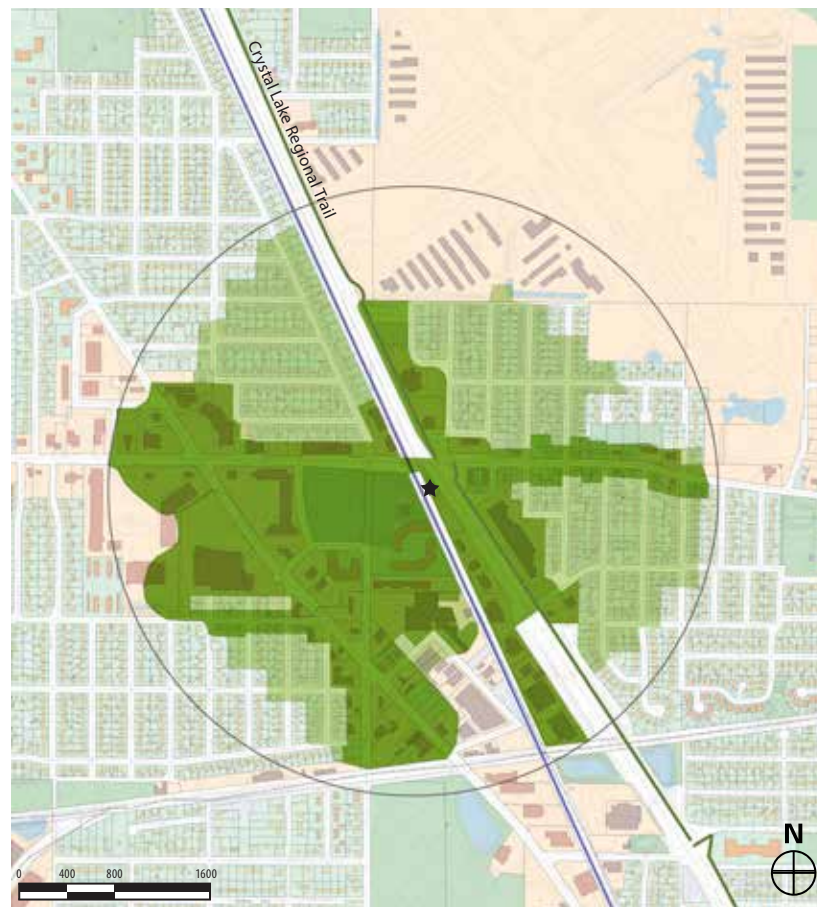


Fig. 16 10-MINUTE WALKSHED

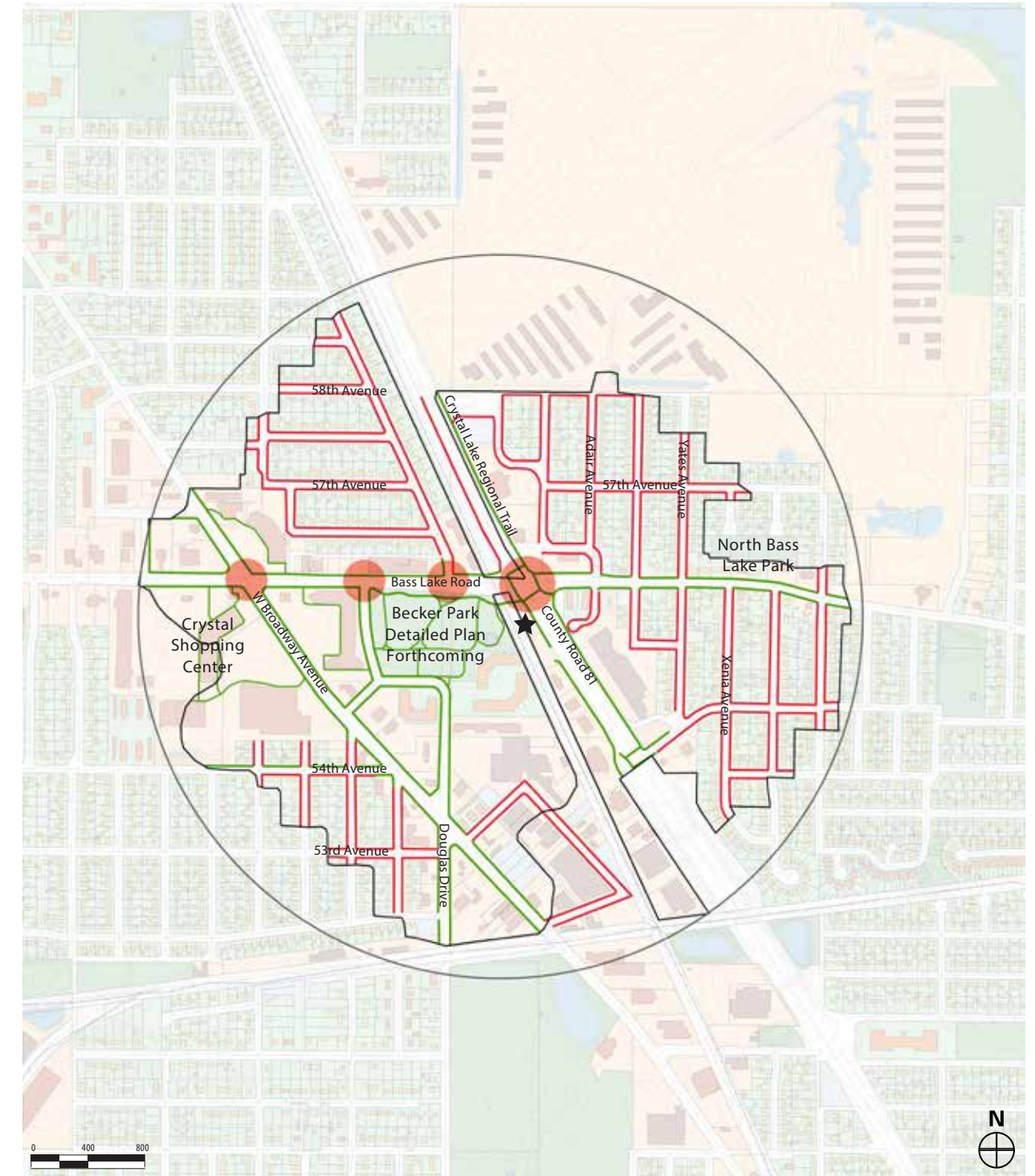


Fig. 17 GAP ANALYSIS Red lines indicate locations without sidewalks, most of which are on secondary residential streets.

Recommendations for Pedestrian Improvements

Much can be done to improve the walking experience without compromising the movement of vehicles. The Station Area Plan recommendations outlined here build on the current City of Crystal sidewalk requirements and are consistent with the Bottineau Bike Study recommendations. Priority areas were pinpointed based on resident input, station access needs, and known gaps in the network.

Some of the most critical pedestrian improvement areas identified by stakeholders during the station area planning process were the intersections along Bass Lake Road. A Promenade is being proposed to improve pedestrian movements along Bass Lake Road and is described in more detail on page 26 of this report. The goal is to create both a strong visual and physical connection for pedestrians between the LRT station and the surrounding businesses by creating a 13- to 15-foot wide sidewalk on both the north and south sides of Bass Lake Road between the intersection with County Road 81 and West Broadway Avenue.

For streets within the station area that currently do not have sidewalks, the recommendation is to consider adding sidewalks to all major streets within the ½-mile radius of the Bass Lake Road station.

Note: Hennepin County will partner with the City of Crystal regarding all proposed changes to County roadways.



LRT Crossing at Bass Lake Road and County Road 81



Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) and Pedestrian Crossing Signage



Wide crosswalk with pedestrian refuge

Improvements at County Road 81 and Bass Lake Road

- » Pedestrian Improvements to be Implemented:
 - › Add stop bar in advance of crosswalk (for visibility)
 - › Add crosswalks at right-turn islands
 - › Add advanced pedestrian/bike signage
 - › Add audible pedestrian signals
 - › Tighten corner radius
 - › Widen white crosswalk markings (min. 10 feet)
 - › Underlay crosswalk markings with a black field so they are more visible
- » Pedestrian Improvements Requiring Further Study:
 - › Add no right turn on red for east-west movement
 - › Add intermediate pedestrian signals/pushbuttons to medians (only when there is sufficient space)
 - › Narrow or remove left turn lanes to create larger refuge area
 - › Add bollards/landscaping in median
 - › Lower speed limit on Bottineau Boulevard (CSAH 81)
 - › Enhance crosswalk markings (raised crosswalk at channelized turns)
 - › Review east-west right turn lanes



Raised crosswalk

Intersection Improvements along Bass Lake Road

- » Develop pedestrian promenades along both the north and south sides of Bass Lake Road, from County Road 81 to West Broadway
- » Add a crossing at Elmhurst with white pavement marking and a stop bar in advance of the crosswalk



Stop bars

Improvements to City Streets

- » Add sidewalks to Elmhurst Avenue to connect Station Area redevelopment north of Bass Lake Road to the station and pedestrian promenade
- » Widen white crosswalk markings (minimum 10 feet)
- » Evaluate stop bars in advance of crosswalk (for visibility)
- » Provide pedestrian and bike crossing signage
- » Rapid flashing beacons
- » Raised crosswalks

County Road 81

The main challenge for people walking or riding a bike is that high traffic volumes and speeds make County Road 81 uncomfortable to cross. This is especially true at Bass Lake Road where the posted speed limit changes from 45 mph south of Bass Lake Road to 55 mph north of Bass Lake Road. In addition, for people needing to cross kitty-corner, they may need to navigate as many as fifteen lanes of traffic, and cars have been noted to stop in the crosswalks impeding movement.

Much can be done to improve the walking experience without compromising the movement of vehicles. A list of proposed pedestrian and bicycle improvements at County Road 81 is included on the previous page and will require further study to determine what is feasible and can best address the challenges of this intersection.

Beyond improving the crosswalks, a grade-separated pedestrian bridge option was requested by City Council members and numerous residents. In response, the Blue Line Extension Project Office has tested options for a pedestrian bridge along the south side of the intersection. The City Council received a presentation of options for grade separated improvements on January 25, 2016. Additional design of a grade separated crossing will continue to be led by the Blue Line Extension Project Office.



INTERSECTION OF BASS LAKE ROAD AND COUNTY ROAD 81



Fig. 18 AERIAL OF THE INTERSECTION OF BASS LAKE ROAD AND COUNTY ROAD 81

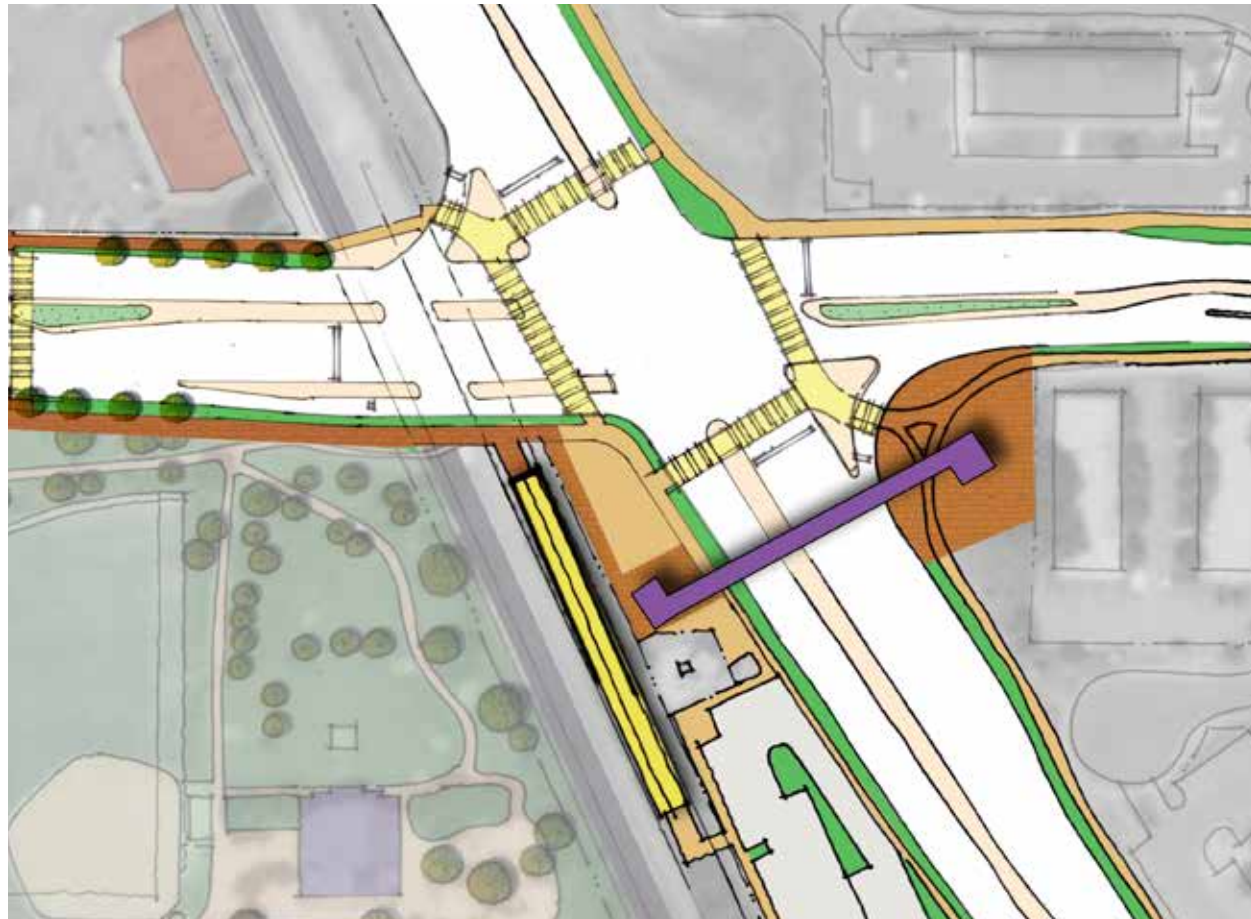


Fig. 19 PLAN OF CONCEPT PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE



PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE EXAMPLE



3-D ILLUSTRATION Proposed intersection improvements.



