



# METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau LRT) Phase 1: Station Area Planning

Van White Boulevard and  
Penn Avenue Stations

Minneapolis, MN

June 1, 2015



# METRO BLUE LINE EXTENSION (BOTTINEAU LRT) PHASE 1: STATION AREA PLANNING

## ***VAN WHITE BOULEVARD AND PENN AVENUE STATIONS***

***Prepared for:***

***Hennepin County, Bottineau LRT Community Works***

***City of Minneapolis***

***CONSULTING TEAM:***

***SRF Consulting Group, Inc.***

***Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc.***

***Leland Consulting Group, Inc.***

***Tangible Consulting Services***

***Carroll, Franck and Associates***



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

## Elected Officials

### *Hennepin County*

Linda Higgins, District 2

### *City of Minneapolis*

Betsy Hodges, Mayor

Barbara Johnson, Council President

Blong Yang, Ward 5

## Hennepin County, Department of Community Works and Department of Planning, Policy and Land Management

Andrew Gillett, Principal Planning Analyst - Project Manager

Denise Engen, Principal Planning Analyst - Public Engagement Manager

Brent Rusco, Senior Professional Engineer

Joe Gladke, Manager of Engineering and Transit Planning

Karen Nikolai, Manager, Healthy Community Planning

Darlene Walser, Bottineau Community Works Program Manager

## Health Equity and Engagement Cohort

Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC)

Harrison Neighborhood Association (HNA)

Heritage Park Neighborhood Association (HPNA)

Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio (CLUES)

CAP USA

Lao Assistance Center of MN (LACM)

Redeemer Center for Life (RCFL)

Masjid An-Nur (MAN)

Nexus Community Partners, Facilitator

## Technical Advisory Committee

Tina Sanz, Hennepin County

Jeff Oliver, City of Golden Valley

Jason Zimmerman, City of Golden Valley

Emily Goellner, City of Golden Valley

Eric Eckman, City of Golden Valley

Don Pflaum, City of Minneapolis

Jim Voll, City of Minneapolis

Beth Grosen, City of Minneapolis

Becca Farrar, City of Minneapolis

Dean Carlson, Minneapolis Public Housing Authority

Jennifer Ringold, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Adam Arvidson, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Alicia Vap, Metro Transit

Michael Mechtenberg, Metro Transit

Pierce Canser, Metro Transit

Amy Geisler, Metro Transit

Karen Lyons, Metropolitan Council

Mike Larson, Metropolitan Council

Jan Youngquist, Metropolitan Council

Ryan Wilson, MnDOT

Ann Rexine, Three Rivers Park District

## Community Working Group

### *Van White Boulevard Station*

Assata Brown

Candy Bakion

Dean Carlson

Terra Cole

Henry Crosby

Kent Dilg

George Garnett

Linda Homsombath

Michael McDowell

Belle Phillips

Joan Vanhala

### *Penn Avenue Station*

Assata Brown

Sandy Ci Moua

Alan Cupp

Staci Horwitz

Erin Jerabek

Shauen Pearce

Alexis Pennie

Aasim Shabazz

Yaomee Xiong

WinnieZwick

*Thank you to all participants of our engagement activities and open houses*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

- INTRODUCTION ..... 1-1**
  - Project Definition and Context..... 1-2
  - Definition of Station Area Planning ..... 1-3
  - Purpose of Station Area Planning..... 1-4
  - Station Area Planning Process and Approach..... 1-5
  - Related Documents ..... 1-8
- VAN WHITE BOULEVARD STATION AREA.....2-1**
  - Existing Conditions Analysis ..... 2-2
  - Station Area Vision .....2-14
  - Implementation Framework .....2-36
- PENN AVENUE STATION AREA.....3-1**
  - Existing Conditions Analysis..... 3-2
  - Station Area Vision .....3-13
  - Implementation Framework .....3-33
- APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY**

# LIST OF FIGURES + TABLES

## INTRODUCTION ..... 1-1

- Figure 1.1: Regional Transitways ..... 1-2
- Figure 1.2: METRO Blue Line Extension ..... 1-3
- Figure 1.3: METRO Blue Line Extension Development Process ..... 1-4
- Figure 1.4: FTA New Starts Rating System ..... 1-5
- Figure 1.5: Station Area Planning Schedule ..... 1-7

## VAN WHITE BOULEVARD STATION AREA ..... 2-1

- Figure 2.1: Van White Blvd. Station Area ..... 2-3
- Figure 2.2: Existing / Planned Streets and Highways ..... 2-4
- Figure 2.3: Highway 55 Pedestrian Crossings ..... 2-5
- Figure 2.4: Existing / Planned Transit Routes ..... 2-6
- Figure 2.5: Existing / Planned Sidewalks and Bikeways ..... 2-8
- Figure 2.6: Proposed North Minneapolis Greenway - Potential Route Options ..... 2-9
- Figure 2.7: Existing Land Use ..... 2-10
- Figure 2.8: Existing / Planned Amenities and Destinations ..... 2-12
- Figure 2.9: Roadway Circulation Enhancements ..... 2-15
- Figure 2.10: Pedestrian Circulation Enhancements ..... 2-17
- Figure 2.11: Bicycle Circulation Enhancements ..... 2-18
- Figure 2.12: Existing Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use ..... 2-21
- Figure 2.13: Future Land Use Modifications ..... 2-22
- Figure 2.14: Van White Boulevard Station: Future Land Use ..... 2-23
- Figure 2.15: Station Area Plan Future Land Use ..... 2-24
- Figure 2.16: Development Intensity ..... 2-26

- Figure 2.17: Development Opportunities ..... 2-28
- Figure 2.18: Public Realm Improvements ..... 2-29
- Figure 2.19: Representative Public Realm and Streetscape Improvements ..... 2-30
- Figure 2.20: Olson Memorial Highway Street Section ..... 2-31
- Figure 2.21: Van White Memorial Boulevard Street Section ..... 2-33
- Figure 2.22: Glenwood Avenue Street Section ..... 2-34
- Table 2.1: Day of Opening Improvements ..... 2-38
- Figure 2.23: Day of Opening Circulation Improvements ..... 2-39
- Figure 2.24: Day of Opening Bicycle Circulation Improvements ..... 2-40
- Figure 2.25: Day of Opening Public Realm Improvements ..... 2-41
- Table 2.2: Future Improvements - Part I ..... 2-42
- Table 2.3: Future Improvements - Part II ..... 2-43

## PENN AVENUE STATION AREA ..... 3-1

- Figure 3.1: Penn Ave. Station Area ..... 3-3
- Figure 3.2: Existing / Planned Streets and Highways ..... 3-4
- Figure 3.3: Highway 55 Pedestrian Crossings ..... 3-5
- Figure 3.4: Existing / Planned Transit Routes ..... 3-6
- Figure 3.5: Existing / Planned Sidewalks and Bikeways ..... 3-8
- Figure 3.6: Proposed North Minneapolis Greenway - Potential Route Options ..... 3-9
- Figure 3.7: Existing Land Use ..... 3-10
- Figure 3.8: Existing / Planned Amenities and Destinations ..... 3-12
- Figure 3.9: Roadway Circulation Enhancements ..... 3-14
- Figure 3.10: Pedestrian Circulation Enhancements ..... 3-17

# LIST OF FIGURES + TABLES

---

- Figure 3.11: Bicycle Circulation Enhancements.....3-18
- Figure 3.12: Existing Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use .....3-19
- Figure 3.13: Future Land Use Modifications.....3-20
- Figure 3.14: Penn Avenue Station: Future Land Use .....3-21
- Figure 3.15: Station Planning Area Future Land Use .....3-22
- Figure 3.16: Development Intensity .....3-23
- Figure 3.17: Development Opportunities.....3-24
- Figure 3.18: Public Realm Improvements .....3-26
- Figure 3.19: Representative Public Realm and Streetscape  
Improvements.....3-27
- Figure 3.20: Olson Memorial Highway Street Section.....3-28
- Figure 3.21: Penn Avenue Street Section.....3-30
- Figure 3.22: Glenwood Avenue Street Section .....3-31
- Table 3.1: Day of Opening Improvements.....3-35
- Figure 3.23: Day of Opening Pedestrian Circulation Improvements .....3-36
- Figure 3.24: Day of Opening Bicycle Circulation Improvements.....3-37
- Figure 3.25: Day of Opening Public Realm Improvements .....3-38
- Table 3.2: Future Improvements - Part I.....3-39
- Table 3.3: Future Improvements - Part II .....3-40

# **1** INTRODUCTION

- 1. Project Definition and Context**
- 2. Definition of Station Area Planning**
- 3. Purpose of Station Area Planning**
- 4. Station Area Planning Process and Approach**
- 5. Related Documents**

# INTRODUCTION

## Project Definition and Context

The METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau Light Rail Transit (LRT)) project is a proposed 13-mile addition to the existing METRO Blue Line and will extend from downtown Minneapolis through north Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park, serving the northwest Twin Cities metro area as shown in **Figure 1.1**. The METRO Blue Line Extension will link to local and express bus routes at its planned stations, and seamlessly connect to the region's system of transitways at Target Field Station in downtown Minneapolis.

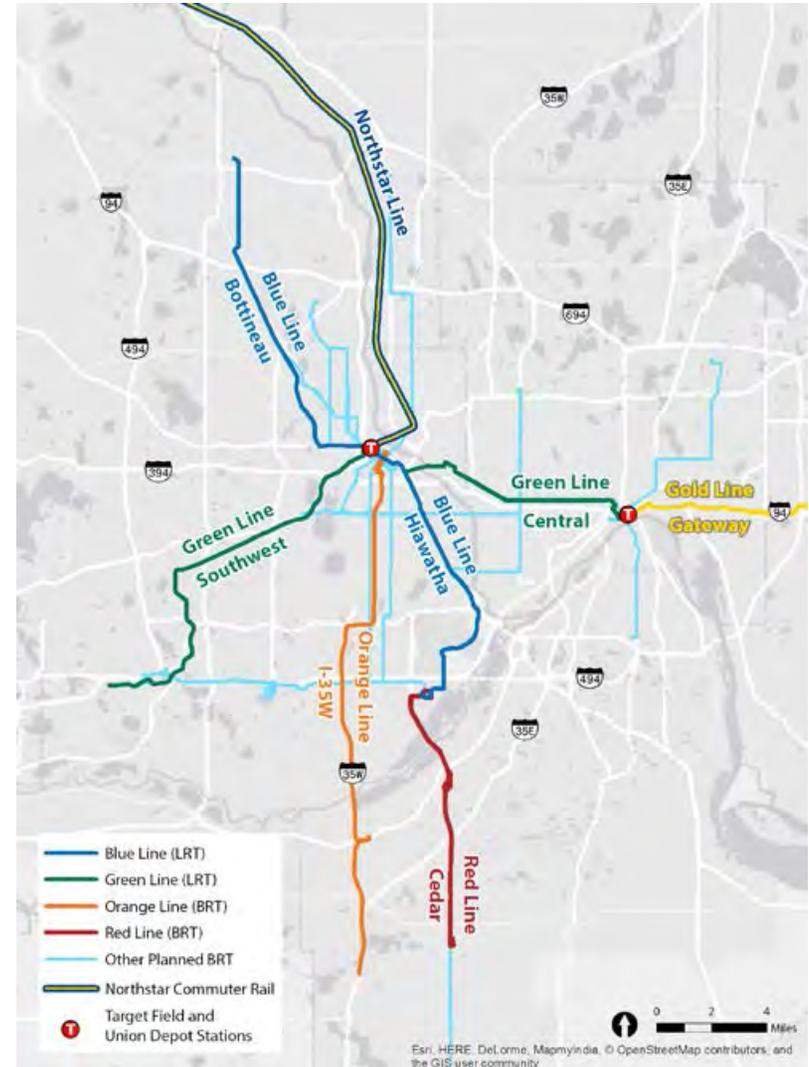
As currently proposed, the METRO Blue Line Extension will build up to 11 new stations:

- Two stations in Minneapolis: Van White Boulevard and Penn Avenue
- One or two stations in Golden Valley: Plymouth Avenue and/or Golden Valley Road
- One station in Robbinsdale: Robbinsdale (at 42nd Avenue)
- One station in Crystal: Bass Lake Road
- Five stations in Brooklyn Park: 63rd Avenue, Brooklyn Boulevard, 85th Avenue, 93rd Avenue, and Oak Grove Parkway

In an effort to use project resources effectively, Hennepin County divided the METRO Blue Line Extension station area planning process into two phases. Phase One is the subject of these plans and covers the four stations in Minneapolis and Golden Valley. Phase One station area plans are presented in two documents. This report

**Figure 1.1: Regional Transitways**

*This map shows the extension of the Blue Line through North Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park.*



addresses the Van White Boulevard and Penn Avenue station areas in Minneapolis. A second report addresses the Plymouth Avenue and Golden Valley Road station areas, each of which falls partially in the cities of Golden Valley and Minneapolis. Phase Two is underway and will cover the balance of the stations in Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park. Phase Two station area plans will be available at a later date.

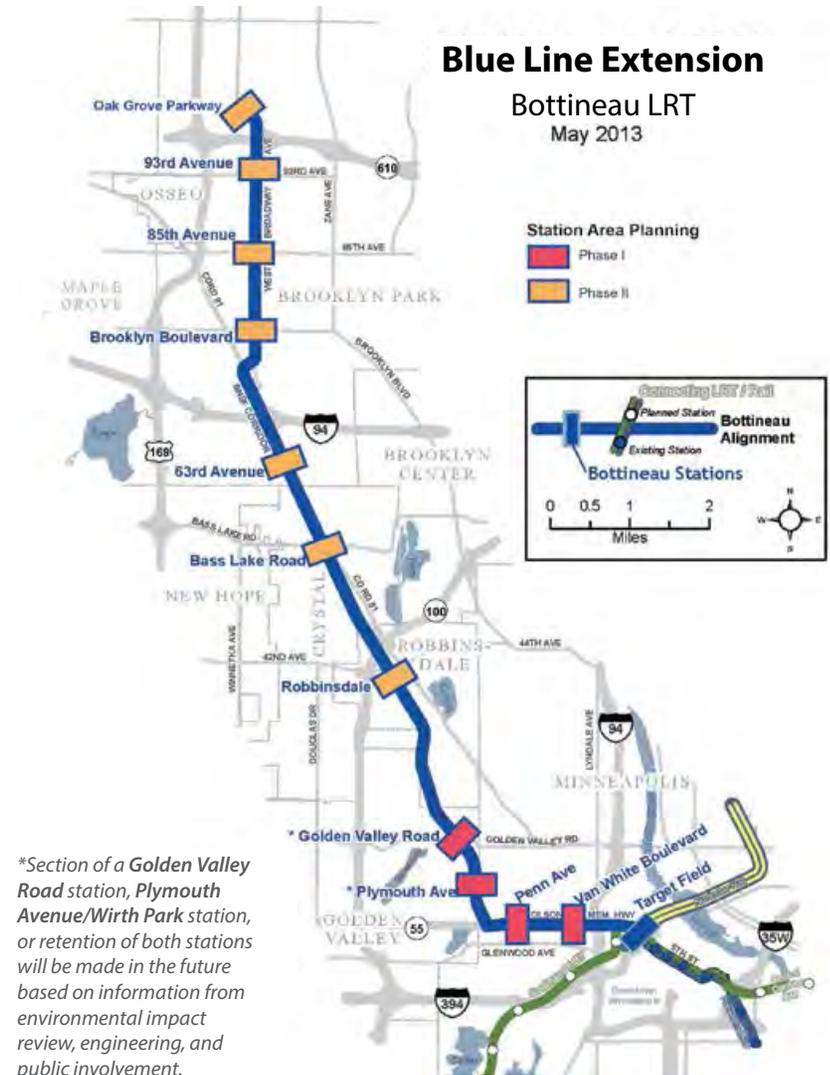
As noted above and in **Figure 1.2**, Metro Transit plans to build either the Plymouth Avenue or the Golden Valley Road Station or both stations. Selection of a station will occur during the LRT project's preliminary engineering phase. To inform this selection, and to keep the decision unbiased, Hennepin County and the Cities of Minneapolis and Golden Valley elected to prepare full station area plans for both stations.

