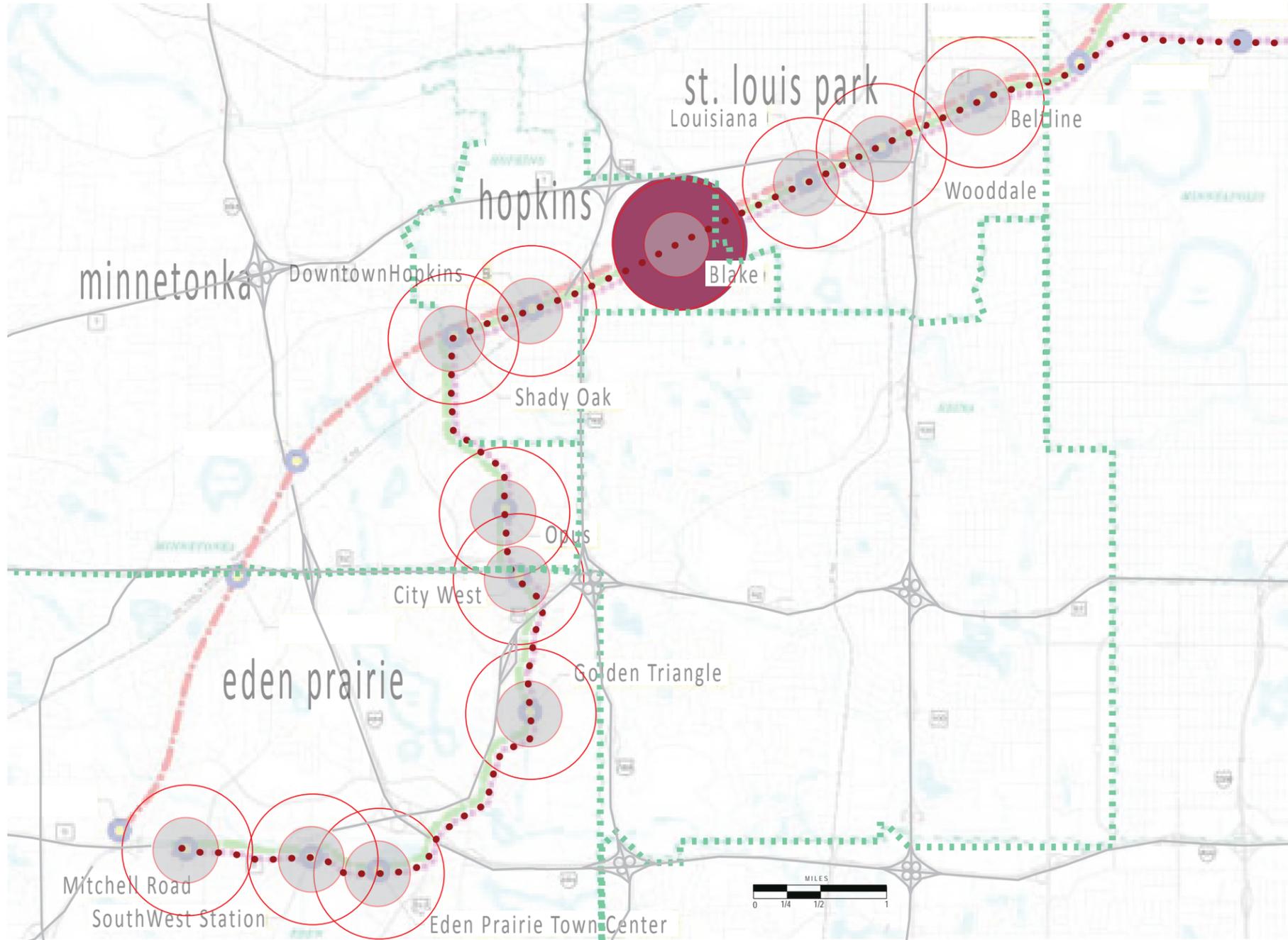




STATION AREA PLANNING

Blake,
Downtown Hopkins,
Shady Oak

4



HOPKINS
BLAKE



December 2009

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Downtown Hopkins

Shady Oak

Approach

A Vision for the future, unique to each city and tailored to each community

Southwest station area planning is grounded in the belief that the Southwest LRT line connects a series of unique, yet related station areas. The primary objective of the planning process is to define each station area according to its existing character, and realize the unique opportunities for development and infrastructure changes over the next 25-30 years with the introduction of LRT to the area. Some stations are focused on employment, some on housing or entertainment, while others are focused around a specific large-scale existing use, like a hospital. Using this unique identifier, recommendations for land use, roadways, infrastructure, trails, parks and greenspace, public realm improvements, transit supportive development, and development typology were created for each of the station areas, defined as a half-mile radius (ten minute walk) from the station. Station area planning during the LRT planning process assures future land use changes and infrastructure improvements are supportive of people using transit.