Fig. 20 PROPOSED INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

Bicycle Network

Providing safe and comfortable bike access to the LRT is important because it can improve the overall quality of the transit experience, extend the reach of the transit network, increase ridership, and provide opportunities for daily physical activity. The Bottineau Bike Study was conducted in parallel with this Station Area Plan and looked at bicycle access and circulation in and around station areas, as well as bike parking and corridor long bicycle travel. A summary of those results is presented below. A summary of the Bottineau Bike Study with a focus on Crystal is attached as an Appendix. The full report is available at www.hennepin.us/bottineau.

An average person biking is willing to ride 20 minutes, or approximately three miles on flat ground, to access an LRT station. The City of Crystal features a grid of neighborhood streets divided by major avenues spaced approximately one mile apart. Twin Lake provides a natural barrier to the east of the city, while Crystal Airport creates a land use gap in the street network leaving a large area with no connections. County Road 81, traveling diagonally north-south across the grid creates another barrier, along with West Broadway, the freight railroad corridor north of 52nd Avenue, and the planned LRT transitway. Regional bicycling connections are provided by the Crystal Lake Regional Trail, connecting south to Robbinsdale and east to the Twin Lakes Regional Trail. Completed sections of the Bassett Creek Regional Trail also provide limited connectivity beyond Crystal. On-street bicycle facilities, such as the bicycle lanes on Douglas Drive, feature limited connectivity with no connections across West Broadway or County Road 81.



The existing mixed-use trail that runs through Becker Park



Winnetka Avenue shared lane for bicycles and parking



Bicyclist crossing Bass Lake Road at West Broadway Avenue



Intersection of Bass Lake Road and West Broadway Avenue

Priority recommendations of the Bottineau Bike study include:

- » Multi-use trail on the south side of Bass Lake Road, connecting existing trails west of Minnesota State Highway 169 with the Bass Lake Road LRT station and the existing Crystal Lake Regional Trail.
- » Bike lanes on Sherburne Avenue between Douglas Drive and Bass Lake Road, providing a direct connection between the LRT station, planned trails and bike lanes on West Broadway, and the existing bike lanes on Douglas Drive.
- » Bike lanes on 58th Avenue, Orchard Avenue, and Bass Lake Road connecting the Bass Lake Road LRT station with planned trails on County Road 81. This corridor is an important connection to the east of the transitway where Twin Lake and the Crystal Airport create barriers in the street network. Similarly, limited east-west crossings of County Road 81 make this an important bicycle connection across Crystal.
- » Combination of a trail, buffered bike lane, and bike lane along West Broadway connecting Brooklyn Park to Crystal and downtown Robbinsdale. This route provides local bicycle connections and an alternate on-street route to the Crystal Lake Regional Trail.
- » A trail on 36th Avenue and bike lanes on 42nd Avenue, connecting southern sections of Crystal with the Robbinsdale LRT station, the Bassett Creek Regional Trail, and the proposed low-stress route on the Crystal Lake Regional Trail and in Sohacki Park. Further study is needed to determine trail feasibility of 36th Avenue and the type of bike facility on 42nd Avenue.
- » Bike boulevards on Vera Cruz, 48th Avenue, and Adair Avenue to connect residents to the community center/aquatic center at Josh Grogan Park.



This is a bicycle boulevard in Portland, OR. Pavement markings indicate that the roadway is a shared street.



Bicycle boulevards can include treatments like this diverter that encourages drivers to take other routes.



This is a bike boulevard on 17th Avenue South in Minneapolis. The neighborhood roundabout helps slow traffic, making the street more comfortable for people biking. There are bicycle boulevards proposed on Elmhurst Avenue and 62nd Street, as well as parts of Vera Cruz and Adair Avenues.



This is a multi-use trail in Hopkins, MN. Multi-use trails are proposed along Bass Lake Road and 36th Avenue.



Bicycle lane on Plymouth Avenue in Minneapolis. Bike lanes are recommended on Douglas Drive, West Broadway, and Orchard Avenue in Crystal.

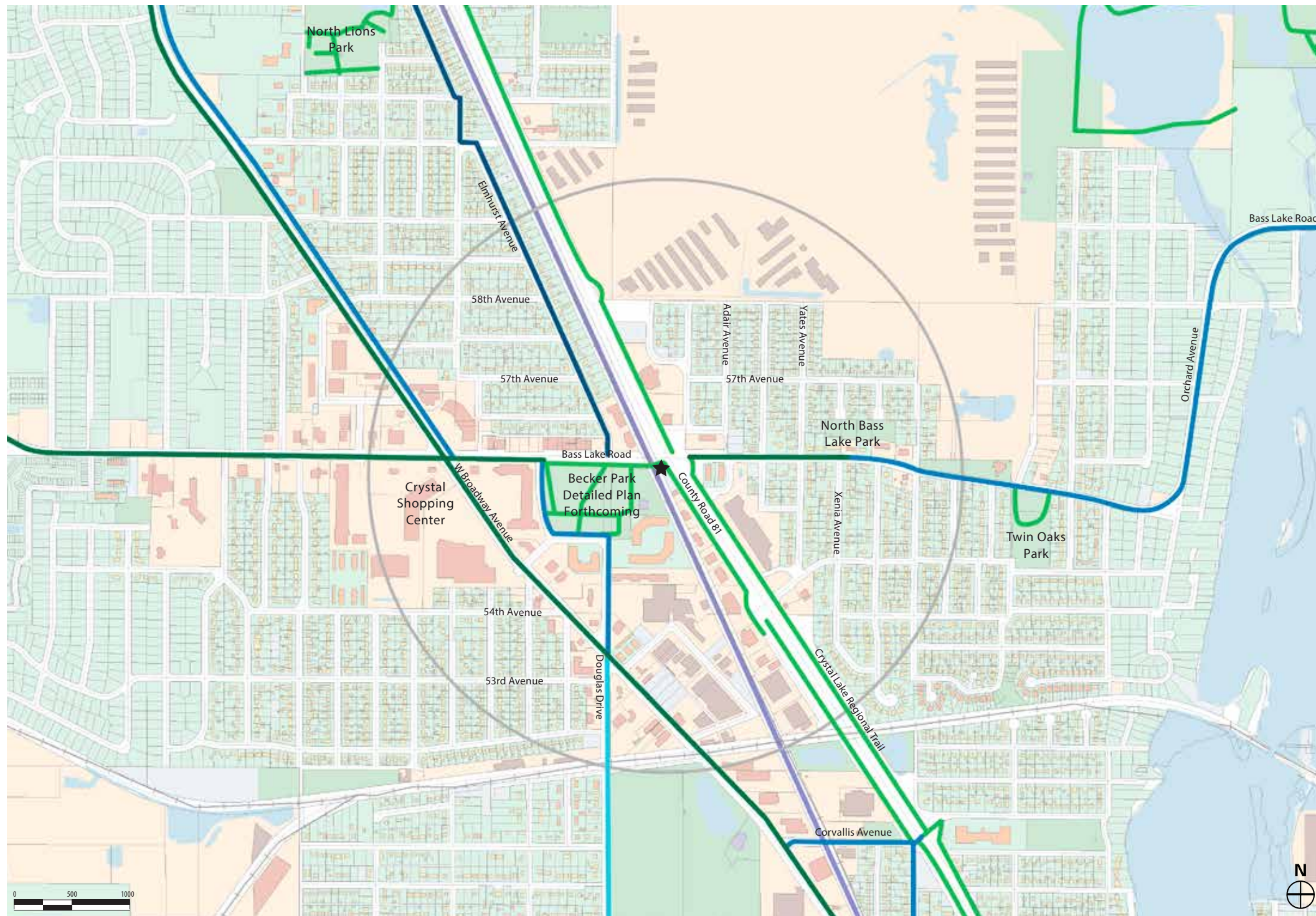


Fig. 21 PROPOSED BIKE ROUTES

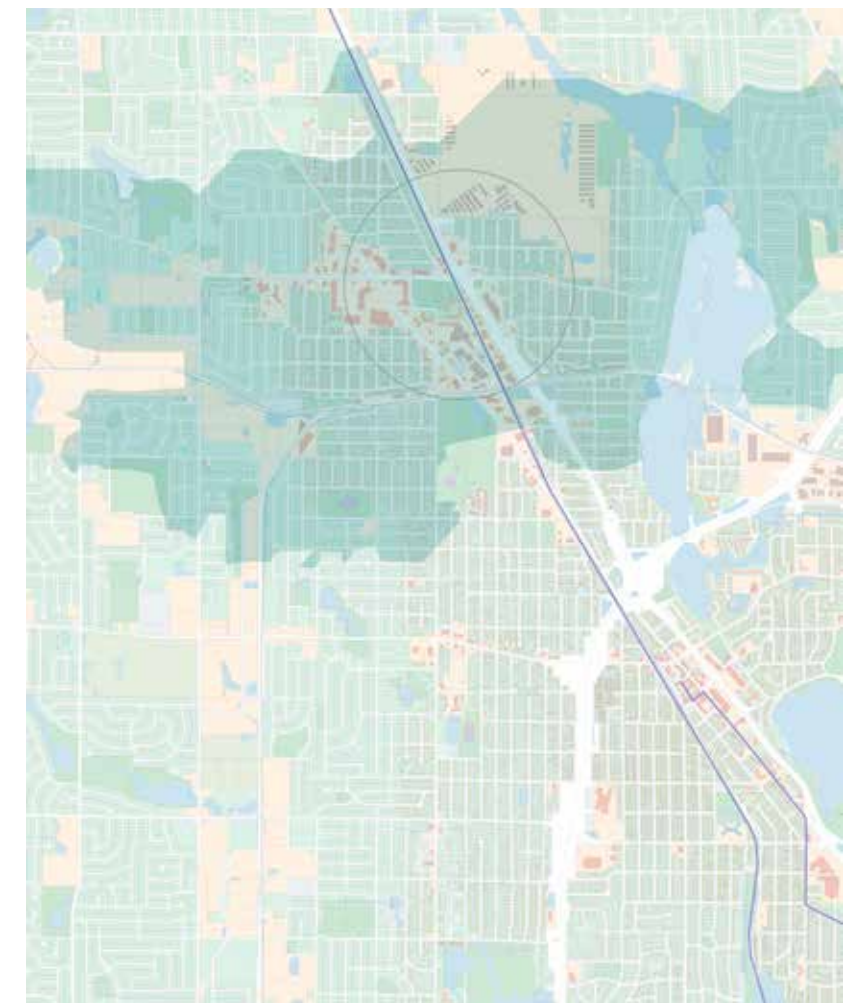


Fig. 22 20-MINUTE BIKESHED MAP

- ★ APPROXIMATE STATION LOCATION
- EXISTING SHARED-USE TRAIL
- PROPOSED SHARED-USE TRAIL
- EXISTING ON-STREET BIKE LANE
- PROPOSED ON-STREET BIKE LANE
- 20-MINUTE BIKESHED
- LIGHT RAIL CORRIDOR

Shared-Use Network

Shared-use mobility refers to the wide range of transportation systems that are shared by many users, rather than owned by an individual, and include traditional public transportation, like buses and LRT, as well as taxis, shuttles, bikesharing, carsharing, and other options. Metro Transit’s regional bus and light rail transit system is the foundation, and backbone, of our region’s shared-use mobility network. As a system available to the general public, it represents one of the original forms of shared-use mobility. Equally important are the wide range of existing and newer shared-use transportation options that have the ability to extend the reach of transit to make the “last mile” connections.