## Definition of Station Area Planning

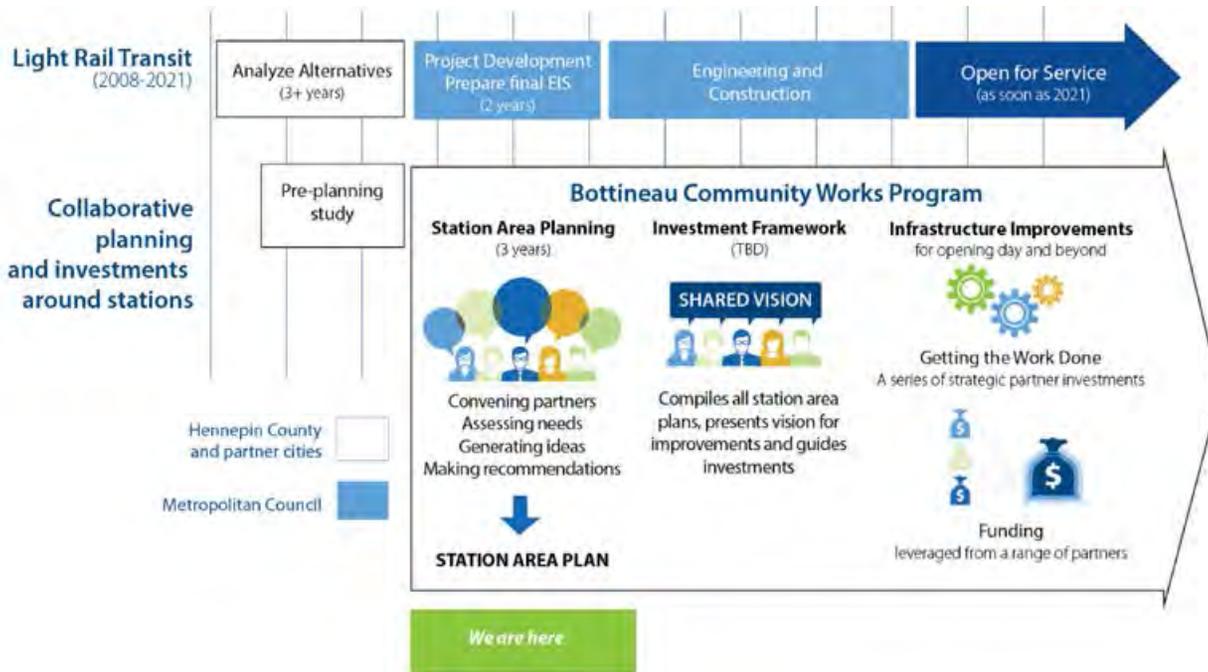
Station area planning is a process by which county and city staff work together with community members to establish a plan for the area surrounding a proposed transit station. Station area plans typically cover the area within a 1/2 mile radius or ten minute walk of the station. During the station area planning process community members discuss issues, needs, desires, and priorities, and set a vision for the future look and feel of the area that creates a context for the station in the community. Station area planning results in a list of recommended actions for agencies and local communities that contribute toward realization of the vision.

**Figure 1.2: METRO Blue Line Extension**

*This map shows which station area planning phase the various METRO Blue Line Extension stations are addressed in.*



**Figure 1.3: METRO Blue Line Extension Development Process**



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, Hennepin County incorporated health considerations as a special area of focus in station area planning.

## Purpose of Station Area Planning

Station area planning is one step in a larger transportation development project, as depicted in **Figure 1.3**. The Phase One Station Area Planning process is a joint effort of Hennepin County Bottineau LRT Community Works, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, and the Cities of Minneapolis and Golden Valley. The purpose of Station Area Planning is to create land use and transitway supportive plans centered on the proposed Bottineau LRT transit stations. These plans examine transportation and circulation

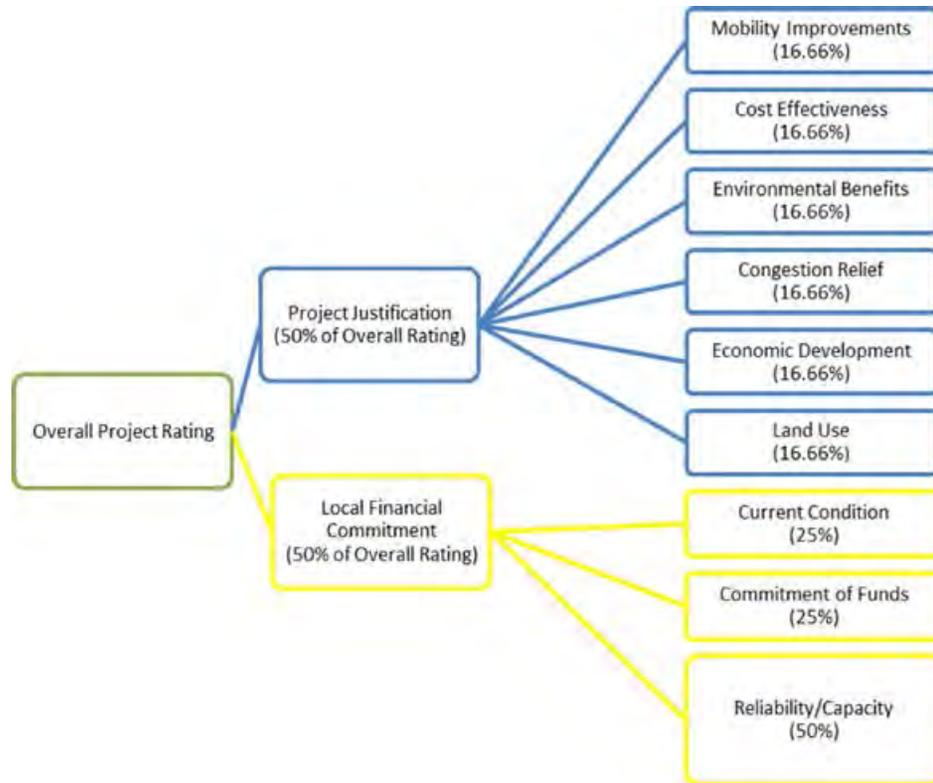
issues, urban design and placemaking, and public realm infrastructure so as to help maintain and create healthy, great neighborhoods and high quality transit-oriented development. These plans cover the area within a half mile of a transit station, but concentrate on the area within a 10 minute walk. The purpose of the Station Area Planning process is threefold:

First: To provide an opportunity for dialogue with station area residents, members of the business community, agency staff, and elected and appointed officials regarding land use concepts and ideas, infrastructure improvements, and whether changes are recommended to city, county, and regional plans, policies, and ordinances. The station area plans will be adopted as part of the comprehensive plans of the partner cities. The station area plans provide guidance for the cities in designating land uses, making infrastructure investments, and developing and providing community services. The maps, goals, and policies of the plan provide the framework for adoption of regulations, programs, and services that implement the plan and help prepare for the METRO Blue Line Extension as a major infrastructure investment.

Second: To improve the METRO Blue Line Extension project's likelihood of receiving federal funding. The METRO Blue Line Extension project is competing with transitway projects across the country for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts funds, which could pay for up to 50 percent of the capital costs of

<sup>1</sup>As of August 2013, FTA's interim policy is to assign 50 percent weight to the summary project justification rating and 50 percent weight to the summary local financial commitment rating to arrive at an overall rating for the project. FTA requires at least a medium rating on both measures to obtain a medium or better rating overall.

**Figure 1.4: FTA New Starts Rating System**



the project. Proposed New Starts projects are evaluated and rated according to local financial commitment and project justification criteria set forth in the federal transportation bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and are shown in **Figure 1.4**<sup>1</sup>.

Of the six project justification criteria, two criteria, economic development effects and land use, are

based almost entirely on local plans and policies, as well as the physical character of station areas. Station area planning therefore has the potential to increase the project’s rating and its likelihood of funding and implementation. Ratings on additional criteria (mobility and cost) can also benefit from station area planning, as these ratings are affected by the number of people who will be served by and ride the LRT line. Planning

around stations is the first step in allocating growth to station areas, eventually increasing the population near stations and in turn increasing ridership on the LRT line.

Finally, the station area planning process builds capacity within community members and agency staff to fully participate in the Hennepin County Bottineau LRT Community Works program, as well as the preliminary engineering process for the LRT line. Bottineau LRT Community Works is a partnership of Hennepin County, the corridor cities, and Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit to coordinate planning and make effective investments in the station areas that foster transit-oriented development, pedestrian and bicycle accessibility, job growth, neighborhood vitality, and unique places in the corridor.

## Station Area Planning Process and Approach

### Process

The station area planning process proceeded in five phases: pre-planning; inventory and analysis; concept alternatives; preferred alternative and implementation recommendations and development of the final station area plans.

### Pre-Planning

To provide Bottineau Corridor stakeholders with a foundation of objective information for future station area planning efforts, two planning efforts were undertaken prior to actively working on station area plans. A pre-planning study documented some best

---

practices for transit-oriented development (TOD) and community engagement, established a corridor-wide vision and suggested station typologies.

In recognition of the relationship between transportation decision making and health outcomes, Hennepin County undertook a health impact assessment (HIA) of the transitway. This effort is similar to an environmental impact assessment, but considers the impact of a project on community health. The HIA found that:

- The Bottineau Transitway has the potential to improve health in the region by influencing multiple factors that shape health.
- Enhancements to land uses surrounding the station areas could greatly advance the LRT line's impact on health.
- The degree to which these health promoting benefits reach communities experiencing health disparities, such as minority and low-income populations, will depend on measures to ensure their access to the LRT.

HIA recommendations for station area planning included:

- Engage populations living in the Bottineau Corridor during station area planning and incorporating 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 zoning, parking requirements, and building codes that encourage higher density, mixed-use development and benefit existing communities.

- Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements into station area plans to improve traffic safety and facilitate access to the transit stations by foot and bike.
- Preserve existing affordable housing and support the development of affordable and mixed-income housing near transit locations using strategies that have been successful for other transit-related investments throughout the U.S.

### ***Inventory and Analysis – Spring and Summer 2014***

This phase included collection of data and an in-depth analysis of several topics. Results of the following inventory and analysis can be found in Chapter 2, Part 1: Existing Conditions Analysis unless otherwise noted.

#### **Access and Circulation**

- An analysis of the connections between modes at each station; bus, bicycle, and pedestrian access to the station; and missing links in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
- High-level consideration of traffic-related issues and traffic generating locations

- An in-depth look at the pedestrian environment on Olson Memorial Highway, including the possibility for a parallel trail, north-south pedestrian connections across the highway, exploration of crossing scenarios, as well as pedestrian and bicycle crossings above-, below-, and at-grade with the highway
- Examination of on and off-street parking options and parameters near the stations

#### **Existing and Future Land Use**

- Mapping of existing land use in each of the station areas

#### **Amenities and Destinations**

- Inventory and mapping of local amenities and destinations, including major developments, healthcare, civic, and educational destinations, as well as parks and historic properties and districts

#### **Economic Development**

*Results of the economic development inventory and analysis can be found at the station area market analysis link on page 1-10.*

- A quantitative and qualitative evaluation of development capacity in each of the station areas including large sites and those in public ownership
- In-person interviews with local developers, community members, business owners, and organizational leaders regarding current real estate dynamics and opportunities

- An evaluation of opportunities for retail, general commercial, and office development at the neighborhood, community, and sub-region scale, as well as potential opportunities for civic, educational, and healthcare uses
- Gathering of baseline demographic information, with metrics such as household size, incomes, age, and educational attainment

### Housing Markets

*Results of the housing inventory and analysis can be found at the station area market analysis link on page 1-10.*

- Documentation of the market dynamics driving residential development (achievable price points, land values, density, and absorption), and links between current and future housing typologies and developable land, in order to generate a picture of the station area in the short and long terms
- An inventory of existing housing conditions, including the scale of existing development, and affordability mix
- Use of housing-related data as well as the reports and perceptions of community residents and other stakeholders to outline the housing needs of communities near the stations
- An evaluation of current and projected market conditions for housing development to estimate the rents that would be achievable in new developments by housing type, and the populations and households that might be target markets for new housing development

### Future Character

- Statements shaped through the community engagement process that communicate each station's assets and values and set the vision that will guide future development in the station area

### Concept Alternatives – Fall and Winter 2014

The concept alternatives encompass the information gathered during the inventory and analysis phase and illustrate a range of development options for each station, as well as potential infrastructure improvements.

### Preferred Alternative and Implementation Recommendations – Winter 2015

Each station's preferred alternative concept is consistent with its station area character statement and incorporates recommended circulation and public realm enhancements. To facilitate adoption into each city's comprehensive plan, the preferred concept alternative is presented as a future land use plan.

Recommendations are based on the results of the analysis, conceptual station area layouts, assessment of development financial feasibility, and extensive community engagement. Recommendations are presented for each station in phases: pre-transitway (2013 - 2020), and post-transitway (2020 - 2030).

The implementation plan includes mutually agreed-on roles and responsibilities for both public agencies and community stakeholders.

### Final Station Area Plans – Spring 2015

This document is a record of the community engagement process, along with the results of technical analyses, as well as the final station concept, future land use plan maps, and corresponding recommendations and implementation plan. For the station area planning timeline, please see **Figure 1.5**.

### Public Engagement throughout the Station Area Planning Process

Robust public engagement was central to development of the station area plans, and the plans reflect input from a wide variety of residents, business community members, community organizations, and government agencies. A variety of methods were used to engage people throughout the project; detail is provided in the sections below.

### Community Engagement

The METRO Blue Line Extension Station Area Planning process began with a concerted effort to identify and invite people who live, work, or are otherwise interested in the station areas to join a Community Working Group, a group of community members that met monthly throughout the planning process to generate ideas, review drawings, maps, and documents, and provide direction on broader station area planning outreach efforts.

Seven Community Working Group meetings were held over the course of the planning process, while three open houses were held at critical junctures to share information and gather input from a broader group of people. Community Working Group meetings

Figure 1.5: Station Area Planning Schedule



---

were open to the public and were well attended by members. Open houses were thoroughly advertised on the Bottineau LRT Community Works email list, website, and noticed in public places and via community and neighborhood organizations. Open houses were very well attended, with more than 150 participants at each event.

In addition, city, county, and consultant staff met with many other stakeholders in small-group and one-on-one topical meetings, and conducted interviews with a broad cross-section of key stakeholders, as well as developers in the corridor and region.

### **Health Equity and Engagement Cohort**

In 2013, Hennepin County published the Bottineau Health Impact Assessment (HIA), which documented dramatic economic, environmental, and social inequalities in the Bottineau Corridor compared to the rest of the region. These inequalities result in lower life expectancy, poor health outcomes, and more traffic fatalities in the corridor. The METRO Blue Line Extension project offers an opportunity to begin improving health in nearby communities. As follow up to the HIA and in parallel to the station area planning process, Hennepin County initiated an engagement process specifically aimed at integrating health equity principles into Bottineau Station Area Planning. The Health Equity and Engagement Cohort formed in 2014 and is comprised of representatives from Northside Residents Redevelopment Council, Harrison Neighborhood Association, Heritage Park Neighborhood Association, Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio (CLUES), CAPI USA (formerly Center for Asian and Pacific Islanders), Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota, Redeemer Center

for Life, and Masjid An-Nur. The cohort has provided input to the station area planning process, and many individual members of the organizations listed above have participated in the process, as well.

### **Agency Engagement**

A Technical Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from each of the affected agencies met eight times throughout the project to review and provide comment and direction on both technical information and community engagement methods. TAC members engaged in difficult conversations to reconcile the differing priorities of their agencies, all of which retain an interest in the success of the METRO Blue Line Extension and its stations. TAC members also participated in a design charrette, an intense all-day meeting with the purpose of identifying preferred land uses, solidifying preferred alternatives, and discussing potential implementation strategies.

For a timeline of community and agency engagement efforts, please see **Figure 1.5**.

## **Related Documents**

### **Relationship to Other Guidance Documents**

As part of the station area planning process, plans that provided city-wide policy guidance, such as Comprehensive Plans, were consulted. In addition, policy documents developed by the Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County were also consulted for applicable policy direction.

Portions of the station areas may be covered by various City of Minneapolis policy guidance documents as described below:

### **Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan**

The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan was adopted in 2007. The Van White Station Area Plan builds on the policy guidance of the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan, but does not replace the plan. However, the Van White Station Area Plan will amend part of the land use map in the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan land use map that is generally south of Glenwood Avenue and north of Bryn Mawr Meadows that is currently shown as low or medium density residential (please see outlined area on **Figure 2.15** and **Figure 2.16**). Future policy decisions should consult both the Bassett Creek Valley Plan and the Van White Station Area Plan, with the amendments of the Van White Station Area Plan taking precedent, where applicable.

### **Minneapolis Near Northside Master Plan**

The Minneapolis Near Northside Master Plan was adopted in 2000. The Van White Station Area Plan land use plan will replace the *Minneapolis Near Northside Master Plan* land use plan.

### **North Loop Small Area Plan**

The North Loop Small Area Plan was adopted in 2010. This document should be referenced for policy guidance for Van White station area east of Interstate 94.

---

## Previous Studies

The studies referenced below each informed the station area planning process. A short description of each is provided, along with a brief synopsis of the information the study provided to the METRO Blue Line Extension Station Area Planning process.

### ***[Bottineau Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement](#)***

Published in April 2014, the [Bottineau Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement](#) describes the transportation and environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of an LRT project to improve transit service in the northwest part of the region. The Bottineau Draft EIS provided information about LRT design, placement of LRT components and potential impacts of the line that was used to inform the station area plans.

### ***[Theodore Wirth Regional Park Bottineau Transitway Design Forum](#)***

In February 2013, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board sponsored the [Theodore Wirth Regional Park Bottineau Transitway Design Forum](#) to explore the relationship between the LRT project and the park. The outcome of the forum is a series of concepts that illustrate potential solutions to the issues and opportunities presented by LRT adjacent to the east side of the park. The station area planning process further explored many of the ideas raised during the Design Forum.

### ***[Bottineau Transitway Station Area Pre-Planning Study](#)***

Published in February 2013, the purpose of the [Bottineau Transitway Station Area Pre-Planning Study](#) is to provide Bottineau Corridor stakeholders with a foundation of objective information for future station area planning efforts. As a pre-planning study, it does not describe where and how change should occur. Rather, it establishes some best practices for TOD, establishes a corridor-wide vision, and suggests station typologies. The vision and station typologies proposed in the Pre-Planning Study were used to arrive at the character statements for each station.