Weaving together Neighborhoods and Uses

The Blake Station Area has the potential to knit together several existing neighborhoods and numerous disparate land uses. This will create a more complete and healthy community, a hierarchy of open space and natural amenities, a variety of movement options and connections, a diverse mix of uses, and attractive buildings framing connected, pedestrian-friendly streets.

Future public and private investment in the Blake Station Area must focus on integrating the station area into the community surrounding the station to create a cohesive, integrated whole. There are ample opportunities for redevelopment to create positive change by replacing underutilized and poorly designed or located buildings with new development that promotes walkability, safety, and desired choices. Redevelopment should include active ground floor uses along the primary streets and near the station. Future public investment should include an extended and connected roadway network with a strong pedestrian focus that reinforces existing connections and creates strong connections to the surrounding community.



- Proposed LRT Route
- Proposed Stations
- 1/2 mile Radius
- Parcel Lines



Aerial View of the Blake Station Area



Map of proposed LRT Line in Hopkins

Site Orientation

The proposed Blake station is located on the existing Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRRA) Right-of-Way just west of Blake Road.

This station is approximate 1/2 mile south of Knollwood Mall and 1/2 mile east of the Excelsior Crossings development, which will house over 3,000 employees of Cargill. The Blake School Hopkins Campus is about 1/2 mile south, or about a 10 minute walk. The Hopkins Cold Storage site, a large parcel just east of the station, is anticipated to redevelop with office and residential uses that would be within a 5 minute walk.



The Park & Ride for the proposed Blake station is planned to be built on the HCRRA-owned parcel where 43 Hoops is located.



Map of proposed stations in Hopkins



The Excelsior Crossings development, which houses Cargill, is approximately 1/2 mile west of the proposed Blake station. Strong bike and pedestrian connections exist and local shuttles are being considered.



The LRT line will run parallel to the existing regional trail. Additional north-south connections to the trail are anticipated to promote non-vehicular connections to the station.

The Blake Vision



Bird's eye view looking northeast at potential long-term redevelopment around the Blake station

A New Face for the East End of Hopkins

The Blake station is envisioned as a center for jobs and housing. The proposed land plan use builds on existing uses while calling for increased housing and jobs near the proposed station. Mixed-use development with ground floor retail and upper floor housing and office space is envisioned near the station and along Blake Road close to the station. Several new streets will allow for better circulation within the station area. The plan envisions improved access to trails, parks, and Minnehaha Creek while upgrading the streetscape along Blake Road. Supportive commercial uses will serve transit users and the neighborhood.

Recent redevelopment in the area, of significant size and scale, reflect positively on the future potential of the area.

Careful attention should be paid to the development and planned hierarchy of public open space as the focal point for redevelopment. Future buildings should frame the open space and primary streets to form the backdrop for activity within the area.

Illustrative Plan

Creating a transit supportive place

The Blake Station Area Plan assumes that the station will be sited west of Blake Road, north of the existing railroad tracks. This area must accommodate increased development density, a Park & Ride facility, and an increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The area is envisioned to have a large transit plaza north of the station with a significant mixed-use development just to the north of the plaza. This development should include a large parking deck wrapped by residential development. It is recommended that the ground floor of this development introduce retail uses where appropriate – likely facing the transit plaza.

A second development is envisioned facing the west side of Blake Road, north of the rail line. This development should provide for large sidewalk area to the east as well as a pull-off lane for “kiss and ride” (automobile drivers dropping off/picking up transit users). This plaza, between the station plaza and Blake Road, should provide a connection between Blake Road and the station. Public streets and private internal drives should provide for access to the Park & Ride facility as well as for service vehicles. The scale of redevelopment in this area is anticipated to be 5-6 stories or more. Strong pedestrian connections should be created to connect key areas within and outside of the study area.

The Hopkins Cold Storage Site presents the single greatest redevelopment opportunity within the study area due to its large parcel size and single owner. This area is envisioned as a major office development site developed as a “build to suit” corporate campus for a single entity or as several multi-tenant office buildings. The site is organized by the introduction of a new public or

Continued



KEY	
	Residential Redevelopment
	Established Neighborhood (No proposed redevelopment)
	Commercial Redevelopment
	Existing Commercial (No proposed redevelopment)
	Mixed Use Redevelopment
	Existing Mixed Use (No proposed redevelopment)
	Office / Civic / Institutional Redevelopment
	Existing Office / Civic / Inst. (No proposed redevelopment)
	Industrial Redevelopment / Parking Ramp
	Existing Industrial (No proposed redevelopment)
	Parks, Open Space
	Ramp Lot
	Proposed Light Rail
	Heavy Rail
	Regional Trail
	Proposed LRT Station

