



Robbinsdale Station Area Plan
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Robbinsdale Station Area Plan

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Hennepin County

FUNDED BY
Hennepin County

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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 downtown Robbinsdale being one of the LRT stops. The station design calls for a light rail station platform and associated improvements, a 500 plus stall parking garage that will serve as a park and ride, and a bus transfer area (relocated from the current Robbinsdale Transit Center in the Hubbard Marketplace).

This transit project will have an impact on downtown Robbinsdale and beyond. 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 Robbinsdale LRT station. The City of Robbinsdale and Hennepin County facilitated discussions and public workshops that sought input from residents, businesses, community representatives, community groups, elected officials, and the Bottineau



ROBBINSDALE INFORMATION KIOSK



MEMBERS OF ROBBINSDALE COMMUNITY GIVING THEIR INPUT



HUBBARD AVENUE VISION Transformed from a service street into a fashionable pedestrian-friendly alley

Community Works Technical Advisory Committee. This report summarizes the collective recommendations of the stakeholders.

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 that process and comments from the community is presented in this section. The consultant team also completed baseline market and urban design assessments. These broad discussions and studies provide insight into the Robbinsdale station area's strength, challenges, and opportunities.

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.

Robbinsdale Station Area Plan

The vision for downtown Robbinsdale that was confirmed during this planning process is to become an even “better” version of what it is today — a unique and eclectic main street surrounded by compact, infill development. This vision reinforces downtown's role as the heart of Robbinsdale life and as the only main street on the Blue Line. The station area plan identifies infrastructure improve-

ments, opportunity sites, improvement to the downtown core, and redevelopment options along the County Road 81 corridor. Land use suggestions, placemaking, and strategies to achieve health equity are also discussed.

Implementation

The implementation section looks beyond station area planning 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.

Bottineau LRT Overview

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 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.

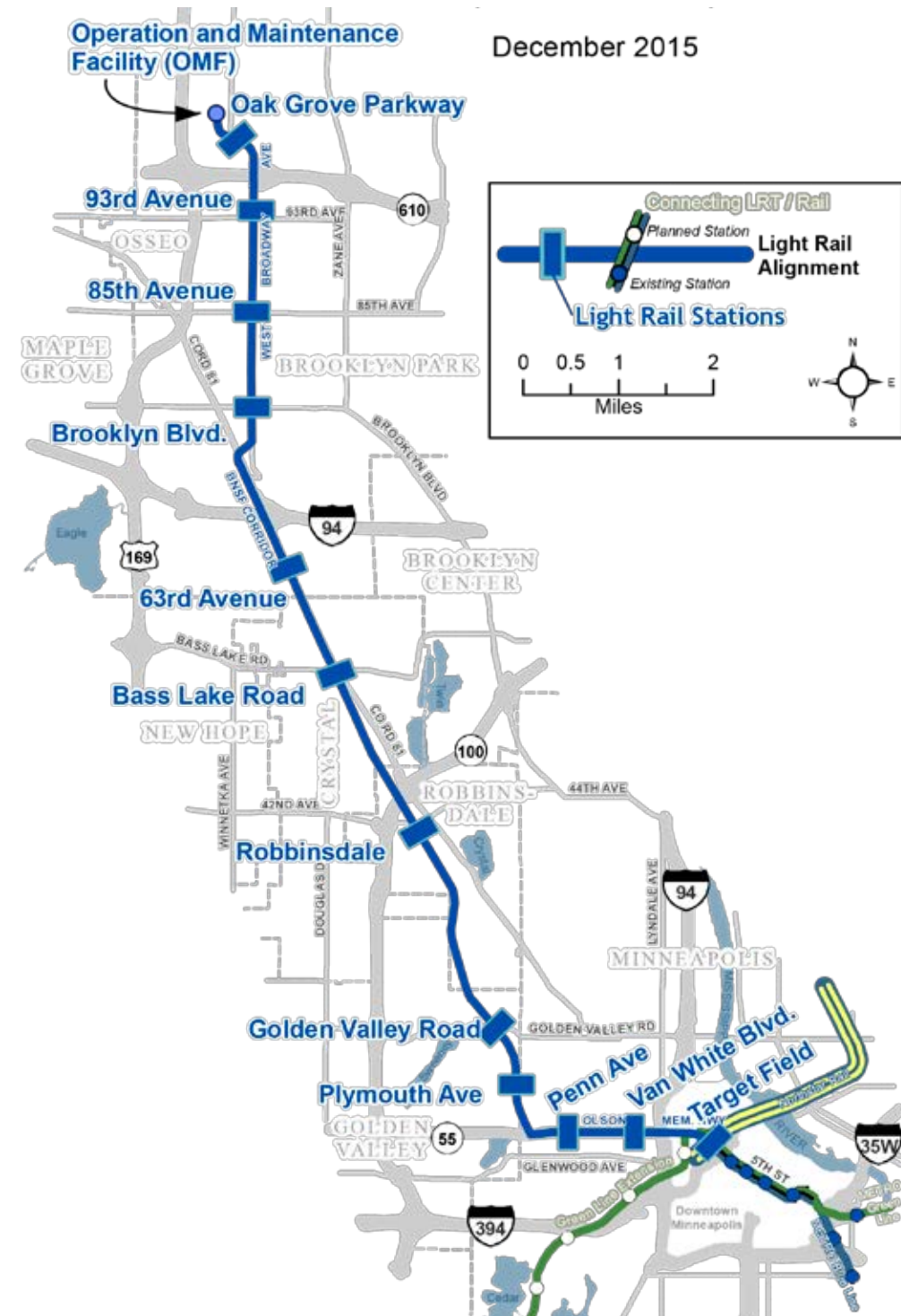


Fig. 1 METRO BLUE LINE EXTENSION

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.

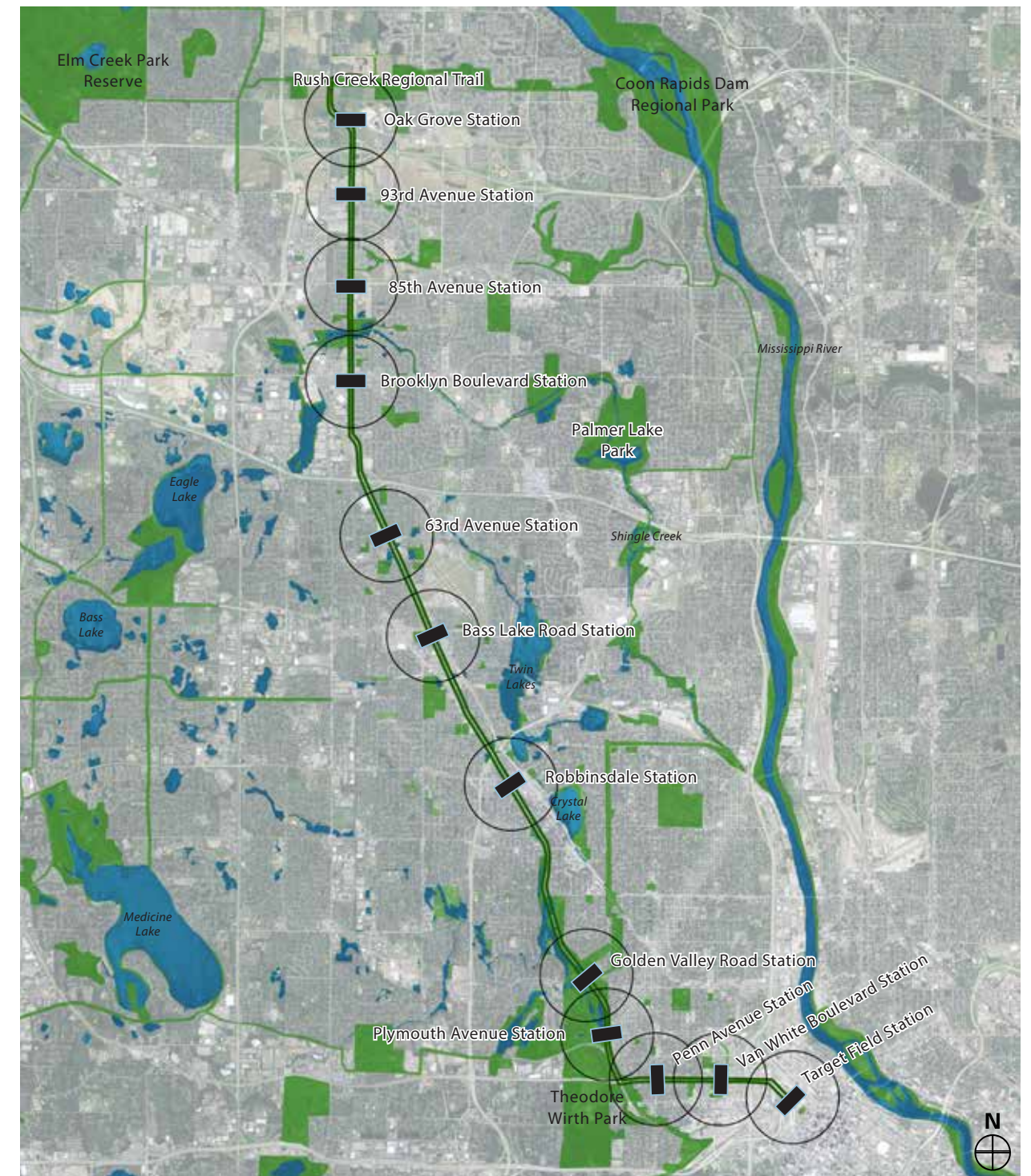


Fig. 2 REGIONAL OPEN SPACE NETWORK

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 near-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 Robbinsdale station area planning process is a joint effort of Hennepin County and the City of Robbinsdale. 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 recommendations for the Robbinsdale station area. Definitions of key terminology used in the report can be found in the Glossary at the end of this document.

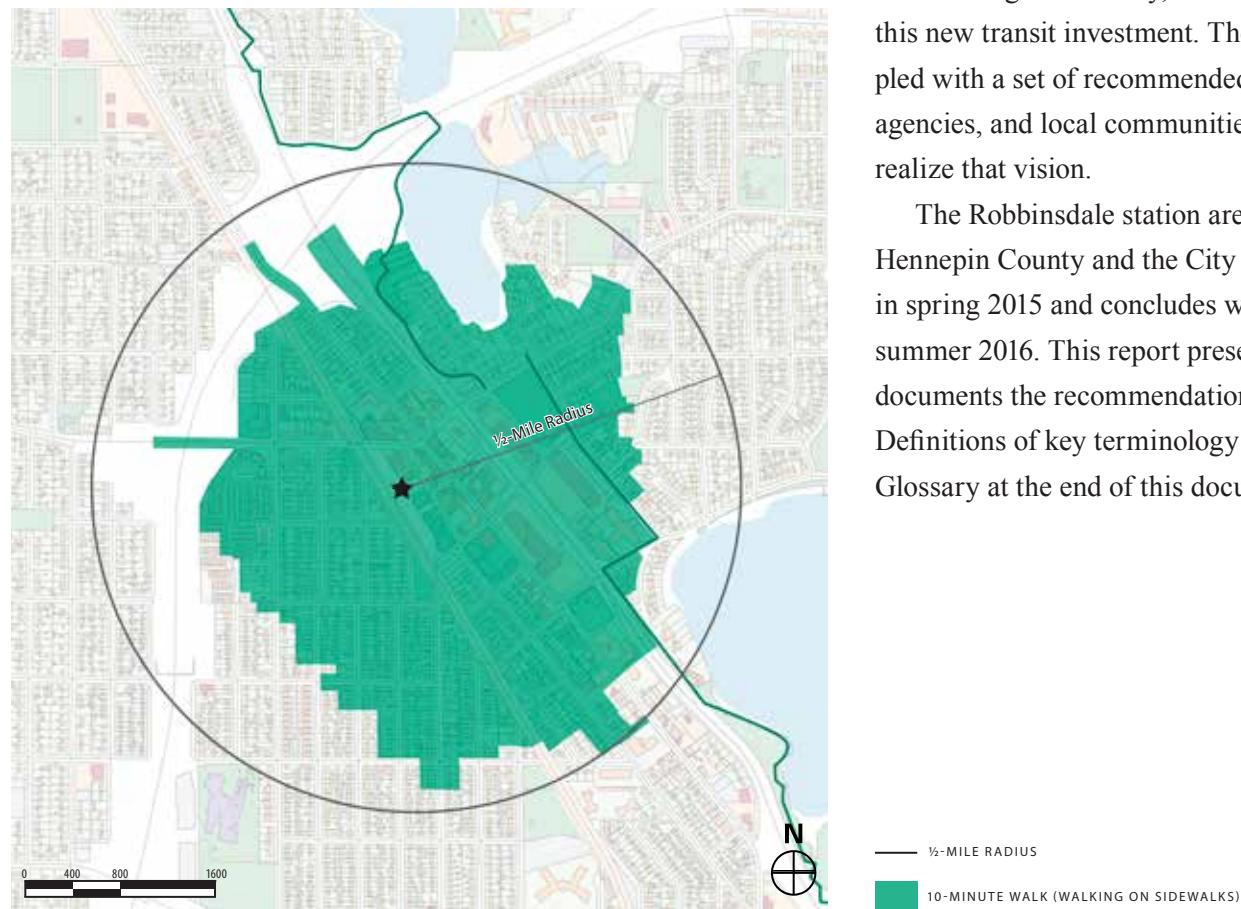


Fig. 3 10-MINUTE WALKSHED

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 Robbinsdale 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 Robbinsdale LRT stop that would be driven by the private market. 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 Robbinsdale today and begin to outline a vision for the future.



DOWNTOWN ROBBINSDALE



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



EXISTING HUBBARD MARKETPLACE



AERIAL OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Community engagement began in April 2015 with a concerted effort by the City of Robbinsdale 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, Lao Assistance Center of MN (LACM), MN African Women’s Association (MAWA), Northwest Hennepin Human Services Council.

In addition, on-street engagement activities were held at four locations during the analysis phase of the project including the Robbinsdale Transit Center, downtown Robbinsdale near Wuollet Bakery, North Memorial Hospital, and Whiz Bang Days. The purpose of these on-street activities was to engage people who would otherwise not be actively engaged in the project and to further assess strengths, weaknesses, and concerns related to the Robbinsdale station area.

Three community-wide meetings were held to get input and feedback from the larger community. At the initial meeting on July 11, 2015, community members 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.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS/ POTENTIAL LRT BENEFITS	CHALLENGES/LRT CONCERNS	VISION FOR THE FUTURE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Keep and strengthen Robbinsdale’s identity — particularly downtown and its local businesses » Show LRT riders that good things are happening in Robbinsdale » Improve roads, traffic, and existing parking problems » Set the stage for business growth » Diversify housing stock by providing more choices » Provide a community gathering area » Pedestrian-scale, walkable design, and safe station access by all modes » Increase access to North Memorial Hospital » Increase access to educational opportunities inside/outside Robbinsdale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Large, boxy parking ramp may overwhelm the scale of the traditional downtown » Maintaining/improving bike and pedestrian paths, sidewalks, and trails » Pedestrian and cyclist safety at road and railroad crossings » Noise (bells) » Loitering by the station and in downtown » Area currently feels isolated and unsafe; need lighting and “eyes on the street” » Concern for property values » Making “last mile” connections to/from home and other community destinations » Places and services provided won’t benefit communities of color and other groups experiencing health disparities » Poor visual and physical connections to downtown from the station area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Vibrant, safe, active, and inclusive community where the walkable downtown flows into the neighborhoods » Unique small town character is preserved with some improvements » Thriving commercial district where local businesses are supported and grow, including immigrant and minority-owned businesses » Diverse housing choices that are attractive and affordable for young people and seniors » Walkable, bike-friendly, safe, and secure station area with community gathering spaces » Parking garage blends into the scale and character of downtown while adding much-needed parking for local business » Pedestrian promenade that welcomes LRT riders to Robbinsdale and creates a strong visual and physical connection from the LRT station to downtown
		

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

A design workshop was held from July 23–26, 2015 to develop design concepts that reflect the community’s vision. Since there is a new 500+ car parking garage proposed for a park and ride at this station, as well as an existing transit center for bus transfers that will continue to operate, a major focus of the design workshop was to study options for integrating those transit facilities that will fit in with the scale and character of Robbinsdale’s downtown and its traditional main street. The design workshop included 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. Working from the input received at the community meeting and this workshop, several design concepts were developed. A preferred concept emerged through this process and was presented at a community meeting on July 28, 2015.