### ***[Southwest Corridor Transitional Station Area Action Plans and Investment Framework](#)***

Created in January 2014, the [Southwest Corridor Investment Framework](#) guides public and private investments around the Green Line Extension (Southwest) LRT stations. The framework is comprised of 17 individual station area action plans that suggest ways to build on local assets, enhance mobility, identify infrastructure needs, and capitalize on promising development opportunities. Because there is overlap between the Van White Station area of the METRO Green Line Extension (Southwest) Corridor and the Van White Station area in the METRO Blue Line Extension, the Action Plans and Investment Framework provided an understanding of the areas that had already been addressed in this previous planning effort.

### ***[Bottineau Transitway Health Impact Assessment](#)***

In recognition of the relationship between transportation decision making and health outcomes, Hennepin County published the [Bottineau Transitway Health Impact Assessment](#) (HIA) in December 2013. The HIA provides recommendations for advancing the transitway's positive health impacts and is intended to help stakeholders consider health as they make decisions and participate in the next phases of the Bottineau Transitway project. The HIA informed community engagement efforts and to consideration of health outcomes throughout the station area planning process.

## Concurrent Studies

Several studies were underway at the same time at METRO Blue Line Extension Station Area Planning. Information from these efforts was coordinated as needed.

### ***[Theodore Wirth Regional Park Master Plan](#)***

Published in February 2015, the [Theodore Wirth Regional Park Master Plan](#) documents current park data and analysis, communicates a plan for the park's future, and guides strategic implementation of the plan over the next 20 years. It serves as a "memory" for decision-making, by reminding future residents, park visitors, and staff of the rationale behind the vision for the park and the recommended improvements. The Master Plan was used as a reference document for understanding of the Park's future and its facilities as they relate to the Penn, Plymouth and Golden Valley Road Stations.

---

### ***Penn Avenue Vision and Implementation Framework***

The [Penn Avenue Community Works Corridor Vision and Implementation Framework](#) is a Hennepin County-led effort to develop an integrated community-based vision and a coordinated, long-term implementation framework to guide future inter-agency efforts and investments in multimodal transportation, land use, economic development, housing, and placemaking along Penn Avenue North between the METRO Green Line Extension station just south of I-394, to 44th Avenue North. Information gathered as part of the Penn Avenue Community Works research and community engagement informed the development potential, community character, and circulation aspects of the Penn Avenue and Plymouth Avenue Station Area Plans.

### ***North Minneapolis Greenway: Technical Investigation Progress Report***

Prepared in June 2014 by the City of Minneapolis, the [North Minneapolis Greenway: Technical Investigation Progress Report](#) documents a proposed 3.5-mile greenway route extending from the intersection of Humboldt Avenue N and 47th Avenue N to the intersection of Irving Avenue N and 16th Avenue N. Several alternative routes were identified between 16th Avenue N and Glenwood Avenue that were taken into consideration during station area planning.

### ***METRO Blue Line Extension Preliminary Engineering***

In August 2014, the Federal Transit Administration approved the [METRO Blue Line Extension](#) for entry into the Preliminary Engineering (also referred to as

the Project Development) phase of the project. Metro Transit is currently leading design of the LRT project, in partnership with FTA, Hennepin County, and the corridor cities.

## **Supporting Reports/Memoranda**

Over the course of the project, supporting reports and technical memoranda were developed on specific topics. These documents can be accessed as separate Appendices.

### ***Station Area Market Analysis***

The Station Area Market Analysis report titled, *Place Based Economic Development and Market Analysis*, provides a realistic understanding of the types of real estate (housing, retail, offices, and employment) that are likely to be feasible within the four station areas over the coming two decades, and to identify key “development opportunity sites” within each of the four station areas.

### ***Stakeholder Engagement Memorandum***

The Stakeholder Engagement Memorandum describes community engagement efforts throughout the station area planning process, outlines issues and themes expressed, and documents how the planning documents and overall process were shaped by community input.

### ***Estimated Infrastructure Construction Costs***

Estimated construction costs were prepared for infrastructure improvement projects recommended in the final station area plans.



# **2 VAN WHITE BOULEVARD STATION AREA**

- 1. Existing Conditions Analysis**
- 2. Station Area Vision**
- 3. Implementation Framework**

# VAN WHITE BOULEVARD STATION AREA

The proposed Van White Boulevard Station is located at the intersection of Van White Memorial Boulevard and Olson Memorial Highway. The station area extends one-half mile around each proposed light rail transit (LRT) station, or the distance the average person can walk to/from the station in ten minutes. One-half mile is the transit industry standard for the maximum length that people are willing to walk to reach a transitway station. While a one-half mile is equated with a ten-minute walk, in reality this does not always hold true on the ground as factors such as terrain and the transportation network affects how people move through the station area. Please see **Figure 2.1** for a map of the station location, half-mile radius, and ten-minute walk extent.

The Van White station area considered in these station area plans varies slightly from the half-mile convention, as a portion of the station area east of I-94 had already been addressed through Green Line Extension Royalston Station area planning. This area was therefore not considered as part of Van White station area planning. Over the course of the station area

planning process the Van White station area expanded several blocks southwest of the one-half mile radius, as logistically and experientially this area is similar to the southwest portion of the station area.

## Relationship to Community Health

The Van White Boulevard Station Area is located in a community experiencing substantial disparities in health outcomes (chronic disease and life expectancy) as is evident from **Figure 2.2** and racial disparities in key social determinants of health (employment, income, food access, et cetera) that contribute towards health outcomes documented in the Bottineau Transitway Health Impact Assessment (HIA). The HIA explored the following determinants of health: employment, location affordability, food access, physical activity, traffic safety, and education access. Additionally, **Table 2.1** demonstrates that 48 percent of residents in this station area live in poverty, 88 percent of residents are people of color, there is a large youth population, and 49 percent of households live without a car.

**Table 2.1: Van White Boulevard Community Profile**

	Half-Mile Station Area	Minneapolis	Hennepin County
<b>Population (2010)</b>	4,576	382,578	1,152,388
<b>Persons under 18 years</b>	37%	20.2%	22.4%
<b>Persons over 65 years</b>	6%	8.0%	12.2%
<b>Minority</b>	88%	36.2%	23.6%
<b>Zero car households</b>	49%	19%	10.5%
<b>Living in poverty<sup>2</sup></b>	48%	22.5%	12.8%

Data sources: U.S. Census (2010); American Community Survey 2007-2011 5-year summary file

## Existing Conditions Analysis

### Roadways

As depicted in **Figure 2.3**, Olson Memorial Highway (Minnesota State Highway 55) is owned and operated by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and has a road functional classification of Principal Arterial. Approximately 23,400 vehicles use the segment of Olson Memorial Highway near the station on a daily basis in 2012. West of Thomas Avenue, Olson Highway is a four-lane roadway with paved shoulders and has a posted speed limit of 50 miles per hour. At Thomas Avenue, Olson Highway transitions to six-lane roadway with curb and gutter and to a 40 mile per hour posted speed limit. Starting at Thomas there is a sidewalk along both the north and south sides of the highway. At times the sidewalk is located directly behind the curb and at times the sidewalk is separated from the highway by a turf boulevard. Within the station area, the highway has a grassy median island where the METRO Blue Line Extension will be constructed. Olson Memorial is supplemented by the Olson Highway Service Road, a frontage road on the south side of the highway extending from Thomas Avenue to Bryant Avenue, with gaps at Penn Avenue and Van White Memorial Boulevard. There is also a short frontage road on the north side of Olson Highway immediately east of Humboldt Avenue that is used by Seed Academy/

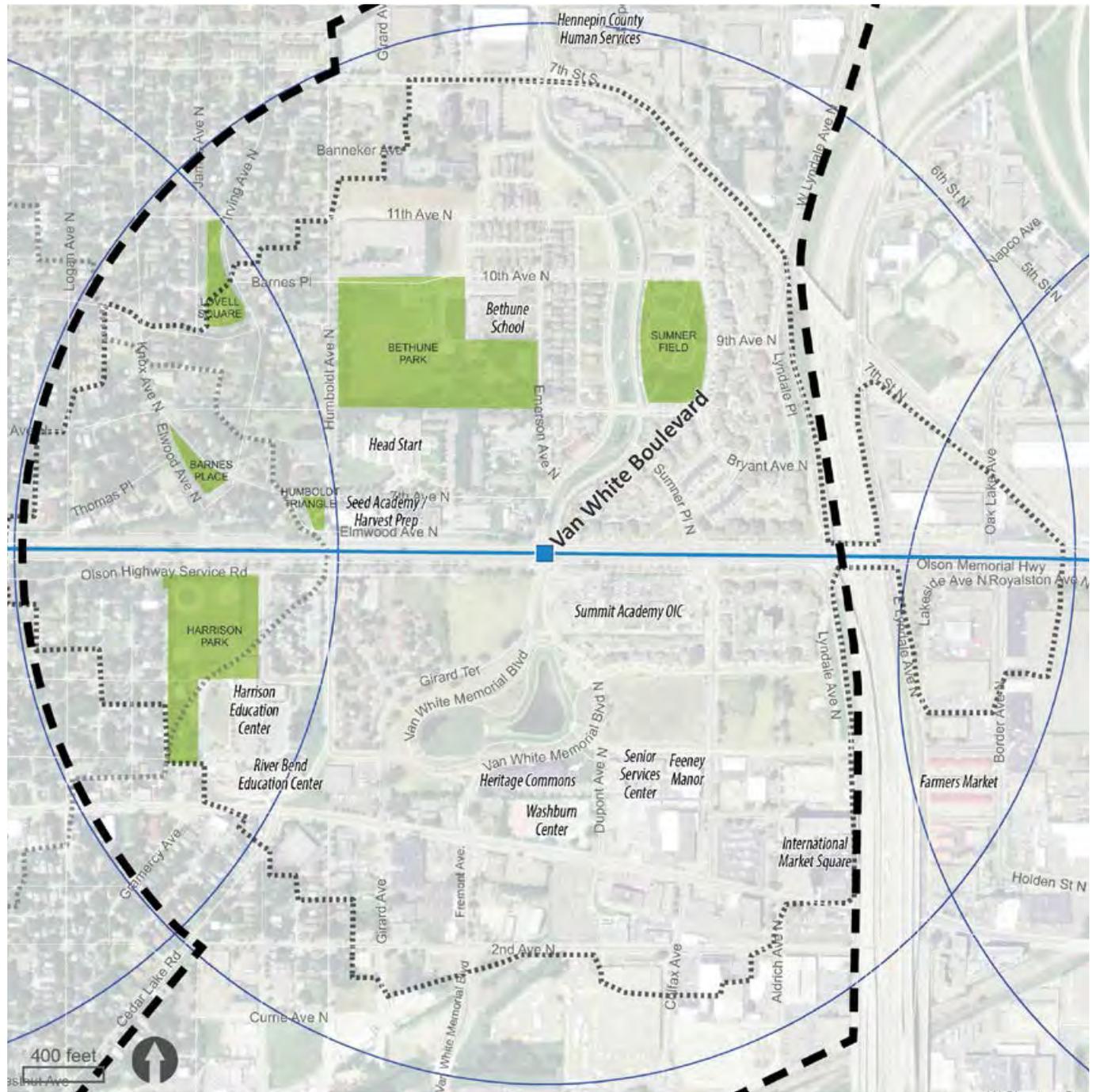
<sup>2</sup>Living in poverty is defined as populations living in households whose income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty thresholds. As a reference, this threshold was \$22,300 in 2010 for a family of four. Minority is defined as non-white.

## Figure 2.1: Van White Blvd. Station Area

This map shows the half mile buffer and 10 minute walking extent for the station area.

Note: Station area boundaries were modified over the course of the study.

-  Modified Station Area
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Adjacent Station 10-minute Walking Extent
-  Van White Station 10-minute Walking Extent



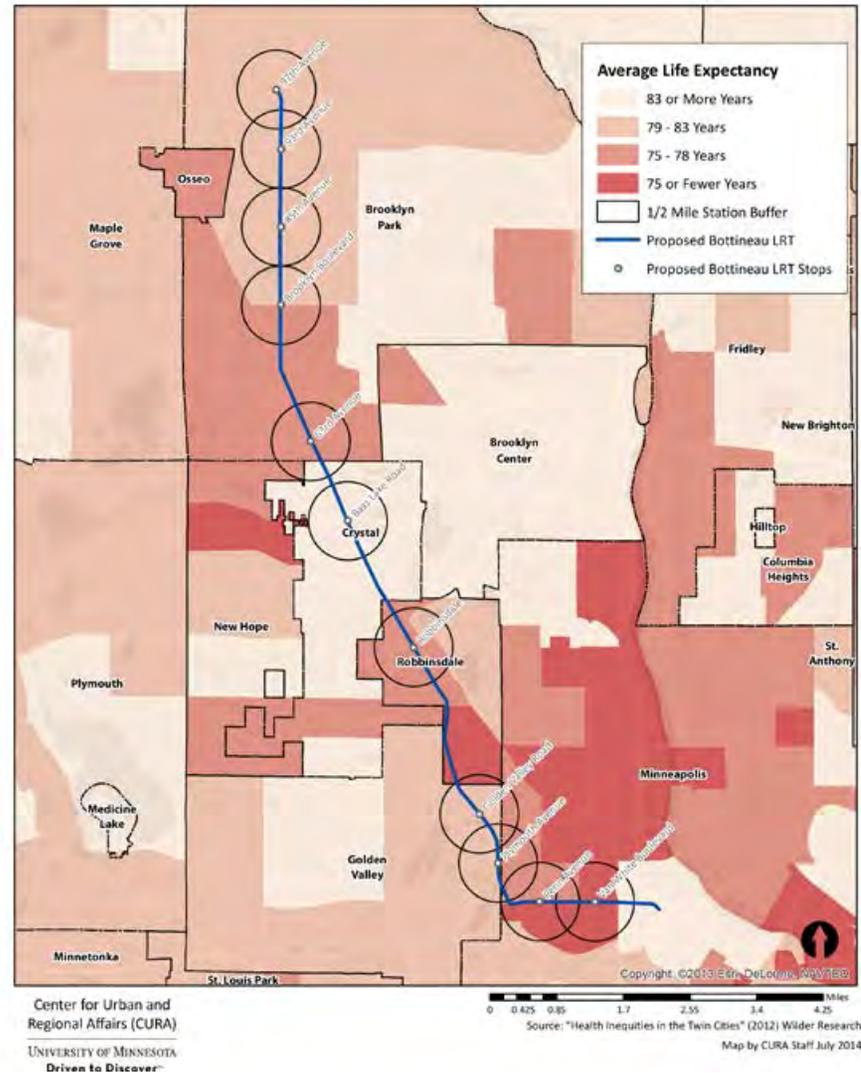
Harvest Preparatory School for parking. Parking is not permitted on Olson Memorial Highway, but is allowed on Olson Highway Service Road.

Van White Memorial Boulevard is a local street owned and maintained by the City of Minneapolis. The Van White Memorial Bridge over the BNSF Railroad tracks and Bassett Creek opened in 2013, creating a new connection between north and south Minneapolis. In addition to connecting parts of the city, Van White Memorial Boulevard functions as the main street in the Heritage Park Neighborhood and is designated in the *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* as a Community Corridor. Community Corridors are lined primarily with medium-density residential, with intermittent neighborhood-serving commercial uses clustered at intersections.

### Primary Community Input

Community members who participated in engagement activities indicated that Olson Memorial Highway is a significant barrier to cross for people who walk and bike. Some community residents felt cars are traveling faster than the posted speed limit and that the highway is not well lit. Neighborhood residents who participated in engagement activities reported that pedestrian signals at intersections are not long enough to complete the crossing of the highway. There were 26 bicycle/automobile and pedestrian/automobile crashes in the station area between 2009-2013, 18 of which occurred along Olson Memorial Highway and most of which occurred in the eastbound lanes of the highway. Three of these crashes were fatal and occurred in low-light conditions at dawn or dusk, or at night. Clusters of crashes occurred at Humboldt Avenue and at I-94;

**Figure 2.2: Average Life Expectancy at Birth by Census Tract in 2007**



**Figure 2.3: Existing / Planned Streets and Highways**

This map depicts roadway jurisdictions, roadway classifications, and existing and forecasted traffic volumes.

Note: The City of Minneapolis defines a Commercial Corridor as historically prominent destinations consisting of a mix of uses, with commercial uses dominating.

The City of Minneapolis defines a Community Corridor as primarily residential with intermittent commercial uses clustered at intersection nodes.

- Modified Station Area
- Planned LRT Station
- Bottineau LRT Alignment
- MnDOT Roads
- City Roads
- Hennepin County Roads
- Planned Roads Noted in Existing Policy Document
- Signalized Intersection
- Commercial Corridors
- Community Corridors
- xxxx (xxxx) MNDOT Traffic Volumes Existing 2012 (Forecast 2030)
- LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
- Adjacent Station 10-minute Walking Extent
- Van White Station 10-minute Walking Extent



---

indicating a need for improved crossing conditions at these intersections. While an effort can be made to improve individual crossing locations, a broader effort to change the character of Olson Memorial Highway is desired so that the highway is no longer a barrier to mobility in the station area.

See **Figure 2.4** for a map of crashes in the study area, along with an analysis of current crossing locations for pedestrians that were proposed in the draft EIS to be closed upon LRT opening. Distances to remaining or new signalized crossings per the draft EIS are also shown.