BLAKE CONCEPTUAL SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Recommendations

Illustrative Plan, Continued

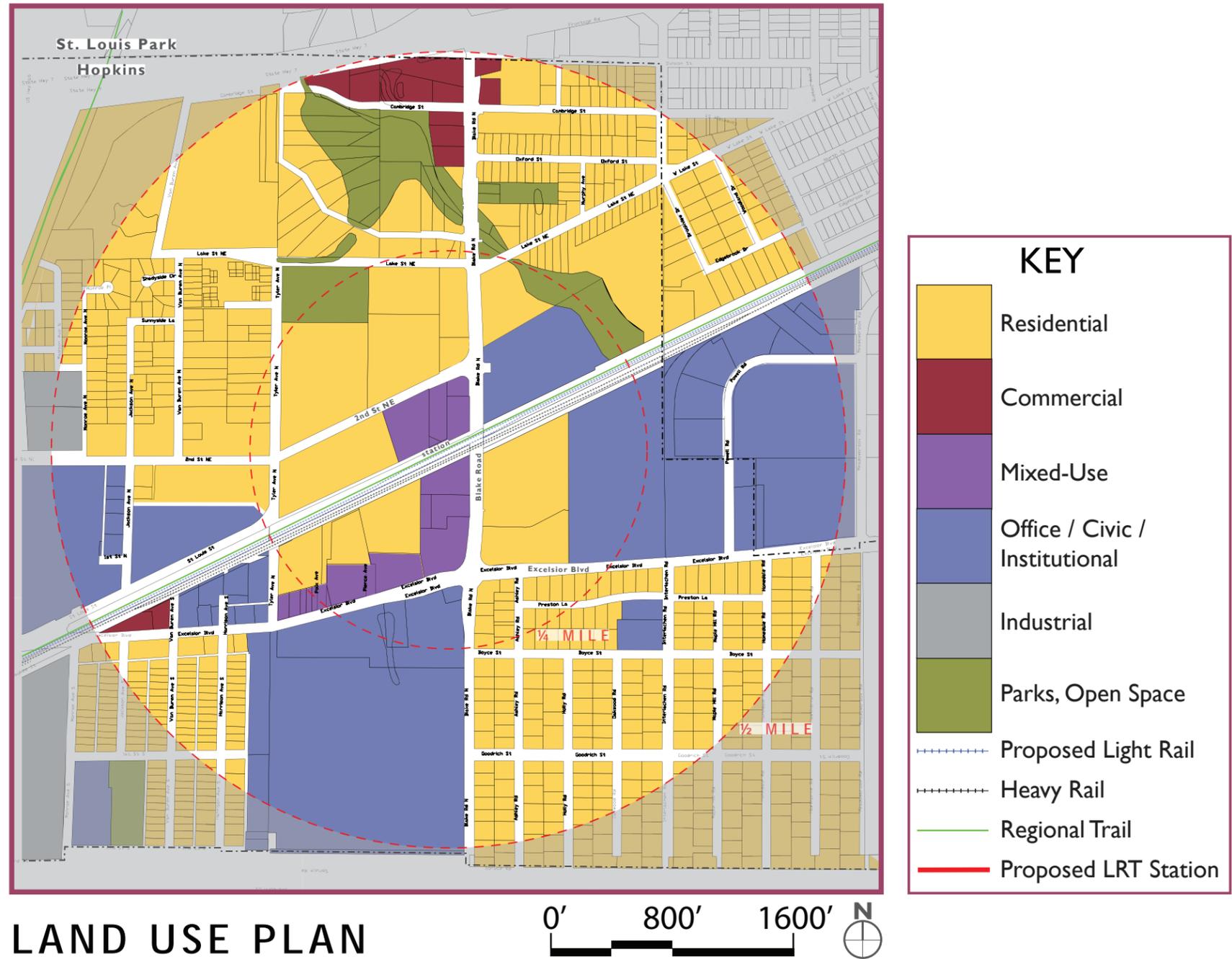
private street which will become the de facto extension of 2nd Street east of Blake Road. A large greenspace will become the focal point for the redevelopment and is envisioned surrounding or within the new street. North of the new street the area can be redeveloped as multi-family housing or additional office space, depending on market demand. This should create a large, internal, three-sided open space when fully developed. Views from the opposite sides of this space should face the trail to the south, and the creek to the east and north. The typical building height of this area is envisioned as 60'- 90' stories. Similar to the housing redevelopment north of the station area proper, the introduction of a new north-south street should be explored in order to provide stronger vehicular and pedestrian connections between Lake Street and the new development.

1. Land Use

Land Use recommendations for the area concentrate mixed-use and office uses near the LRT station.