The Bottineau LRT will be a new transit highway through the regional transit system. The design features of this world-class asset have been well documented. Metro Transit’s bus service is already extensive within Crystal (see existing Route map). At the present time the agency is studying route modifications that will best leverage the light rail extension. Primary bus service along Bass Lake Road will remain.

Beyond public transit and the pedestrian and bike network, a variety of other options may be used by customers to get between the station and their final destination.



BIKESHARE



LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT



METRO TRANSIT

Small-scale, shared-use options include:

- » Taxis and limos
- » Jitneys (unlicensed taxis that serve areas where taxis do not normally go)
- » Shuttles, including employer sponsored shuttles
- » Bikesharing (provides members access to bikes)
- » Carsharing (provides members with access to vehicles)
- » Ridesourcing (online platforms connect passengers with drivers)
- » Ridesharing (carpooling and vanpooling)

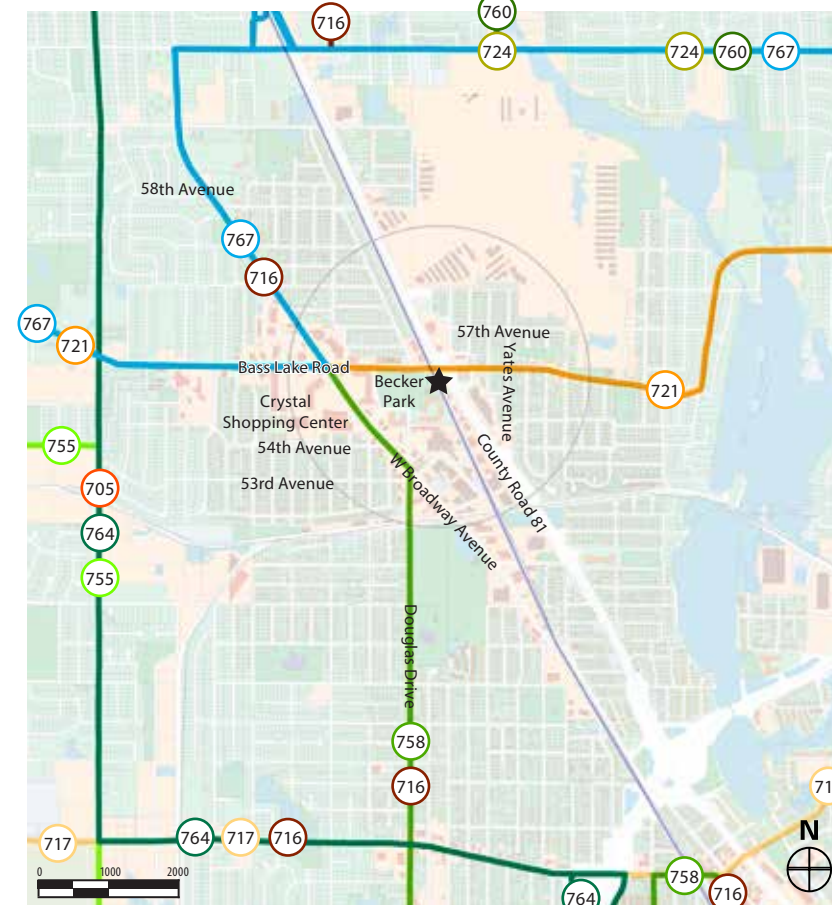


Fig. 23 EXISTING TRANSIT ROUTES

Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan

BASS LAKE ROAD STATION AREA PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES	
» Placemaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Create a welcoming sense of arrival to the community from the station › Reimagine Becker Park › Convert Bass Lake Road from just an arterial into a compelling place › Assist in the densification of shopping centers
» Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Engage residents in future decisions about Becker Park › Connect all modes of transportation to the light rail station › Work to eliminate conflicts between pedestrians, bikes, and cars at County Road 81 › Encourage pedestrian and bike friendly crosswalks › Create walkable and bikeable streets
» Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Take advantage of compact building design and reduced parking requirements within a ½-mile radius of stations › Allow for targeted mixing of land uses › Identify long-range opportunity sites › Remove hurdles to economic development

TABLE 6 Guiding Principles

The planning area for the Bass Lake Road Station Area is defined as the area within a ½-mile radius of the proposed light rail platform. The Station Area Plan addresses connections and access to the station for all modes of transportation, future land use implications, and placemaking — a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design, and management of beautiful public spaces. The principles of transit oriented development (TOD) underpin all station area planning. TOD areas have a mix of residential and commercial uses designed to maximize access to public transit and to encourage transit ridership. Specific recommendations for the Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan are identified on the following pages.

Bass Lake Road between County Road 81 and West Broadway is viewed as the downtown of Crystal. Community stakeholders saw an opportunity to reinforce this identity in the Station Area by incorporating more pedestrian access along Bass Lake Road and adding mixed-use buildings that would bring retail and residential closer to the station.

The city, Hennepin County, stakeholders, and residents are eager to see the retail center and Becker Park become improved versions of what they are today — a unique commercial center and civic park surrounded by desirable residential neighborhoods. Community stakeholders repeatedly emphasized the importance of maintaining the distinctive mix of uses, (open space, retail, residential, educational, office, etc.) while leveraging the LRT station as a driver of positive change. Light rail and associated infrastructure improvements should catalyze market potential, and assist in upgrading the image of the corridor.

Public improvements will fall into several categories, each addressing location-specific needs. These improvements will enhance pedestrian and bike infrastructure, support the redevelopment of underutilized property, and create a more attractive public

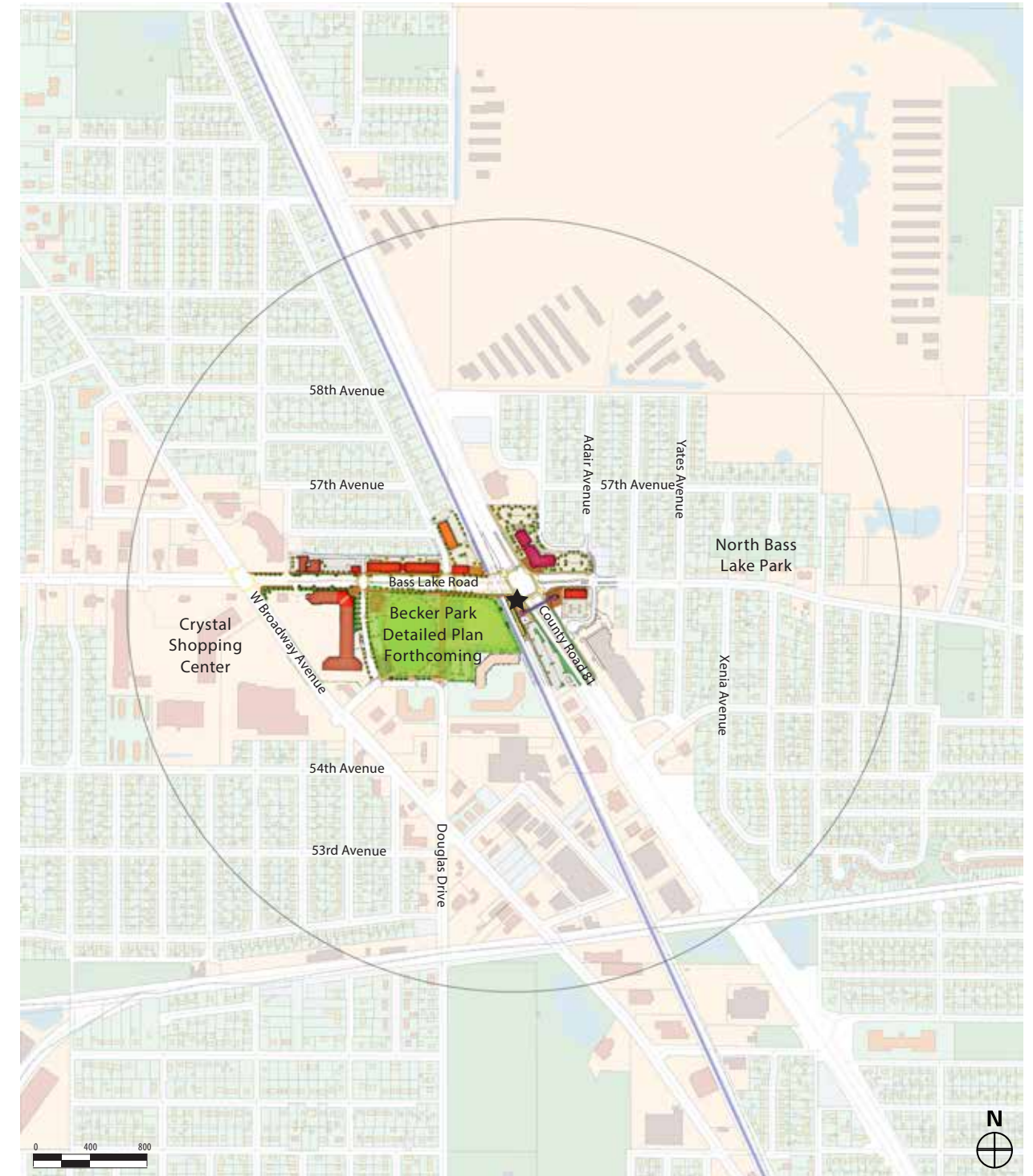


Fig. 24 ILLUSTRATIVE STATION AREA PLAN Light rail can be a catalyst for transit oriented development initiatives in and around the station area. This image demonstrates the possible re-development that could occur in the long-term around the Bass Lake Road LRT station.

realm. The plan also includes specific recommendations for long-term catalyst projects within the study area.

Placemaking and Cultural Diversity

1. Public spaces are often where people gather and what defines a community. 2. Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to planning, design, and management of beautiful public spaces, which builds upon and enhances a community's assets and potential. The cities along the Bottineau LRT are home to a variety of cultural and ethnic groups. Community and economic development efforts should support a range of businesses, services, and places that embrace and support the needs and preferences of the corridor's varied and changing population demographics.

Placemaking is planning which focuses on building upon and enhancing a community's assets in order to promote a pride of place and the well-being of that community and its members. Creating and maintaining an authentic sense of place is especially important at a time when individuals and families are increasingly choosing a great place to live over most other factors, including proximity to employment.

The Bass Lake Road Station Area already has an advantage with its distinctive commercial core and 12-acre Becker Park. It also has a disadvantage in that it is isolated from the primary activity areas. As was discussed in detail on the preceding pages, the Bass Lake Road Promenade, reimagined Becker Park, and the development of opportunity sites in a strong mixed-use downtown for Crystal all offer unique opportunities for authentic placemaking. Strategies for placemaking, promoting cultural diversity, and connecting the station area to social nodes may include widening sidewalks, planting trees, enhancing streetscape, installing street furniture such as benches that encourages all people to spend time, extending pedestrian-scale lighting, offering smaller retail space or pop-up opportunities for new creative businesses, incorporating public art, and highlighting iconic buildings and signage.



CRYSTAL SIGNAGE The LRT station will create a new entrance into the community — distinctive signage can help create a sense of pride and place for Crystal.



RESIDENTIAL STREETS Crystal has strong residential neighborhoods. The areas around the station will become even more desirable places for people to live.



RAIL CORRIDOR The area along the rail will be reconfigured and landscaped. Views from the station into Becker Park will create a vision for riders of Crystal as a destination.



PARK BUILDING The building in Becker Park is used for concerts and events — a new facility would be an opportunity for an iconic, functional building that all members of the community identify with the place.



BECKER PARK The park is already a well-loved open space in the city, and presents an opportunity to enhance the uses and character of the park to be better utilized by all members of the community and throughout the year.