## Transit

As shown in **Figure 2.5**, four local routes serve the station area: the high-frequency Route 19 on Olson Memorial Highway, the Route 9 on Glenwood Avenue, and high-frequency Route 5 and Route 22 on 7th Street North. Limited stop Route 755 passes through the station area on Olson Memorial Highway but does not stop. The proposed C Line Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service is currently planned to operate on Olson Memorial Highway with stations planned at Humboldt Avenue, Bryant Avenue, and 7th Street. Arterial BRT is also under consideration for Emerson and Fremont Avenues, and would use 7th Street to enter downtown Minneapolis; stations are planned at the intersections of 7th Street and 11th Avenue and 7th Street and Olson Memorial Highway.

### Primary Community Input

There currently are no transit routes that serve north-south trips through the station area and connect to the planned Van White station on the Green Line

Extension. Community members who participated in engagement activities have expressed a desire for this transit connection.

## Bikeways and Sidewalks

Sidewalk infrastructure in the station area is fairly consistent, with sidewalks on both sides of local and arterial streets. In general, sidewalks along local streets are separated from the roadway by a planted boulevard with grass, street trees, or landscaping. In Heritage Park, pedestrian-scale street lights are also located in the boulevard; these lights are not present in the rest of the station area. Notable gaps in the sidewalk network are along sites that have not yet been redeveloped. Sidewalks along Olson Memorial Highway are back of curb with no boulevard between Humboldt and Russell Avenues on the south side, and on the north side between Russell and Sheridan Avenues. Pedestrians walk immediately adjacent to the highway, with no buffer from fast-moving traffic. This configuration is coupled with a lack of sidewalks west of Sheridan on the north side, and sidewalks along the Service Road only on the south side between Humboldt and Bryant Avenues. In addition, lighting along the highway is geared toward the roadway and not the sidewalks, creating a dark walking environment at night. All of these conditions make for an uncomfortable, disconnected, and unintuitive pedestrian network. Please see **Figure 2.6** for a map of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the station area.

Bicycle infrastructure in the station area serves north-south users fairly well with dedicated trails along most of Van White Boulevard throughout the station area; an existing trail gap between 2nd and

4th Avenues North will be completed as part of the METRO Green Line Extension. As part of a concurrent study being performed by the City of Minneapolis, the City identified a proposed 3.5-mile greenway route extending from the intersection of Humboldt Avenue N and 47th Avenue N to the intersection of Irving Avenue N and Golden Valley Road. As part of the study, several alternative routes were identified between Golden Valley Road and Glenwood Avenue that were taken into consideration during station area planning. **Figure 2.7** depicts the route alternatives that were identified as part of the greenway study. The route alternatives are composed of two options (A and B) between Golden Valley Road and 16th Avenue and six different route options (1 – 6) between 16th Avenue N and Glenwood Avenue. Implementation of the proposed north Minneapolis Greenway, would further improve north-south bicycle movement in the station area. As shown in **Figure 2.6**, east-west users can use on-street bicycle lanes on Glenwood Avenue to the south of the station, but are otherwise limited in their options. Bicyclists, pedestrians, and drivers have just two options for crossing I-94 in the station area: on the Olson Memorial Highway bridge over the freeway, and at the Glenwood Avenue underpass. Additional crossing options between Olson Memorial Highway and Glenwood Avenue have been investigated, but in this location I-94 is surrounded by bridge abutments and a complex web of entrance and exit ramps at varying levels, making a pedestrian connection over or under the freeway physically infeasible.

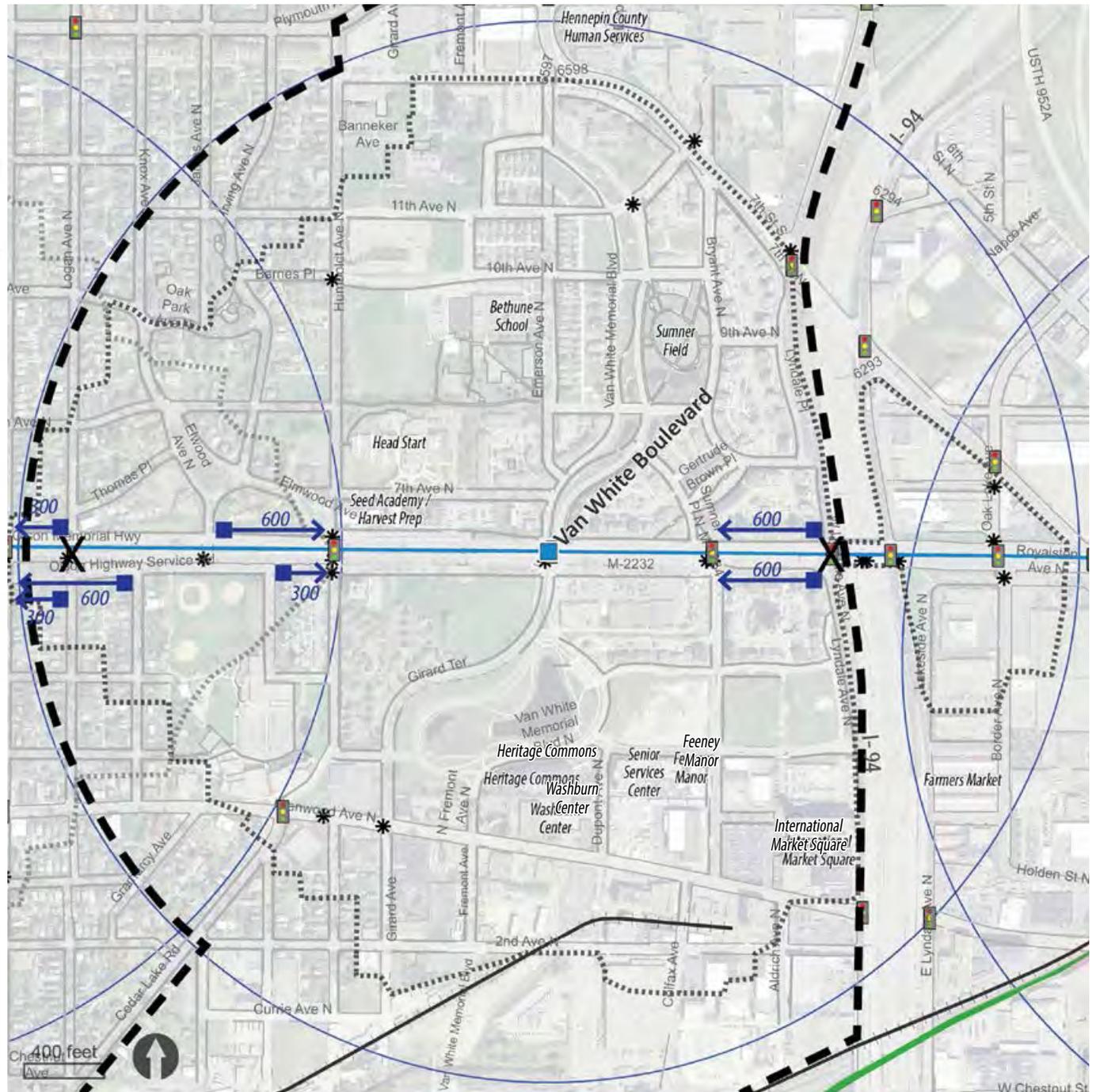
### Primary Community Input

Community members who participated in engagement activities have expressed an interest in having a bike

**Figure 2.4: Olson Memorial Highway Diversions to Signalized Intersections**

This map depicts distances pedestrians need to walk to reach proposed signalized intersections as shown in the draft Environmental Impact Statement.

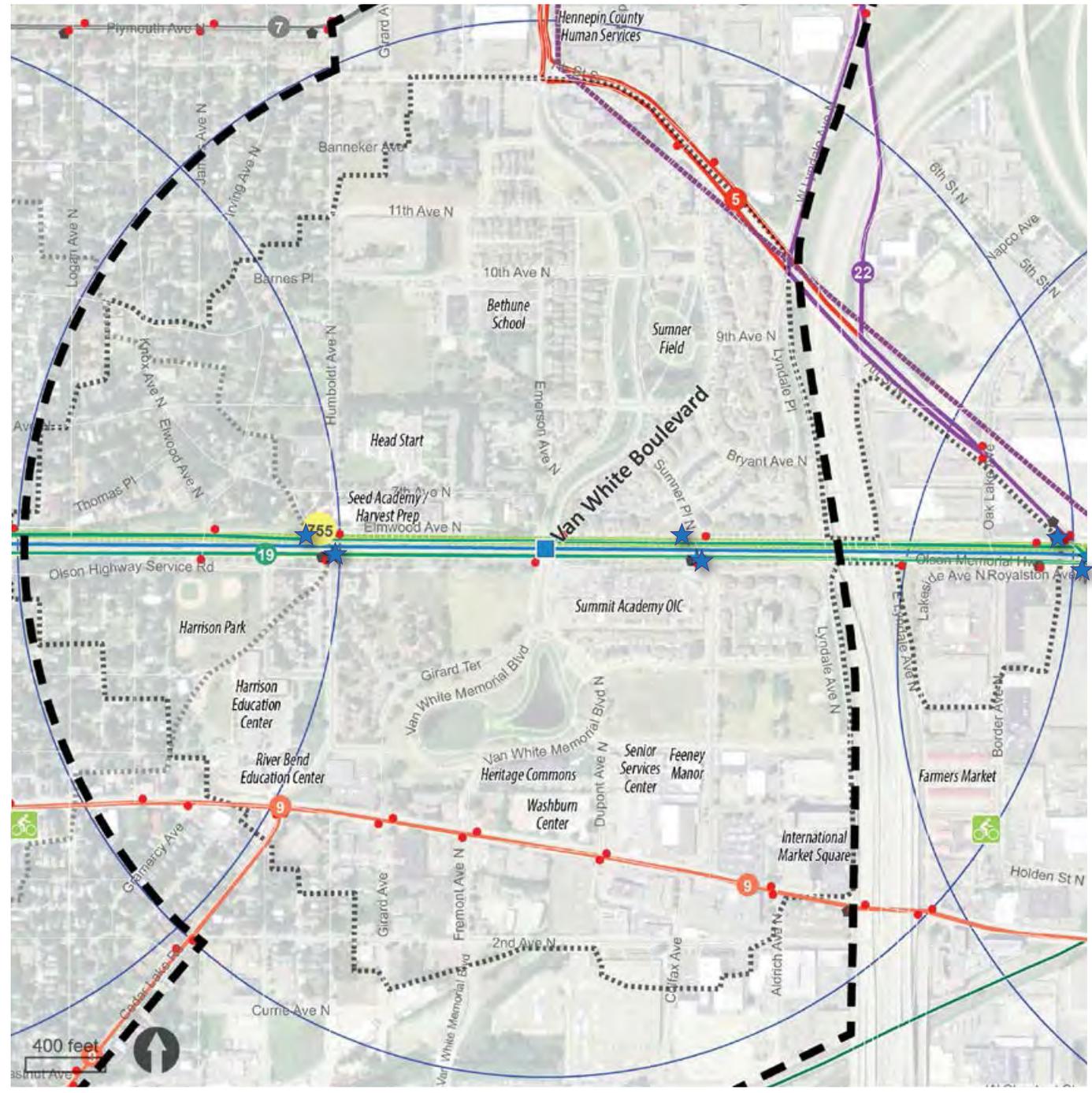
-  Modified Station Area
-  Distance to Signalized Intersection
-  Loss of Pedestrian Crossing
-  Bike/Ped and Vehicle Crash Incident (2009-2013)
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  Existing Sidewalks
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Railroad
-  Signalized Intersection
-  Adjacent Station 10-minute Walking Extent
-  Van White Station 10-minute Walking Extent



**Figure 2.5: Existing / Planned Transit Routes**

This map depicts existing bus routes and planned arterial BRT routes.

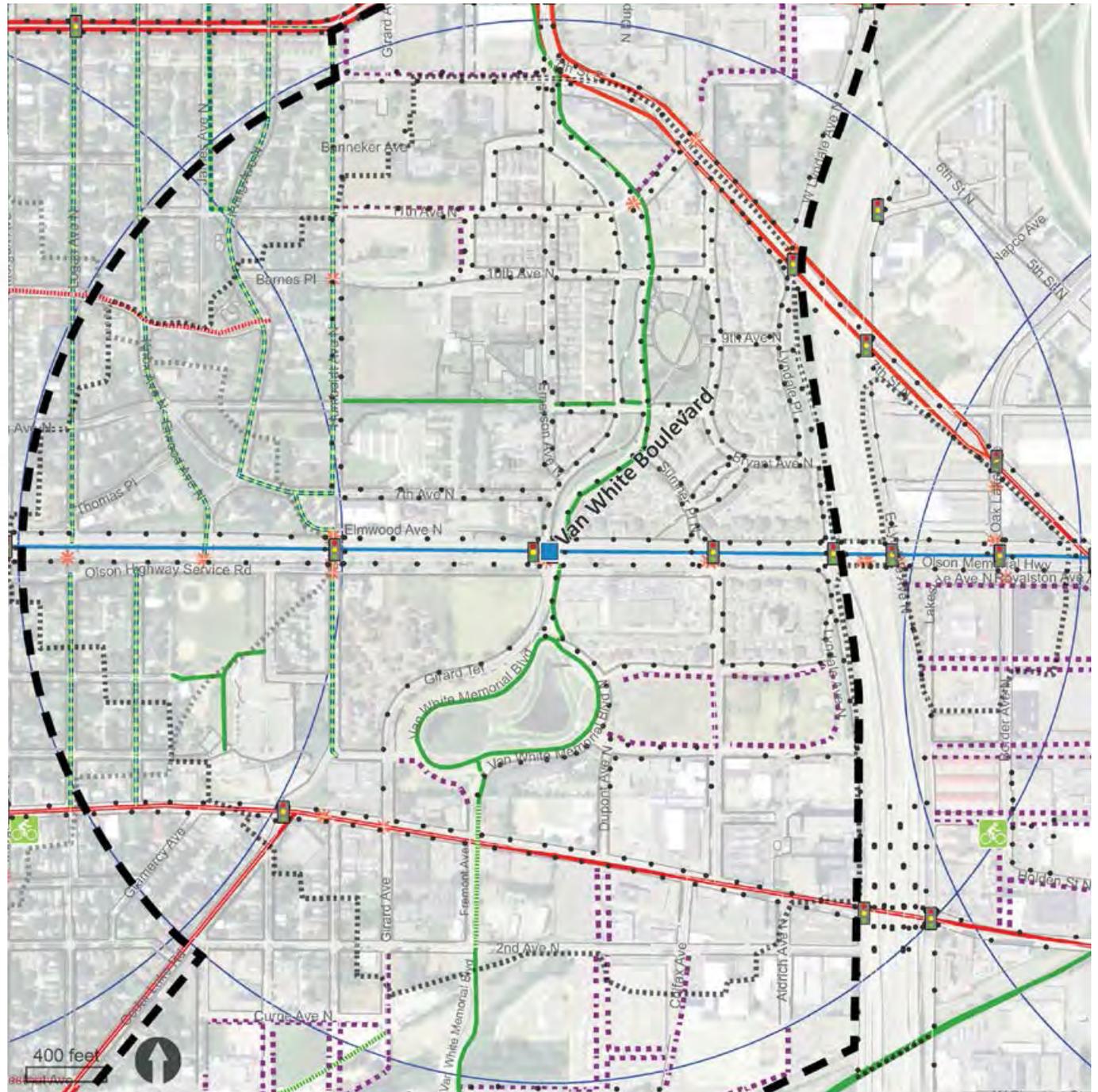
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  Planned C Line (Arterial BRT)
-  Planned C Line Stations
-  Planned Chicago-Emerson Line (Arterial BRT)
-  Route 5
-  Route 9
-  Route 19
-  Route 22
-  Route 755
-  Route 7
-  Bus Stop
-  Bus Shelter
-  Planned SWLRT Alignment
-  Nice Ride Station
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Adjacent Station 10-minute Walking Extent
-  Van White Station 10-minute Walking Extent



### Figure 2.6: Existing / Planned Sidewalks and Bikeways

This map shows existing sidewalks and bikeways, along with identified sidewalk gaps, planned sidewalks and planned bikeways previously identified in city policy documents.

-  Modified Station Area
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  Nice Ride Station
-  Bike/Ped and Vehicle Crash Incident 2009-2013
-  Existing Sidewalks
-  Sidewalk Gap
-  Existing On-Street Bike Lane
-  Planned On-Street Bike Lane in an Existing Policy Document
-  Existing Paved Trail
-  Planned Paved Trail in an Existing Policy Document
-  Potential North Minneapolis Greenway Route
-  Signalized Intersection
-  Street Light
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Adjacent Station 10-minute Walking Extent
-  Van White Station 10-minute Walking Extent



### Figure 2.7: Proposed North Minneapolis Greenway - Potential Route Options

This map depicts potential route options for the proposed North Minneapolis Greenway that were previously identified in the *North Minneapolis Greenway: Technical Investigation Progress Report*.

Note: Route alternatives are composed of two options (A and B) between Golden Valley Road and 16th Avenue and six different route options (1 – 6) between 16th Avenue N and Glenwood Avenue.

- Planned LRT Station
- Bottineau LRT Alignment
- - Modified Station Area
- LRT Station Half Mile Buffer



---

facility along the Olson Memorial Highway corridor that would improve east-west bicycle connectivity in the area and connect to Theodore Wirth Regional Park. Improvements to the overpass crossing of I-94 on Olson Memorial Highway and the underpass crossing at Glenwood Avenue were also mentioned as downtown Minneapolis is within walking and biking distance from the neighborhood and those connections are crucial to accessing downtown. Finally, community members who participated in engagement activities highlighted the need for improved lighting along Olson Memorial Highway and around and within the many neighborhood parks in the station area, which are very dark at night.