Multi-family residential is recommended for the balance of the station area.

A limited amount of commercial land use is recommended for the northern portion of the station area near Blake Road and Highway 7 as well in the southwest part of the station area along Excelsior Boulevard.

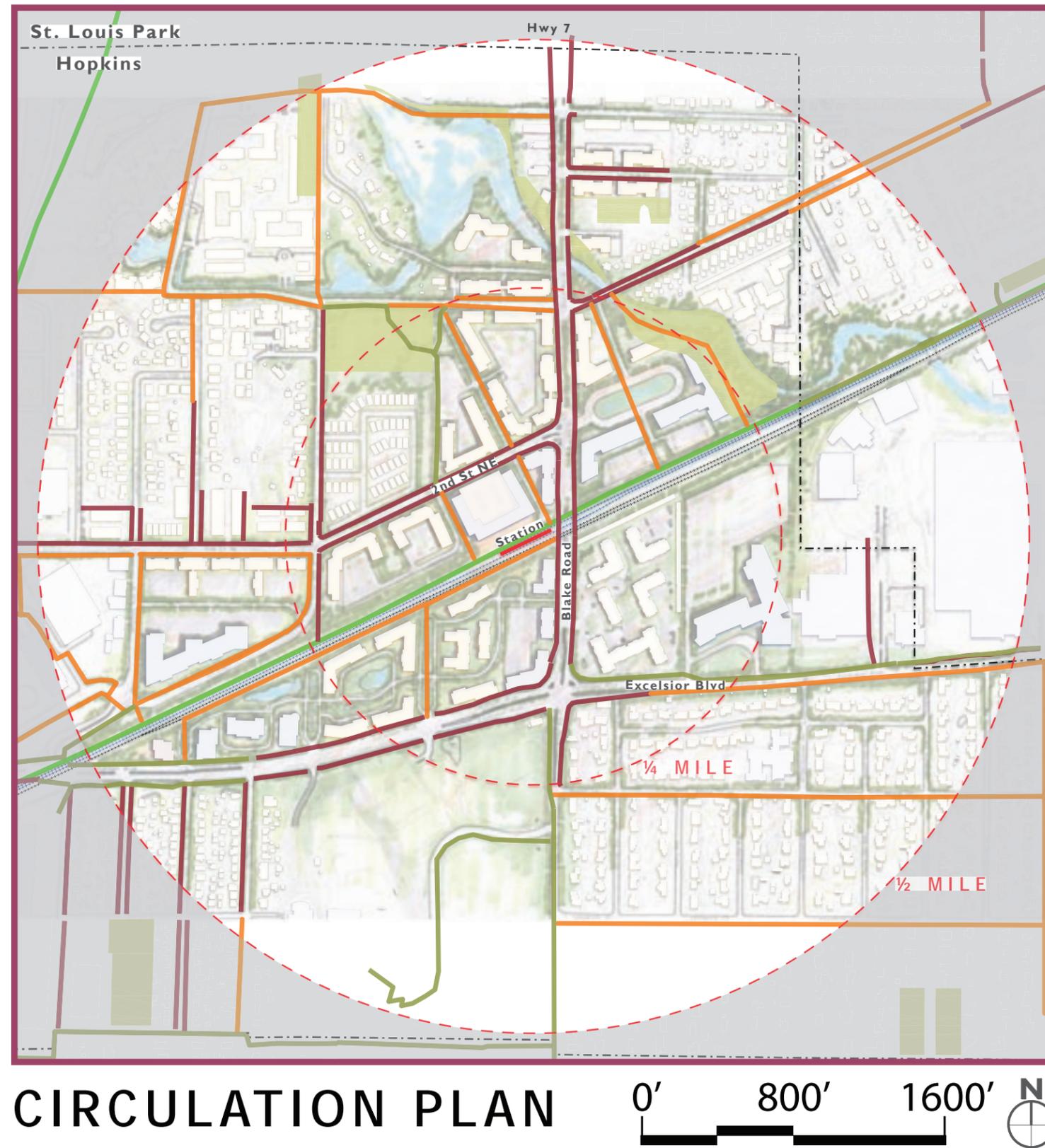


2. Movement and Connections

Enhancing Multi-modal Movement

The Blake Station has a significant amount of redevelopment planned along the light rail corridor. Trail segments should be incorporated throughout this redevelopment and provide direct connections to the Blake Station. Pedestrian enhancements will be made along Blake Road to accommodate new housing and connect transit users to Blake Rd from the north side of Excelsior Blvd. A proposed trail segment on the south side of the light rail line will also serve the station area.