Opportunity Sites

Drawing from community input, the city and the consultant team identified a series of near- and long-term opportunity sites that have redevelopment potential under the right set of circumstances. These properties are currently home to either commercial or multi-family uses. Decisions to participate in redevelopment would be made by individual property owners based on market opportunity.

The team considered several criteria when identifying opportunity sites — proximity to the proposed LRT station, existing land use, underutilized lots, trends in market rates, and suitability for future mixed-use. For example, sites with excess surface parking, critical mass, or a location on the west side of County Road 81 would be ideal candidates for redevelopment.

In most cases intensification of use is permitted today but current market conditions do not support redevelopment at this time. Current land uses support Neighborhood Commercial, adjacent to residential areas. The addition of the Bottineau LRT station, the evolving marketplace, and building obsolescence will eventually create conditions that will support redevelopment. Additional incentives for TOD such as reduced parking ratios, increased building coverage, increased building heights, or reduced setbacks would accelerate opportunities for mixed-use development.

Near-term Open Space Initiatives:

- » Bass Lake Road Promenade
- » Becker Park

Potential Long-term Redevelopment Opportunities:

- 1 Daycare/Liquor Store
- 2 Office Building/County Parcel/Used Car Lot
- 3 Apartment Complex
- 4 North side of Bass Lake Road

OPPORTUNITY SITE CRITERIA	
» Proximity and walkability to the proposed LRT station	
» Existing land use	
» Underutilized property (parking lots, storage facilities, etc.)	
» Market rents and trends	
» Suitability for transit oriented uses such as mixed-use and multi-family residential	

- ★ APPROXIMATE STATION LOCATION
- STATION AREA/10-MINUTE WALKSHED
- LRT STATION SITE
- EXISTING PARK
- OPPORTUNITY SITE
- FUTURE OPPORTUNITY SITE
- LIGHT RAIL CORRIDOR

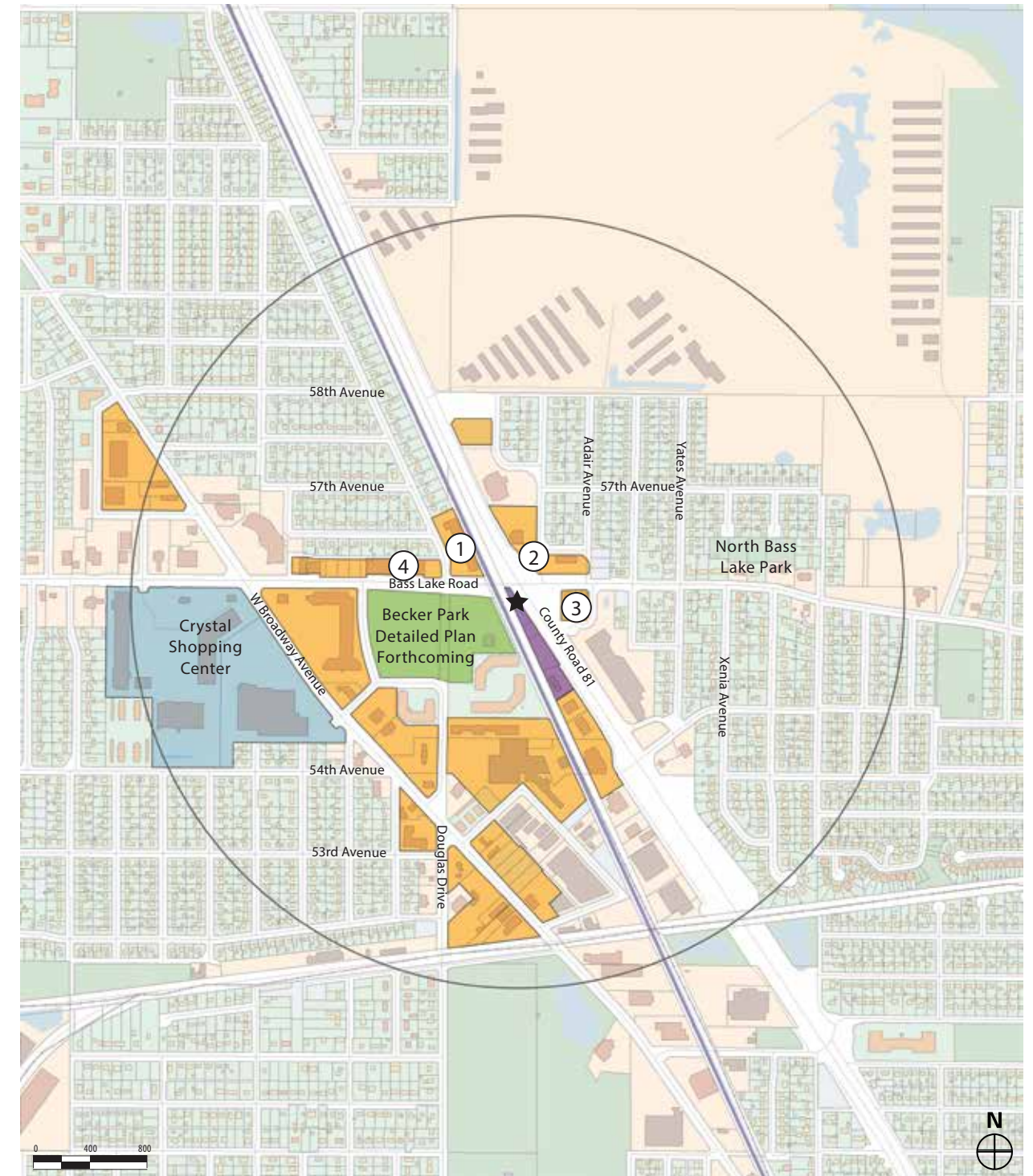


Fig. 25 OPPORTUNITY SITES IN PROXIMITY TO PROPOSED LRT STATION

Bass Lake Road Promenade

Bass Lake Road (County Road 10) is the main connection between the LRT station and Crystal's commercial core. During its heyday, this area was Crystal's commercial main street, but few indications of this remain. It currently is characterized by dated streetscapes along the north edge and a wide berm at Becker Park. A largely forgotten median runs down the middle. Parking is accommodated in off-street lots. Given its strategic location, the introduction of light rail will require Bass Lake Road to strike a better balance between moving vehicles and the accommodation of foot and bike traffic.

The Station Area Plan calls for constructing a 12-foot wide multi-use path on the south side of Bass Lake Road between the station platform and W. Broadway Avenue. This pedestrian and bike spine will funnel transit users from the commercial area and the park to and from the new station, increasing safety by allowing users to be seen by passing motorists. A similar treatment is proposed along the north side of the street, with a new 16-foot wide sidewalk running in front of existing shops and parking lots. On-street parking is proposed on both sides of the street in support of retail and park uses.

Additional improvements along Bass Lake Road will include streetscape enhancements (such as pavers, street trees, furniture, lighting, and room for outdoor dining) that are oriented to pedestrians rather than cars. Facade upgrades to existing tired storefronts are also recommended along with enhancing the pedestrian connection through the Crystal Gallery shopping center. The creation of on-street parking is key to creating the correct dimension for pedestrians on both sides of the street. As reimagined, the improved street will be an animated pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly environment.



Bass Lake Road existing conditions



Existing commercial parcels



Existing Crystal Gallery Mall



Existing conditions along the north side of Bass Lake Road

The Bass Lake Road Promenade is a significant enhancement to Crystal with or without the light rail station in place and was received enthusiastically by community members who participated in public meetings. The next logical step will be to study the feasibility and cost of upgrading streetscapes and adding on-street parking.



BASS LAKE ROAD EXISTING CONDITION



BASS LAKE ROAD PROMENADE A new civic place in Crystal



Fig. 26 CONCEPTUAL PLAN OF BASS LAKE ROAD PROMENADE



Fig. 27 BASS LAKE ROAD Areas of pedestrian friction



Fig. 28 BASS LAKE ROAD PROMENADE Clarify and improve pedestrian connections

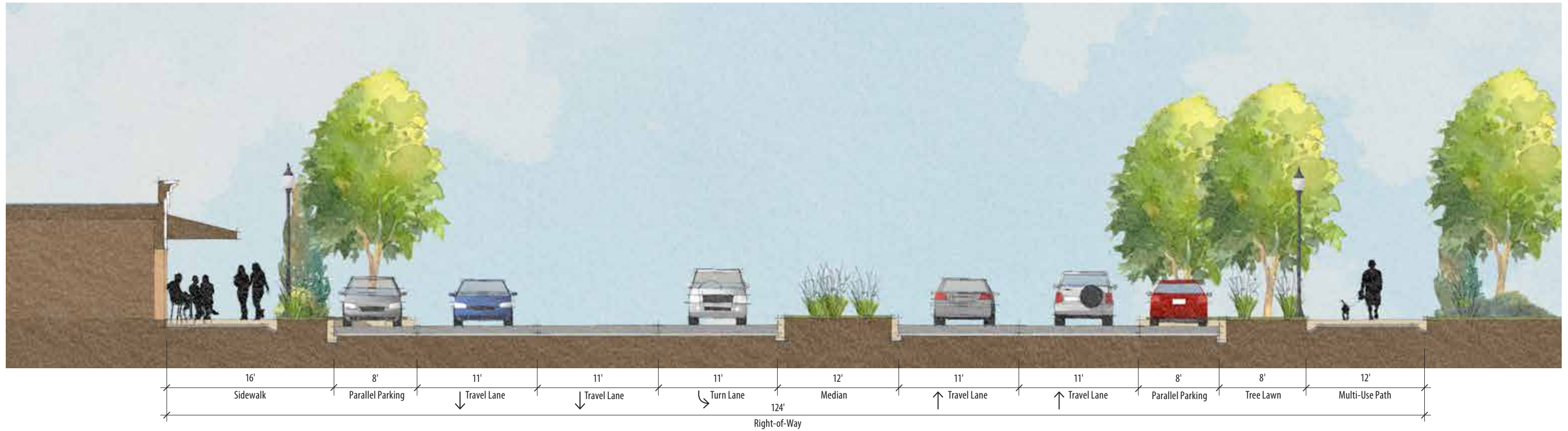


Fig. 29 BASS LAKE ROAD PROPOSED STREET SECTION A-A Pedestrian upgrades and new on-street parking help to create a nice experience for residents.

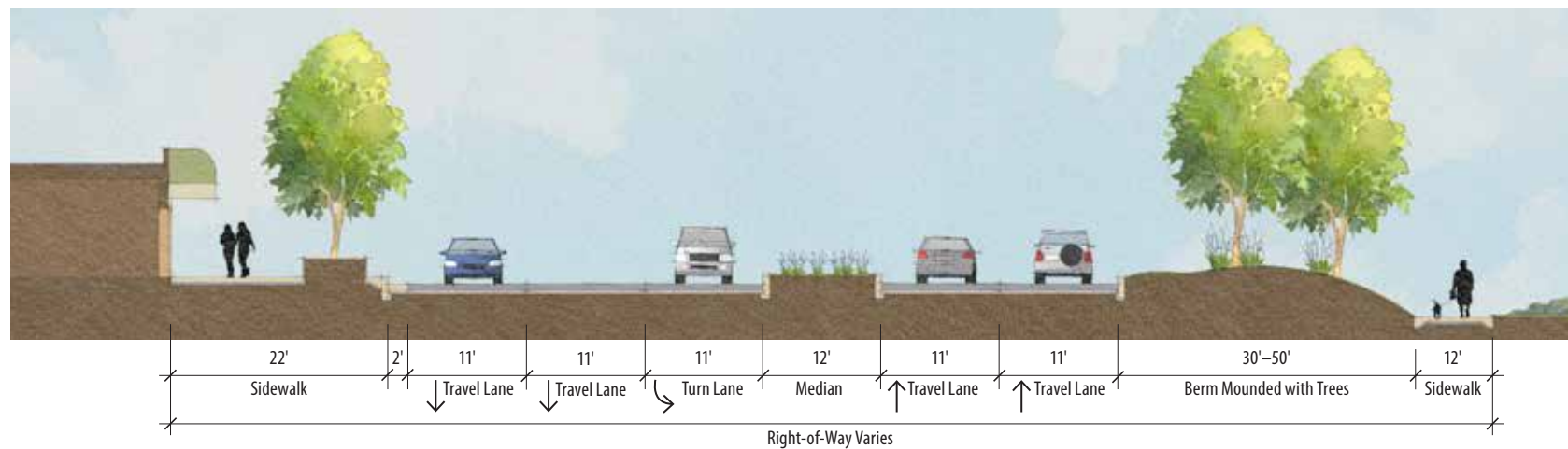


Fig. 30 BASS LAKE ROAD EXISTING STREET SECTION Dated streetscapes and disconnected park sidewalk contribute to a pedestrian-unfriendly street.