In the following weeks, the design team prepared a series of analytical plans called UDA X-Rays®, tested and refined the preferred concept plan, and developed additional design concepts for the ½-mile area around the station. A third community meeting to review and provide feedback on these design concepts was held on October 21, 2015.

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.



ROBBINSDALE COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



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ROBBINSDALE 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 dependent 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.



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

- » 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.
- » 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 Robbinsdale station area mirrors the population characteristics of the average Hennepin County resident. As seen in Table 3, the station area closely matches the countywide average in terms of the proportion of residents who are children, people of color, and those who don’t own a car or who live in poverty. There is a higher percentage of residents over age sixty-five in this station area (16%) than the countywide average (12.2%). However, just outside the ½-mile station area, in North Minneapolis, residents experience substantial disparities in health outcomes (chronic disease and life expectancy). Both Robbinsdale and north Minneapolis residents will benefit from access to the LRT and the associated infrastructure improvements.

Robbinsdale residents are active, already biking and walking for fun and to get around in their community. The station currently draws regional transit users connecting through the existing

Robbinsdale Transit Center, a bus transfer station located at Hubbard Marketplace. Safe walking and biking connections will be crucial for the wide range of people who will connect to the station. With the increased connections from light rail transit, as well as commuters driving to the 500+ stall parking garage proposed to be built as part of the project, residents expressed concerns about how children and seniors will be able to traverse the station area safely, especially crossing County Road 81. Children, seniors, and transit dependent populations are populations that have the most to gain from improved transit access and positive changes to infrastructure that support walking and biking in and around the station area.

ROBBINSDALE COMMUNITY PROFILE			
	½-mile Station Area	Robbinsdale	Hennepin County
Population	3,984	13,953	1,152,388
Persons under 18 years	21%	22%	22.4%
Persons over 65 years	16%	12%	12.2%
Persons of Color	25%	23%	23.6%
Zero car households	8%	3%	10.5%
Living in Poverty	10%	11%	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 Robbinsdale Community Profile

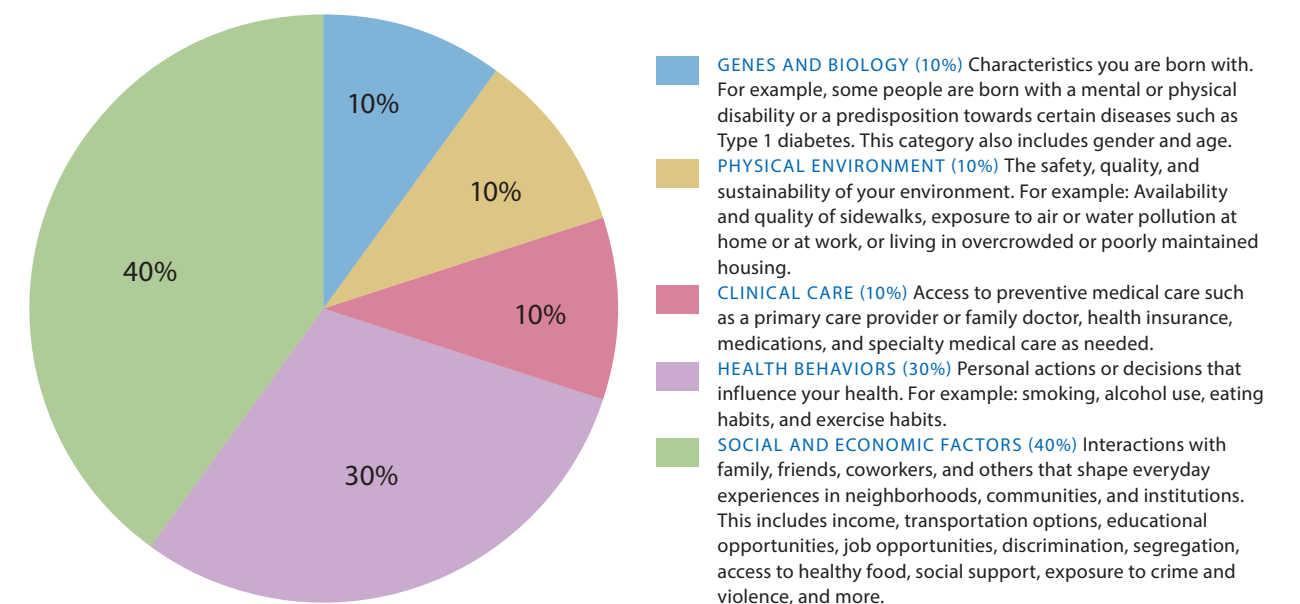


Fig. 4 SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
 Source: Determinants of Health Model based on frameworks developed by the Minnesota Department of Health at http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/healthequity/ahe_leg_report_020414.pdf and the following papers: Tarlov AR. Ann N Y Acad Sci 1999; 896: 281-93; and 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 within the Robbinsdale Station Area (the “Study Area” or “Downtown Robbinsdale”). 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 these uses;
- » Conducted interviews with local brokers and economic development professionals;
- » Considered the potential impacts of catalytic infrastructure improvements within the Study Area, namely the potential METRO Blue Line Extension along the Bottineau LRT Corridor; and
- » Identified potential development opportunities, including product types and scale.

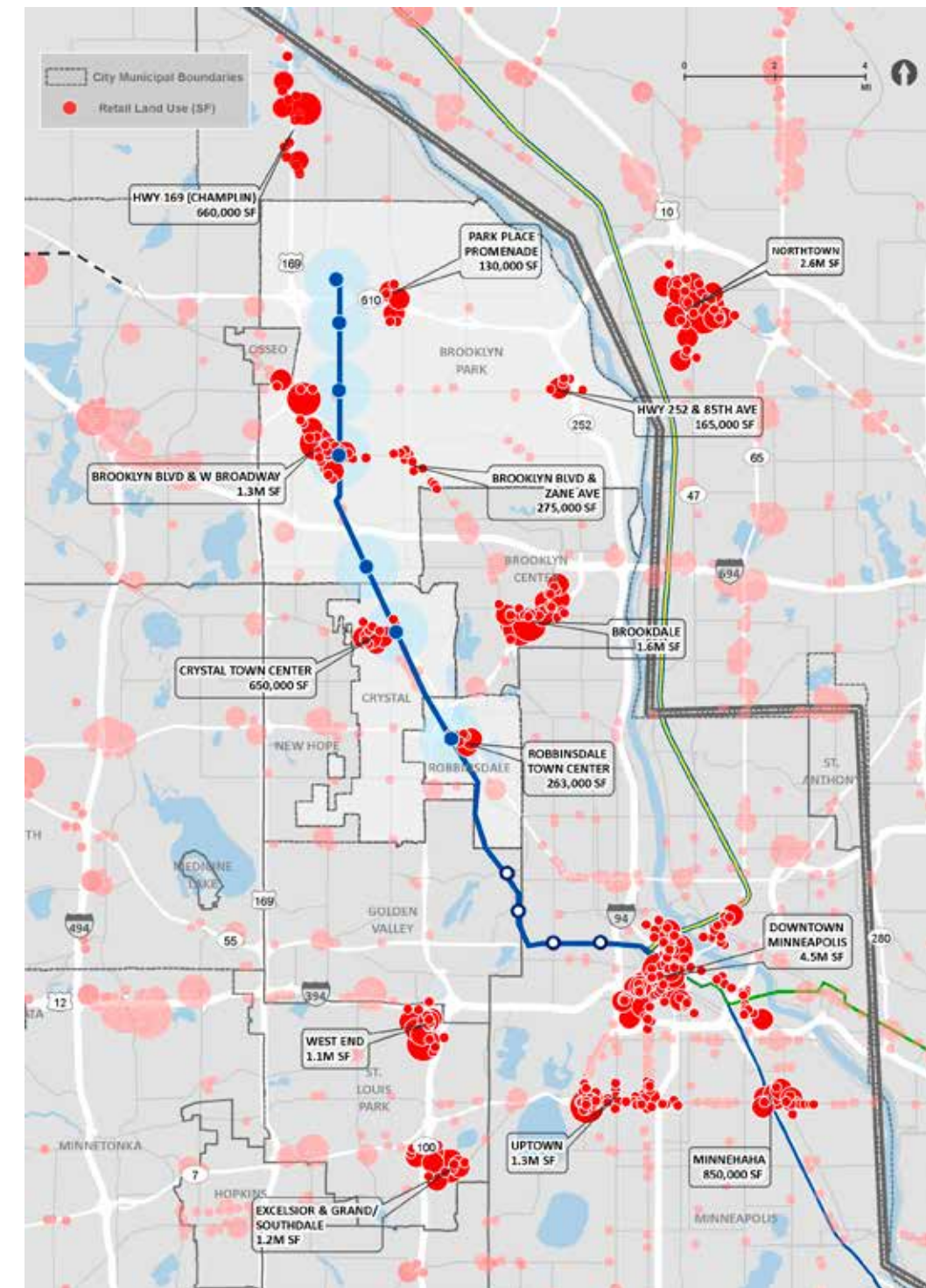


Fig. 5 SELECTED REGIONAL RETAIL CLUSTERS AND MAJOR CENTERS

Source: CoStar, Esri, SB Friedman

Existing Conditions and Site Analyses

The Robbinsdale market analysis studied the walkable area in downtown Robbinsdale near the future Bottineau LRT station at 42nd Avenue (“Robbinsdale Station”). The Study Area is bound by rail tracks to the west, County Road 81 to the east, 43rd Avenue to the north and 40th Avenue to the south. A line of retail strip malls was excluded from the study since the uses were auto-oriented and different from the character of the rest of the study area. This is discussed in the “Retail Local Pattern” section below.

Downtown Robbinsdale is unique among other suburban Bottineau LRT station areas in that it is in an existing downtown, which has a walkable network of streets and an existing cluster of food businesses and restaurants. These provide a strong foundation for additional transit oriented development. A future transit oriented district will not have to be developed from the ground-up, but rather will build on the existing strengths of the area. These strengths include:

- 1 **Urban Form.** The area around the Robbinsdale Station has an existing urban form and dense street grid. An existing stock of one- and two-story structures and relatively wide sidewalks has created a pedestrian environment in the Study Area that could be enhanced through public and private investment. Real estate in walkable locations has become increasingly desired, thus Robbinsdale may be well positioned to use its existing urban form to capture future transit oriented development opportunities.
- 2 **Public Land Ownership.** Some land and existing buildings in the Study Area are under public ownership, including the Hubbard Marketplace. Public property ownership should allow the city to more easily support projects that fulfill key policy goals and help address financial challenges associated with redevelopment.

- 3 **Existing Food Businesses.** Downtown Robbinsdale has a strong cluster of independent food-based businesses and restaurants, as detailed in the “Retail” section below. These restaurants represent a strong foundation of a vibrant transit oriented lifestyle which can help attract additional dining, shopping, housing, and office development.
- 4 **Demographic Change.** Reflecting national trends, Hennepin County’s population is becoming older overall. From 2016-2025 persons in their 70s will be the age group with the greatest growth. Some senior citizens will likely choose 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 smaller, walkable multifamily housing and care facilities in downtown Robbinsdale.

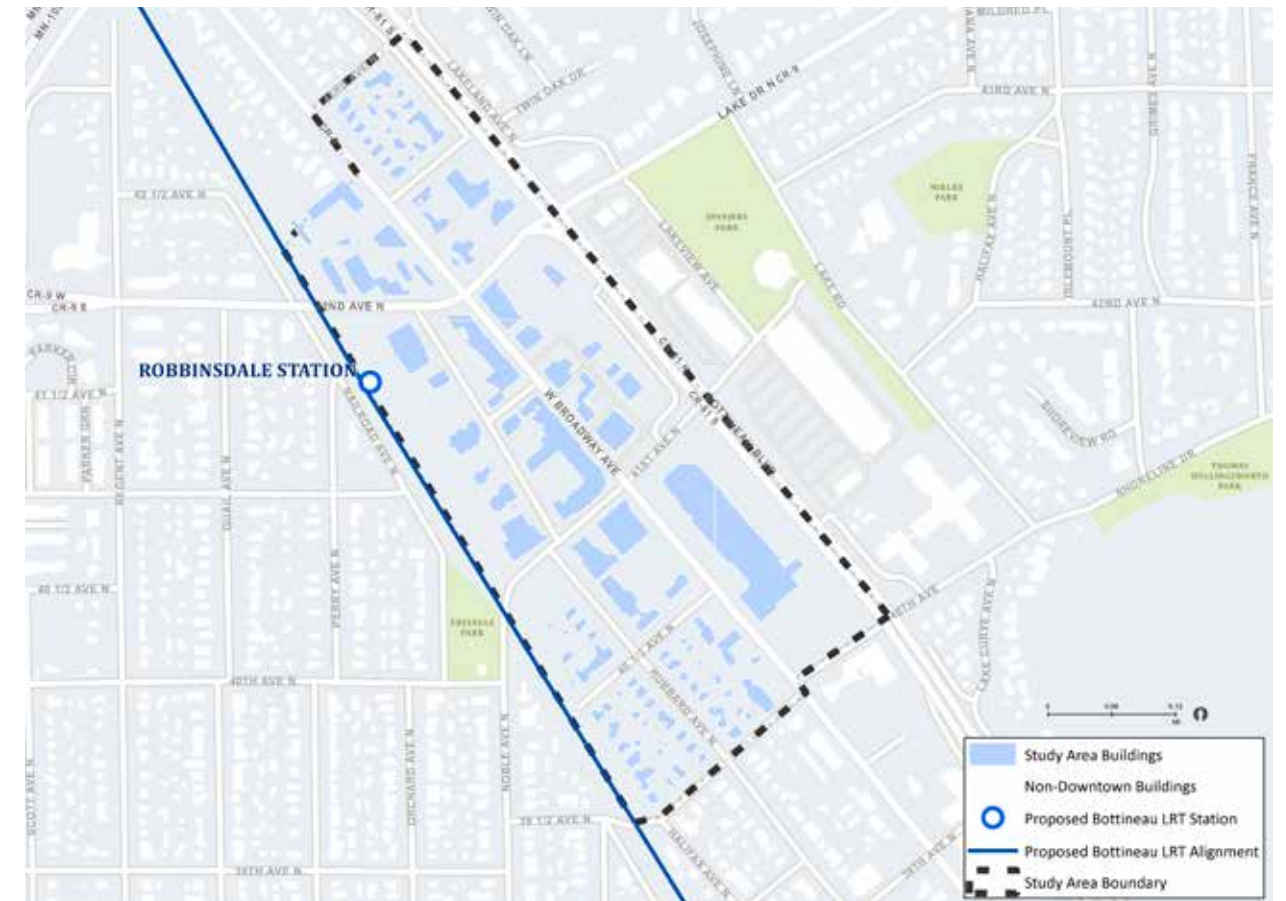


Fig. 6 ROBBINSDALE STUDY AREA
Source: CoStar, Esri, SB Friedman

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 in 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 1.

CORRIDOR-WIDE COMPETITIVE SUPPLY AND PLANNED PROJECTS			
	RESIDENTIAL	RETAIL AND RESTAURANTS	OFFICE
Development in past 25 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Four (4) senior housing facilities built within a ½-mile of the future 42nd Avenue station, totaling 217 units » 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"> » Regional-level retail has tended towards 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. » Concentration of independent restaurants and food-related businesses in older buildings with plenty of street frontage creates a pedestrian experience that does not yet exist near the METRO Blue Line’s other suburban stations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » New development may be limited within the Study Area given the relatively high vacancy of existing medical office space in both downtown Robbinsdale and near North Memorial Hospital. Corporate office unlikely to locate in Study Area near or medium term.
Type of Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Throughout the Bottineau LRT Corridor, all 300 units of new multifamily development in the past 25 years have been senior housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Downtown Robbinsdale contains two types of smaller retail environments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The Study Area has a walkable, small-town environment with independent and highly regarded food and dining businesses around West Broadway Avenue, and › A more typical suburban strip mall environment fronting County Road 81. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Smaller office and medical office for local dentists, physical therapists, and outpatient specialists
Local Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 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"> » Outside the Study Area along County Road 81 are existing tenants including CVS and Dollar Tree with relatively high sales volumes, high tax generation, presumably long leases, and large parking needs. These sorts of users are not likely to be easy or desirable to relocate in the near term. 	<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. » However, development of this size may be more desirable on the east side of County Road 81, where parking and visibility might be better for such users.