East-west connections to Blake Rd are recommended in the SE section of the ½ mile quadrant to accommodate existing residents who currently have no sidewalks in the Interlachen neighborhood. This will allow pedestrians to reach the station and other destinations safely. Trail connections in the north part of the quadrant encourage pedestrian traffic through the existing park system and residential areas. Making pedestrian connections to main streets, parks, businesses, and residential areas is key in creating livable neighborhoods and communities.



KEY	
	Proposed LRT Station
	Proposed Light Rail
	Heavy Rail
	Existing Regional Trail
	Removed Regional Trail
	Proposed Regional Trail
	Existing City Trail
	Existing City Sidewalk
	Proposed City Trail
	Proposed Connection

Recommendations, Continued

3. Traffic Analysis

Conceptual Transportation Assessment

Access to Station Site

Access to the Blake Road Station site will most likely be via 2nd Street NE west of Blake Road with the primary access point located on 2nd Street about midway between Blake Road and Tyler Avenue. Secondary access could be located on 2nd Street with right-in/right-out restricted movements. Figure 4 shows access routes and options to a proposed Blake Road Station site on 2nd Street.

General Roadway Capacity

A general roadway capacity analysis of projected average daily traffic volumes indicates that existing roadway capacity would be sufficient to handle anticipated traffic volumes resulting from the implementation of the light rail line along most major roadways providing access to the site. However, the exception this is 2nd Street NE between Blake Road and Tyler Avenue. Second Street west of Tyler Avenue to Jackson Avenue is projected to reach capacity in 2030 with the Southwest LRT project in place. Figure 4 depicts these projected 2030 over-capacity segments. See Appendix 5, Table A-1 for a listing of Year 2030 average daily traffic compared to daily threshold capacities, with and without the Southwest LRT project.