Fig. 31 STREET SECTION A-A LOCATION THROUGH PROPOSED PLAN

Becker Park

Becker Park is a source of great community pride. This was evident throughout the public engagement process. It is home to the Crystal Frolics, an annual festival and softball tournament. The 12.4-acre park is also the site of concerts, court sports, and other forms of both active and passive recreation. In January 2016, based on feedback from the Station Area Planning process, the city decided to initiate a separate detailed planning process for Becker Park. This city-led process will engage both residents and commission members to determine what changes, if any, should be made. The Becker Park planning process will create a long-term vision for the park that is useful, feasible, and realistic, but does not downsize the park.

The following pages document the planning ideas that framed the City Council decision to take the next step. None of these plans will be the final plan — they are simply included as a benchmark for community discussion. The three alternatives that emerged from the November planning workshop include:

- 1 The Light Touch Plan
- 2 The Park Reimagined
- 3 The Main Street Plan



Becker Park existing open space



Becker Park existing fields



Becker Park existing trail



Becker Park existing conditions

BECKER PARK

STRENGTHS

- » Green space for community
- » Beautifully maintained
- » Venue for fundraising/frolics

CONCERNS

- » No eyes-on-the-park
- » Single-purpose facilities
- » Seasonal use in a place with year-round activity
- » Security issues and loitering
- » Hurts the retail by using private parking

TABLE 7 SWOT Analysis

THE LIGHT TOUCH PLAN

This alternative proposes to keep the park largely as it is today. The only change would be to overlay the Bass Lake Road Promenade concept over the park, creating a more direct link between the light rail station and downtown. This approach improves security by increasing visibility into the park.

Key features of this plan include:

- » Park remains the same size
- » Park elements remain in their same location
- » Removes berms/mounding along Bass Lake Road to improve visibility and safety
- » Creates a promenade along the north edge of the park, connecting the station to downtown



Fig. 32 THE LIGHT TOUCH PLAN Multi-use path along the north edge improves connectivity.

LIGHT TOUCH PARK			
Use		Acreage (ac)	Percentage (%)
	Park	12.4	100
	Civic Park	2.0	16
	Recreational Park	10.4	84
	Development	0	0
	Street	0	0
Total		12.4	100

TABLE 8 Light Touch Plan Development Quantities



Fig. 33 LIGHT TOUCH USE DIAGRAM



BASS LAKE ROAD STATION AERIAL WITH THE LIGHT TOUCH PLAN View looking Southwest

THE PARK REIMAGINED PLAN

This option is a redevelopment alternative that keeps the park at 12.4 acres, but trades one softball field for a Great Lawn and associated uses. The remaining softball field and all courts have been reorganized and consolidated in the east part of the park. A central pedestrian connection, called The Stroll, that aligns with Douglas Drive helps define this area. The biggest change is the introduction of a spacious oval lawn as an organizing element for the playground, park building, stage, and park restaurant. This balances space for sports and civic uses, and is a useful feature given the park's location near downtown Crystal.

Key features of this plan include:

- » Mixes active and passive uses
- » Provides a wide pedestrian link (The Stroll in line with Douglas Drive) with special paving for pedestrians and bicyclists
- » The Stroll could be a space for Frolics vendors, large events, or weekly markets
- » Groups the active recreation uses east of The Stroll
- » Retains one championship ball field adjacent to the LRT station
- » Creates a Civic Park with uses for all west of The Stroll
- » Introduces a Great Lawn for informal recreation, picnics, concerts, a skating rink, and other community events
- » Relocates playground and community facility to a more visible and functional location (along 55th Avenue)
- » Creates a special restaurant in the Park with cafe seating, opening up to the Great Lawn.
- » Creates a promenade along the north edge of the park, connecting the station to downtown



Fig. 34 ILLUSTRATIVE PARK REIMAGINED PLAN

THE PARK REIMAGINED			
Use		Acreage (ac)	Percentage (%)
	Park	12.4	100
	Civic Park	7.4	60
	Recreational Park	5.0	40
	Development	0	0
	Street	0	0
Total		12.4	100

TABLE 9 The Park Re-imagined Development Quantities



Fig. 35 THE PARK RE-IMAGINED USE DIAGRAM



BASS LAKE ROAD STATION AERIAL WITH THE PARK REIMAGINED View looking Southwest

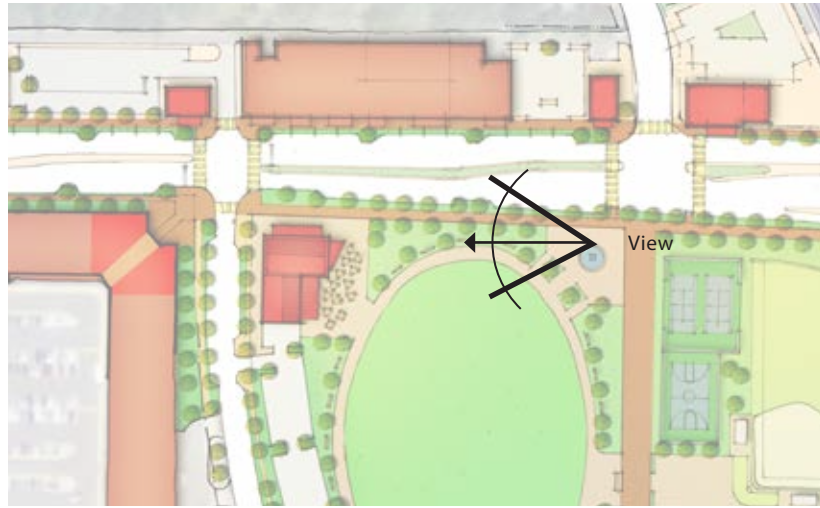


Fig. 36 PERSPECTIVE LOCATING PLAN



PARK REIMAGINED PLAN PERSPECTIVE

The Stroll



Fig. 37 PLAN DETAIL AND EXAMPLE IMAGES FOR THE STROLL



PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY EXAMPLE



PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY EXAMPLE

Ideas for Activities in Becker Park



POP-UP RETAIL



PARK CAFE



PUBLIC EVENTS AND ENTERTAINMENT



PLAY AREAS



PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS AND POP-UP CAFES



PARK CAFE



SPLASH PADS AND WATER PLAY AREAS

THE MAIN STREET PLAN

This alternative could dedicate up to 4 acres (a little less than a third of the existing park) to future economic development and a one-way park street. One block of development, accommodating a mix of retail and residential uses, would occupy the corner at Bass Lake Road and Sherburne Avenue. The balance of the park would then be reconfigured in a way very similar to the Park Reimagined alternative. However, the Great Lawn is smaller in this iteration.

Key features of this plan include:

- » Restores/recreates a Main Street for Crystal along Bass Lake Road
- » Encourages improvements to the existing buildings along the north side of the street
- » Introduces new retail frontage along the south side of the street to create a face-to-face retail shopping environment between the station and the retail hub to the west
- » Relocates the active recreation uses east of The Stroll, similar to the Park Reimagined plan
- » New townhouses would face the Great Lawn to ensure safety through ‘eyes-on-the-park’
- » Relocates the playground and community facility building to Sherburne Avenue

Some elements of the Main Street option were generally well received by the community, such as enhanced pedestrian crossings, streetscape improvements, and on-street parking on Bass Lake Road. The community expressed a preference for the Park Reimagined option. The uses and size of Becker Park will be explored in the city’s detailed planning process for the park.



Fig. 38 MAIN STREET PLAN ILLUSTRATIVE

MAIN STREET PLAN ACREAGE			
Use		Acreage (ac)	Percentage (%)
	Park	8.4	68
	Civic Park	3.5	28
	Recreational Park	4.9	40
	Development	2.9	23
	Street	1.1	9
Total		12.4	100

TABLE 10 Main Street Development Quantities



Fig. 39 MAIN STREET USE DIAGRAM



BASS LAKE ROAD STATION AERIAL WITH MAIN STREET PLAN View looking Southwest

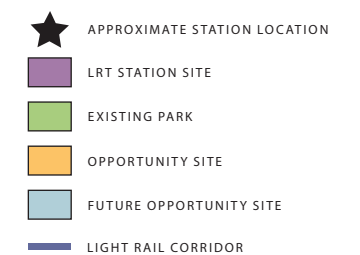
Potential Long-Term Redevelopment Opportunities

A handful of potential long-term redevelopment sites were identified in proximity to the intersection of County Road 81 and Bass Lake Road.

- 1 The first is the Liquor Store/Daycare site at the northwest corner of the intersection. Although almost fully tenanted today, the market potential of this site will change with the introduction of light rail. This is a prime opportunity for conversion to a mix of uses that features a high-density residential building to the north with a tall one-story retail building to the south. Amenities such as the LRT stop, Becker Park, downtown shopping, and the Bass Lake Road Promenade will appeal to a wide demographic. Any new construction should reinforce the street frontage to complement the “main street” feel of the area. Special attention should be paid to the highly visible building facade facing Bass Lake Road. This facade requires an attractive civic appearance.
- 2 The second site is the Office Building/County Parcel/Used Car property at the northeast corner of the intersection. The market potential of these lots will also change with the introduction of light rail, especially if they can someday be consolidated into one redevelopment parcel. This highly visible 3-acre area is best suited for a multi-story office or mixed-use building (residential over ground floor retail). Ample space exists for parking north and east of the building pad. Any new construction should face the intersection to complement the light rail station.
- 3 The third opportunity is currently home to a small, relatively dense, aging apartment complex at the southeast corner of the intersection. The combination of a landlocked site and the small parcel size (less than an acre) limits redevelopment options. Still, it is an ideal long-term redevelopment site for a one-story com-



Fig. 40 BASS LAKE ROAD STATION REDEVELOPMENT SITES Existing Conditions



mercial building with surface parking behind or high-density housing targeted at light rail users. Any new construction should reinforce the Bass Lake Road street frontage.

- 4 The fourth and final site is the property along the north side of Bass Lake Road between Sherburne and Elmhurst Avenues. The addition of on-street parking should permit the construction of two corner retail out parcels in the city-owned parking lots — an intervention that would help define the corners and further animate the street. As was previously mentioned, it would be important for the large one-story building to establish a new civic appearance. This could be achieved either through simple facade improvements, or the building could be razed and rebuilt as a multi-story mixed-use development with residential over retail and underground parking. The latter approach is beyond what the market could support today, but could eventually be feasible as the Bass Lake Road station area continues to evolve.

ESTIMATED DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL				
Site	Approximate Acreage (ac)	Approximate Commercial Square Footage (sf)	Approximate Unit Count (units)	Approximate Parking (spaces)
1. Daycare/ Liquor Store	1.8	18,000	30	95
2. Office Building/ County Parcel/ Used Car Lot	3.1	55,000	—	150
	3.1	—	90–130	150
3. Apartment Complex	0.8	12,500	—	50
	0.8	—	40	50
4. North Side of Bass Lake Road	2.0	34,000	50	140
Total	7.7	119,500	210–250	435

TABLE 11 Development Potential



Fig. 41 PLAN OF OTHER INITIATIVES Long-Term Development Opportunities Surround the LRT Station.

TOD Overlay

A Transit Oriented Development Overlay (TOD Overlay) is a regulatory tool that creates a special zoning district for the furtherance of transit oriented development. This approach is recommended for the non-residential property within the Station Area Plan. The goal is to give property owners additional flexibility/incentives to diversify and densify uses. Elements of TOD already exist around the intersection of West Broadway Avenue and Bass Lake Road in that many patrons arrive by bus and ridesharing. As a result, commercial parking requirements have already been reduced, allowing for infill development in the larger parking lots. The market study identified limited future retail demand, but potential exists for mixed-use in proximity to the light rail station (education, housing, etc.). Suggestions for regulations to be addressed in the overlay include:

- » Parking Ratios for both automobiles and bicycles
- » Building Coverage
- » Permitted Uses
- » Building Heights
- » Setbacks
- » Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections

Additional information on this recommendation can be found in the Implementation section of this report.