TABLE 4 Corridor-wide Competitive Supply and Planned Projects



Fig. 7 EXISTING ROBBINSDALE SENIOR HOUSING
Source: CoStar, Esri, SB Friedman



Fig. 8 EXISTING ROBBINSDALE RETAIL
Source: CoStar, Esri, SB Friedman Development Advisors

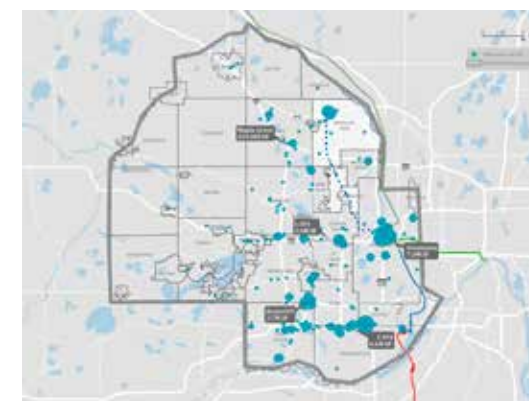


Fig. 9 REGIONAL OFFICE DEVELOPMENT, POST-1990
Source: CoStar, Esri, SB Friedman Development Advisors

Development Opportunities and Other Considerations

Based on the analysis of competitive supply, demographic trends, demand, and existing conditions within the Study Area, the market study identified potential opportunities for near-term and long-term development within the Study Area. The strongest market potential in the near term appears to be for attached housing and retail/dining uses. However, even with some market demand, new development will only be realized with a suitable and properly priced site. Land around the 42nd Avenue station is made up of small occupied parcels, which makes securing a suitably large site one of the largest impediments to development.

Near-term Development Potential

Within the first five years after the opening of the METRO Blue Line Extension in 2021, there may be limited opportunities for development within the Study Area. Given the challenges associated with redevelopment, public financial assistance may be required to make some or all of these products financially feasible. Development products that may be feasible (likely with financial assistance) within this timeframe are included in Table 5.

Long-term Development Potential

Over the next 10 to 20 years, the redevelopment of the Study Area may continue to shift perceptions of Downtown Robbinsdale. If early redevelopment projects and large, transformative infrastructure investments, such as the LRT transit line and parking garage are successful, there may be long-term opportunities for additional development in the Study Area which are included in Table 6.

NEAR-TERM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL			
	RESIDENTIAL	RETAIL AND RESTAURANTS	OFFICE
Number of Units/SF	» A mix of market and affordable buildings, 40 to 100 units each	» May be an opportunity for public-private partnerships	» Due to high existing vacancy, little development potential near-term
Type of Product	» Affordable and senior housing » Market-rate with "off-site" urban amenities, not larger suburban "on-site" amenities	» Infill retail » Chain brands or local stores, depending on policy decisions and financial assistance	» Medical office » Infill first floor space
Opportunities	» Existing street grid and restaurants could attract residential development » Strong demand for affordable and senior housing » Market-rate benefits from proximity to Minneapolis	» In-line neighborhood retail including nail salons, dry cleaners, and convenience tenants may be feasible » Along with restaurants and Walgreens, good base of amenities not found at other stations	» Increased access and amenities of station location » Limited to small medical offices in new first floor storefront space
Constraints	» Few developable parcels » Affordable housing is dependent on city's policies and financing	» Local restaurants have required financial assistance in the past » Growth dependent on city's policies and financing	» High vacancy of existing office space dampens demand for more development » Existing auto-oriented office in Robbinsdale and Crystal may be more desirable in near-term

TABLE 5 Near-term Development Potential

LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL			
	RESIDENTIAL	RETAIL AND RESTAURANTS	OFFICE
Number of Units/SF	» Multiple affordable/market rate buildings with 50-150 units each	» 10,000-50,000 SF, dependent on city's policy	» Dependent on improvement in existing vacancy
Type of Product	» Smaller market-rate building » Multiple affordable projects	» Expanded dining cluster » A small entertainment venue or community movie theater at full-buildout	» Medical office
Opportunities	» As perceptions and market preferences change, there may be an opportunity to increase development or add additional market-rate units	» More residential units should increase dining cluster demand	» Small-scale facilities will fill-in space rather than drive new development projects
Constraints	» MN law and developer liability limits townhouse and condo development	» Competition with existing downtown buildings would increase if new square footage is built	» No long-term changes in growth potential, limited development

TABLE 6 Long-term Development Potential

Urban Design Analysis

Looking closely at all the pieces of a place — its “genetic code” — is a key part of understanding that place and unlocking well-reasoned recommendations. In this 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 Robbinsdale. Representative examples are highlighted on the following page.

- ★ STATION
- ½-MILE RADIUS
- - - 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

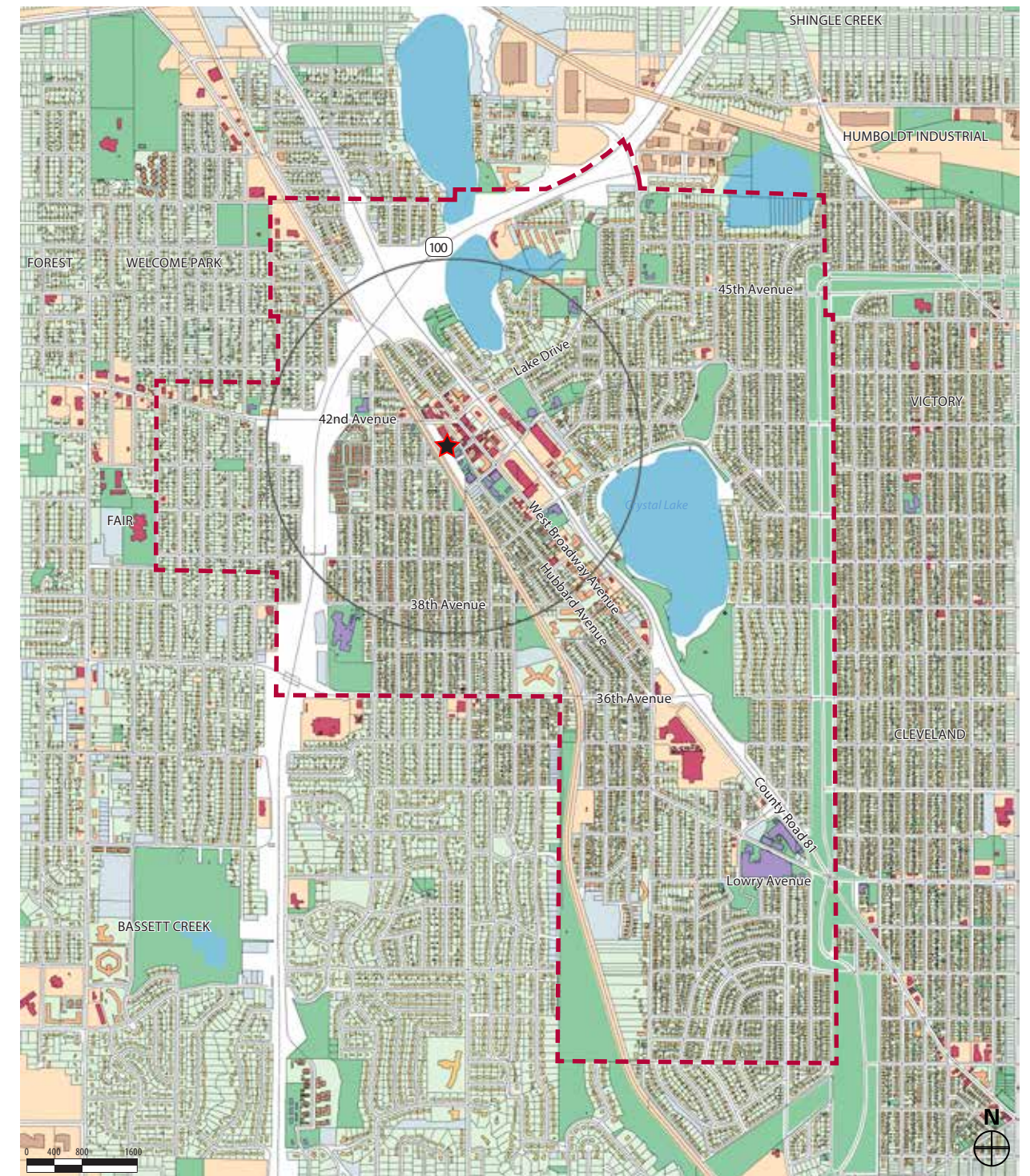


Fig. 10 PORTRAIT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS An illustrative drawing showing the existing conditions of the site and the surrounding area



Fig. 11 **LOCAL STREET PATTERNS** The city is characterized by a grid of local streets that is interrupted and distorted by Highway 100, County Road 81, a freight rail corridor, and natural features, such as lakes. All of the disruptive elements have limited crossing points, funneling traffic onto a few crucial arterial streets.



Fig. 12 **RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS** Residential is the predominant land use in Robbinsdale, filling most blocks created by the local street grid. Highways, commercial/industrial land uses, and open space create voids in the pattern.



Fig. 13 **COMMERCIAL USES** Commercial uses are primarily concentrated along County Road 81. Shopping centers can be identified by their large footprints. The most fine-grained building pattern is along West Broadway Avenue between 41st and 42nd Avenues (County Road 9).



Fig. 14 **TRANSIT** Many existing bus routes crisscross city neighborhoods, radiating out from the Transit Center on Hubbard Avenue. Metro Transit is studying how this system should be enhanced to best leverage the proposed light rail stop.



Fig. 15 **INDUSTRIAL USES** The diagram shows very few existing industrial uses. The freight rail line is the main industrial feature. Public transit will share this corridor with LRT on the east and cargo on the west.

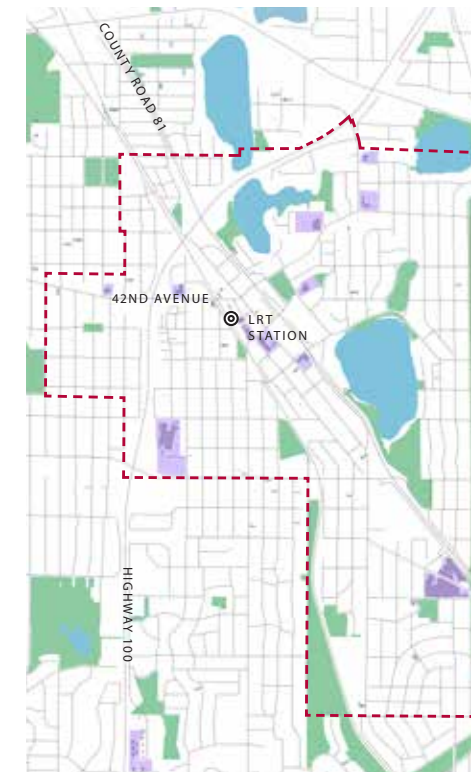


Fig. 16 **PARKS AND INSTITUTIONS** Civic uses are peppered throughout the city, including parks, lakes, natural features, churches, and public buildings. City Hall, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, and the Police/Fire Department are all in close proximity to the proposed LRT station.

Land Use

Robbinsdale has all of the land uses that one would expect to find in a compact city: commercial; office; industrial; institutional; residential; and parks. The city is a mosaic of well-defined residential neighborhoods inset between highway corridors and lakes. With its distinctive mix of main street shops and restaurants, the downtown core acts as the city's symbolic center.

- LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MEDIUM-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MIXED-USE
- COMMERCIAL
- OFFICE
- INSTITUTIONAL
- PUBLIC
- UTILITY/INDUSTRIAL

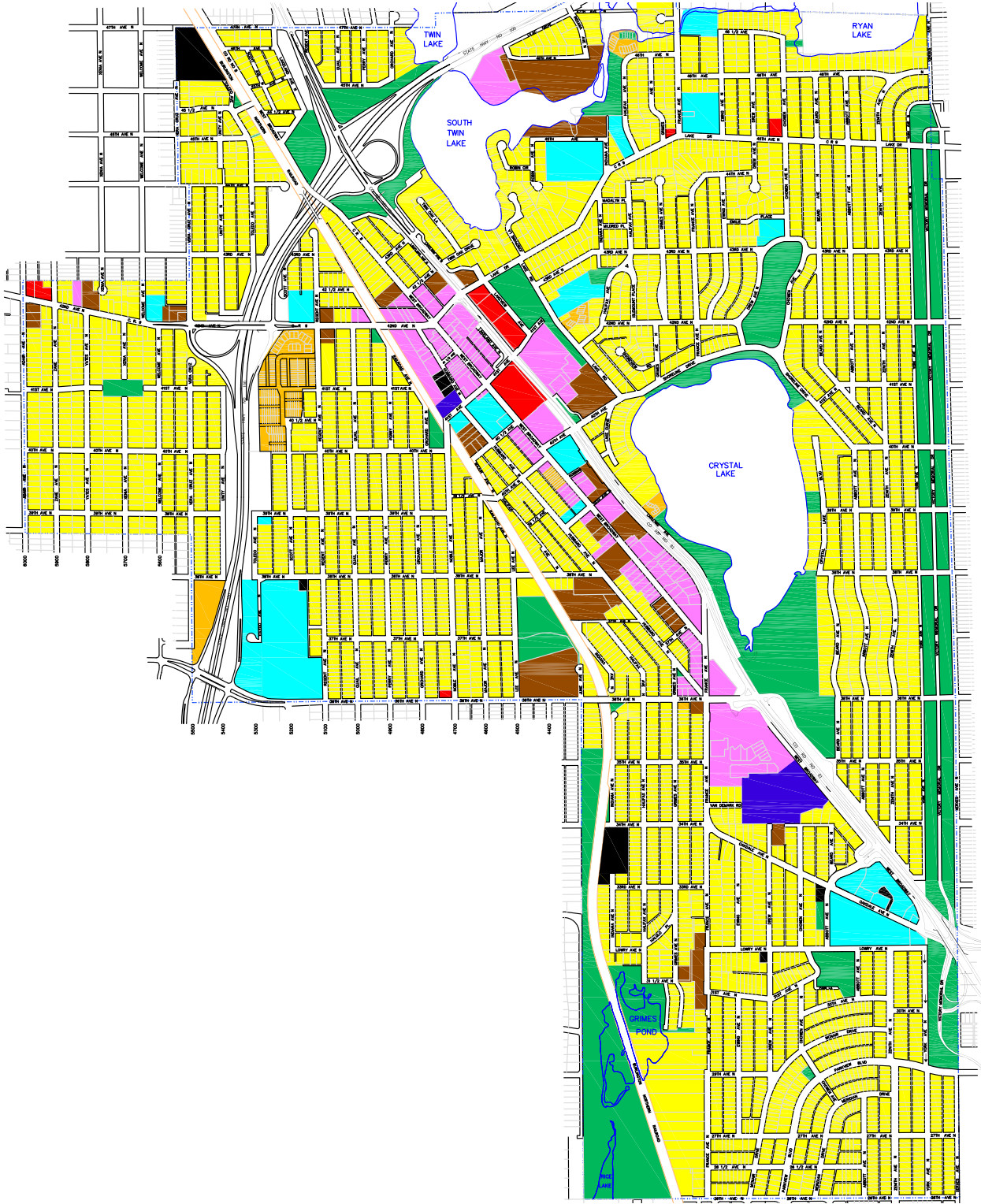


Fig. 17 EXISTING LAND USE PLAN From City of Robbinsdale Comprehensive Plan.

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 advances 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 downtown Robbinsdale, 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, ehicle, 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, the pedestrian and bike networks do have gaps, which create friction points for users. The area is well-served by bus service, although routes will require some tweaking to provide easy connections for users transferring to and from the LRT. One important connection in Robbinsdale will be to North Memorial Medical Center, both for employees and medical center users. The expectation is that all transportation modes will be improved to North Memorial and the surrounding area, including transit connections.