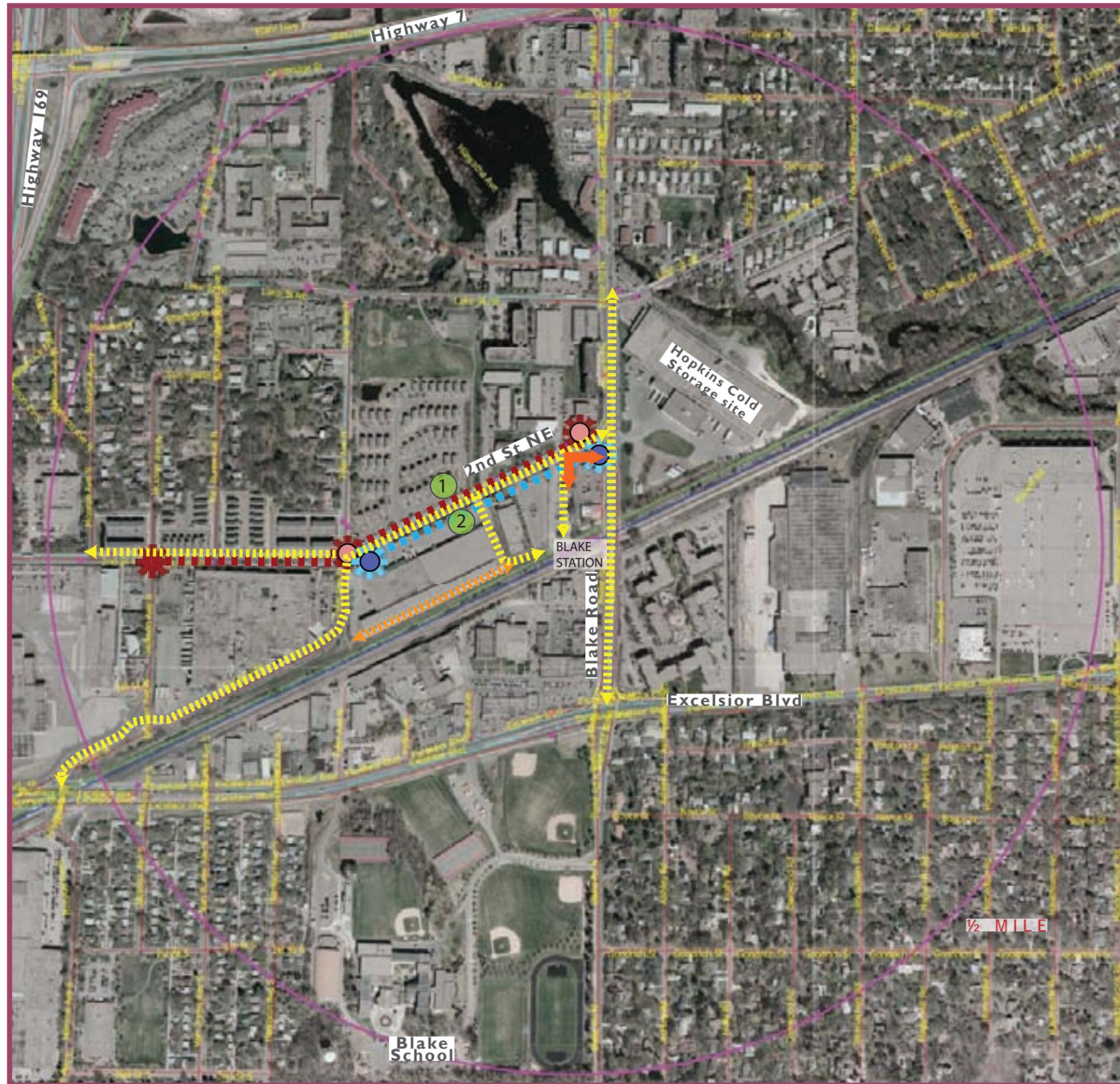
Potential Constraints

Roadway capacity along 2nd Street will be a constraining factor to vehicular access at the Blake Road LRT Station site. However, removing parking and re-striping to accommodate left turn lanes would sufficiently improve daily capacity to accommodate the anticipated increases in future travel demand. The undeveloped portion of the site is somewhat small and may be restrictive for on-site circulation. Providing a second access point at the intersection of Tyler Avenue and St. Louis Street would require moving an existing warehouse, but would greatly improve on-site circulation opportunities.

Possible Transportation Improvements

The following potential transportation improvements (also shown in Figure 4) should be considered:

- Removing parking and restriping Second Street between Blake Road and Tyler Avenue to create left turn lanes and increase through-vehicle capacity.
- Monitoring the need for a traffic signal at primary 2nd Street access point.



Access & Circulation

-  Over Capacity 2030 Baseline
-  At Capacity 2030 w/LRT
-  Over Capacity 2030 w/LRT
-  Primary Access Route
-  Secondary Access
-  Right-in/Right-out Access Only
-  Trails
-  Sidewalks
-  LRT Route
-  Half Mile Radius
-  Bus Route
-  Bus Stop
-  Existing Roads

IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

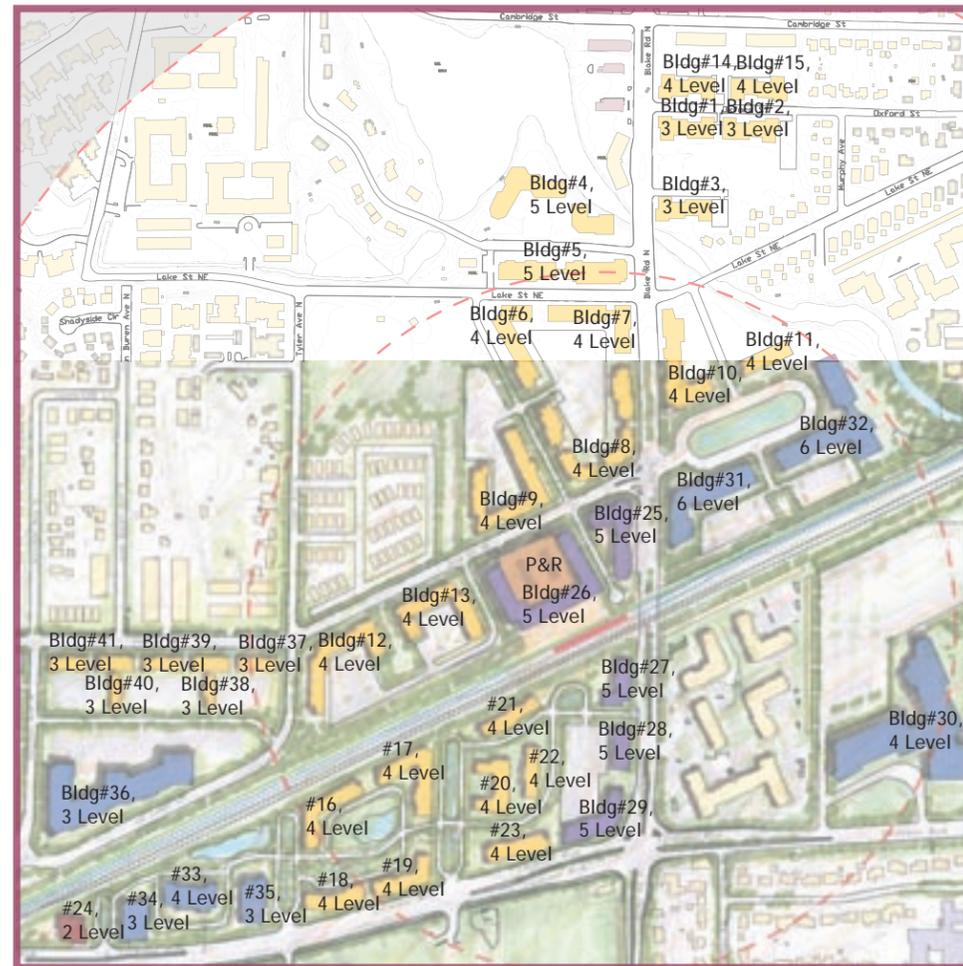
- 1 Remove parking & re-stripe to accommodate left turn lanes along 2nd Street
- 2 Monitor need for a traffic signal at primary 2nd Street access point

FIGURE 4 - STATION ACCESS PLAN

Recommendations, Continued

4. Building Scale & Type

Projected New Development



BLAKE



Jobs, parking, and a strong residential neighborhood define the vision for the Blake Station.