- ★ APPROXIMATE STATION LOCATION
- STATION AREA/10-MINUTE WALKSHED
- ▨ OPPORTUNITY SITE
- ▨ FUTURE OPPORTUNITY SITE

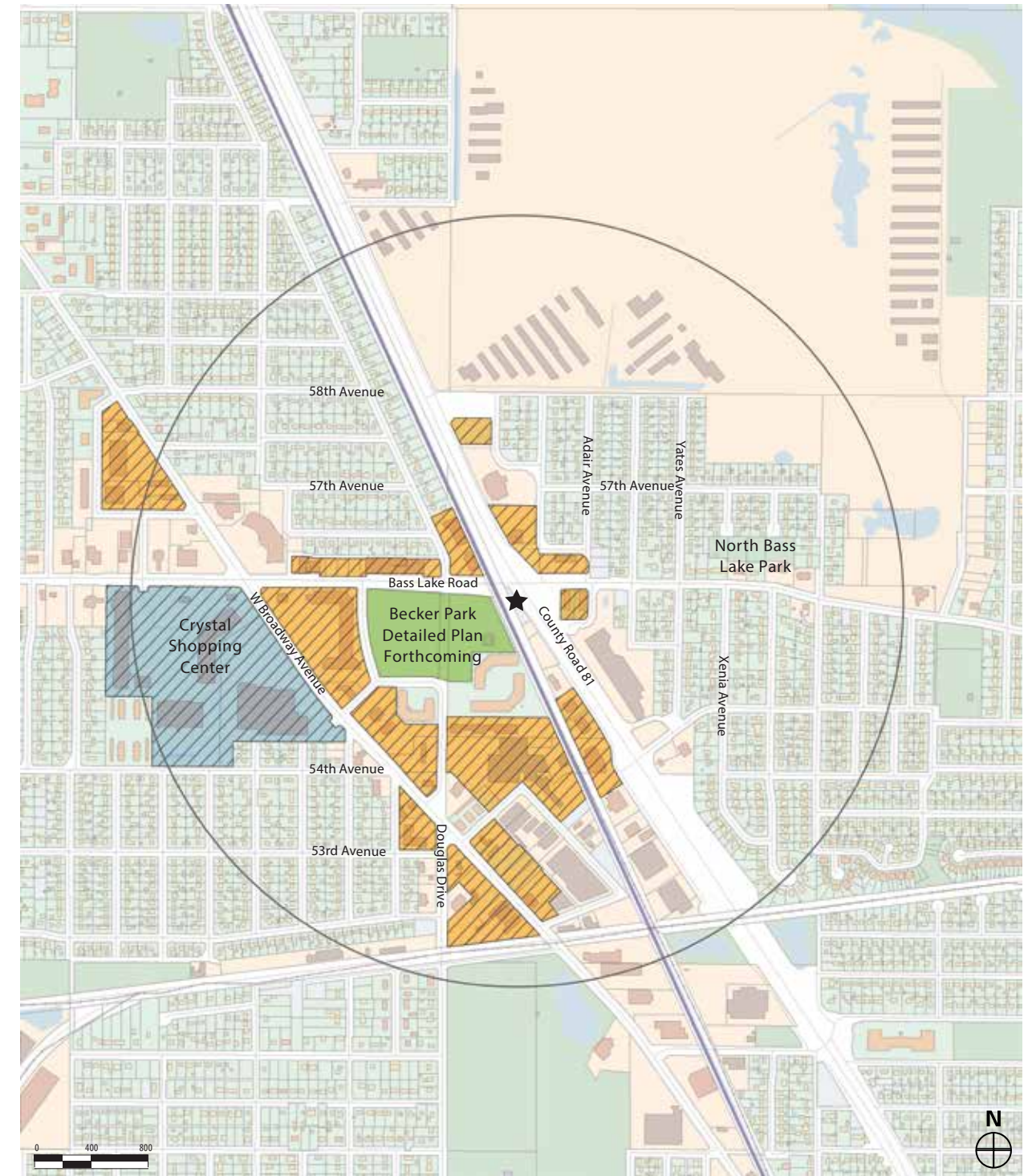


Fig. 42 PLAN OF PROPOSED SITES FOR TOD OVERLAY

Proposed Land Use Plan

The City of Crystal's land use policy is documented in the Comprehensive Plan and sets the policy for the future development of these sites. The map to the left is the 2030 Planned Land Use map from the Comprehensive Plan and the map on the right has the recommended revisions to this map, based on the Station Area Plan, which the city may choose to adopt. One recommendation is to develop a mixed-use TOD overlay which would be applied to all parcels within the 10-minute walk area to provide additional flexibility and diversity in the uses surrounding the station.

Each land use will require adequate stormwater facilities when developed. Ideally, a district stormwater strategy should be developed that will allow smaller sites to redevelop without having to allocate a portion of each parcel, but rather consolidates stormwater into logical locations. It is critical that large stormwater facilities not be located on key opportunity sites, and that the city have purview over the placement of ponds and stormwater facilities.

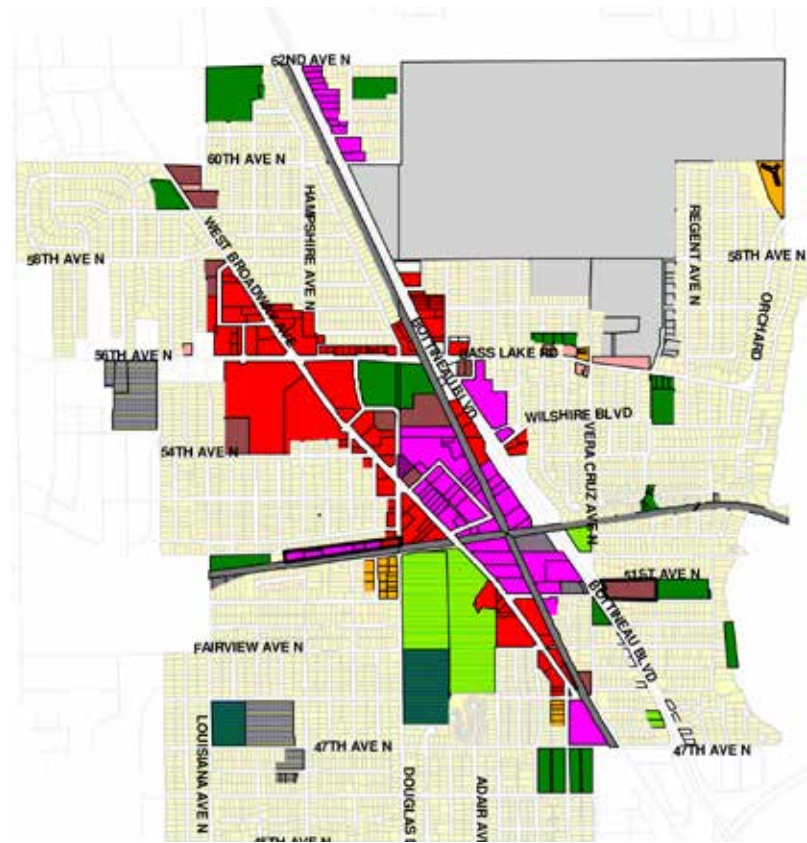


Fig. 43 2030 PLANNED LAND USE MAP

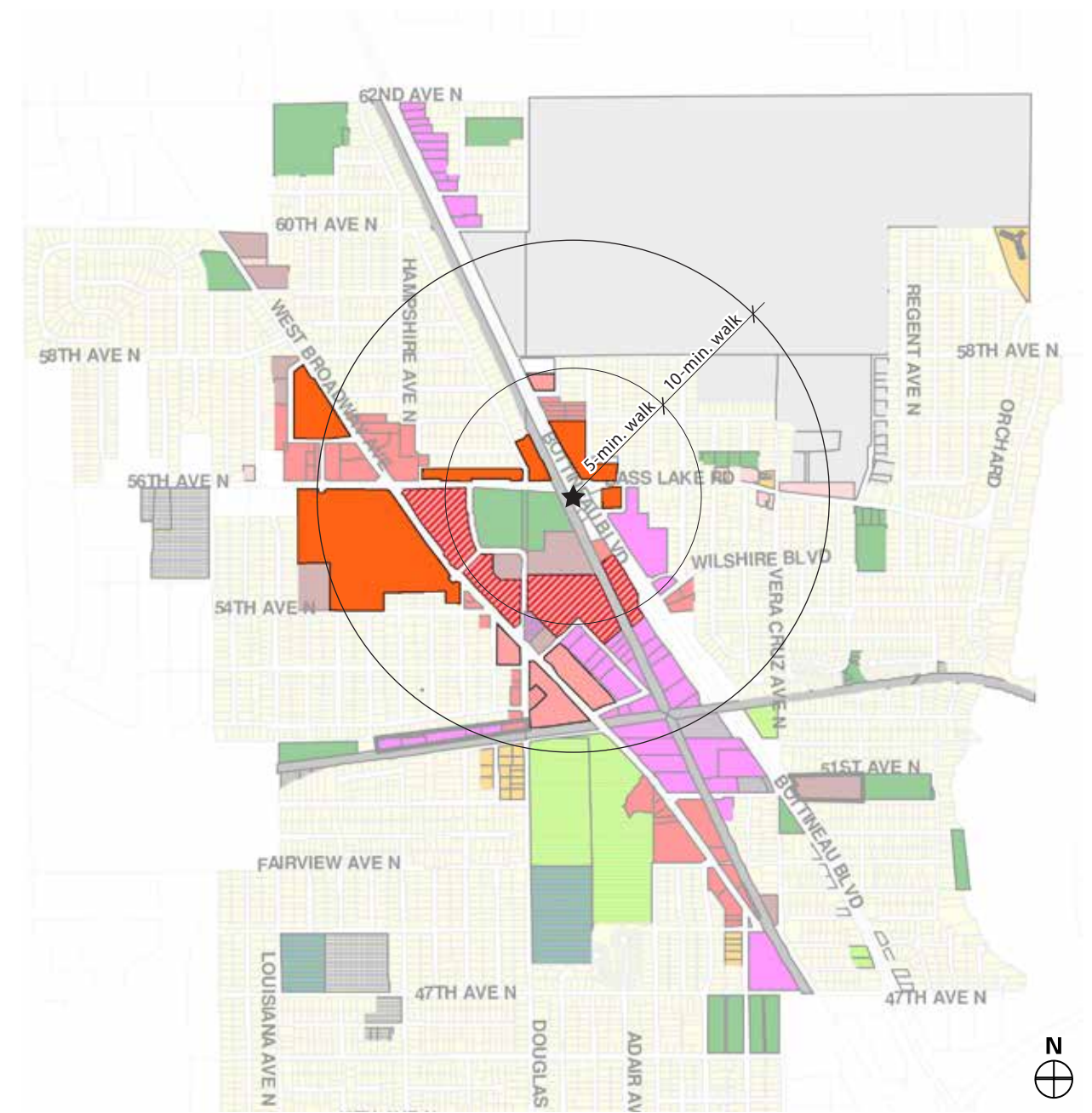


Fig. 44 REVISIONS TO THE 2030 PLANNED LAND USE MAP

Strategies to Support Health Equity

This section highlights the development policies and built environment recommendations contained in this report that affect the key determinants of health identified in the Bottineau Transitway Health Impact Assessment (HIA). This section also provides more in-depth information on health equity-related community input specific to the Bass Lake Road station area, and presents broader health equity themes. Since community engagement in all eleven Bottineau LRT stations revealed recurring themes about access to goods and services, as well as community needs and opportunities, this plan considers strategies to address both Bass Lake Road station-specific issues and corridor-wide themes.

Community Health Benefits

The Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan provides development policy guidance and built environment recommendations that affect the key determinants of health identified in the HIA: physical activity, location affordability, employment and education access, traffic safety, and healthy food access. The Station Area Plan recommends circulation and built environment improvements that address traffic safety and circulation issues expressed by the community and support additional infrastructure that encourages physical activity near each station. Improving bicycle and pedestrian connections on major streets is a focus of the station area plan in Crystal. For example, the plan identifies locations where there are gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle networks, where the sidewalk becomes narrow and difficult to use, and where pedestrian crossings could be improved. In addition to gaps, there are likely sidewalk sections where pedestrian ramps are needed. Closing gaps and improving pedestrian crosswalks in key locations could improve community health by creating an environment where people feel more comfortable walking and biking to and from the LRT station, around the station area and to more distant destinations.