## Land Use

The Van White Boulevard station area encompasses an interesting mix of land uses and development types as depicted in **Figure 2.8**. The land use map was created from data received from the Metropolitan Council (2010). The land uses shown on this map represent a period in time and may not exactly match actual land uses or the City's existing land use maps. Please note that while it provides project context, it is not the City of Minneapolis' official land use map. There is a cluster of important area institutions along Olson Memorial Highway, very close to the future transit station at Van White. These include Summit Academy OIC on the south side of the highway; and a historic city library, a private school (Seed Academy/Harvest Preparatory School), and an important community church on the north side. Additional notable community services are north of these facilities—Parents in Community Action Head Start, the Phyllis Wheatley Community Center,

and Bethune Community Elementary School, and a Hennepin County regional human service center. To the south and west of the station are the Washburn Center for Children, and River Bend Education Center along Glenwood Avenue, and the Harrison Education Center.

Five or six blocks of land on the north side of Olson Memorial Highway, and one or two blocks on the south side of the highway, have been developed in the last dozen years or so as apartments, townhomes, and single family homes as part of the successful and stable Heritage Park development. At the southern edge of Heritage Park, two senior housing facilities have been constructed by the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, including the Heritage Park Senior Services Center, a health and wellness center for seniors.

Heritage Park has also refreshed the existing Sumner Field Park and provided a new park to augment the nearby Bethune and Harrison Parks. The Heritage Park development is not fully built out. Several blocks of still-vacant land have not yet been redeveloped. Most, but not all of this land, is south of the highway. These are the most prominent opportunities for new development in the Van White station area.

Much of the vacant land is owned by the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority. This includes a 5.3 acre site at the Van White/Olson Memorial Highway intersection, and additional large areas of land between Olson Memorial Highway and Glenwood Avenue totaling 8.4 acres.

North of the station area are several scattered vacant parcels totaling approximately 7 acres, owned by the City of Minneapolis and Minneapolis Public Housing Authority.

Heritage Park is itself situated among several legacy low-income housing developments that are medium to high density in character. West of Humboldt Avenue, the fabric of the neighborhood changes to blocks of older single family houses that are typical of most other parts of north Minneapolis.

Glenwood Avenue is situated south of Heritage Park. It is a commercial corridor in the City's comprehensive plan nomenclature, and lives up to that title in its mix of new and old buildings, and its commercial and industrial businesses. International Market Square is a historic mixed-use anchor facility on the east end of the corridor that represents how housing is starting to be introduced in the corridor.

The land south of Glenwood Avenue is home to acres of older industrial properties. Some of this is in active use, but much of it is blighted, and many of the older industrial buildings are vacant. Some of these large warehouse industrial users seem to have outgrown their sites, leasing additional property for trailer parking, and parking trailers on city streets. At the northwestern edge of this area, the first block south of Glenwood Avenue includes some pockets of older single family homes and duplexes, scattered among commercial uses.

## Community Character

The Van White Boulevard station will serve the Sumner-Glenwood, Near North, and Harrison neighborhoods as well as numerous community destinations as depicted in **Figure 2.9**. The Van White Boulevard Station area has experienced significant change over the past 15 years, with the opportunity to see more change in the future.

### Figure 2.8: Existing Land Use

This map shows existing land uses with data received from the Metropolitan Council (2010).

- Single-Family Detached
- Two-Family
- Multifamily
- Retail and Other Commercial
- Office
- Mixed Use Residential
- Mixed Use Industrial
- Industrial and Utility
- Institutional
- Park, Recreational or Preserve
- Major Highway
- Railway
- Undeveloped
- Parcels
- Modified Station Area
- Planned LRT Station
- Bottineau LRT Alignment
- LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
- 10-minute Walking Extent

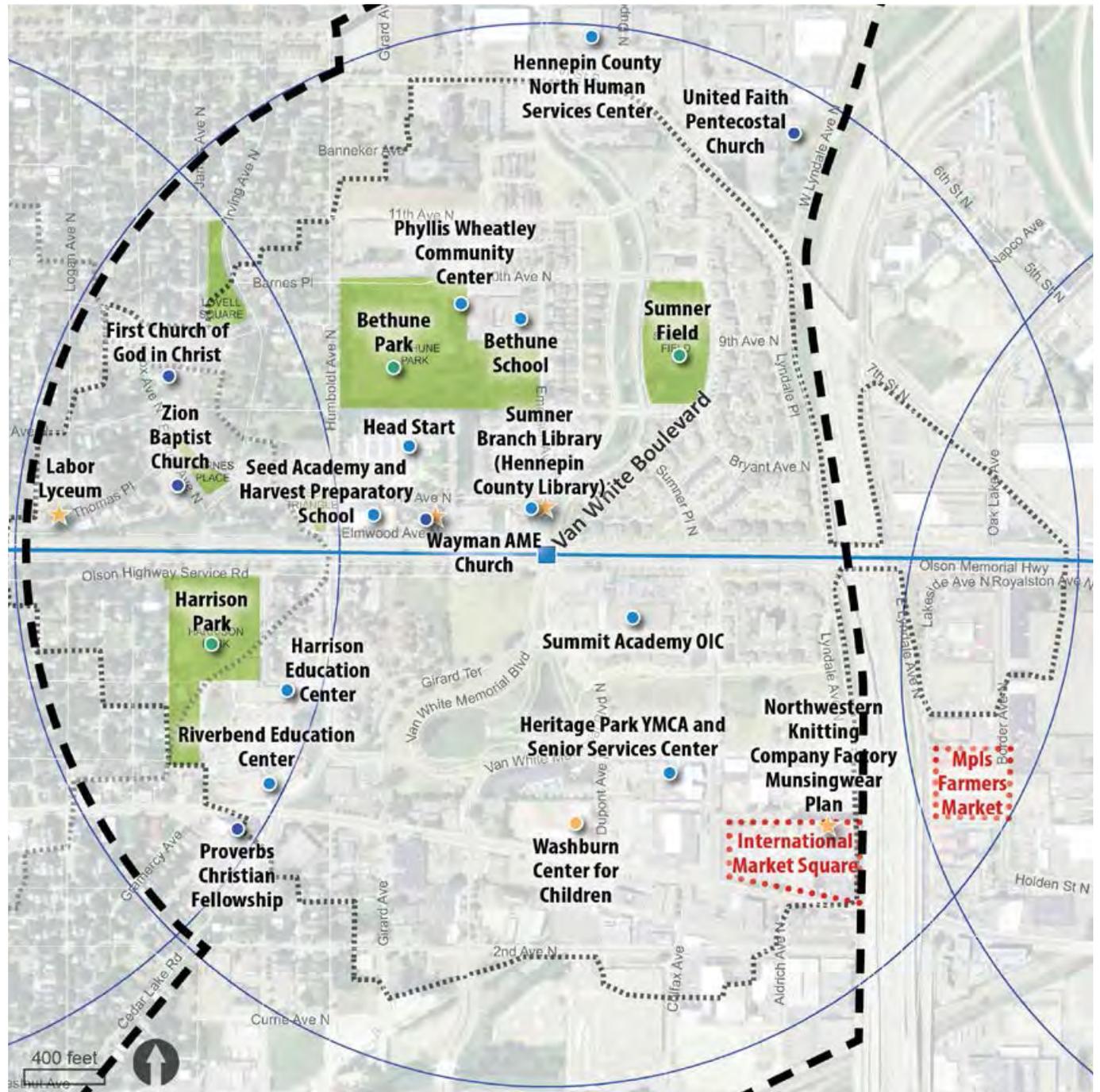


source: Metropolitan Council, 2010

**Figure 2.9: Existing / Planned Amenities and Destinations**

This map identifies amenities and destinations located in the station area.

-  Civic / Institutional
-  Religious
-  Health & Wellness
-  Retail / Restaurant / Grocery
-  Parks
-  Historic Property
-  Major Development / Destinations
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  10-minute Walking Extent
-  Modified Station Area



---

The Van White Station is surrounded by the Heritage Park development, which replaced the Sumner Field Homes, Glenwood, Lyndale, and Olson public housing developments. The Heritage Park development plan, which is partially built out, calls for the creation of 900 units of single-family homes, duplexes, garden apartments, townhouses, and carriage houses for both rental and ownership. The Heritage Park development reconfigured the site from large “superblocks” into smaller, residentially scaled blocks that included sidewalks and trails to improve connectivity and knit the area back into the broader neighborhood street network. New housing units were designed to blend with the architectural housing style of the adjacent neighborhood.

The area has seen recent growth and change along Glenwood Avenue, including the provision of new health centers and seniors and children, and the renovation of commercial and industrial buildings into space for design, marketing and other creative businesses.

Several historic landmarks and buildings line Olson Memorial Highway in the station area:

- Sumner Library was built in 1915 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The building was one of four public libraries that were built with Carnegie funds in Minneapolis.
- The Wayman A.M.E. Church was constructed in 1966 by an African American congregation and is eligible for listing on the NRHP. The church is an important and distinctive example of nationwide changes in ecclesiastical architectural design.

- The Labor Lyceum was a meeting hall that was constructed in 1915 as a place to maintain Jewish culture without religion and has been determined eligible for listing in the NRHP for its role in Jewish settlement in Minneapolis.
- South of the Van White Station, the Northwestern Knitting Company established their factory on Glenwood Avenue. Known today as International Market Square, the factory was renovated in the 1980s into offices and showrooms and is listed on the NRHP.

The Minneapolis Farmers Market is within a half mile of the Van White Station but access to the market is challenging. Crossing busy roadways like I-94 and Lyndale Avenue are difficult for pedestrians and enhanced signage and wayfinding are needed to orient transit riders between the Van White Boulevard and/or Target Field stations and the Farmers Market.

The station area is an urban neighborhood with a high potential for change given its available land for development and its proximity to downtown Minneapolis. It is home to a few locally-serving retail establishments, but is mostly a single- and multi-family residential neighborhood with institutional uses and some commercial uses scattered throughout. The approximate station area population is 4,900. It will be a destination for some transit riders and an origin for the majority of station users, who will arrive mostly on foot or by bicycle or bus. This suggests a need for strong connections between the Van White Boulevard Station and the neighborhoods, destinations and amenities being served by transit.

### ***Primary Community Input***

Community members who participated in engagement activities expressed a desire for additional retail and service-oriented businesses, and businesses that create local jobs. Neighborhood residents are comfortable with higher density development, but would like the sites for tall buildings chosen judiciously, as not to obstruct the neighborhood’s view of the downtown Minneapolis skyline. Some community members highlighted the need for several major improvements to walking conditions in the area; connections and wayfinding to the Farmers Market; safer crossings of Olson Memorial Highway and a consistent sidewalk and trail system parallel to the highway. Finally, community members who participated in engagement activities see opportunities to connect their neighborhood to the METRO Green Line Extension at Van White Boulevard to the south. This station could become a neighborhood amenity, but connections must be improved to realize this opportunity.

---

## Station Area Vision

### Future Station Area Character

The Van White Boulevard Station area is envisioned as:

- A multi-cultural community providing sustainable urban living;
- A community poised for future growth that is supportive of new residential, retail, and employment;
- An area that maintains housing opportunities for current residents; and
- A walkable area that is knit together by the new design of Olson Memorial Highway and the METRO Blue Line Extension

This vision statement can be used as a guide for city staff and community members as they evaluate future development proposals to ensure that new development is consistent with and supportive of the desired community character for this station area.

### Circulation

#### Roadways

The City of Minneapolis' vision for Olson Memorial Highway is the transformation from an open-feeling highway with high-speed through traffic, to an urbanized street with an enclosed feel from buildings and greenery on both sides for the purpose of visually and experientially reconnecting the neighborhood across Olson Highway. Given the neighborhood's close proximity to downtown Minneapolis, Olson

Highway should support community livability while also providing a gracious entrance to downtown. It needs to accommodate the transit, walking, biking and vehicular needs of neighborhood residents while accommodating regional mobility; allowing traffic from areas further west to move through the community in a safe and controlled manner. At the time of this report, the Bottineau Project Office in cooperation with agency partners are looking at ways to improve the pedestrian environment without significantly compromising traffic movement. New developments that face Olson Highway, lining both sides of the street with sidewalks and/or bikeways, turf boulevards with street trees, and pedestrian-scale lighting, and potentially narrowing the highway are other urban design approaches that may change the character of the corridor. These changes may cue drivers to slow down, provide safe and comfortable crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists, and result in a cohesive and organized visual environment along the street.

As shown in **Figure 2.10** Girard Terrace closely parallels Van White Memorial Boulevard between Olson Memorial Highway and 4th Avenue North. Because it is mostly redundant with Van White Memorial Boulevard, closure or a narrowing of Girard Terrace is proposed to allow more room for development in the heart of the station area. A new street is proposed between Van White Memorial Boulevard and the Olson Highway Service Road. This proposed street would provide access to existing housing to the west, as well as to the 555 Girard Terrace redevelopment parcel to the east. The proposed new street is conceptual. The location of a new street would be explored as part of redevelopment concepts for the site.

#### Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Improving pedestrian and bicycle crossings are critical to safety in the station area. The following improvements should be considered at locations where pedestrians and bicyclists are expected to cross higher volume roadways, such as Olson Memorial Highway, Glenwood Avenue and 7th Street.

#### All Intersections

- Median island pedestrian refuges or curb extensions
- Improved intersection and pedestrian realm lighting
- Crossing signage
- ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps

#### Signalized Intersections

- High visibility crosswalk markings and signs
- Traffic signal timing modifications to provide adequate crossing time for pedestrians
- Countdown timers that allow pedestrians to make informed decisions whether there is adequate time to safely cross the roadway.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - compliant signals

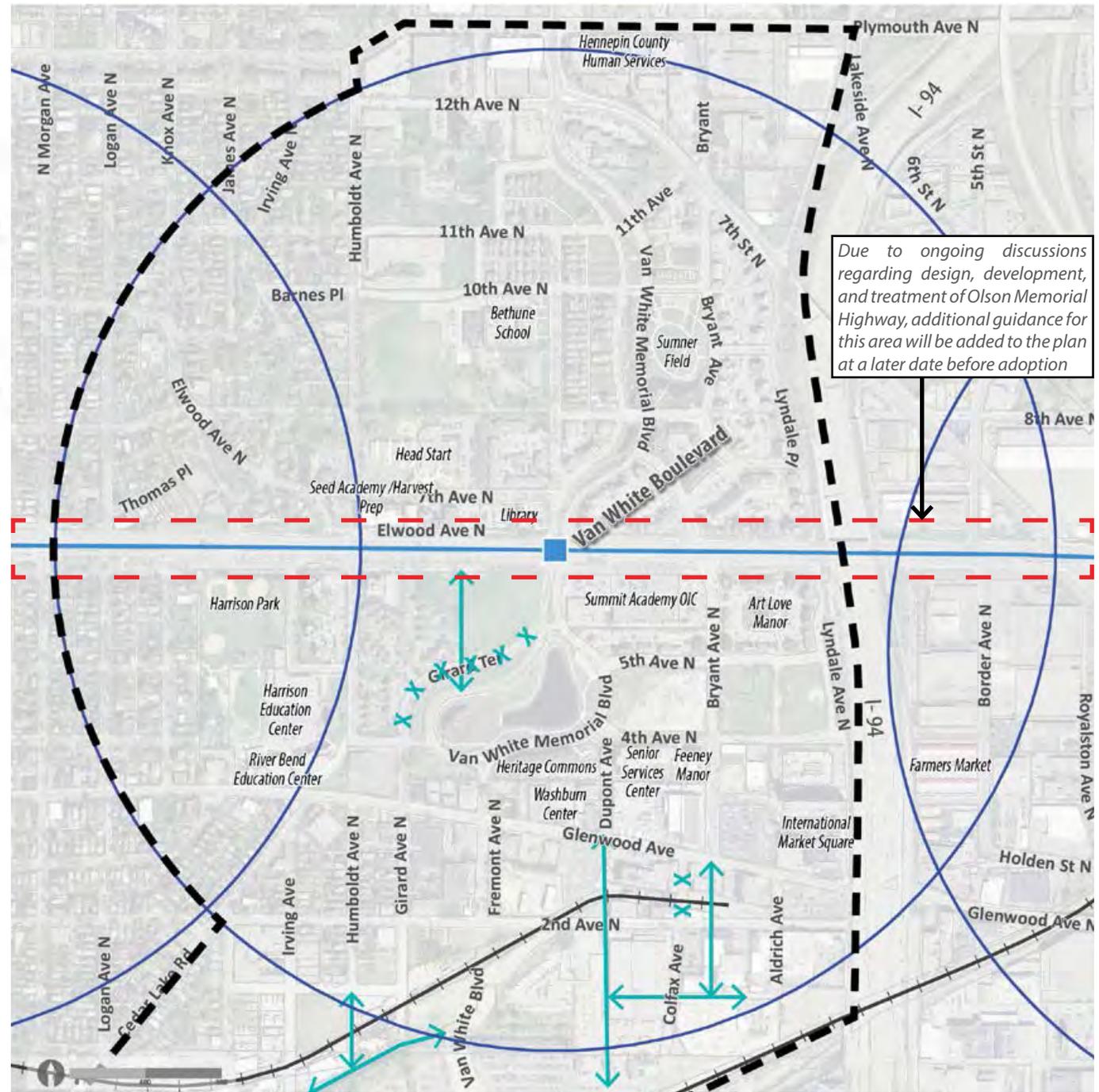
#### Non-signalized Intersections

- Rapid flashing beacons

**Figure 2.10: Roadway Circulation Enhancements**

This map shows recommended roadway enhancements in the station area to better support station area livability and LRT station access.