Several new streets will allow for better circulation within the station area.

The plan envisions improved access to trails, parks, and Minnehaha Creek; and also upgrades for the streetscape along Blake Road.

Supporting commercial uses will serve transit users and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Blake - BUILDING SCALE AND TYPE RECOMMENDATIONS*

Land Use Type	Building #	Footprint Area (SF)	# Floors	Total
Residential	1	10,800	3	32,400 sf
	2	10,800	3	32,400 sf
	3	14,850	3	44,550 sf
	4	32,400	5	162,000 sf
	5	27,000	5	135,000 sf
	6	23,400	4	93,600 sf
	7	23,400	4	93,600 sf
	8	32,400	4	129,600 sf
	9	36,000	4	144,000 sf
	10	27,000	4	108,000 sf
	11	12,600	4	50,400 sf
	12	32,400	4	129,600 sf
	13	28,800	4	115,200 sf
	14	10,800	4	43,200 sf
	15	10,800	4	43,200 sf
	16	19,800	4	79,200 sf
	17	23,400	4	93,600 sf
	20	19,800	4	79,200 sf
	21	14,400	4	57,600 sf
	22	14,400	4	57,600 sf
	37	8,500	3	25,500 sf
38	15,200	3	45,600 sf	
39	8,500	3	25,500 sf	
40	15,200	3	45,600 sf	
41	8,500	3	25,500 sf	
Commercial	24	10,100	2	20,200 sf
Mixed Use	18	14,400	4	57,600 sf
	19	18,000	4	72,000 sf
	23	14,400	4	57,600 sf
	25	27,000	5	135,000 sf
	26	46,317	5	231,585 sf
	27	16,200	5	81,000 sf
	28	9,000	5	45,000 sf
	29	9,000	5	45,000 sf
	Civic/Institutional/Office	30	100,800	4
31		37,800	6	226,800 sf
32		37,800	6	226,800 sf
33		10,800	4	43,200 sf
34		7,200	3	21,600 sf
35		15,720	3	47,160 sf
36		75,400	3	226,200 sf
Industrial		-	-	-
Land Use Type Summary				
Residential Development				1,891,650 sf
Commercial				20,200 sf
Mixed Use				537,585 sf
Civic/Institutional/Office				1,194,960 sf
Industrial				- sf
Job Growth Potential (@ 350 sf per worker)				3,856 Jobs
# of Housing Units @ 1200sf each (2 BR)				1,800 Housing Units
Park & Ride				250 Cars

*plans and calculations are conceptual, based on projections for beyond the year 2030, and may shift as a result of on-going station area planning efforts.



Renderings showing potential phasing of redevelopment.

Initial redevelopment at the station (above) includes a Park & Ride surface lot and 1-story buildings.

The long term vision (right) includes a Park & Ride ramp and multi-story mixed-use



Recommendations, Continued

5. Connecting to Nature

Minnehaha Creek - a hidden jewel

Minnehaha Creek is an incredible natural feature running through the station area. The creek runs under Blake Road and Lake Street, then follows the eastern border of what is currently the Hopkins Cold Storage site. The creek is largely hidden from view and easily goes unnoticed, especially by cars traveling on Blake Road. Currently, there are a handful of opportunities to get a glimpse of the creek, including a small bench and viewing area on the Bike Trail at the far eastern edge of the study area, and from the Lake Street bridge over the creek. Cottageville Park and Oaks Park are also within the study area. Future efforts should provide better visual and physical access to Minnehaha Creek, Cottageville Park, and Oaks Park.

Along with any enhancements to or along Minnehaha Creek, preservation and restoration of this natural feature must be a priority. Development and redevelopment within the station area will have an immediate impact on the Creek as well as the entire Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, and special attention should be made to properly manage storm and surface water runoff.



View of Minnehaha Creek



View of Minnehaha Creek and surrounding wetlands



Illustration showing Cottageville Park extended to Blake Road



Illustration showing opportunities for additional greenspace and access to Minnehaha Creek

6. Special Features

A Focal Point to the Station Area

The transit plaza and connected pedestrian network adjacent to the station should become a key public open space within the station area.