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 Blue Line.

Pedestrian Network

Providing safe, comfortable access to transit for foot traffic is a critical 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 same is true for the bike network which is described in the next section.

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. In Robbinsdale the 10-minute walkshed ends less than a 1/2-mile from the station platform due to the limited number of rail crossings (see 10-Minute Walkshed image below).

A fairly complete sidewalk network already exists in Robbinsdale (see Gap Analysis) making it easier for people to walk to the LRT station. The main challenge for walkers is that high traffic volumes and speeds make some roads stressful to cross. The main points of concern identified by residents and stakeholders for improved pedestrian/bike crossings are primarily concentrated along County Road 81, 42nd Avenue (County Road 9), and the rail corridor. General recommendations for pedestrian improvements, as well as specific recommendations for these main points of concern, are outlined on the following page.

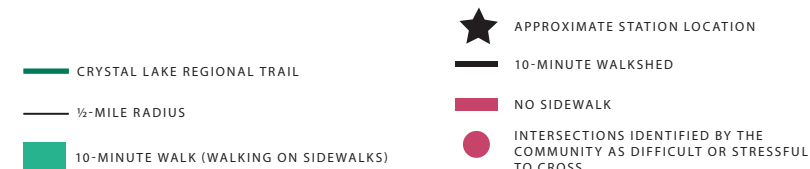
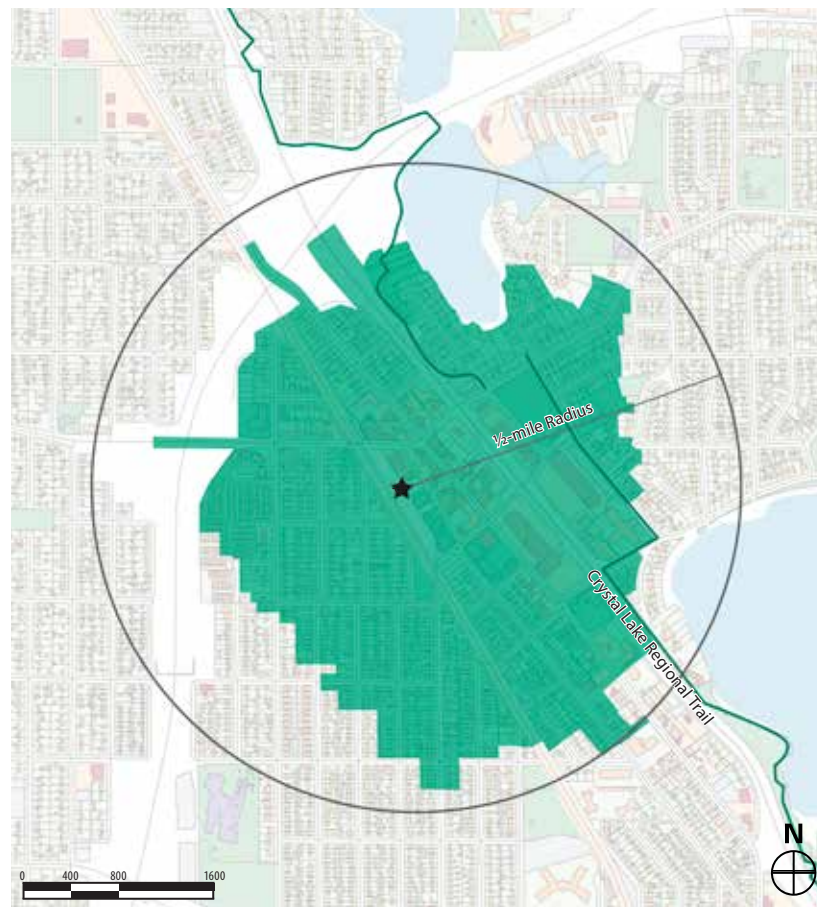


Fig. 18 10-MINUTE WALKSHED

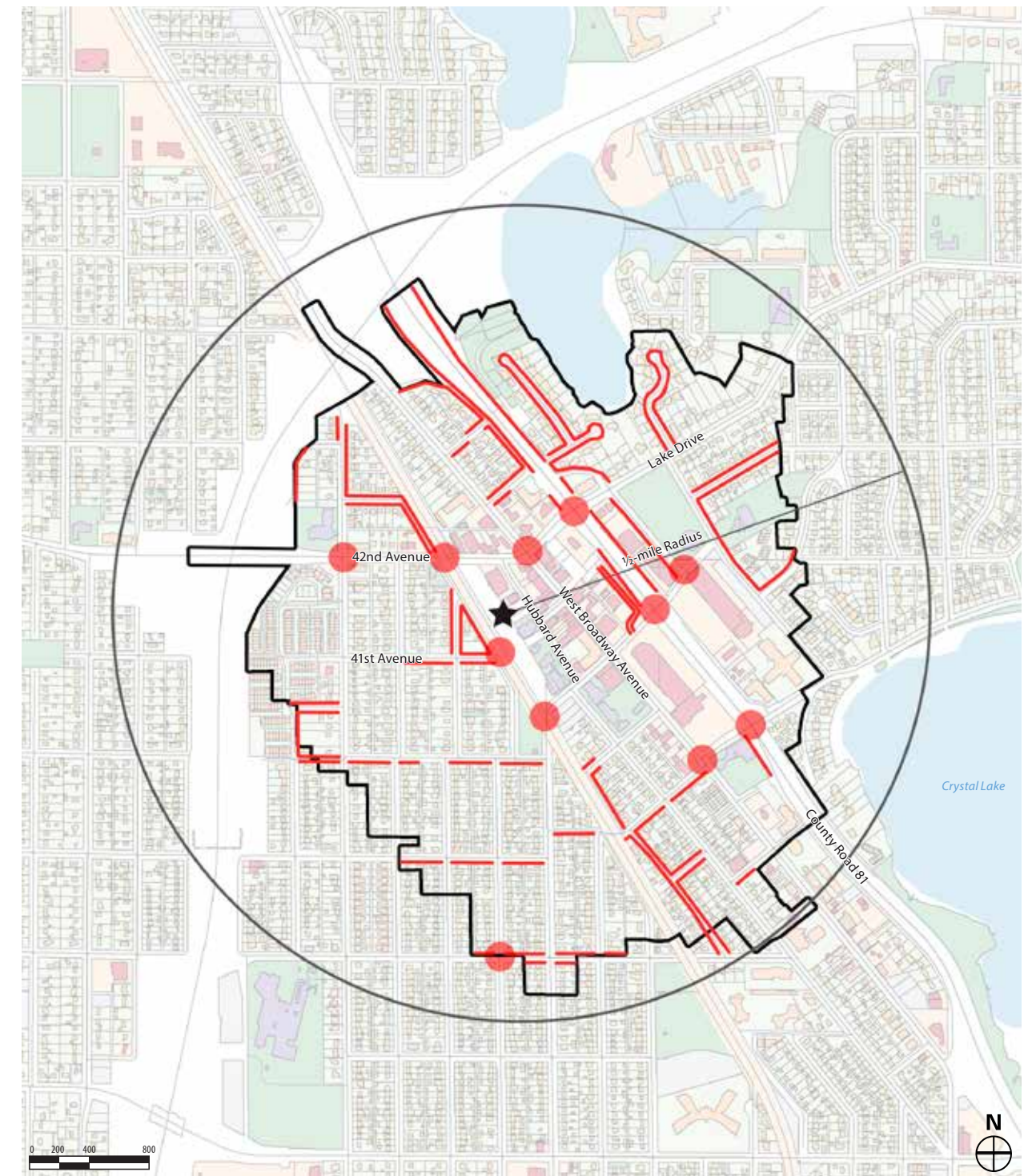


Fig. 19 GAP ANALYSIS In general, Robbinsdale is a pleasant place to walk with many streets having sidewalks on at least one side. Some specific intersections are more challenging for pedestrians to cross due to width and traffic volumes.

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 approved City of Robbinsdale Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan 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.

A critical pedestrian connection identified by stakeholders during the station area planning process was 41½ Avenue between the LRT platform and County Road 81. The proposed 41½ Avenue Promenade is described in more detail on page 28 of this report. The goal is to create both a strong visual and physical connection for pedestrians between the LRT station and downtown Robbinsdale by creating a 13- to 15-foot wide sidewalk on the north side of 41½ between the station platform and County Road 81, and by making streetscape improvements.

For streets within the station area that currently do not have sidewalks, the recommendation is to add sidewalks per the City of Robbinsdale policy:

- » Priority is given to main pedestrian routes, such as routes to schools and transit stops.
- » The city looks at missing sidewalk locations on a case-by-case basis.
- » A public input process is required.

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



Existing Rail Crossing at 41st Avenue North



Pedestrian Improvements at LRT Crossing at 41st Avenue N

Railroad Corridor Improvements

- » Safety and sidewalk upgrades where 41st and 42nd Avenues cross the rail corridor
- » 10- to 15-foot sidewalk along the east side of the LRT and rail corridor between 41st and 42nd Avenue (County Road 9).



Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacons (RRFB) and Pedestrian Crossing Signage



Raised crosswalk

Pedestrian Improvements — General

- » Widen white crosswalk markings (minimum 10 feet)
- » Underlay crosswalk markings with a black field
- » Add stop bar in advance of crosswalk (for visibility)
- » Provide pedestrian and bike crossing signage
- » Rapid flashing beacons
- » Raised crosswalks



Wide crosswalk with pedestrian refuge



Stop bars

Intersection Improvements along County Roads

- » Widen white crosswalk markings (minimum 10 feet)
- » Underlay crosswalk markings with a black field
- » Add stop bar in advance of crosswalk (for visibility)
- » Provide pedestrian and bike crossing signage
- » Along County 81 where it is feasible:
 - » Widen narrow median refuges (min. of 10 feet)
 - » Add walk signal push buttons and breakaway bollards in median refuges

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 are presented on the following page. A summary of the Bottineau Bike Study with a focus on Robbinsdale 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. Robbinsdale features a grid of neighborhood streets and relatively flat terrain which provides a strong foundation for bicycling. Regional bicycling connections are provided by a network of shared-use trails, including the Bassett Creek Regional Trail, Victory Memorial Parkway Regional Trail, Twin Lakes Regional Trail, and Crystal Lake Regional Trail. However, access to the trails and bicycle connections in the station area are limited by gaps in the bicycle network where high traffic volumes and high speeds are uncomfortable for people biking, and may discourage bicycle access to the station. Multi-lane intersections also discourage bicycle access to the station, particularly along County Road 81 and 42nd Avenue (County Road 9).



New bike lanes on parts of County Road 9 in Robbinsdale



Wide crossing distances at 42nd Avenue (County Road 9) and Country Road 81



Bicyclist traveling west towards County Road 81



West Broadway is narrow between 41st and 42nd Avenues so a bike boulevard is planned on Hubbard Avenue, parallel to West Broadway

Priority recommendations of the Bottineau Bike study include:

- » Bicycle lanes on 42nd Avenue (County Road 9) extending west from the existing Lake Drive bicycle lane to Crystal. Bike boxes and a two-way trail on the south side of 42nd Avenue between Hubbard Avenue and West Broadway are proposed to facilitate bicycle connections to the LRT station.
- » Intersection changes on County Road 81 at 42nd Avenue (County Road 9) for safer bicycle and pedestrian crossings, including stop bars set back from high-visibility crosswalks, new median refuges, and smaller corner radii.
- » A bicycle boulevard on Hubbard Avenue between 42nd Avenue (County Road 9), connecting through the street's dead end to the intersection of France Avenue and 36th Avenue.
- » Intersection changes on County Road 81 at 36th Avenue, to improve bicycle access to the Crystal Lake Regional Trail, including high-visibility crosswalks, smaller corner radii, a slip lane with raised crosswalk and pedestrian signals, extended median refuges, and set back stop bars for visibility.
- » A trail on 36th Avenue linking the Crystal Lake Regional Trail to the Hubbard Avenue bike boulevard (at the intersection of France Avenue and 36th Avenue) and on to July Avenue, to connect people biking to Sochacki Park. Further study is needed to determine trail feasibility on 36th Avenue.



This is a bicycle boulevard in Portland, OR. Pavement markings indicate that the roadway is a shared street. A bicycle boulevard is recommended for Hubbard Avenue.



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.



This is a multi-use trail in Hopkins, MN. The Crystal Lake Regional Trail is a new multi-use trail in Robbinsdale.



Bicycle lane on Plymouth Avenue in Minneapolis. Bike lanes are recommended on Noble Avenue in Robbinsdale.