-  Modify/Eliminate Street (Maintain Existing Parcel Access)
-  New Street (Conceptual - street location to be explored as part of redevelopment)
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Modified Station Area
-  Railroad



---

Grade-separated crossings were investigated as part of station area planning and are currently not recommended for Olson Highway as these approaches are not supportive of the urban character desired for the roadway and they pose their own personal safety and connectivity challenges. A multi-use trail on the north side of the highway is recommended, which would greatly improve east-west bicycle and pedestrian connectivity in the station area and could be an instrumental part of reshaping the roadway's character. Alternatively, a two-way protected bikeway with a parallel sidewalk could be considered if sufficient right-of-way or easement space is available. The trail would connect to a planned future greenway on Irving Avenue and existing trails on Van White Memorial Boulevard. A Nice Ride Station is proposed immediately adjacent to the Van White Station.

An important part of realizing the vision for improved bicycle and pedestrian circulation in the Van White Station area is to improve the conditions at the Olson Memorial Highway I-94 overpass and Glenwood Avenue I-94 underpass that all bicyclists and pedestrian must use to reach downtown Minneapolis. Potential improvements to these crossings could include protected bikeways or an independent pedestrian bridge at the Olson Highway I-94 overpass, dedicated bicycle facilities at the Glenwood Avenue I-94 underpass, wider sidewalks, decorative pavements and bridge railings, the integration of public art, and pedestrian-scaled lighting.

Finally, there are several gaps in the sidewalk network including southbound Van White Boulevard between Olson Highway and Glenwood Avenue, and along 4th and 5th Avenues east of Van White Boulevard. Several

sidewalk gaps also exist in the Bassett Creek Valley area south of Glenwood Avenue. It is anticipated that these missing sidewalks will be constructed concurrent with adjacent future developments. For a map of envisioned pedestrian and bicycle circulation enhancements, see **Figure 2.11** and **Figure 2.12**.

### **Transit**

The C Line arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) is currently planned to operate on Olson Memorial Highway with three stops in the station area along the Highway: at Humboldt Avenue, at Bryant Avenue, and at 7th Street, as shown in **Figure 2.11**. Arterial BRT service is also being planned for Emerson and Fremont Avenues North, which would use 7th Street to reach downtown Minneapolis. Arterial BRT stations are planned along 7th Street North at 11th Avenue and at Olson Memorial Highway. If north-south bus service on Van White Boulevard is established, its stop should be easily visible and reachable from both the C Line and METRO Blue Line Extension Stations.

### **Future Development**

New development in the area around the Van White station benefits from the strong context already established in the area. There are community institutions on both sides of Olson Memorial Highway, and in the surrounding neighborhood. The Heritage Park development established new parks and trails, and set a high standard for development quality.

New development can strengthen these characteristics, building the brand of high quality neighborhood development, with housing, retail, and community oriented facilities, in a medium to high density format.

South of Heritage Park, in the Bassett Creek Valley area, there is new opportunity because of proximity to two light rail stations and development momentum along Glenwood Avenue.

Desired development for both of these areas is described below—with reference to a set of land use and development policy maps. A subsequent section will provide guidance on implementation—that is, how the desired development might be fostered over time, and the role of the public sector in that process.

### **Development Character**

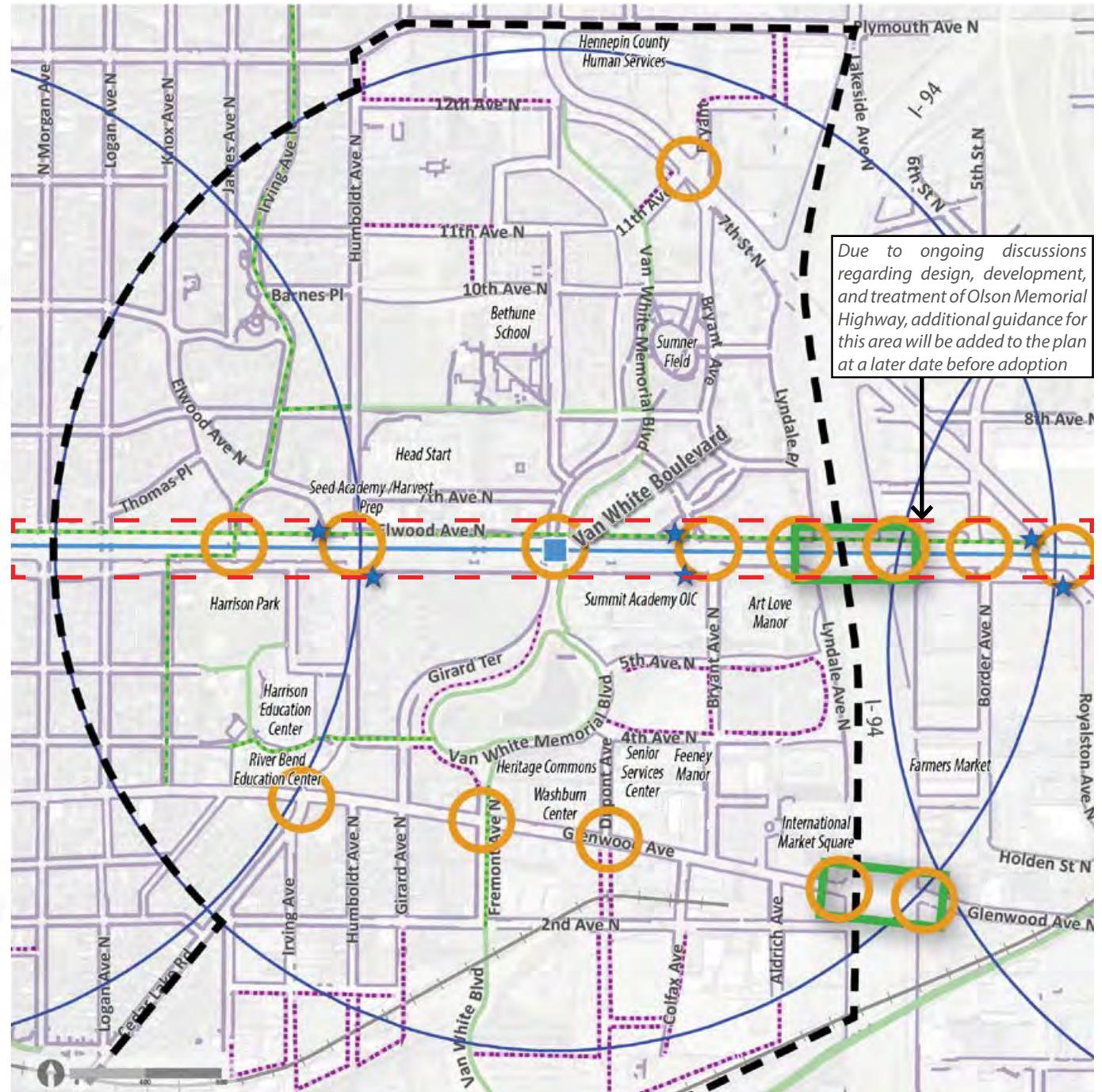
**Heritage Park.** This station area affords the opportunity for signature development to be established at one or two corners of the station itself—at the 555 Girard Terrace site at the southwest corner of the station intersection, and, if a redevelopment scenario can meet the needs of Summit Academy OIC, at the Summit OIC property at the southeast corner of the station intersection. Medium to high density development would be appropriate and desirable in these locations at the first station outside of downtown Minneapolis. A set of community oriented retail businesses on the ground floor would serve the needs of the surrounding neighborhood, and attract some downtown commuter customers. The provision of a public plaza would contribute to the branding of the area, and its community-oriented identity.

The buildings could offer housing choices in a near-downtown setting. Alternatively, these sites would provide an optimal setting for additional community educational opportunities, if a school such as Dunwoody or Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC) could be attracted to establish a satellite location for some of their programs.

**Figure 2.11: Pedestrian Circulation Enhancements**

This map shows recommended pedestrian circulation enhancement to better support station area livability and LRT station access.

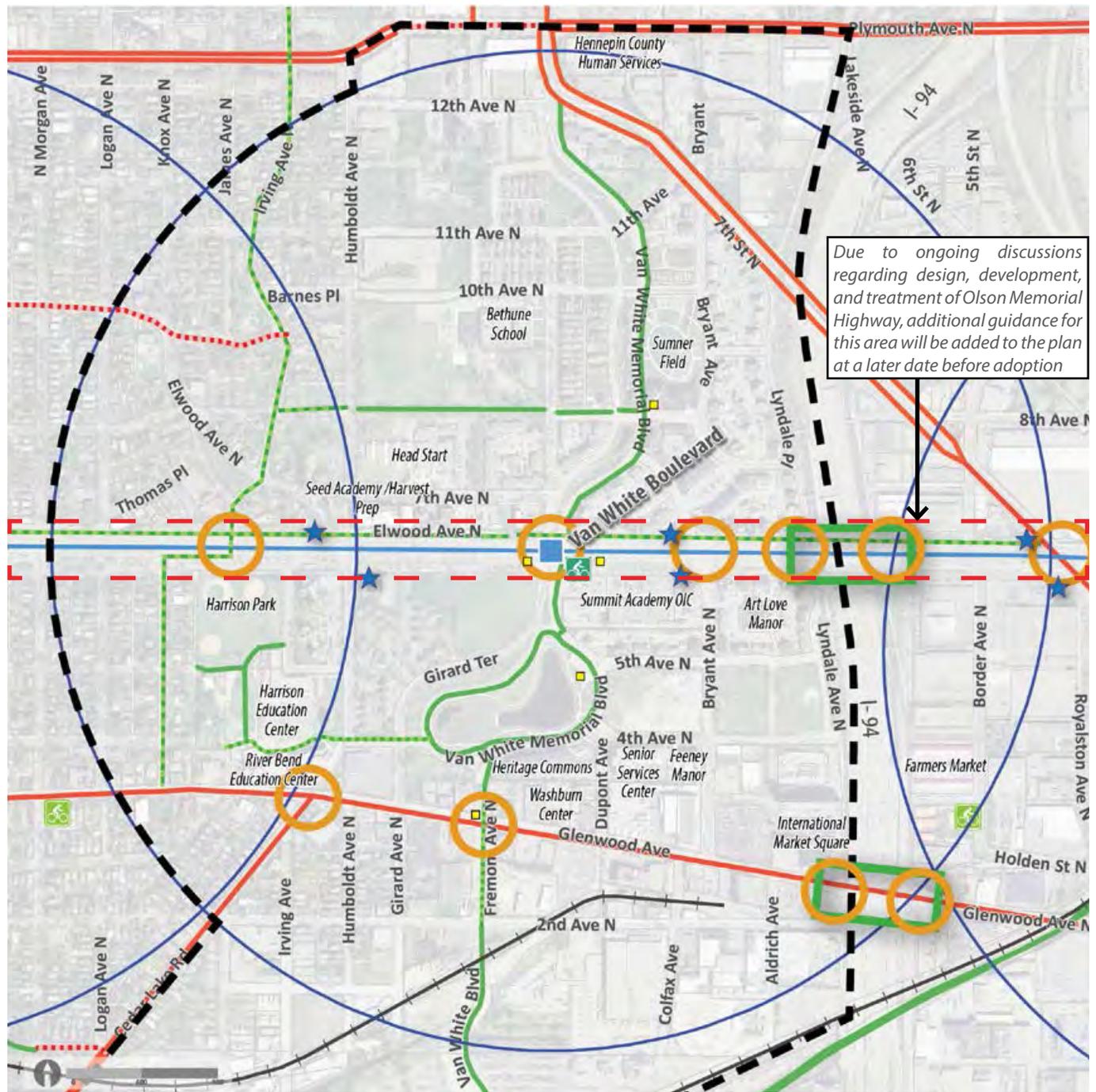
-  **Enhanced Pedestrian/Bicycle Crossing of I-94**  
Potential Improvements:
  - Dedicated Trails or Bikeways
  - Wider Sidewalks
  - Enhanced Streetscape Treatments
    - Decorative bridge railings
    - Pedestrian-scaled lighting
    - Decorative pavements
-  **Proposed Bus Rapid Transit Connection**
-  **Safe Intersection Crossing**  
Potential Improvements:
  - Crosswalk Marking & Signage
  - Adequate Crossing Time for Pedestrians
  - Median Island Pedestrian Refuges
  - Improved Sight Lines
  - Improved Lighting
  - Countdown Timers
  - ADA Compliant Signals & Pedestrian Ramps
  - Rapid Flashing Beacon
-  **Proposed Sidewalks**
-  **Existing Sidewalks**
-  **Proposed Paved Trail**
-  **Existing Paved Trail**
-  **Planned LRT Station**
-  **Bottineau LRT Alignment**
-  **LRT Station Half Mile Buffer**
-  **Modified Station Area**
-  **Railroad**



**Figure 2.12: Bicycle Circulation Enhancements**

This map shows recommended bicycle circulation enhancement to better support station area livability and LRT station access.

-  Enhanced Pedestrian/Bicycle Crossing of I-94  
Potential Improvements:
  - Dedicated Trails or Bikeways
  - Wider Sidewalks
  - Enhanced Streetscape Treatments
    - Decorative bridge railings
    - Pedestrian-scaled lighting
    - Decorative pavements
-  Proposed Bus Rapid Transit Connection
-  Safe Intersection Crossing  
Potential Improvements:
  - Crosswalk Marking & Signage
  - Adequate Crossing Time for Pedestrians
  - Median Island Pedestrian Refuges
  - Improved Sight Lines
  - Improved Lighting
  - Countdown Timers
  - ADA Compliant Signals & Pedestrian Ramps
  - Rapid Flashing Beacon
-  Proposed Bicycle Parking
-  Proposed Nice Ride Station
-  Existing Nice Ride Station
-  Proposed Paved Trail
-  Existing Paved Trail
-  Proposed On-Street Bike Facility
-  Existing On-Street Bike Facility
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Modified Station Area
-  Railroad



The other sizable vacant land in Heritage Park, bound by 5th Avenue on the north, Lyndale Place on the east, 4th Avenue on the south and Van White Memorial Boulevard on the west, should be built out in a medium to high density housing format. This makes additional housing options available in north Minneapolis, while building the local customer base to support retail offerings at the Van White station, and along Glenwood. Flexibility should be retained for the block of vacant land along Interstate 94 between 4th Avenue and 5th Avenue to consider a higher density office development, with structured parking, if proposed by a developer. That would meet goals for development intensity, add to the daytime population of the area, and be consistent with the International Market Square development located immediately south.

**Bassett Creek Valley.** The desired character of Glenwood Avenue is a vibrant street of residential and commercial uses, new buildings mixed with repositioned older structures of medium to higher density. The desired character of Glenwood Avenue is a vibrant street of residential and commercial uses, new buildings mixed with repositioned older structures of medium to higher density. A limited amount of development of this kind has occurred, but there is not yet a clear momentum for new, higher density development. No progress has been made yet to establish a neighborhood retail node at Van White and Glenwood. The pedestrian environment along Glenwood Avenue is still weak with many parking lots and few retail destinations.

The industrial areas south of Glenwood Avenue are an interesting transitional environment. Productive

industrial activity is ongoing in certain locations. In others, buildings are vacant, or land is empty.

This plan proposes a refinement to the plan for this area. A vibrant live-work setting is envisioned for the future—encompassing low-impact work settings amidst a range of housing developments. Flexibility can be shown in the use of existing buildings. New development should be of sufficient density that it is consistent with Bassett Creek Valley’s designation as a Growth Center, but both commercial and residential development should be supported along and to the west of Van White Boulevard. Retail development should be steered to Glenwood or along Van White Boulevard as part of a larger mixed use development, adding vitality and character to those settings and building momentum for additional development rather than in the middle of these transitioning neighborhoods.

This plan proposes a new development opportunity along the west side of Van White Memorial Boulevard, and north of Bassett Creek. This is in addition to the areas proposed for development in the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan.

### **Land Use Guidance**

This plan offers land use guidance for the Van White Station Area by proposing changes to the Future Land Use map in *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* (the comprehensive plan for the entire City of Minneapolis), and by providing a more detailed Future Land Use map in this small area plan that would have policy effect upon adoption. **Figure 2.13** depicts the Future Land Use Map in the adopted *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*.

Important land use policy goals are represented by symbols on the Future Land Use maps in the City of Minneapolis’ comprehensive plan. The desired development of the area, as described above, implies a few modifications to this policy map.

**Figure 2.14** highlights proposed modifications to the Future Land Use Map. **Figure 2.15** shows the proposed Future Land Use map that would pertain to the Van White station area. No change is proposed to the designation of:

- The Bassett Creek Valley area as a Growth Center
- Glenwood Avenue as a Commercial Corridor
- Van White Memorial Boulevard as a Community Corridor

Two new designations on the map are proposed to support the development vision.

1. The station location at Olson Memorial Highway and Van White Memorial Boulevard is designated a “Transit Station”.

A Transit Station designation on the Future Land Use Map establishes policy support for high density development “in ways that encourage transit use and contribute to interesting and vibrant places.” Pedestrian oriented retail and services, and the creation of public spaces, are also encouraged as part of higher density development. The policy excerpts on the following page provide more detail about the policies that pertain to designated Transit Stations.