HEALTH-RELATED COMMUNITY INPUT	
CRYSTAL-SPECIFIC	CORRIDOR-WIDE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Inadequate public transit currently makes it difficult to get around the city and to local businesses » Concerns related to safety, criminal activity, and line of sight at Becker Park (landscape berms) » The area is not designed for pedestrians: inadequate pedestrian and bicycle connections make it difficult to walk and get to businesses » Concern was expressed about lack of bus shelters on Bass Lake Road and that people must wait on narrow sidewalks » Local businesses and ethnically owned businesses were seen as an asset » Need more senior housing and multi-generational housing accommodating diverse cultural backgrounds » Placemaking (benches, walkable destinations, park activities) are desired for seniors to increase social connectedness 	<p>The following are topics consistently raised by community members in each of the cities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Concerns related to employment: unemployment, underemployment, and strong desire to work within their city » Business development (ownership by people of color and culturally inclusive services) » Fear related to housing costs (renters and homeowners) » Childcare and adult care (proximity to station, quality, and cultural inclusivity) » Elder/Aging: accessibility, more senior housing » Safety: mobility/access and fear of crime » More publicly accessible spaces » Language/translation: at station area and wayfinding » Bus feeder routes and connections are critical and are needed

TABLE 12 Health-related Community Input

The plan’s land use and development recommendations support allowing additional mixed-use development, increased building coverage and heights, and reduced setbacks — in the event that the market supports such development. The market study identifies near-term opportunities for affordable or senior housing and small-scale neighborhood retail near the station. Allowing jobs, housing, and businesses to be located close to each other and to transit has the potential to provide residents with employment opportunities, increase business opportunities for minority entrepreneurs and provide better access to community desired services (such as grocery stores and child care). These are important aspects of a healthy community.

Finally, the plan promotes placemaking and cultural diversity. Healthy communities include interesting and lively public places like wide sidewalks, plazas, and parks where residents of all incomes and backgrounds feel comfortable gathering. Crystal’s downtown already has such public places. The station area plan shows opportunities to make these places even better. Key features include the Bass Lake Road Promenade, which would renovate the commercial main street along Bass Lake Road, and a re-envisioned Becker Park. The Bass Lake Road Promenade would connect the LRT station to the heart of downtown Crystal with pedestrian, parking, and streetscape improvements. The plan also includes ideas for re-envisioning Becker Park which is the station area’s premier public space. Based on community feedback during station area planning, the city has decided to conduct a separate, detailed planning process to make Becker Park more useful for the community while preserving the overall size of the park. This may add additional placemaking and recreational opportunities in the station area. Revitalizing Bass Lake Road and improving Becker Park can benefit community health by helping residents meet their neighbors and feel socially connected to their community, improve public safety by increasing the number of

“eyes on the street,” and encourage people to spend more time outside walking and being physically active.

Additional Policy and Program Recommendations

As health rises to the forefront in terms of national interest, municipalities across the country are integrating health considerations, including tools and indicators, into local decision-making to support positive health outcomes, while reducing health disparities. Hennepin County’s Bottineau Transitway Health Impact Assessment (HIA) documented stark health disparities in the corridor. Including health-specific policies and health-supportive practices in each corridor station area plan is important to make sure the benefits of LRT extend to all community members. Efforts by local governments to incorporate health equity into wider decision-making not only helps to better serve their communities, it is important to the region’s ability to meet the needs of an aging and diversifying population over the coming decades. The following are recommended for consideration in Crystal.

1 Incorporate Health Equity into decision-making. Tools are available to help communities with this work. One such tool is from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity and evaluates decisions considering Racial Equity. Municipalities across the country are utilizing this tool in different ways to improve outcomes. This approach, along with experiences from other cities could help the City of Crystal, as well as other partners working on the Bottineau LRT project, to help maximize the health benefits for residents and other transit users by addressing health disparities in the areas of income, housing, and educational attainment. Resources can be found online: <http://racialequityalliance.org/tools-resources>.

- 2 Utilize planning and zoning to reflect healthy community goals and encourage businesses that meet the needs of the region’s diverse population.** Reflecting healthy community goals (around physical activity, location affordability, employment and education access, traffic safety, and healthy food access) in design guidelines, zoning overlays, and other tools and plans, could improve community health and help provide the businesses, services, and programs that stakeholders and residents identified during station area planning. These included culturally supportive childcare, elder care, ethnically-owned businesses, and multi-use spaces that support community connectedness. Planning and zoning is an important piece of the puzzle, but successfully creating these opportunities along the Bottineau LRT line will require additional programmatic support.
- 3 Apply equitable development evaluation criteria into future project evaluation.** A local example is the Equitable Development Scorecard. Its template can easily be adapted into development policy and practice to fit local circumstance. Resources can be found online: <http://www.hnampls.org/scorecard/>
- 4 Apply a Health in All Policies approach.** This approach integrates the consideration of health impacts into non-health policies and decisions in sectors such as transportation, community and economic development, housing, workforce, and education. It uses simple indicators as well as catalytic questions to walk through policy questions and decisions without needing a separate tool.
- 5 Provide additional corridor-wide program and resource development.** During the station area planning process Crystal community members identified a variety of needs and desires that could be addressed in the city, along the Bottineau LRT or

elsewhere in the expanded transit system. The Bottineau LRT stands to strengthen local assets and bring opportunity to the ½-mile station area and to Crystal in general. The line also increases access for Crystal residents to regional job centers, educational opportunities, health care providers, and needed business services. Programmatic support and coordination beyond infrastructure development is necessary to connect people to local and regional opportunities and to mobilize regional resources and expertise to support development along the Bottineau LRT and in Crystal.

The Hennepin County Community Works Program is well positioned, in partnership with philanthropic partners and corridor stakeholders, to provide a platform to strategically convene partners, activate regional expertise, and mobilize resources to connect residents to transit accessible opportunities and support equitable transit oriented development in station areas. Many of the issues identified by the community such as employment, availability of affordable housing, access to childcare, and a desire for ethnically based businesses, impact key health determinants for populations along the corridor and require a regional strategy.

Areas of Early Action

Begin working with private and public leaders to understand the challenges, opportunities, and strategies to support connections to employment and address employment disparities and barriers to access.

A Align workforce opportunities. The Bottineau Health Impact Assessment documented disparities in employment status and income, especially for people of color. Crystal has employment opportunities in key industries which align with workforce providers who train communities experiencing high rates of unemployment. The top job categories currently found in Crystal are

the following: Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance. Further research is needed to better understand the workforce needs of Crystal employers and potential relationships with workforce providers working with communities experiencing disparities in employment.

B Explore last mile transportation options to encourage ridership and connections to employment, health care, libraries, childcare, public space, and educational resources. There are important employers and educational institutions located near the Bottineau LRT. Many Crystal residents who provided input for this report are also people who use these institutions and businesses or work in a supporting role to help ensure that they function well. Ensuring strong connections through physical improvements such as sidewalks, trails, and transportation shuttles is important for these Crystal residents who use other stations, for residents and others who use the Bass Lake Road station, and for the city as it encourages people to live, work, play, or shop in Crystal.

C Childcare. A first step is to connect interested Bottineau LRT stakeholders to Metro Transit’s Transit Oriented Development Office, which is currently conducting a Market Study of Childcare Facilities in relationship to transit networks. The Market Study was completed in May 2016.



PROGRAMMING Providing innovative programming inclusive of diverse populations



BECKER PARK



EDUCATION Promoting physical activity

Implementation

The vision and initiatives set forth in this Station Area Plan provide a framework and a roadmap to help the city and its partners guide both the short-term and the long-term change that will come as a result of this new transit investment. The plan was developed with the community and represents a general consensus between a wide range of stakeholders, including the city, the county, the Metropolitan Council, the businesses, and the residents.

Some components of the plan are included in the LRT project and will be funded and constructed as part of that effort. However, most of the initiatives included in the station area plan require either the public sector or the private sector to secure additional funding and approvals in order to realize the vision. Also, while some initiatives may be implemented in the short-term, others will take a decade or more to realize.

With completion of station area plans, the next steps in the “beyond the rails” process is to develop an Investment Framework to help guide the implementation of the station area plans. Through this process the partners and the stakeholders will:

- 1 Determine which projects should be completed by “Day of Opening” (the date when the Blue Line Extension LRT will begin operating) and which will need to be implemented later,
- 2 Prioritize projects, and
- 3 Advance more detailed plans, including cost estimates, timelines, and sources of funding.

As design and implementation of each element of the plan advances, the partners must continue to work collaboratively in order to realize the larger vision for the Bass Lake Road Station Area. Each implementation project should be vetted to assess how it accomplishes

the consensus objectives outlined in the Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan. The following pages outline the recommendations for:

- 4 Public initiatives and private opportunities
- 5 Policy and comprehensive plan updates
- 6 Next steps for the short-term, mid-term and long-term

PUBLIC INITIATIVES
» Infrastructure and Development
› Intersection improvements
› LRT project infrastructure
› Public plazas and urban spaces
› Future Becker Park reconfiguration, amenities, and programming
› Promenade and streetscape improvements along Bass Lake Road
» Policy Updates
› Density recommendations
› District Stormwater Strategy
› TOD Overlay District

PRIVATE OPPORTUNITIES
» Infrastructure and Development
› Facade improvements
› Mixed-use Development
› Mid- and high-density multi-family housing
› New retail space and improvements to existing retail space
› Improved pedestrian connections on private property and through existing parking lots



Fig. 45 PUBLIC INITIATIVES AND PRIVATE OPPORTUNITIES

★ APPROXIMATE STATION LOCATION ■ PUBLIC INITIATIVES ■ PRIVATE OPPORTUNITIES

Public and Private Initiatives



Fig. 46 PUBLIC INITIATIVES

OTHER PUBLIC INITIATIVES (NON-PROJECT)

Through the station area planning process, stakeholders identified projects that public entities will take the lead on that are related to LRT, but are not included in the LRT project. These initiatives will require additional funding and approvals, as well as more detailed planning. Below is the list of those consensus recommendations from the station area planning process.

Metro Transit will lead:

- A Continued study of the pedestrian bridge and at-grade improvements at the intersection of County Road 81 and Bass Lake Road

Hennepin County will lead:

- B Pedestrian crossings along Bass Lake Road

The City of Crystal will lead:

- C Streetscape improvements and Promenade along Bass Lake Road
- D Future planning of Becker Park

Lead Entity to be Determined:

- E Public Art*

Final initiatives will be vetted through the Investment Framework process and future planning.



Fig. 47 PRIVATE OPPORTUNITIES

PRIVATE OPPORTUNITIES

Private property owners and developers will lead the following efforts and partner with the City and others in the development process as market conditions warrant. As was previously discussed, while some of these private developments may occur in the near-term, many will take decades or longer to be realized.

- A Facade improvements to the commercial strip building along the north promenade of Bass Lake Road (may need public incentives)
- B Reconfiguration of the surface parking lots for the commercial strip building north of Bass Lake Road and new corner out parcels
- C Reinvestment in and reorientation of corner tenant spaces of the Crystal Gallery Mall building to front Bass Lake Road and Becker Park
- D Redevelopment of Crystal Court apartments into new retail, mixed-use, or medium-density housing
- E Future redevelopment of existing retail buildings west of County Road 81 and north of Bass Lake Road
- F Future redevelopment of the Cities Auto lot, office building, and County-owned right-of-way into a mixed-use development

DAY OF OPENING IMPROVEMENTS	
LEAD AGENCY	INVESTMENT
BPO/Metro Transit	1 LRT guideway and support systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Station platform, lighting, and landscaping › Pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle access 2 Parking lot for transit ridership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Intersection improvements at Wilshire Boulevard to provide better access to the park and ride facility 3 Bicycle parking
Hennepin County	To be determined by the investment framework
City of Crystal	To be determined by the investment framework

TABLE 13 Bass Lake Road Station Day of Opening Investments

* The Federal Transit Administration no longer allows public art to be included as part of the project budget for LRT projects. Therefore, a strategy for including public art in the station area will need to be developed by the public and private partners and funding will need to be identified.

Policy Recommendations

The purpose of policy updates and the recommendations outlined below serve two purposes. First, these transit-supportive policies and plans are required to meet the requirements for federal funding. The Federal Transit Administration requires the following transit-supportive policies for New Starts funding under the Economic Development Effects Criterion:

- » Growth management and land conservation policies,
- » Station area plans with pedestrian-friendly infrastructure and parking strategy,
- » Supportive zoning regulations and coordinated comprehensive plan recommendations for the station area,
- » Zoning allowance for reduced parking and traffic mitigation, and
- » Regulatory and financial incentives to promote TOD.

Beyond their being a requirement of FTA funding, having the appropriate policies in place will expedite the city's ability to bring in private partners for the redevelopment.