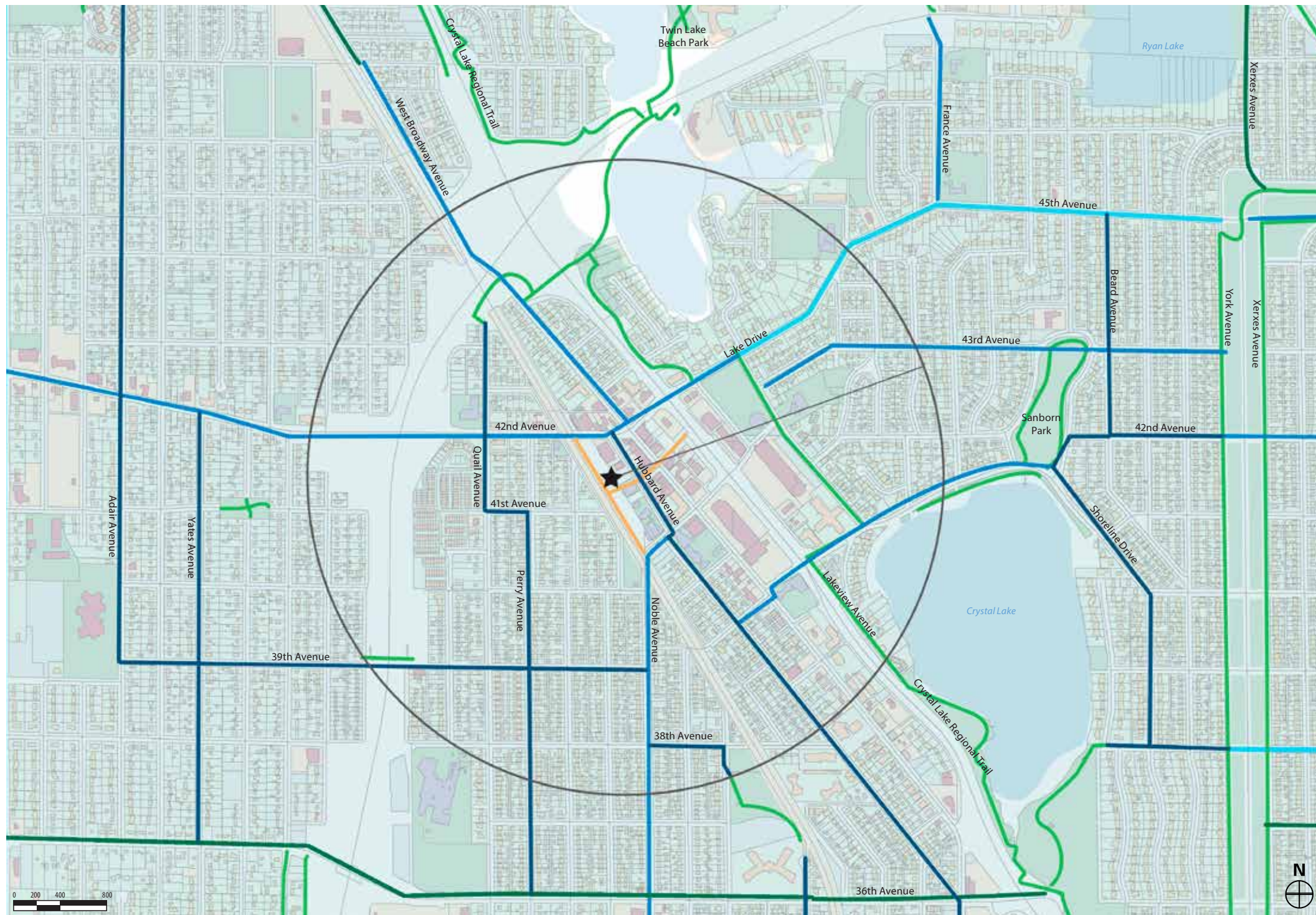


Fig. 20 PROPOSED BIKE ROUTES

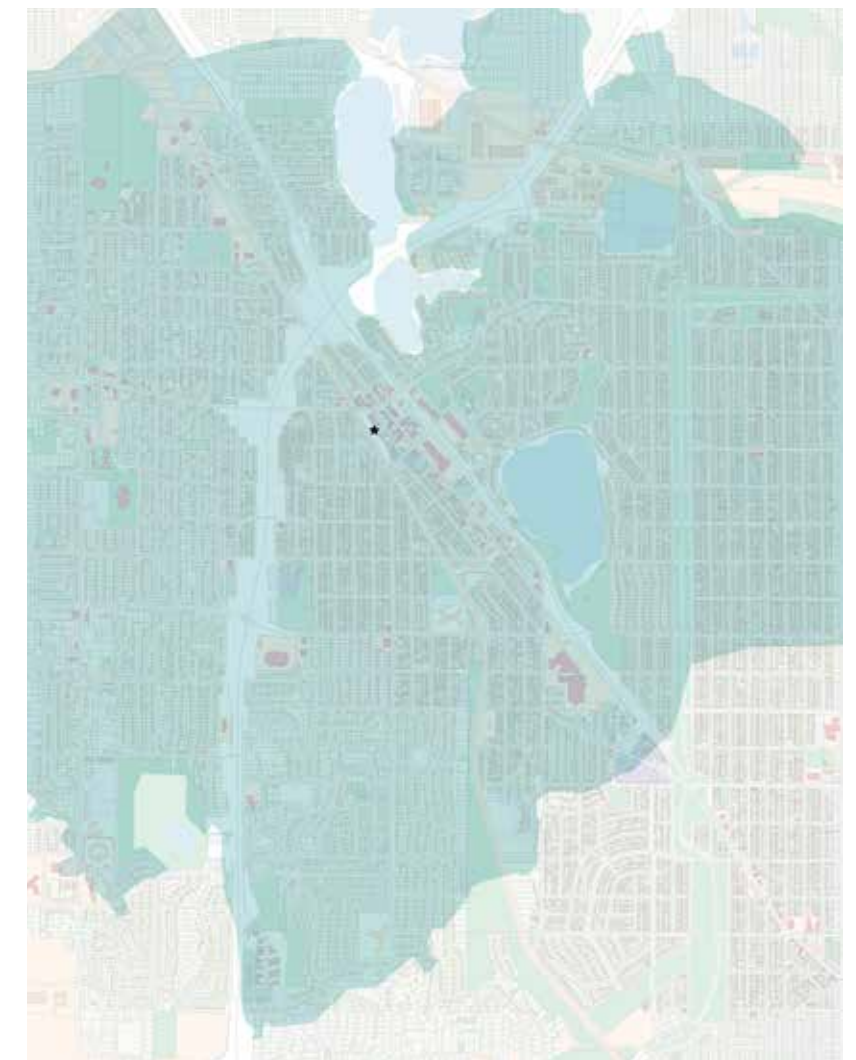


Fig. 21 BIKESHED MAP

- ★ APPROXIMATE STATION LOCATION
- PEDESTRIAN PROMENADE
- EXISTING SHARED-USE TRAIL
- PROPOSED SHARED-USE TRAIL
- EXISTING ON-STREET BIKE LANE
- PROPOSED ON-STREET BIKE LANE
- PROPOSED BIKE BOULEVARD
- PROPOSED TRAIL AND SIDEWALK
- 20-MINUTE BIKESHED

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.



BIKESHARE



LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT



METRO TRANSIT

The Bottineau LRT will be a new transit highway within the regional transit system. The design features of this world-class asset have been well documented. Metro Transit’s bus service is already prevalent throughout Robbinsdale (see existing route map) and the Robbinsdale Transit Center, located in the Hubbard Marketplace building, currently acts as a bus transfer point for a number of bus routes. It features an indoor climate-controlled waiting area and outdoor bike parking. These features will also be included in the new Robbinsdale Transit Center which will be integrated into the proposed parking garage that will house a park and ride, bicycle parking, and other transit facilities. Metro Transit will be studying bus route modifications prior to construction of the new LRT line in order to best leverage this new transit option.

Beyond public transit and the pedestrian and bike network, a variety of other options are likely to be used by consumers to get between the station and their final destinations.

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)

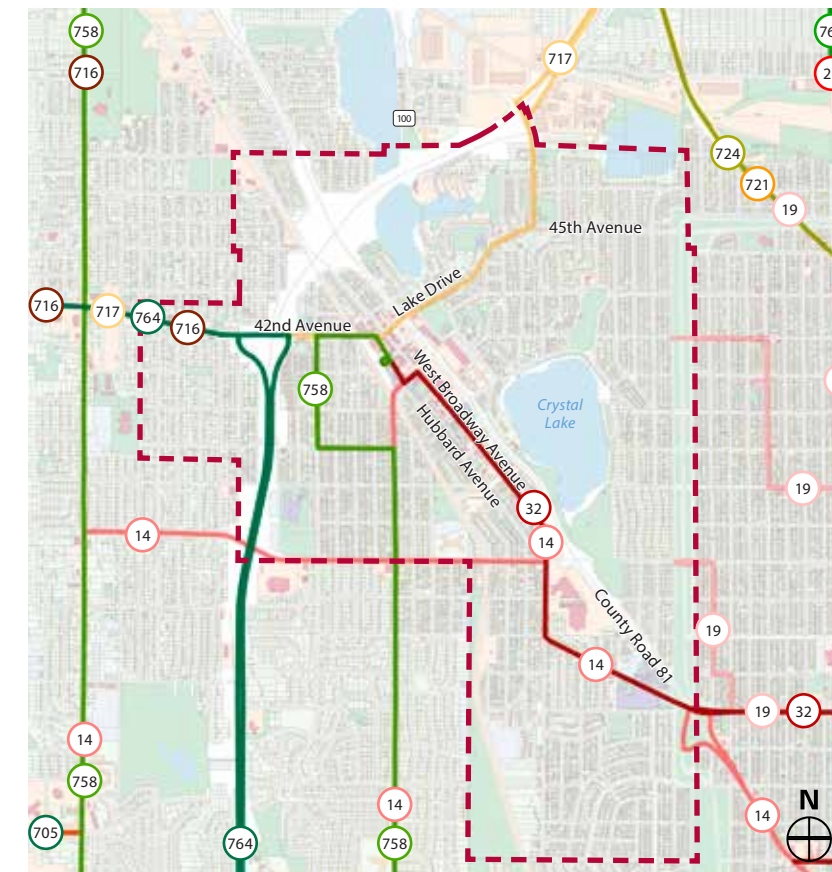


Fig. 22 EXISTING BUS ROUTES

Robbinsdale Station Area Plan

ROBBINSDALE STATION AREA PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- » Placemaking
 - › Reinforce the main street character of downtown
 - › Keep the parking garage in scale with West Broadway buildings
 - › Create a welcoming sense of arrival at the station
 - › Reimagine the Hubbard Marketplace as a TOD
 - › Reinforce Robbinsdale as a region-wide dining destination
- » Connectivity
 - › Put buses in the parking garage
 - › Connect all modes of transportation to the light rail station
 - › Encourage pedestrian and bike friendly crosswalks and railroad crossings
 - › Create walkable and bikeable streets
 - › Connect and safely balance all modes of transportation at the light rail station
 - › Manage traffic to and from the parking garage efficiently with intersection improvements
- » Land Use
 - › Take advantage of compact building design and reduced parking requirements within a ½-mile radius of stations
 - › Encourage the market to take advantage of permitted mixing of land uses
 - › Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
 - › Continue to proactively update the city's zoning code and policies to support new, innovative land uses that complement existing uses and embody new trends
 - › Provide adequate free parking for businesses downtown

There are two areas in Robbinsdale that this report focuses on given the important role that West Broadway plays as a main street: 1) a traditional ½-mile radius, or 10-minute walk, from the proposed LRT station; and 2) an elliptical area that extends along West Broadway, the commercial spine of the city. The Station Area Plan addresses connections and access to the station for all modes of transportation, future land use implications, and placemaking considerations within these areas. 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 are documented on the following pages.

The vision for downtown Robbinsdale defined by community stakeholders is for an enhanced version of what it is today — a unique and eclectic main street surrounded by compact infill development. As the only existing main street on the Blue Line Extension, community stakeholders consistently underscored the importance of maintaining the “small town” character of downtown while leveraging the LRT station to create opportunities to support existing and new business. A key element is to visually and physically connect the LRT station to the heart of Robbinsdale’s downtown.

The light rail station and associated infrastructure improvements will accelerate the market potential of downtown Robbinsdale. Public investment should spur private development, allowing strategic initiatives and the overall vision to be achieved more quickly.

Public improvements fall into several categories, each of which addresses fundamental needs. These requirements center on the need to provide pedestrian and bike enhancements, support the redevelopment of underutilized property, and create attractive points of arrival.

The plan also includes specific recommendations for both near-term and long-term catalytic projects within the study area. These projects should serve to create momentum for additional revitalization efforts and private investment.

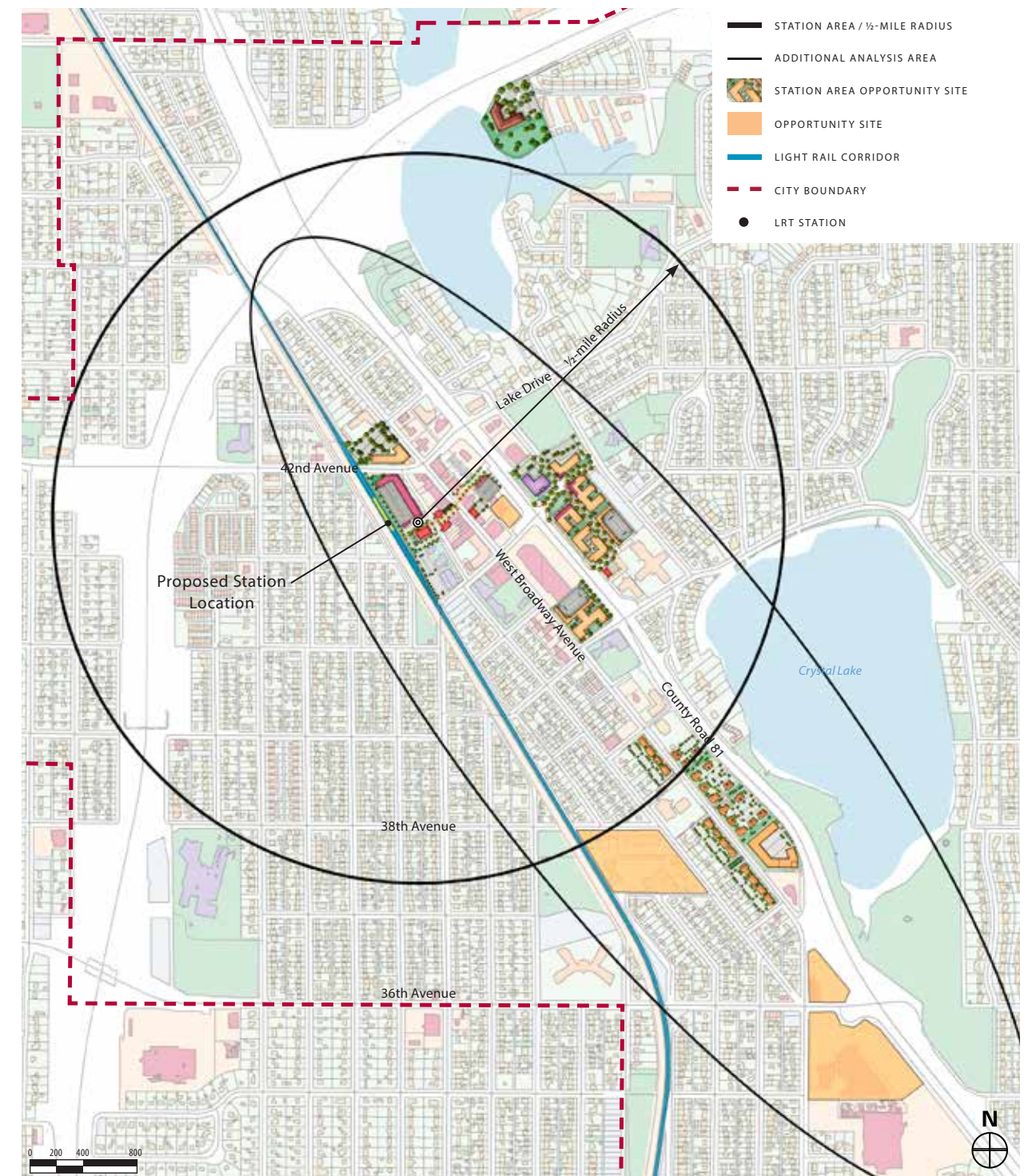


Fig. 23 ILLUSTRATIVE STATION AREA PLAN Light rail can be a catalyst for transit oriented development initiatives in and around downtown

Placemaking and Cultural Diversity

Downtown Robbinsdale has already developed a strong sense of place, with sidewalks and special paving along West Broadway, destination restaurants, and iconic buildings like the Hubbard Marketplace. Robbinsdale is home to a diverse population and the design of places within the station area should promote cultural, social, and economic inclusion. A range of businesses, services, and places near the station should foster engagement, enjoyment, and pride in Downtown Robbinsdale.

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. Robbinsdale already has an advantage with its distinctive downtown which has helped make it a regional destination. The addition of light rail gives the city an opportunity to strengthen and expand its strength as a great place to live.

Hubbard Marketplace, 41½ Avenue Promenade, the two Gateway Plazas, and Hubbard Avenue all offer unique chances for authentic placemaking. Strategies for placemaking and promoting diversity may include widening sidewalks, planting trees, enhancing streetscape, installing street furniture that encourages all people to spend time such as benches, 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.



Opportunities along 41½ Avenue for a pedestrian promenade



Adjacent to the station, public walkways and gateway plazas would create a sense of place



41½ Avenue represents a unique opportunity for placemaking in the public realm



The transit garage and TOD liner will add character to the station area and create places for people to gather



West Broadway has food and beverage destinations that will help to seed a more robust place around the station

ROBBINSDALE STATION

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 rents, and suitability for future mixed-use. For example, sites with excess surface parking, development potential, 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. 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 the opportunity.