## Policy Excerpts from The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth

**Policy 1.11:** *Preserve and enhance a system of Neighborhood Commercial Nodes that includes a mix of housing, neighborhood-serving retail, and community uses.*

**1.11.1** Discourage the commercial territorial expansion of Neighborhood Commercial Nodes, except to adjacent corners of the node's main intersection.

**1.11.2** Support the continued presence of small-scale, neighborhood-serving retail and commercial services in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.

**1.11.3** Discourage new or expanded uses that diminish the transit and pedestrian character of Neighborhood Commercial Nodes, such as some automobile services and drive-through facilities.

**1.11.4** Encourage a height of at least two stories for new buildings in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes, in keeping with neighborhood character.

**1.11.5** Encourage the development of medium- to high-density housing where appropriate within the boundaries of Neighborhood Commercial Nodes, preferably in mixed use buildings with commercial uses on the ground floor.

**1.11.6** Encourage the development of medium-density housing immediately adjacent to Neighborhood Commercial Nodes to serve as a transition to surrounding low-density residential areas.

**1.11.7** Encourage the redevelopment of vacant commercial buildings and direct City services to these areas.

**Policy 1.13:** *Support high density development near transit stations in ways that encourage transit use and contribute to interesting and vibrant places.*

**1.13.1** *Encourage pedestrian-oriented services and retail uses as part of higher density development near transit stations.*

**1.13.2** *Pursue opportunities to integrate existing and new development with transit stations through joint development.*

**1.13.3** *Discourage uses that diminish the transit and pedestrian character of areas around transit stations, such as automobile services, surface parking lots, and drive-through facilities.*

**1.13.4** *Encourage architectural design, building massing and site plans to create or improve public and semi-public spaces near the station.*

**1.13.5** *Concentrate highest densities and mixed use development adjacent to the transit station and along connecting corridors served by bus.*

**1.13.6** *Encourage investment and place making around transit stations through infrastructure changes and the planning and installation of streetscape, public art, and other public amenities.*

2. The Neighborhood Commercial Node designation in the properties near the station provide policy support for the goal of developing space for retail businesses at properties near the station.

A Neighborhood Commercial Node designation establishes policy support for increased density, and for “a mix of housing, neighborhood-serving retail, and community uses.” The policy excerpts on the following page provide more detail about the policies that pertain to designated Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.

In addition to the features on the map, all of the property on the Future Land Use map are colored in a palette of colors that represents City policy for how those properties should be developed in the future, utilizing broad land use categories as indicated in its legend. Some adjustments were made to the coloration of property in the proposed map.

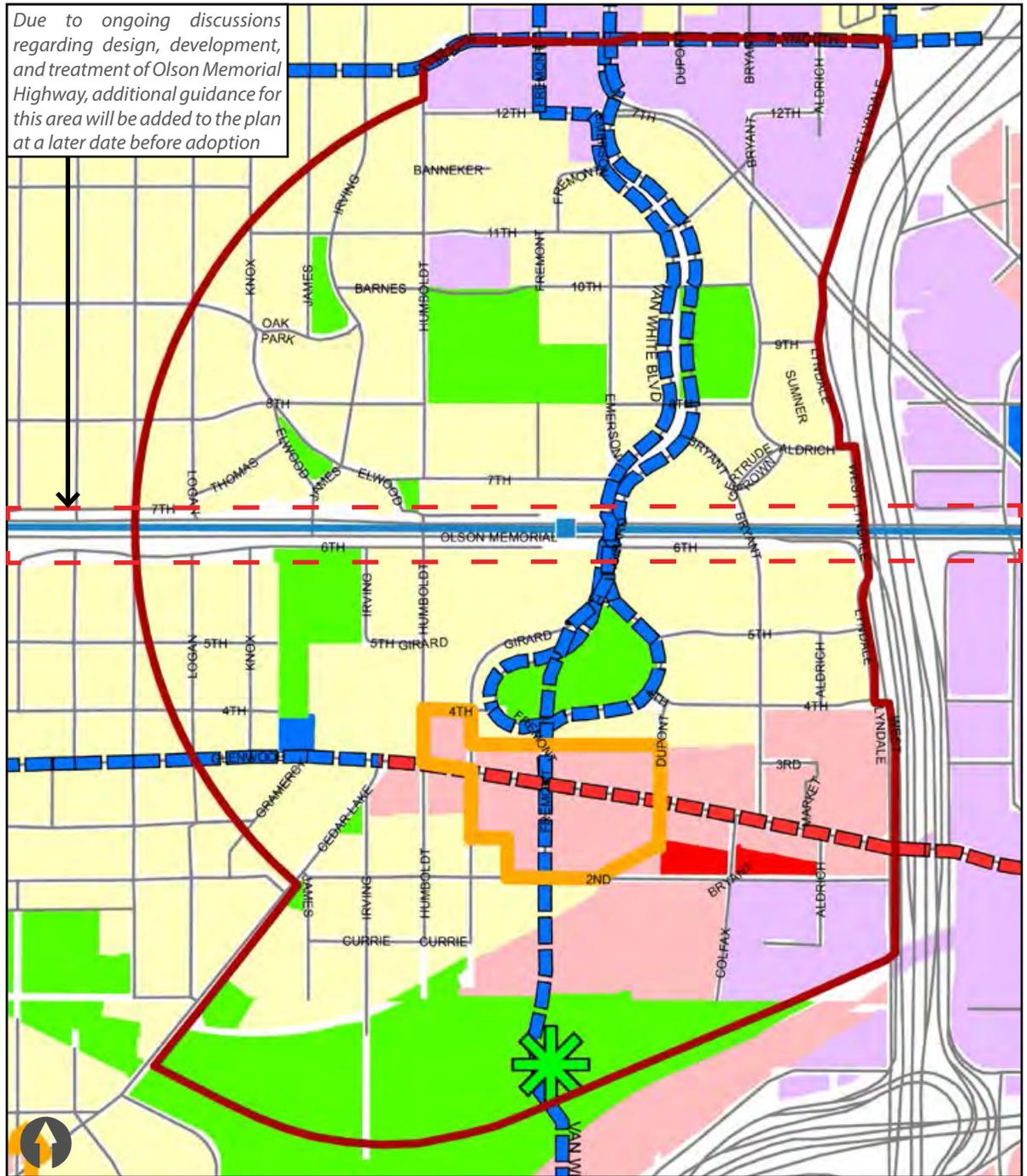
- Property within the proposed Neighborhood Commercial Node are peach colored to signify support for retail development along with residential or office/institutional development
- Some modifications were made to land in the transitional industrial areas in the Bassett Creek Valley, to represent the area's desired mixed use, live-work future.

**Figure 2.16** is consistent with the Future Land Use map in the City's comprehensive plan, and offers additional detail to it. The map identifies additional public/institutional uses, and it puts residential development in one of three density categories. It is intended to support the desired development character of the area, as described above.

**Figure 2.13: Existing Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use**

This map depicts the Future Land Use map in the adopted Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth

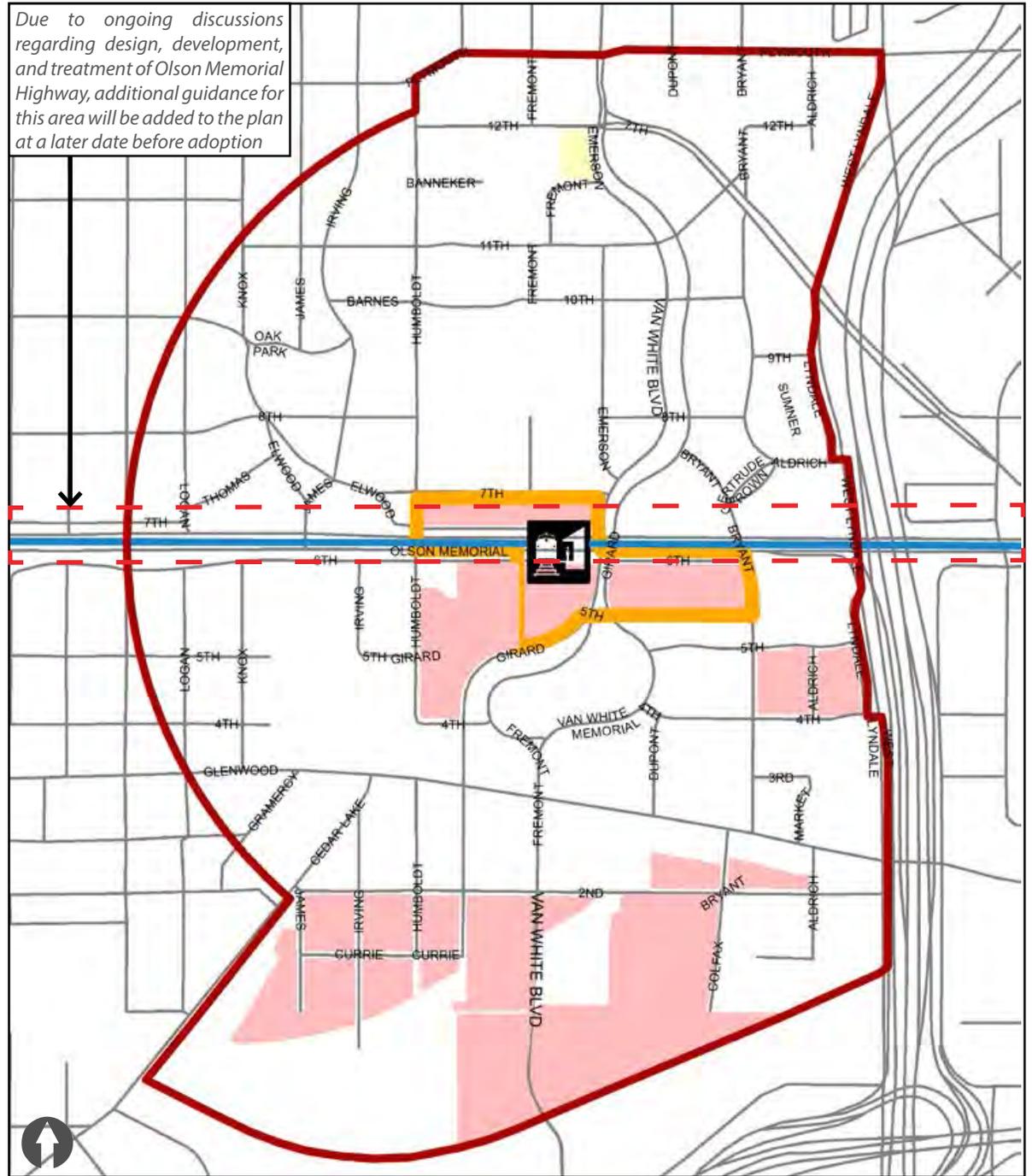
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  Modified Station Area
-  Neighborhood Commercial Node
-  Commercial Corridor
-  Community Corridor
-  Mixed Use
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Public and Institutional
-  Transitional Industrial
-  Urban Neighborhood
-  Commercial
-  Growth Center



### Figure 2.14: Future Land Use Modifications

This map highlights proposed modifications to the City of Minneapolis' future land use

-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  Transit Station
-  Modified Station Area
-  Neighborhood Commercial Node
-  Mixed Use
-  Transitional Industrial
-  Urban Neighborhood



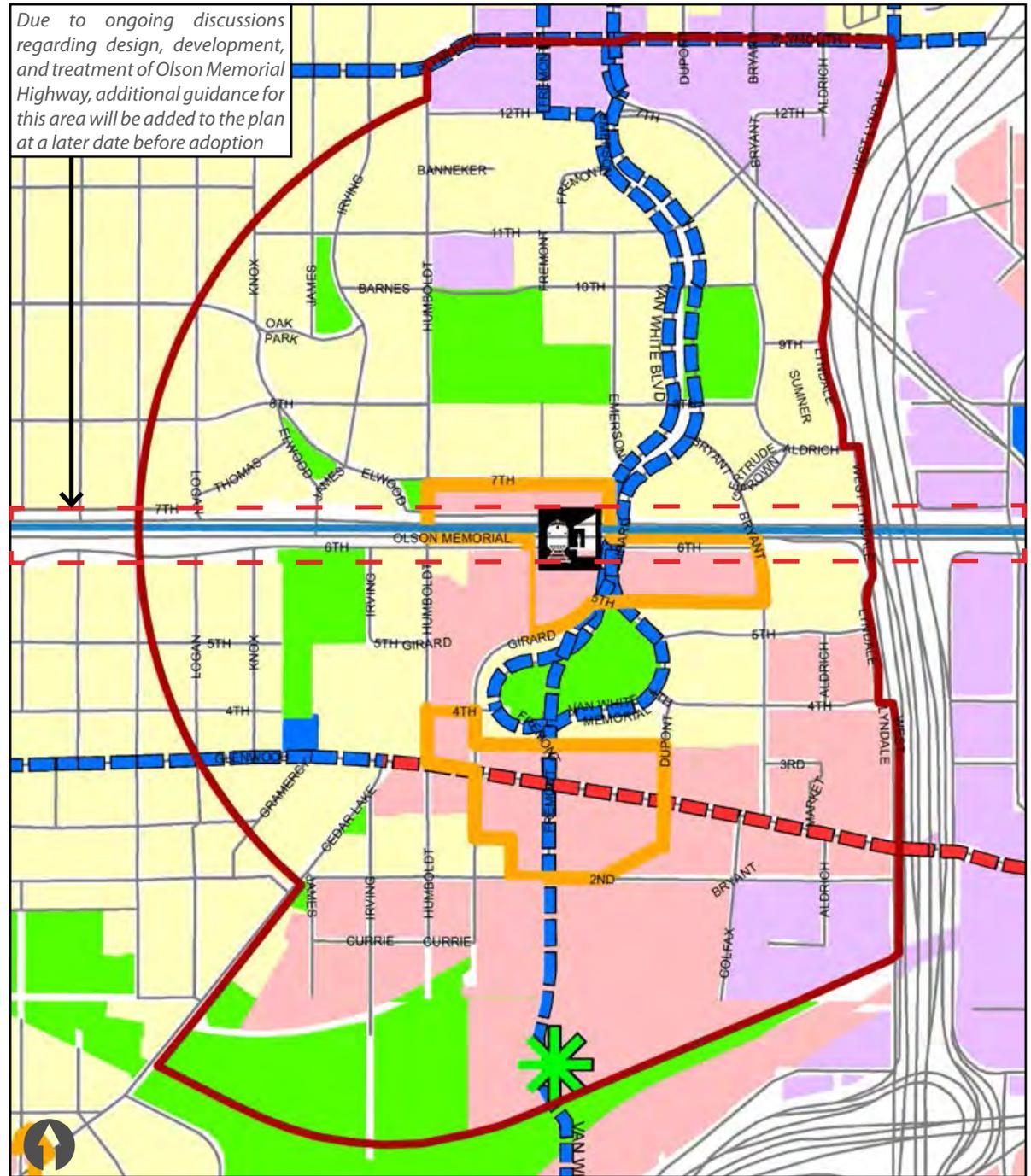
### Figure 2.15: Future Land Use

This map depicts proposed modifications to the City of Minneapolis' future land use in context with the City's adopted future land use map.

Note: The City of Minneapolis defines a Commercial Corridor as historically prominent destinations consisting of a mix of uses, with commercial uses dominating.

The City of Minneapolis defines a Community Corridor as primarily residential with intermittent commercial uses clustered at intersection nodes.