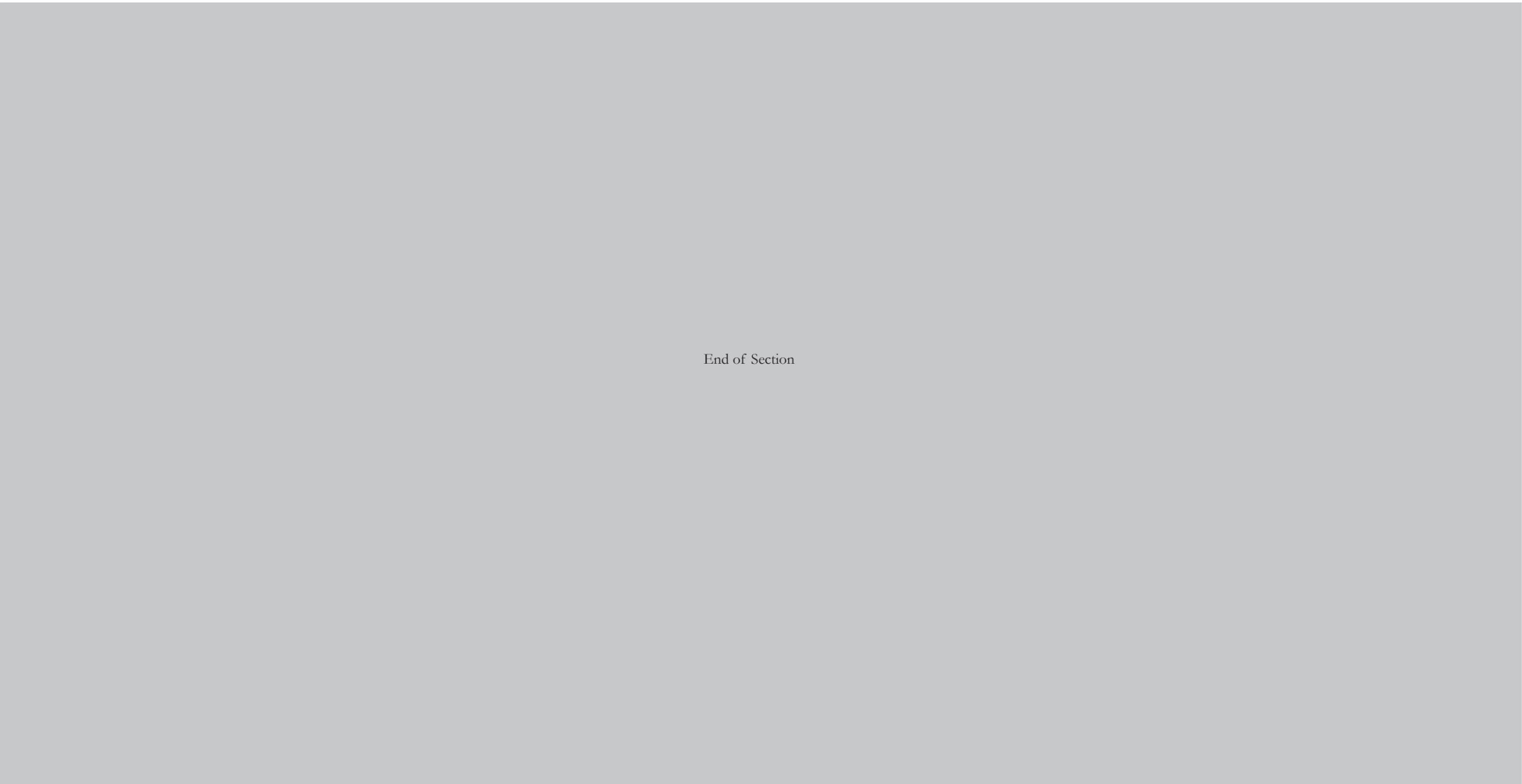
Key to the successful development of the station area is the need for public open space. This is a place for residents, workers, commuters and visitors to mingle and create a sense of community. Within the Blake Station Area, the transit plaza directly adjacent to the LRT Station should take on this function. The transit plaza should become a primary public open space within the station area and it should be strongly connected to surrounding sidewalks and greenspaces to create a cohesive whole.

Public art and community kiosks should be incorporated into the transit plaza to create a unique and authentic place. The plaza should be designed to support a variety of uses during all seasons of the year. Special attention should be paid to lighting, signage and wayfinding as well as design to support personal safety.

Care should be taken to ensure that there is visual access to the transit plaza and that ground floor uses front directly on to the plaza where possible. This is truly the place for civic life to prosper.



Illustration of the Blake Transit Plaza, looking west, with potential future development



End of Section