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

- 1 Downtown Core
- 2 42nd Avenue TOD
- 3 Robin Center
- 4 U.S. Bank Site
- 5 Lakeview Area
- 6 Twin Lakes Senior Housing
- 7 38th Avenue Rail Corridor Site
- 8 Legion/St. Petersburg Site
- 9 Terrace Mall Site

- ⊙ LRT STATION
- ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS AREA
- STATION AREA/10-MINUTE WALKSHED
- OPPORTUNITY SITE
- LIGHT RAIL CORRIDOR
- - - CITY BOUNDARY

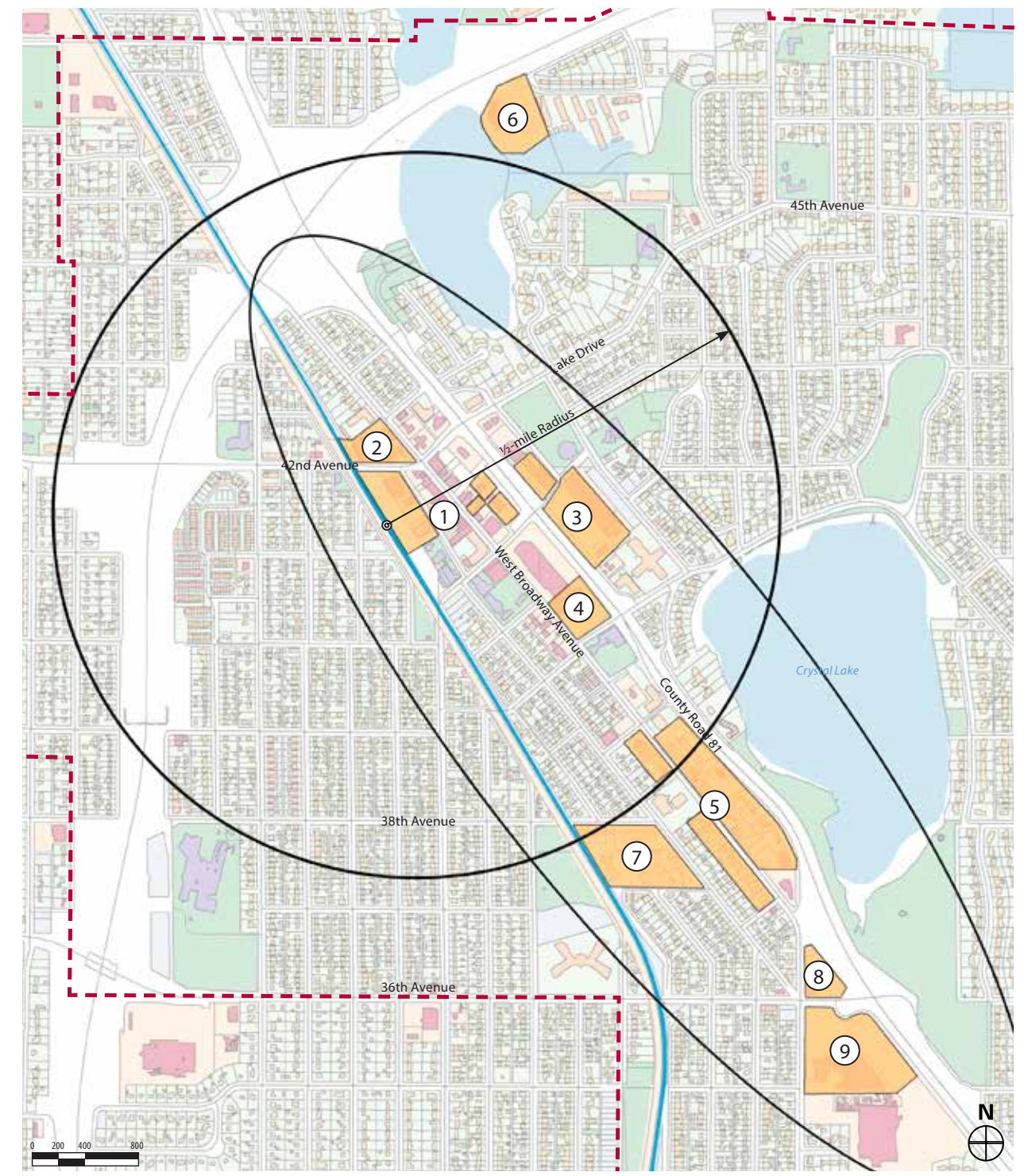


Fig. 24 OPPORTUNITY SITES IN PROXIMITY TO PROPOSED LRT STATION

ROBBINSDALE STATION

Downtown Core

Within the Station Area Plan, the downtown core is the central focus and is defined by 41st Avenue and 42nd Avenue (County Road 9), the rail corridor, and County Road 81. It is characterized by main street uses along West Broadway that feature a high percentage of food and beverage offerings. The market study refers to this area as a regional or sub-regional dining destination.

With the LRT station comes the opportunity and need for additional parking, enhanced pedestrian and bike connections, streetscape improvements, and targeted development in this mixed-use core. The mixed-use core located along West Broadway will grow to include Hubbard and 41½ Avenues. Primary initiatives include:

- A Parking Garage with a Transit Oriented Development Liner Building
- B 41½ Avenue Pedestrian Promenade
- C Hubbard Marketplace
- D Plazas Providing Open Space
- E Infill Retail along Hubbard, 41½, and West Broadway Avenues

ESTIMATED DOWNTOWN CORE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL			
Site	Commercial SF (1st Floor)	Commercial SF (2nd Floor)	Total SF
TOD Liner (large ramp)	22,025	26,345	48,370
Broadway	4,720	0	4,720
41½ Avenue Promenade	5,700	0	5,700
TOD Liner (small ramp)	2,800	0	2,800
Hubbard Marketplace	6,000	8,000	14,000
Total	41,245 SF	34,345 SF	75,590 SF

TABLE 8 Development Potential

PROVIDED PARKING	
Site	Provided Parking (approx.)
Park and Ride Parking Ramp	550 spaces
City Parking Ramp	150 spaces
Total	approx. 700 spaces

TABLE 9 Development Potential

- RETAIL BUILDING
- TOD LINER
- PEDESTRIAN PATH
- PARKING
- PUBLIC PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
- APPROXIMATE PLATFORM LOCATION
- LIGHT RAIL CORRIDOR
- HEAVY RAIL LINE



Fig. 25 PLAN OF PROPOSED INITIATIVES IN THE DOWNTOWN CORE (OPPORTUNITY SITE 1)

Parking Garage and TOD Liner

A critical element of the Bottineau LRT is the construction of a 500 plus car parking garage in proximity to the Robbinsdale Station. Based on concerns expressed by the stakeholders at the July 11, 2015 community meeting regarding the scale and location of the parking garage, it became a central focus of the design workshop. UDA worked with the BLRT Project Office, the city, Hennepin County, and other stakeholders to test numerous locations and configurations before consensus was reached. Advantages of this site include:

- » Direct access from the station platform
- » Room for an indoor bus transfer station
- » Visual connection between West Broadway and the station platform (down 41½ Avenue)
- » Room for a TOD development liner
- » Room to step back ramp
- » Good access from Hubbard Avenue

In general, the plan envisions a four-story rectangular garage wrapped on three sides by a Transit Oriented Development liner (TOD liner) that is two stories tall. The citizens of Robbinsdale mentioned scale repeatedly as an important consideration. They requested that the garage/liner respect the existing one-story main street character along West Broadway. To this end, the new structure should be designed to look like a series of two-story buildings versus one monolithic edifice.

Car and bus access is planned at logical points along Hubbard Avenue. A passenger drop-off adjacent to the south face of the building will provide a convenient approach to both light rail and buses. Additional pedestrian/bike access is proposed via a wide sidewalk along the west side of the building between 41st and 42nd Avenues (County Road 9).



ROBBINSDALE STATION AERIAL View looking Northwest at the new TOD liner and parking garage



EXISTING EMI BUILDING



Fig. 26 PARKING GARAGE ACCESS PLAN

- VEHICULAR ENTRY/EXIT
- BUS MOVEMENT
- PASSENGER DROP-OFF

Municipal Parking

Consideration for parking must also be given to Robbinsdale's existing downtown uses. There is already a surprising amount of pressure on the existing public parking supply. Business owners reported that spots are hard to find during the weekday peak (10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.). There is concern that development related to transit will exacerbate the current situation. Signing on-street spaces with a "two-hour limit" is recommended to keep the most convenient parking spaces turning over and accessible to people visiting downtown businesses. However, a municipal parking ramp east of Broadway may ultimately be required to increase the overall supply of parking. The ideal location for this ramp, which could house 150 plus vehicles, is somewhere between 41st and 41½ Avenues facing County Road 81. If it is constructed adjacent to a city street it should have a one-story commercial liner.



Fig. 27 ROBBINSDALE STATION AERIAL View looking Southeast showing the new TOD liner and other Downtown Core development

41½ Avenue Promenade

41½ Avenue is a quirky midblock lane that subdivides downtown into four pedestrian-friendly blocks. It currently looks more like a parking lot than a street. Skinny sidewalks and lots of asphalt reinforce this image. Given its strategic location, the introduction of light rail will require 41½ Avenue to strike a balance between its existing function and the accommodation of foot traffic.

The Station Area Plan calls for constructing a 13- to 15-foot wide pedestrian promenade (wide sidewalk) along 41½ between the station platform and County Road 81. The promenade is envisioned as running against the north side of the Hubbard Marketplace building, then the north side of 41½ between Hubbard and West Broadway, and finally against the north facade of the hardware store and proposed municipal parking ramp, after crossing West Broadway. This pedestrian spine will guide transit users from the sidewalks on the major north/south streets to and from the new station. As a parallel wayfinding device, the LRT platform and the end of the light rail cars, should be visible from the clock tower on West Broadway.

Additional improvements to 41½ Avenue will include streetscape enhancements, including pavers, street trees, furniture, and room for outdoor dining. The segment of 41½ Avenue between West Broadway and Hubbard Avenues will remain one-way headed west, but some angled parking will need to be changed to parallel parking in order to widen sidewalks for pedestrians on both sides of the street. Further study is needed to finalize the design. As reimagined, the improved street will be a new entry into downtown from the LRT station and the ideal location for local festivals, events, and celebrations.



41½ AVENUE VISION LOOKING TOWARDS HUBBARD MARKET A new civic place in Downtown Robbinsdale



Fig. 28 41½ AVENUE ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



41½ AVENUE EXISTING CONDITIONS Parking lot character with narrow sidewalks

PROPOSED STREET SECTION ALTERNATIVES FOR 41½ AVENUE



Fig. 29 41½ AVENUE PROPOSED STREET SECTION OPTION 1 One side of diagonal parking and one side of parallel parking take advantage of the current paving area and provide plenty of street parking, while the widened sidewalks help achieve the desired pedestrian-friendly character.

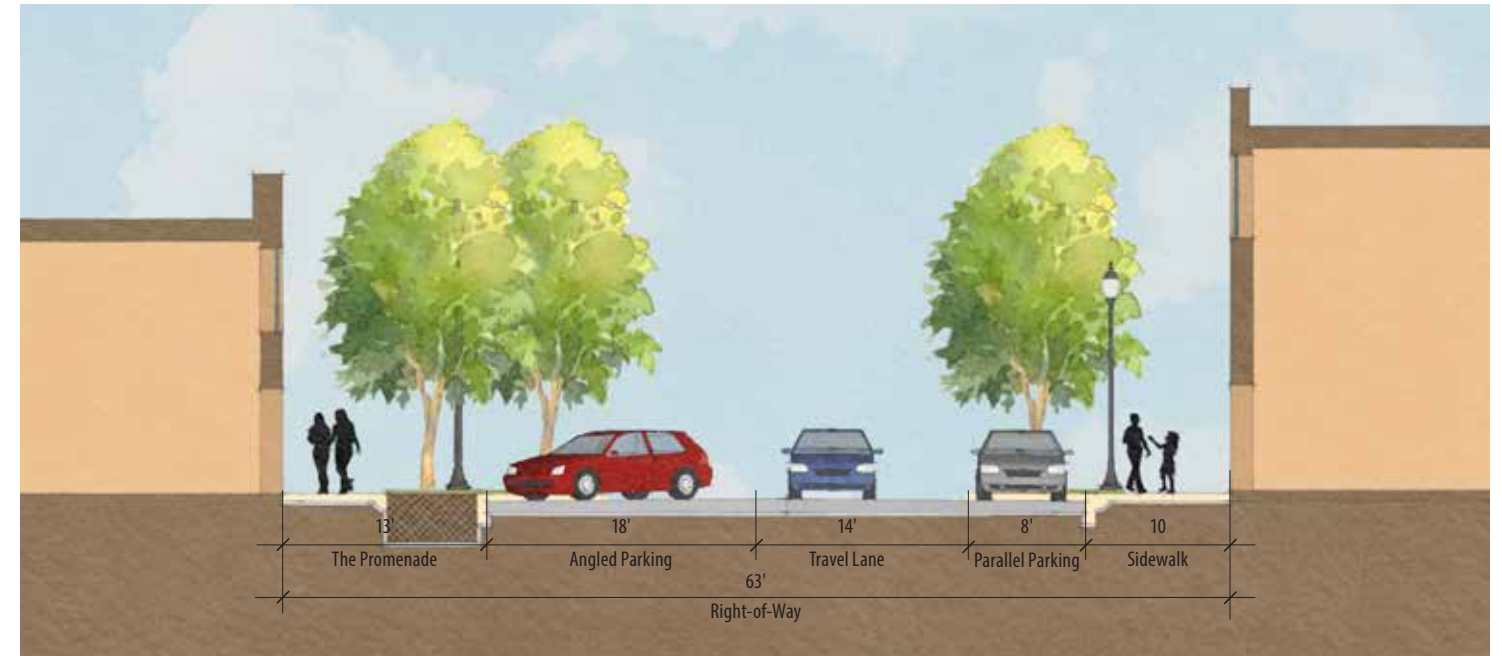


Fig. 30 41½ AVENUE PROPOSED STREET SECTION OPTION 2 One side of diagonal parking and one side of parallel parking take advantage of the current paving area. A park strip is located on just one side to allow for a 14-foot travel lane that will accommodate emergency vehicles.



Fig. 31 SECTION LOCATION PLAN FOR OPTIONS 1 AND 2 Diagonal parking

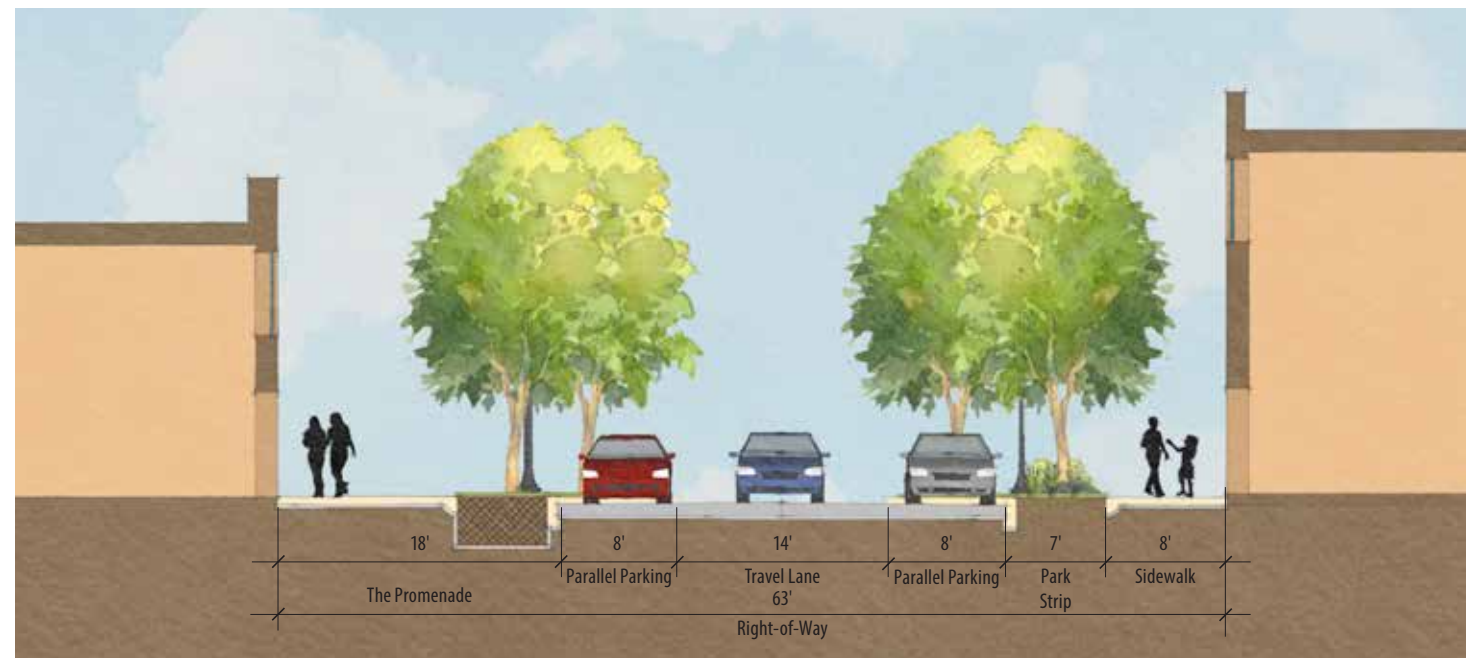


Fig. 32 41½ AVENUE PROPOSED STREET SECTION OPTION 3 Parallel parking on both sides provides less parking than the use of diagonal spaces, but generates a much wider pedestrian area on both sides of the street. The pedestrian promenade is widened, and both the park strip and sidewalk on the other side are enlarged. This section will require infill of some of the current paving.