This station area planning process has assessed the regulatory documents and made detailed recommendations to the city for amendments to the policies and plans that govern development. Below is a summary of those recommendations:

Thrive MSP 2040 and the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP)

- » Thrive MSP 2040 designates Crystal as an Urban Community; this designation guides density of new development
- » Urban Community Designation Residential Density Requirements

- » Minimum gross residential density of 10 units/acre for all new growth, development, and redevelopment across the city
- » Station Area Residential Density and Activity Thresholds (Chapter 3: Land Use and Local Planning, Transportation Policy Plan, Table 3-1, 3.18)
- » Minimum gross residential density of 25 units/acre for new development or redevelopment with some form of housing (or mixed-use)
- » Target gross residential density of 50-100+ units/acre identified for new development or redevelopment with some form of housing (or mixed-use)
- » Minimum activity threshold of 7,000 residents, jobs, or students within the station areas

2030 Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Update

- » The City of Crystal has several alternatives for aligning policy with Station Area Planning recommendation:
 - » Adopt the Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan as an addendum to the current 2030 Comprehensive Plan
 - » Make text amendments to the 2030 Comprehensive Plan in high priority sections to align the land use policies
 - » Incorporate the changes into the updated 2040 Comprehensive Plan, which will be submitted to Metropolitan Council by the end of 2018.

» Background:

- › Revise language for high-level planning policies to prioritize development opportunities around the station area

» Land Use:

- › Review low-, medium-, and high-density residential categories to allow for more flexibility to meet targets in the station area if the market permits
- › Add opportunity site projects in the Station Area to the ‘Hypothetical Examples of Potential High-density Residential Redevelopment Projects’

» Housing:

- › Identify the Station Area as an opportunity for new and diverse housing options

» Redevelopment:

- › Consider recasting and simplifying the potential Redevelopment Areas to include all of the opportunity sites in the Station Area plan in a single potential redevelopment area

» Transportation:

- › Emphasize streetscape improvements along streets in the Bass Lake Road Station Area
- › Prioritize sidewalks, bike infrastructure, and pedestrian crossings in the Station Area
- › Consider extending sidewalks to residential streets beyond the City’s typical policy on key streets within the Station Area to better connect neighborhoods to the station

» Public Transit:

- › Update to emphasize the impact of the Blue Line extension on economic development, workforce mobility, access to regional and entertainment amenities, and general connectivity

- › Indicate municipal interest in strengthening local bus route connectivity to the station

» Parks and Open Space:

- › Indicate specific improvement projects for Becker Park and new opportunities for connections to the trail systems

TOD Incentives for Station Area

The intent of the City of Crystal is to ensure that current uses remain viable, while offering regulatory incentives for increased density, mixed-use, and urban forms within the Station Area so the city is ready to respond to changes in market demand.

These regulatory incentives may include:

- » Parking ratios
- » Density, height, and building coverage
- » Permitted uses
- » Reduced setbacks from the street

The Station Area Plan recommends that the city explore these areas further to determine where amendments, additions, and further explanation are necessary.

Next Steps

Implementation of the Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan will depend on a coordinated approach between transit investments, infrastructure improvements, partnerships with private owners and developers, and continued community involvement. While the greatest short-term impact will be visible in the ¼-mile areas surrounding the stations, the market will eventually accommodate growth in the ½-mile radius from the stations and beyond, especially where land is available for development. It will be important to coordinate stakeholders across sectors to maximize potential benefits to communities experiencing health disparities.

The Investment Framework, which is the next step in the station area planning process, will help all the partners move towards implementing the broader vision for the community “beyond the rails” that is outlined in this report. It will result in a detailed implementation plan and the process will be used to help coordinate the list of next steps outlined in Table 14. Through this process the partners and the stakeholders will:

- 1 Determine which projects should be completed by “Day of Opening” (the date when the Blue Line Extension LRT will begin operating) and which will need to be implemented later;
- 2 Prioritize projects; and
- 3 Advance more detailed plans, including information on cost estimates, timelines, and sources of funding.

SUMMARY OF NEXT STEPS

- » Take action on the Bass Lake Road Station Area Plan
- » Continue to coordinate LRT design with the station area plan to ensure implementation designs follow the intent and vision of the Station Area Plan
- » Continue to leverage LRT planning and construction to improve the environment for people walking and biking
- » Incorporate additional station area plan projects, strategies, and tools into the 2040 Crystal Comprehensive Plan Update
- » Develop a comprehensive stormwater strategy for the station area
- » Establish parking requirements and a parking management strategy for the Station Area to incentivize higher densities and redevelopment
- » Work to include infrastructure projects, such as the Promenade along Bass Lake Road
- » Pursue partnerships to recruit and attract active businesses and retail shops for the corridor to activate the district
- » Conduct a more detailed housing analysis
- » Explore a TOD overlay district to apply to the Station Area
- » Initiate a planning process for Becker Park
- » Implement recommendations from the bicycle and transit studies

TABLE 14 Bass Lake Road Station Next Steps



PARK REIMAGINED PLAN PERSPECTIVE



BASS LAKE ROAD PROMENADE A new civic place in Crystal



BASS LAKE ROAD STATION AERIAL WITH THE PARK REIMAGINED View looking Southwest

Definitions of Key Terms

Access or Accessibility. In transportation, access or accessibility refers to the ease with which people can reach multiple destinations. People in places that are highly accessible can reach many other activities or destinations quickly and easily.

Community Working Group (CWG). Small advisory groups established by Bottineau Community Works and the corridor municipalities for specific stations to provide community expertise and insight on issues and priorities throughout the station area planning process from a community standpoint. The CWGs also advised and guided project planning efforts, reviewed project deliverables, and assisted with community outreach and engagement efforts. Members were appointed by the cities or represented Health Equity & Engagement Cohort (HEEC) organizations.

Comprehensive Plan. A planning document drawn up by cities and counties that outlines the community’s vision for the future, along with policies and plans to achieve that vision. Comprehensive plans are updated every 10 years in the Minneapolis–Saint Paul metropolitan area. The next round of comprehensive plans in this region are due in 2018 and outline a vision for the year 2040.

Density. The number of units (of housing, commercial, industrial, etc.) in a given amount of space (typically an acre).

Equity. The principle that “everyone regardless of race, economic status, ability or the neighborhood in which they live has access to essential ingredients for environmental, economic, social and cultural well-being including: living wage jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities,

viable housing choices, public transportation, good schools, strong social networks, safe and walkable streets, services, parks and access to healthy foods.”¹

Free Right Turns. Dedicated right turn lanes that bypass the traditional intersection of two roadways.

Grade Separation. A bridge or tunnel that separates transportation facilities such as a highway and railroad so that they will not disrupt each other’s traffic flow when they cross.

Green Infrastructure. A storm water management practice that attempts to mimic natural hydrologic processes to remove pollutants, promote storm water infiltration and reduce the quantity of runoff entering the storm sewer system. Also known as Low Impact Development.

Health Equity. When every person has the opportunity to realize their health potential — the highest level of health possible for that person — without limits imposed by structural inequities (systems of society such as finance, housing, transportation, education, social opportunities, etc. — that benefit one population unfairly, whether intended or not.²)

Health Equity & Engagement Cohort (HEEC). Community-based organizations that advised the County as part of its health initiatives for station area planning. The HEEC provided community expertise and insight focused on healthy community planning and health equity throughout the process. HEEC organizations received funding to conduct targeted community engagement about health

equity in station area planning with their constituent populations and were provided training and technical support. For the station areas in Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park, the HEEC was comprised of representatives from African American Leadership Forum (AALF), African Career & Education Resources (ACER), Asamblea de Derechos Civiles, CAPI USA, Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota, Minnesota African Women's Association (MAWA), and the Northwest Hennepin Human Services Council (NHHSC). Nexus Community Partners, the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, and the Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing provided technical support to the HEEC.

Infill development. The process of developing vacant or under used land parcels within existing urban areas that are already largely developed. For example, replacing a parking lot with a mixed-use development.

Investment Framework. Bottineau LRT Community Works program plans for the policies, programs, infrastructure, and investments that occur “beyond the rails” of light rail transit. The investment framework is the step after station area planning; it will take a comprehensive look throughout the corridor at what is needed on the transitway's opening day in 2021 — and beyond. It is envisioned to look at long-term opportunities and provide guidance for communities to use as they consider comprehensive plan and capital improvement plan updates over the next 10 to 20 years.

Jitney. A bus, shuttle, or taxi that carries passengers for a low price. Jitneys usually follow a regular route and schedule but are privately owned and typically cheaper than public transit.

Low Impact Development. See Green Infrastructure.

Light Rail Transit (LRT) Station Area. An area of land around a proposed light rail transit (LRT) station typically defined as a ½-mile radius (or “buffer”) from the station, or the distance the average person will walk to/from the station in ten minutes. ½-mile is the transit industry standard for the maximum length an average person is willing to walk to reach a transitway station. While a ½-mile is equated with a ten-minute walk, in reality this does not always hold true on the ground due to factors such as individual walking preferences, terrain and the transportation network.

LRT Station Half-Mile Buffer. See Light Rail Transit (LRT) Station Area definition.

Mixed-Use Development. The practice of allowing more than one type of use in a building or set of buildings. Mixed-use development supports transportation choices such as LRT, walking, and biking because it allows destinations such as shopping and dining in walkable proximity to homes, jobs, and transit stations.

Mobility. The ability of people and goods to move freely within the transportation system. Transportation options including transit, walking, and biking help improve mobility because these modes can carry a large number of people in an efficient manner.

Nice Ride. A non-profit bike sharing system in the Minneapolis–Saint Paul metropolitan area. Nice Ride stations are conveniently located around the community with approximately ½-mile between stations. Users can pick up or drop off rental bicycles at the stations.

Opportunity Site. A location that has been identified as prime for redevelopment. Opportunity sites are typically identified based on their current uses (often underutilized) and their proximity to the LRT station.

Passenger Drop-Off. Dedicated location on the street for short-term use where LRT passengers can exit or enter motor vehicles.

Placemaking. Planning which focuses on building upon and enhancing a community's assets in order to promote a pride of place and the well-being of that community and its members.

Protected Bikeway. An exclusive facility for bicyclists that is located within or directly adjacent to the roadway and that is physically separated from motor vehicle traffic with a vertical element.

Shared Use Mobility. Transportation options that are shared among many people or households, as opposed to the private automobile. Common shared use mobility options include LRT, bus, bike share, and carpooling.

Social Determinants of Health. Conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes. Social determinants of health include: access to employment, education, health care, and healthy foods; transportation options; housing availability and cost; social connectedness; public safety; exposure to crime and/or violence, income, wealth, and more.

Station Area Planning. A process by which county and city staff work together with community members to establish a plan for the area surrounding a proposed transit station. The goal is to create a short-term and long-term vision that reflects the community's goals,

ensures that the LRT infrastructure is effectively integrated with the surrounding community, and helps the community take advantage of this new transit investment. The result is a vision for the area, coupled with a set of recommended actions and policy changes for cities, agencies, and local communities to consider as they move forward to realize that vision. Station area planning is designed to be coordinated with, and run parallel to, the planning and engineering of the LRT line.

Ten-Minute Walk. The rule of thumb is that people are willing to walk approximately 10 minutes, or roughly a ½-mile on a regular basis to access light rail transit.

Transit Oriented Development (TOD). A mixed-use area designed to maximize access to public transit. TOD often include a mix of housing, businesses, and jobs.

Transit Oriented Development liner (TOD liner). A TOD development that is located on the outside of a parking ramp. TOD liners visually shield the parking ramp from the surroundings and provide the additional benefit of allowing parking ramp users to live, work, or shop in the neighborhood.

Wayfinding. Signage, maps, and other elements of station design that orient and direct people to and from their destinations, and enhances the sense of character and identify of a place, neighborhood, or community. Wayfinding typically involves the use of signage and maps at key navigational decision points, use of landmarks and improved sight lines. It is an important public realm element for delivering transit users to and from a station in a safe and convenient manner.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Corridors of Opportunity Minneapolis, <http://www.corridorsofopportunity.org/>
- 2 Minnesota Department of Health, “Advancing Health Equity in Minnesota,” February 2014, Page 11, http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/healthequity/ahe_leg_report_020414.pdf

Appendices

- 1 Hennepin County Bottineau LRT/Metro Blue Line Extension
Bicycle Study: Crystal Station
- 2 Consolidated Stakeholder/Community Meeting Minutes (Crystal
Station Area Planning Process)