Fig. 33 SECTION LOCATION PLAN FOR OPTION 3 Parallel parking

Hubbard Marketplace

Hubbard Marketplace is a nostalgic civic building in Robbinsdale, terminating the vista down 41½ Avenue from West Broadway. As was mentioned above, Metro Transit currently owns the building and uses it as a transit center. The transit center and bus facilities will be moved from the Hubbard Marketplace into the parking garage once that facility is complete. The existing building will then be available for non-transit uses. The city's preference is for a private business to take over ownership and operation of the building. It has tall bays with a perimeter mezzanine on the first floor and a large room above. This configuration dates back to the building's former use as City Hall and the fire station.

The most important reuse objectives are to pull activity from West Broadway to the station platform and to animate the sidewalk with highly active uses. This will have the dual benefit of growing the downtown core and creating eyes on the street for improved safety along Hubbard Avenue and around the LRT station and transit center. Suggestions for future uses included a destination café or restaurant at grade with loft offices or a gathering space above. 41½ Avenue will loop around the building to provide improved access and convenient parking.



HUBBARD MARKETPLACE VISION LOOKING EAST Civic icon restored to its former role as downtown anchor



HUBBARD MARKETPLACE EXISTING CONDITIONS

Urban Open Space

Stakeholders and residents recommended creating small urban plazas rather than adding large parks in the area. The result is a proposal for a new compact public square (1) on the west side of the Hubbard Marketplace that will serve as a new front door to downtown and welcome transit riders to Robbinsdale. The concept for this welcoming gesture is illustrated in the image on the right.

A second smaller plaza (2) is recommended as a gateway to downtown at 42nd Avenue, just east of the rail corridor. The “Historic Robbinsdale” sign atop the EMI building currently marks this entrance. A similar sign affixed to the proposed liner building is envisioned at this location with a landscaped civic space below.

Both plazas could be integrated with the private business uses at Hubbard Marketplace and the new TOD liner to encourage public/private partnership in the construction, and long-term maintenance of these spaces.



VIEW 1 41½ Avenue Public Square

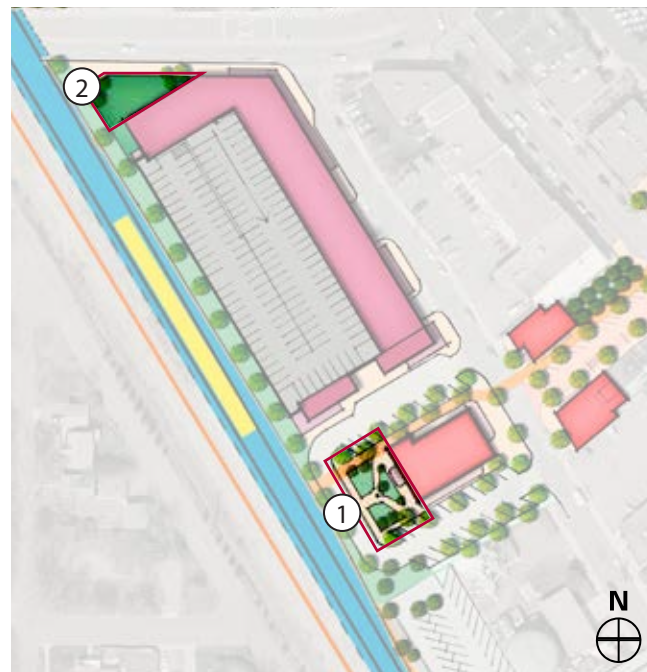


Fig. 34 URBAN OPEN SPACE PLAN VIEW



VIEW 2 Gateway plaza concept

Hubbard Avenue and Infill Retail

Hubbard Avenue currently functions primarily as a service street for businesses that face West Broadway. In the comments from community meetings, residents mention that the uses along Hubbard Avenue feel disconnected from downtown Robbinsdale. This context will change with the new LRT station and additional commercial uses peppered down the street. Hubbard will never be a main street, but it can complement uses on Broadway by providing a second front door for establishments like the new brewery/taproom, or a primary address for future uses in Hubbard Marketplace and the proposed TOD liner along the parking garage. If West Broadway is the traditional retail street then Hubbard should be the fashionable alley.

Although Robbinsdale's downtown core is largely built out, there are three compact sites that have been identified (beyond those mentioned above) as opportunity sites. These include the two corner buildings at the intersection of Hubbard and 41½ Avenue and the pawn shop along West Broadway. The market potential of all three sites will be significantly enhanced by additional foot traffic and visibility associated with the LRT. Retail uses that face the street are the preferred tenant.



HUBBARD AVENUE VISION Transformed from a service street into a fashionable pedestrian-friendly alley

ROBBINSDALE STATION

Other Initiatives

Several opportunity sites within the ½-mile area of the station area were studied in more depth. Opportunities for mixed-use development exist in close proximity to the LRT station, and medium-density and high-density residential development could occur over time on several opportunity sites further from the immediate station area. Five of these areas are discussed below:

- ② 42nd Avenue TOD
- ③ Robin Center
- ④ U.S. Bank Site
- ⑤ Lakeview Area
- ⑥ Twin Lakes Senior Housing

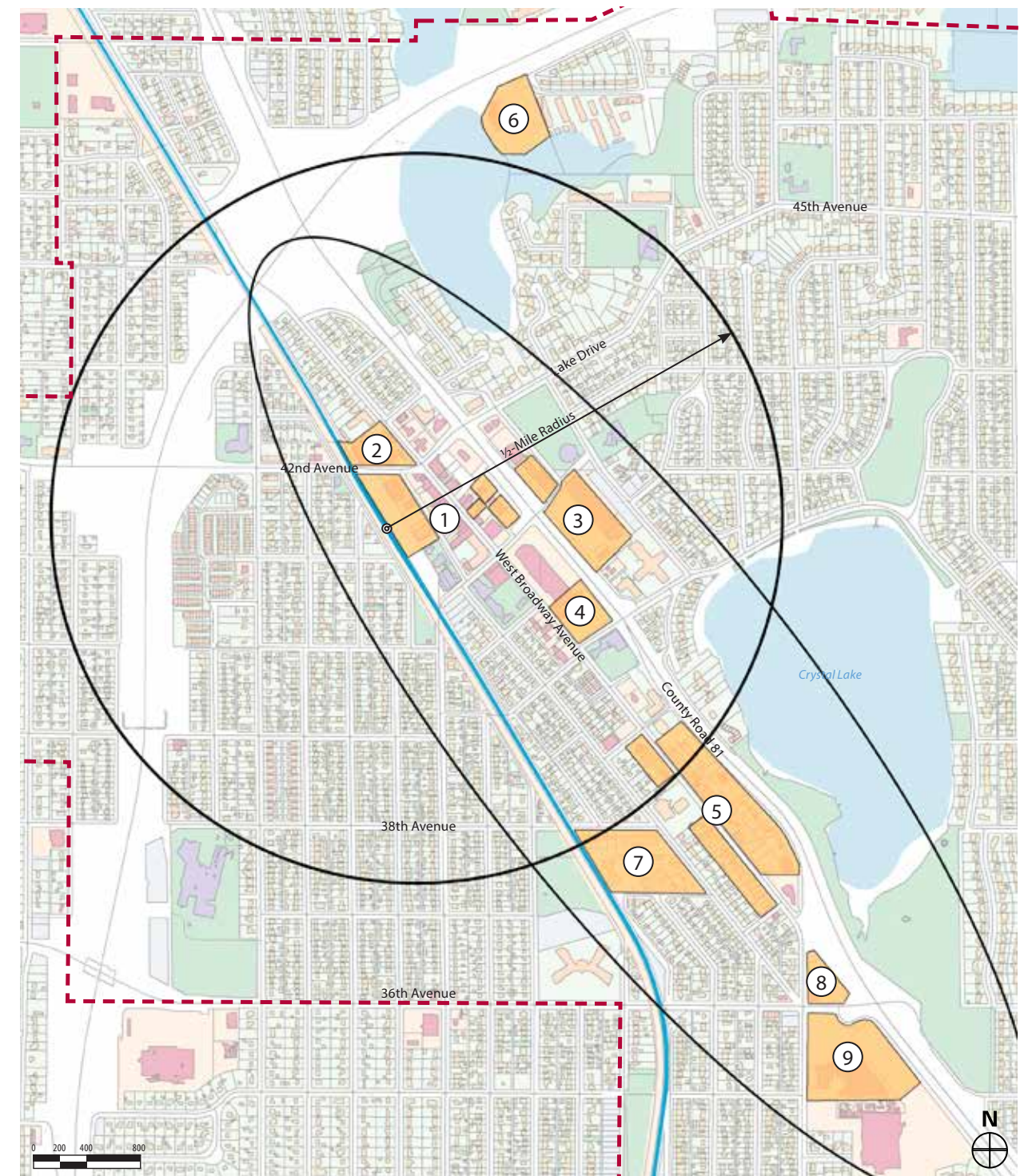
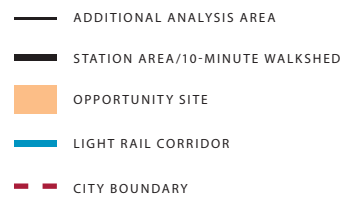


Fig. 35 PLAN OF INITIATIVE SITES



Fig. 36 INITIATIVE 1 PLAN 42nd Avenue TOD Transformation

42nd Avenue TOD

The northwest corner of 42nd Avenue (County Road 9) and West Broadway Avenue is an ideal site for high-density, mixed-use development in close proximity to the Bottineau LRT. It is located one block from the LRT station, making it an excellent housing option for commuters. While many of the existing structures are underutilized and nearing obsolescence, the primary challenge to redevelopment is that the site is currently comprised of multiple parcels/owners.



Fig. 37 INITIATIVE 2 PLAN Robin Center Transformation

Robin Center

The redevelopment of Robin Center is a significant opportunity for the Robbinsdale community. The site's proximity to downtown and the new LRT station make a mixed-use district an ideal option for redevelopment, and the 6.77-acre site would allow for a density of 58 units per acre. A modern city hall is included as part of this concept (shown in purple). The location is flexible, but it should be in a highly visible place that is worthy of a civic building. The major constraint to the redevelopment of Robin Center is the high water table in that area, implying a need for more complicated construction methods.



Fig. 38 INITIATIVE 3 PLAN U.S. Bank Site Transformation

U.S. Bank Site

The U.S. Bank site is another opportunity for high-density residential development within the station area. The 2.25-acre site allows for 54 units per acre with the incorporation of a parking deck. Currently, the site is an important employment use within the city, so redevelopment should only occur if U.S. Bank relocates or if parking can be accommodated elsewhere, allowing for the parking lot to be redeveloped.

ESTIMATED DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OUTSIDE CORE				
Site	Approx. Acreage	Approx. Commercial SF	Approx. Unit Counts	Approx. Parking
42nd Avenue TOD	2.0	1,200	90	130
Robin Center	6.8	20,900	395	330
U.S. Bank Site	2.3	0	122	164
Total	11.02	22,100	607	624

TABLE 10 Development Potential

Lakeview Area

The Lakeview Area is currently characterized by medium density, aging apartments and is located south of 39th Avenue between Lakeland and Hubbard Avenues. Although viable today, this neighborhood presents an opportunity for redevelopment and densification over time given its close proximity to the proposed Robbinsdale Station. Amenities such as the lake, Lakeview Terrace Park, and downtown retail provide additional value. The market study supports medium-density market rate apartments with surface parking in this general location. The context could accommodate larger buildings if the market demand grows to a point where it can support structured parking.

The major challenge to redevelopment of the Lakeview Area is that it is composed of multiple parcels/owners. The exception is the corner site at the intersection of Lakeland and West Broadway Avenues, which offers a gateway location along County Road 81. It has a limited number of owners, possibly making land assembly easier. It could easily support a large residential tower with a fabulous view of the lake.

Twin Lakes Senior Housing

The best opportunity for redevelopment on the Twin Lakes site would be a new senior housing development given the site's limited access. There is currently a demand for senior housing, and since senior housing has lower parking requirements than other residential uses, there is also less need for vehicle access. Given the site's limited access, other residential uses are not feasible. In the area, due to low parking requirements, the 2.7 acre site has a density of 31 units per acre, and could provide more than 80 market rate senior units.



Fig. 39 INITIATIVE 5 PLAN Lakeview Transformation



Fig. 40 INITIATIVE 6 PLAN Twin Lakes Senior Housing Transformation

ESTIMATED DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OUTSIDE CORE			
Site	Approx. Acreage	Approx. Unit Count	Approx. Parking
Lakeview Area	11.4	387	300 surface/240 structured
Twin Lakes Senior Housing	2.7	86	66
Total	14.1	473	606

TABLE 11 Development Potential

ROBBINSDALE STATION

Proposed Land Use Plan

The City of Robbinsdale’s future land uses, documented in the Comprehensive Plan, are consistent with the Station Area Plan recommendations. However, the city may wish to fine-tune future land uses for the identified opportunity sites. The revised map on this page illustrates potential updates.

- LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MEDIUM-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MIXED-USE
- COMMERCIAL
- OFFICE
- INSTITUTIONAL
- PUBLIC
- UTILITY/INDUSTRIAL

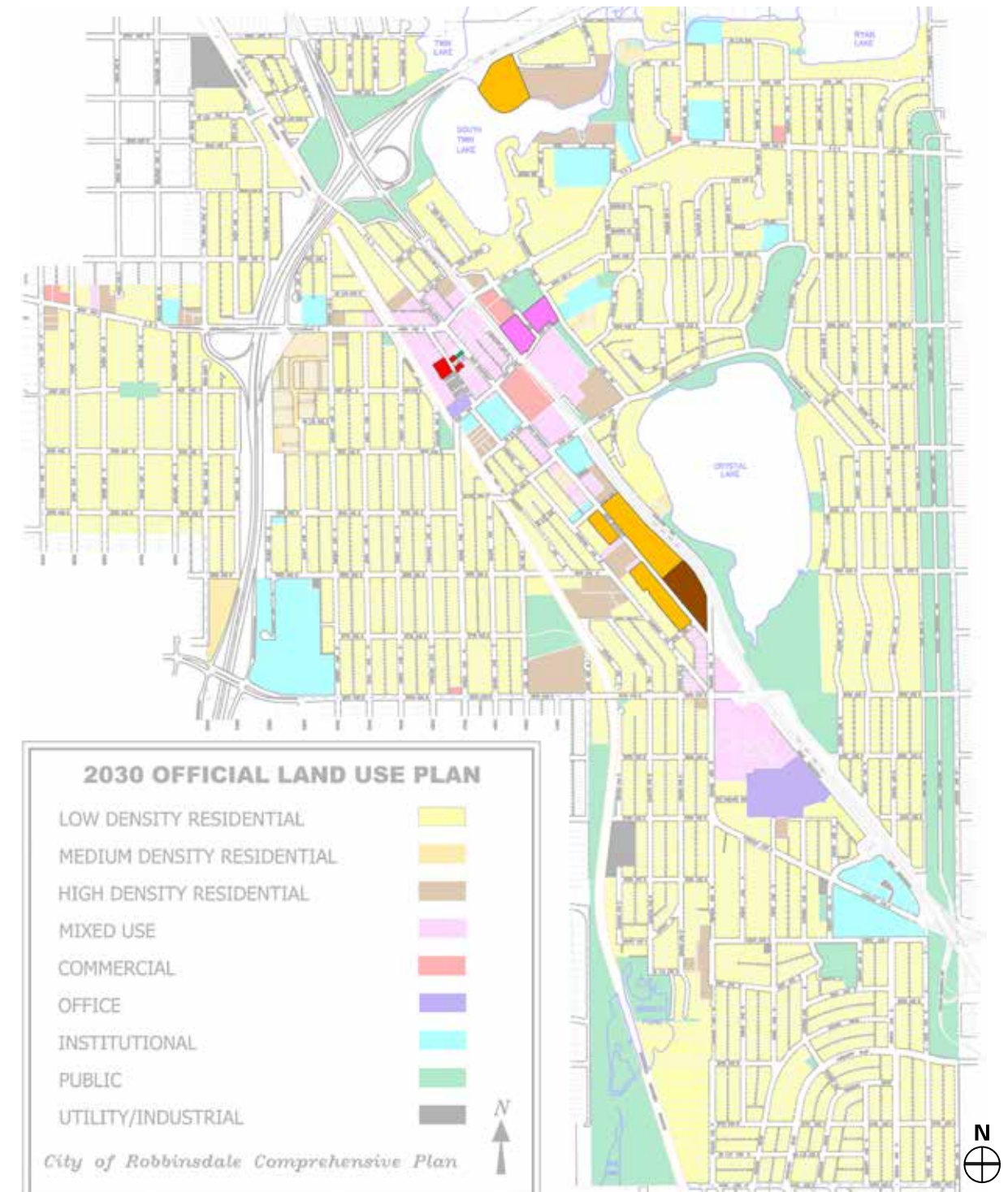


Fig. 41 REVISIONS TO THE 2030 PLANNED LAND USE MAP

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 \(HIA\)](#). In addition, the section provides more in-depth information on health equity-related community input specific to the Robbinsdale station area and presents broader health equity themes. This information is being provided because 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 recognizes the work Robbinsdale already carries out that supports health equity and considers additional issues and strategies that a range of government, non-profit, and institutional partners may want to consider to address station-specific issues and corridor-wide themes that would augment the city’s current processes.

Community Health Benefits

The Robbinsdale 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 supports additional infrastructure that encourages physical activity near the station. For example, the plan identifies locations where there are gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle networks. Closing some of these gaps in key locations could improve community health by creating an environment where more people feel safe being physically active in their neighborhood and may choose to walk and bike more often to and from the transit station as well as around the station area and beyond for recreation.

HEALTH-RELATED COMMUNITY INPUT

ROBBINSDALE-SPECIFIC

- » **North Memorial Medical Center:** Noted by members of the African community as a place that many go to for care as well as for employment. Addressing connections to the last one-mile destinations is important especially for individuals with limited mobility options and/or living with illnesses.
- » **Education:** A desire for educational resources within Robbinsdale was noted for youth and adults. Adults in particular must go elsewhere to receive education, and it was suggested that a satellite facility be established to provide trade or technical school courses. Additional culturally specific services and support for school-age children was also desired. Finally, residents also were excited about the potential opportunity to use LRT to access educational institutions outside the city.
- » **Culturally specific and/or competent child and adult care:** This desire was raised by both individuals who travel to Robbinsdale to work at North Memorial Medical Center and by people living in Robbinsdale and commuting elsewhere for work. The desire was also raised by immigrant communities and communities of color throughout the entire LRT corridor.
- » **Public space availability and access:** People requested that as public space is planned, special consideration be given to creating space that is accessible to, and comfortable for, multiple groups of people for diverse uses. People would like to see the Hubbard Marketplace building be used for community functions.

CORRIDOR-WIDE

- The following are topics consistently raised by community members in each of the cities.
- » 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 housing and mixed-use development at densities and in locations that provide increased access to affordable transit. Robbinsdale's current zoning is relatively inclusive. It allows mixed-use development in the LRT station area, which encourages jobs, housing, and businesses to be located close to each other and to transit, and has the potential to increase business opportunities for minority entrepreneurs and community desired services, as well as the potential to increase employment opportunities for neighborhood residents.

Finally, the plan promotes placemaking and cultural diversity. Healthy communities include interesting and lively public places such as sidewalks, plazas, and parks where residents of all incomes and backgrounds feel comfortable gathering. Robbinsdale's downtown already has great public places. The station area plan builds on those existing features and extends them into the LRT station area. This addresses a currently perceived shortage in community space by creating public space that can be accessed by diverse groups, and provides the opportunity for innovative programming inclusive of diverse populations in Robbinsdale and along the corridor. This benefits community health by helping residents meet their neighbors and feel socially connected to their community, improves public safety by increasing the number of "eyes on the street," and encourages 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. Municipalities acting to address disparities and secure more equi-

table outcomes are tailoring tools to meet their situation and better serve the community. Hennepin County's Bottineau Transitway Health Impact Assessment (HIA) documented stark health disparities in the corridor. Efforts by local governments to incorporate health equity into decision-making is important to the region's ability to meet the needs of an aging and diversifying population over the coming decades.

- 1 Incorporate Health Equity into decision-making.** Tools are available to help communities with this work. One such tool is from the City of Seattle 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 Robbinsdale, as well as other partners working on the Bottineau LRT project, to help maximize the health benefits for residents of Robbinsdale, as well as other transit users, by addressing health disparities in the areas of income, housing, and educational attainment. Resources can be found online: <http://racialequity-alliance.org/tools-resources/>
- 2 Apply equitable development evaluation criteria into future large-scale 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.
- 3 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.

4 Utilize planning and zoning to encourage businesses that meet the needs of the region's diverse population. Community members identified a number of services and programs they would ideally like to see including culturally supportive child-care, elder care, ethnically owned businesses, and multi-use space 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.

5 Additional Corridor-wide Program and Resource Development. During the station area planning process Robbinsdale community members identified a variety of needs and desires that could be addressed in Robbinsdale, along the METRO Blue Line Extension Corridor or elsewhere in the expanded Transit system. The METRO Blue Line Extension stands to strengthen local assets and bring opportunity to the ½-mile station area and Robbinsdale in general. The line also increases access for Robbinsdale 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 METRO Blue Line Extension Corridor and in Robbinsdale.

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 employment connections and address employment disparities and barriers to access.

A Align workforce opportunities. Robbinsdale 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 Robbinsdale are the following: Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, Manufacturing, and Educational Services. Further research is needed to better understand the workforce needs of Robbinsdale 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. Several larger local employers are located outside the ½-mile station area radius, but are within the elliptical area along West Broadway that was studied for this report. Many residents who provided input for this report are also people who play a supporting role in helping ensure these institutions and businesses function well. Ensuring strong connections through physical improvements such as sidewalks, trails, and transportation shuttles is important for these residents, as well as others and for the city as it encourages people to move to Robbinsdale.

C Childcare. A first step is to connect interested METRO Blue Line Extension 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 is scheduled to be completed in May 2016.



PROGRAMMING Providing innovative programming inclusive of diverse populations



TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS Development and public spaces around the station will be designed to maximize transportation access and connections



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 the public sector, private sector, or both to secure additional funding and approvals in order to realize the vision. 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 Robbinsdale Station Area. Each implementation project should be vetted to assess how it accomplishes the consensus objectives outlined in the Robbinsdale Station Area Plan.

The following pages outline the recommendations for:

- 1 Public initiatives and private opportunities
- 2 Policy and comprehensive plan updates
- 3 Next steps for the short-term, mid-term, and long-term

PUBLIC INITIATIVES
» Infrastructure and Development
› Parking garage and TOD Liner
› Intersection improvements
› Station platform and drop-off
› Public plazas and spaces
› Hubbard Market project (public-private partnership)
› Pedestrian improvements along 41½ Avenue
» Policy Updates
› Density recommendations
› Height strategy for the West Broadway main street
› District stormwater strategy

PRIVATE OPPORTUNITIES
» Infrastructure and Development
› Hubbard Marketplace project (public-private partnership)
› Continued renovation of street-based retail along West Broadway
› Mixed-use development
› Medium- and high-density multi-family housing
› Senior housing

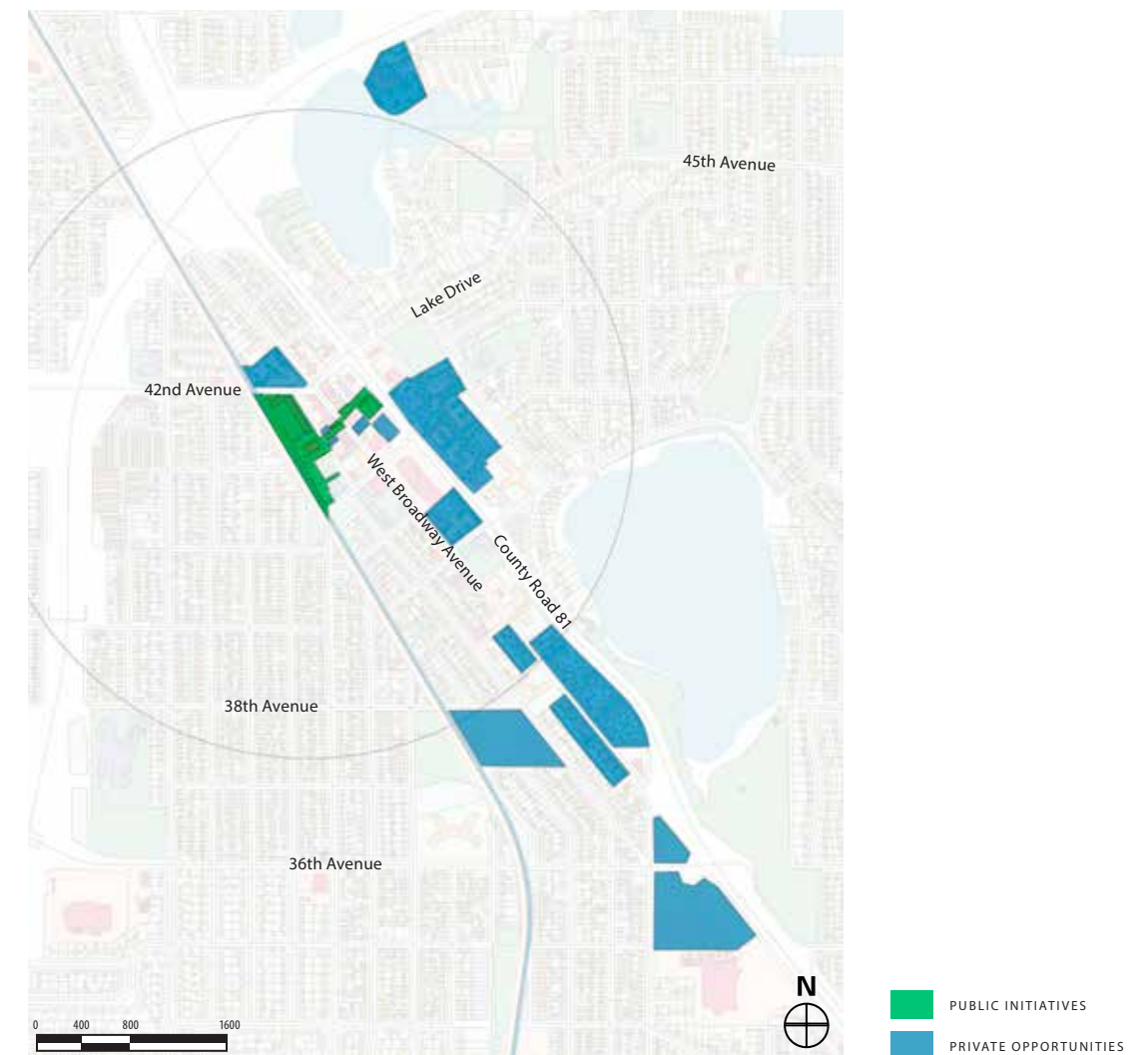


Fig. 42 PUBLIC INITIATIVES AND PRIVATE OPPORTUNITIES

Public and Private Initiatives

DAY OF OPENING IMPROVEMENTS	
LEAD AGENCY	INVESTMENT
BPO/Metro Transit	1 Station platform, lighting, and landscaping 2 Parking ramp that includes park and ride, a transit center for bus transfers, and accommodates a TOD liner with ground-level retail (liner to be led by city and developed as public/private partnership) 3 Improvements to 41st and 42nd Avenue intersections at the rail corridor 4 Intersection and pedestrian improvements at West Broadway and 42nd Avenue 5 Bicycle parking at the LRT station 6 Pedestrian and bicycle access to the station 7 Reconstruction of police and fire station parking
Hennepin County	To be determined by the Investment Framework
City of Robbinsdale	To be determined by the Investment Framework

TABLE 13 Day of Opening Investments

PUBLIC INITIATIVES (NON-LRT 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.

City of Robbinsdale will lead:

- A Redevelopment of the Hubbard Marketplace into a new retail function (public/private partnership)
- B Pedestrian promenade along 41½ Avenue from the station to County Road 81
- C Mixed-use liner wrapping the Metro Transit garage (public/private partnership)

Hennepin County will lead:

- D Improvements to County Road 81
- E Improvements to 42nd Avenue (County Road 9) that are outside the scope of the LRT project

Lead Entity to be Determined:

- F Public Art*

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

* 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.



Fig. 43 PUBLIC INITIATIVES

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 Redevelopment of retail parcels on the 41½ Avenue promenade
- B TOD redevelopment at 42nd Avenue and West Broadway
- C Robin Center redevelopment into a mixed-use neighborhood
- D Medium-density residential development along County Road 81 by Crystal Lake
- E Medium-density residential development on Twin Lakes site
- F High-density residential TOD on the U.S. Bank site
- G Redevelopment of high-density residential site located just east of the rail corridor and south of 38th Avenue. This site warrants further discussions to consider the best options for preservation or redevelopment
- H High-density residential development on the Legion/St. Petersburg site
- I Redevelopment of Terrace Mall and theater properties



Fig. 44 PRIVATE INITIATIVES

Policy Recommendations

The purpose of policy updates and the recommendations outlined below serve two purposes. First, having the appropriate policies in place will expedite the city's ability to bring in private partners in the redevelopment and implementation process. Second, these transit-supportive policies and plans are important to meet the requirements for federal funding. The Federal Transit Agency 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.

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

Thrive MSP2040 and the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP)

- » Review the Metropolitan Council's designation of Robbinsdale as an "Urban Center" to reconcile the projected employment and residential densities that come with that designation.
- » Allow for greater flexibility in recommending corresponding densities in future comprehensive plan updates.

2030 Comprehensive Plan Amendment and 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update

- » Approve and adopt the Robbinsdale Station Area Plan as an appendix to the city's 2030 Comprehensive plan.
- » Develop corridor regulations for West Broadway that apply specifically to the pedestrian-oriented main street area between 41st and 42nd Avenues.
- » Develop downtown regulations between County Road 81 and the rail, and between 41st and 42nd Avenues, to protect the character of the downtown area and regulate building heights.
- » Update the official land use map (2030 Land Use) to match the city's recommendations for each of the opportunity sites.
- » Allow for a greater diversity of building and lot types, and density ranges for new and infill housing in the ½-mile radius surrounding the station.
- » Write specific regulations for future development sites, including Hubbard Marketplace, Robin Center, Terrace Mall/Theater, U.S. Bank, Lakeview Offices, and others, to support the recommendations in the Station Area Plan.
- » Update the Public Facilities and Transportation chapter to accommodate the planned improvements related to the transit facilities and the extension of bicycle and pedestrian networks.
- » Recommend a comprehensive stormwater strategy for the station area
- » Develop a menu of recommended low-impact best practices for stormwater quality and treatment and quantity retention and detention.

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

Next Steps

SUMMARY OF NEXT STEPS

- » Approve and adopt the Robbinsdale 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
- » Finalize location and design of station platform (shift station platform south, so a portion of the platform is clearly visible from the pedestrian promenade)
- » Make necessary amendments to the existing 2030 Robbinsdale Comprehensive Plan
- » Incorporate additional station area plan projects, strategies, and tools into the 2040 Robbinsdale 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 pedestrian-oriented design of 41½ Avenue and a bicycle friendly Hubbard Avenue, in the city's Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) budget, and identify other potential sources of funding
- » Pursue partnerships to recruit and attract active businesses and retail shops for the West Broadway and Hubbard Avenue corridors to activate the district
- » Conduct a more detailed housing analysis
- » Advance coordinated design work for elements of the Downtown Core Plan that are anticipated to be in place Opening Day of the METRO Blue Line Extension:
 - › Parking Garage and TOD Liner
 - › 41½ Avenue Promenade
 - › Urban Open Space
- » Implement recommendations from the bicycle and transit studies

Implementation of the Robbinsdale 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 station, the market will eventually accommodate growth in the ½-mile radius from the station 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 that 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.



HUBBARD AVENUE VISION Transformed from a service street into a fashionable pedestrian-friendly alley



VIEW 1 41½ Avenue Public Square



VIEW 2 Gateway plaza concept

TABLE 14 Robbinsdale Summary of Next Steps

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 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