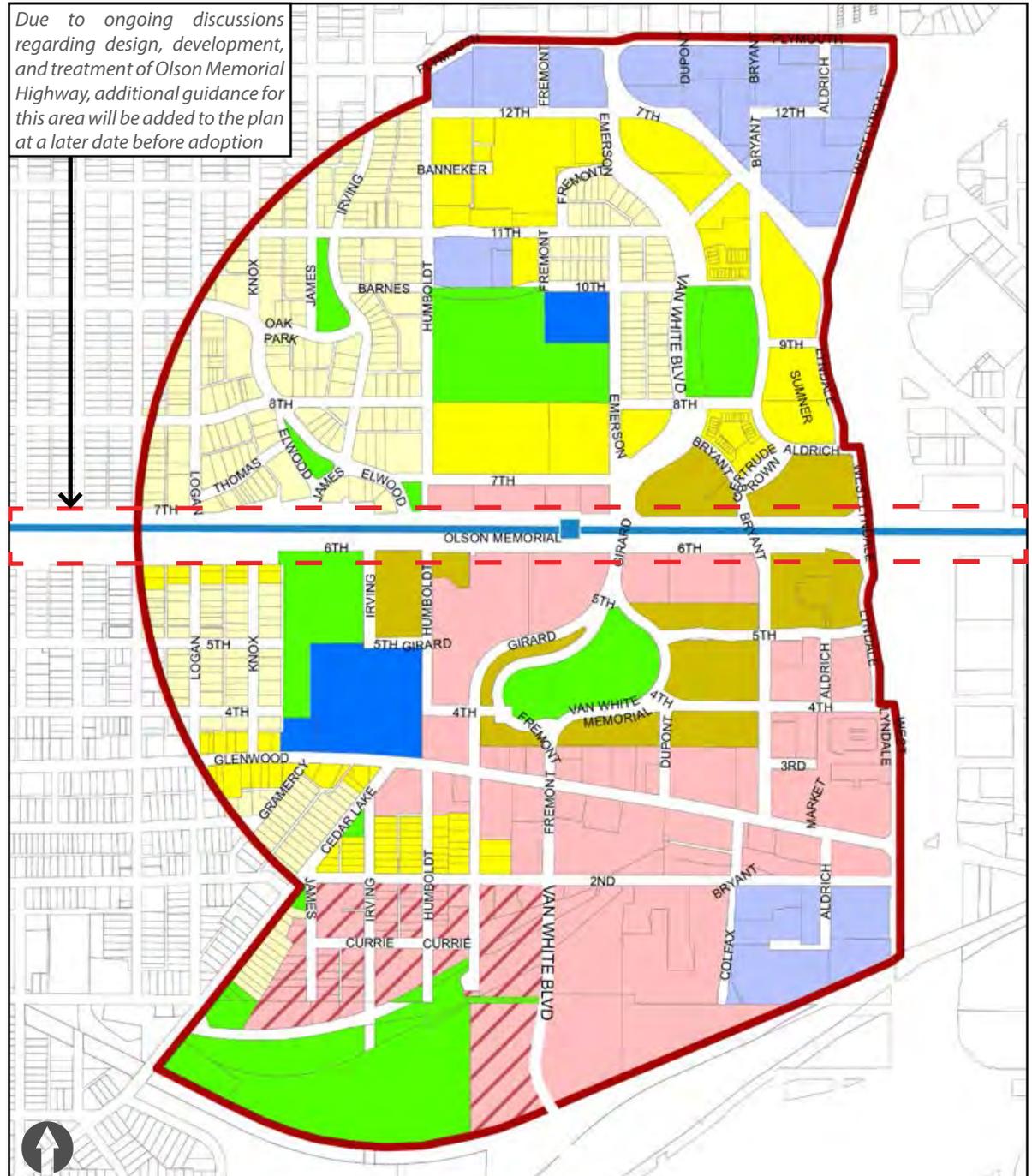
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  Transit Station
-  Modified Station Area
-  Neighborhood Commercial Node
-  Commercial Corridor
-  Community Corridor
-  Mixed Use
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Public and Institutional
-  Transitional Industrial
-  Urban Neighborhood
-  Growth Center



**Figure 2.16: Future Land Use (Parcel Basis)**

This map depicts recommended City of Minneapolis future land use on a parcel-specific basis.

- Planned LRT Station
- Bottineau LRT Alignment
- Modified Station Area
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Medium to High Density Residential
- Mixed Use Medium to High Density Residential
- Mixed Use Medium to High Density Residential/Business Park
- Parks and Open Space
- Public and Institutional
- Transitional Industrial



---

Although the colors on the future land use map seem to imply great precision, that is not their intent. For example, a medium density residential development that incorporates a “low-density” property or two may be deemed consistent with the policy intent of this plan without plan amendment.

### **Development Intensity**

It is understood that additional density in the Van White station area is a key to transforming and enlivening the Heritage Park community and nearby areas. It offers customer support to existing and desired retail areas, to existing and new transit service, and it strengthens the safety and stability of the neighborhood. New development also needs to be sensitive to its context and be compatible in design and character to adjacent and nearby development.

**Figure 2.17** contributes additional clarity concerning the desired density of future development. The map is parcel-specific, similar to the plan’s Future Land Use map (although as described above, that should not be taken to imply complete policy precision). Darker shades of blue indicate policy support for medium or higher density development. Light blue indicates policy support for lower density development.

The map assigns property in the Van White Boulevard station area—whether residential, commercial or mixed use—to one of three development districts. The three development districts represent different acceptable density levels. The Transit Scale development district supports the highest density development and suggests building heights of five-story or greater; the Urban Scale development district suggests a three to four story upper limit on development; and the

Neighborhood Scale development district supports low to medium density development types that are more compatible with the character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Density is frequently measured using parameters like floor area ratio, or dwelling units per square foot of property area. Those density measures are not very intuitive, in part because they don’t lend themselves to being depicted visually. The density scale employed in this plan attempts to make the proposed density levels more intuitive by correlating each district with a mix of compatible development types that are common in Minneapolis and will be easily recognized by most Minneapolis citizens. Where commercial development occurs, it should be of a similar scale to the listed residential building types, or it may be situated on the ground level of an otherwise residential development.

In the Van White Boulevard station area, the properties seen as having the highest density development potential are the following:

- Certain properties along Olson Memorial Highway.
- Other vacant blocks in Heritage Park.
- Properties at the Glenwood Avenue and Van White Memorial Boulevard intersection.

### **Housing**

Only about a third of the rental housing developed thus far in Heritage Park are market rate apartments. Roughly a third are public housing. And the remaining third are other types of income-restricted affordable housing. Around the perimeter of Heritage Park are several

additional medium to high density affordable housing developments, serving households earning between 30 percent and 50 percent of area median income. Given the continuing concentration of affordable housing in the community, the remaining housing development should primarily be market rate housing, targeted to a range of household types.

Heritage Park includes a couple of blocks of owner occupied single family homes, and some ownership townhomes. New development that offers single-family housing ownership would contribute to a balanced and long-term-stable neighborhood. Although the market climate for developing condominiums and townhomes is quite weak at this time, it may strengthen in upcoming years.

### **Economic Development**

An additional junior or technical college institution at this station area could have value for the north Minneapolis community in bringing additional job-oriented education closer to residents, in a location that is superbly connected to the transit network. It is worth exploring proactively as a component in a mixed-use development of the 555 Girard Terrace site.

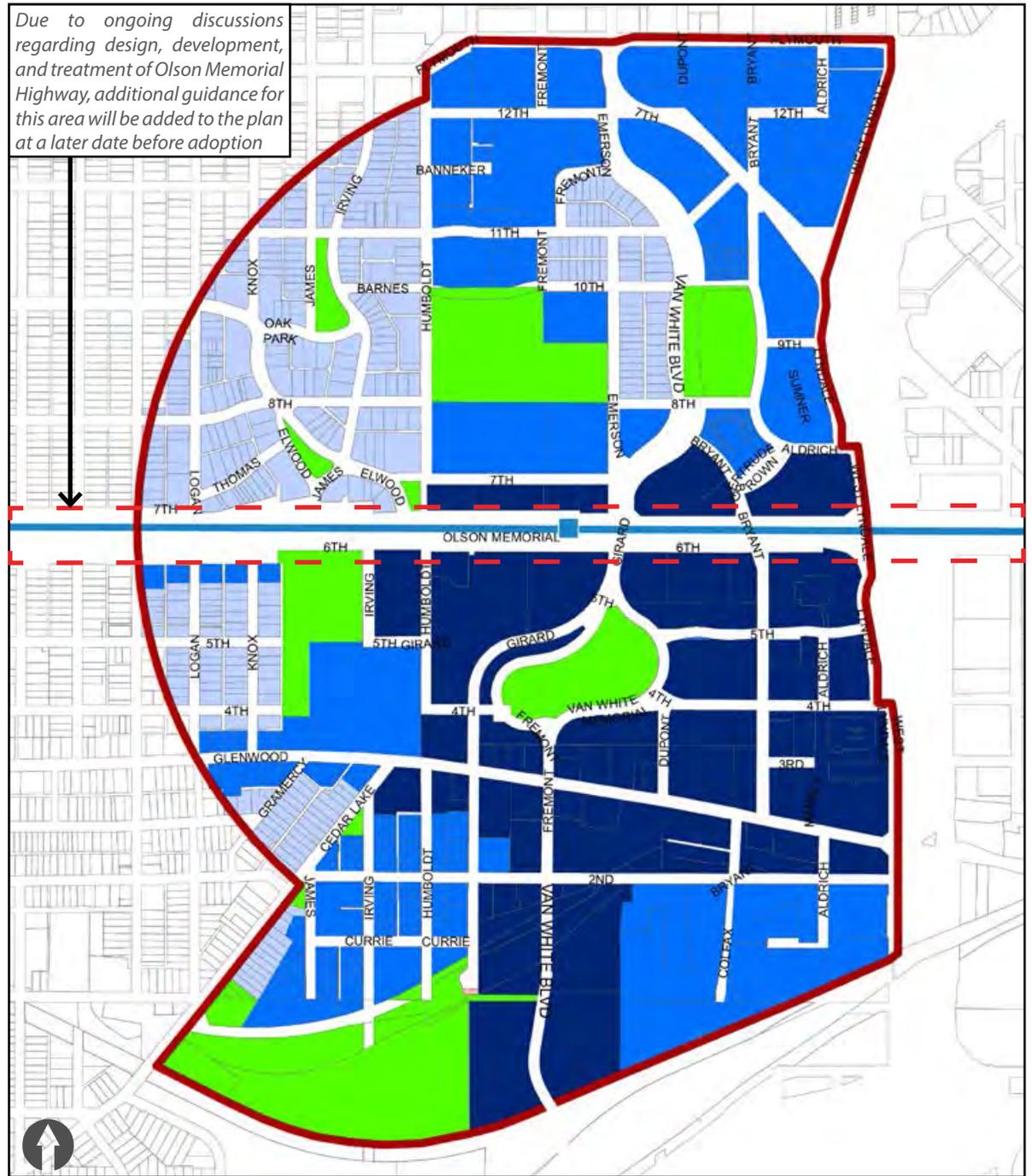
Summit Academy OIC is an institution that already brings tremendous value to the community in terms of readying residents for living wage employment. While its property has tremendous promise for new and more intensive development, any scenarios for new development on its property would need to have the full support and participation of the institution, and would ideally provide them a reconfigured footprint on site, or on a nearby parcel.

**Figure 2.17: Development Intensity**

This map provide guidance concerning desired density of future City of Minneapolis development



\*Note that in commercial districts, apartment/condominium buildings may include commercial businesses on the ground floor. Commercial-only buildings should be of comparable height.



Any commercial development near the station or in the Bassett Creek Valley area would provide additional employment opportunities for area residents.

### Development Opportunities

Development opportunity sites are properties that are judged to be likely candidates for redevelopment. Properties in the Van White station area were evaluated to identify development opportunity sites. A broad set of criteria was used to determine these sites, including the following:

- Property value per square foot of land
- Public ownership
- Vacant property
- Opportunity to bundle properties for significant redevelopment projects

A property that is identified as a development opportunity is judged to be somewhat easier to develop, from a financial perspective, than other properties in the area—even if it is privately owned, or already developed. In situations where property is privately owned, the property owner would have to be a willing seller of his or her property before such a development could take place.

**Figure 2.18** is intended to provide information that can be considered in setting City priorities for development related activities such as site assembly and development support. It can also be employed in conversation with developers about what opportunities might be available for redevelopment.

## Public Realm Improvements

Public realm improvements are critical components of the station area as they create a safe and comfortable environment that support walking and biking to the station. These improvements also provide economic, environmental and social benefits that are supportive of overall neighborhood livability. **Figure 2.19** shows recommended public realm improvements; **Figure 2.20** shows representative public realm improvement images.

### Streetscaping

Enhancing the streetscape environment in the Van White Station area will facilitate improved mobility to and from the station platform from nearby amenities, destinations, homes, and businesses- and improve the character of the public realm. Streetscape enhancements may include improvements to pedestrian facilities, greening the streets, street and pedestrian lighting, street furnishings, signage, and wayfinding elements. Specific streetscape improvements recommended in the Van White Boulevard Station area include the following:

### Olson Memorial Highway

**Figure 2.21** depicts the potential character and streetscape features for Olson Memorial Highway. Streetscape improvements could extend from 7th Street N. west to Theodore Wirth Regional Park and include the following:

- Minimum 5-foot wide sidewalk detached from the curb (along the south side of the roadway)

- Minimum 10-foot wide multi-use trail detached from the curb (along the north side of the roadway). Alternatively, a two-way protected bikeway with a parallel sidewalk could be considered if sufficient right-of-way or easement space is available.

- Minimum 6-foot wide turf boulevard (along both sides of the roadway)

- Street trees within the boulevard areas

- Pedestrian lighting

- Site furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks) at key intersections

- Signage and wayfinding

## Van White Memorial Boulevard/Fremont Avenue

Much of Van White Memorial Boulevard has already been improved, particularly north of Olson Memorial Highway. The established Van White Boulevard streetscape design palette should be completed and extended along Fremont Avenue south to Glenwood Avenue to ensure good pedestrian connections south into Bassett Creek Valley.

**Figure 2.22** depicts the desired character and streetscape features for Van White Boulevard.

### Glenwood Avenue

Glenwood Avenue is a designated commercial corridor from downtown west to Cedar Lake Road and should be designed to include streetscape enhancements that can take heavy foot traffic and create a pedestrian-friendly corridor.

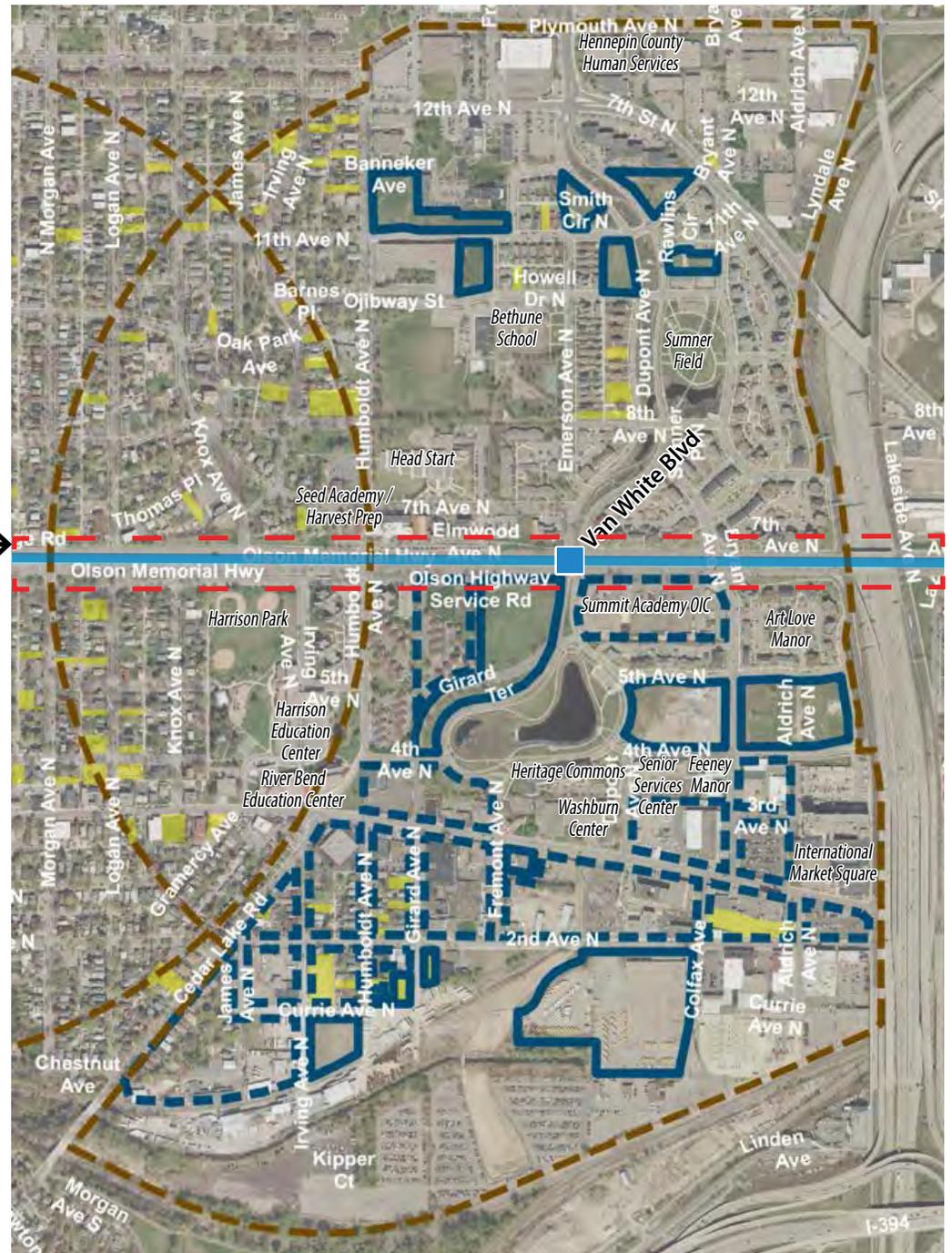
### Figure 2.18: Development Opportunities

This map highlights parcels that pose potential redevelopment opportunities if the property owners decide to redevelop their sites in the future.

#### Development Opportunities

-  Publicly Owned Parcels
-  Privately Owned Parcels
-  Modified Station Area
-  Vacant Parcels
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment

Due to ongoing discussions regarding design, development, and treatment of Olson Memorial Highway, additional guidance for this area will be added to the plan at a later date before adoption



## Figure 2.19: Public Realm Improvements

This map depicts public realm improvements that provide economic, environmental and social benefits that are supportive of station area livability

-  Enhanced Streetscape
-  Trail Lighting
-  Park
-  Plaza
-  Wayfinding
-  Public Art
-  Redevelopment Opportunity Site
-  New Street  
(conceptual - exact street location to be explored as part of site redevelopment)
-  Modify/Eliminate Existing Street
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Railroad
-  Modified Station Area
-  Proposed Sidewalks
-  Existing Sidewalks
-  Proposed Paved Trail
-  Existing Paved Trail
-  Proposed On-Street Bike Facility
-  Existing On-Street Bike Facility

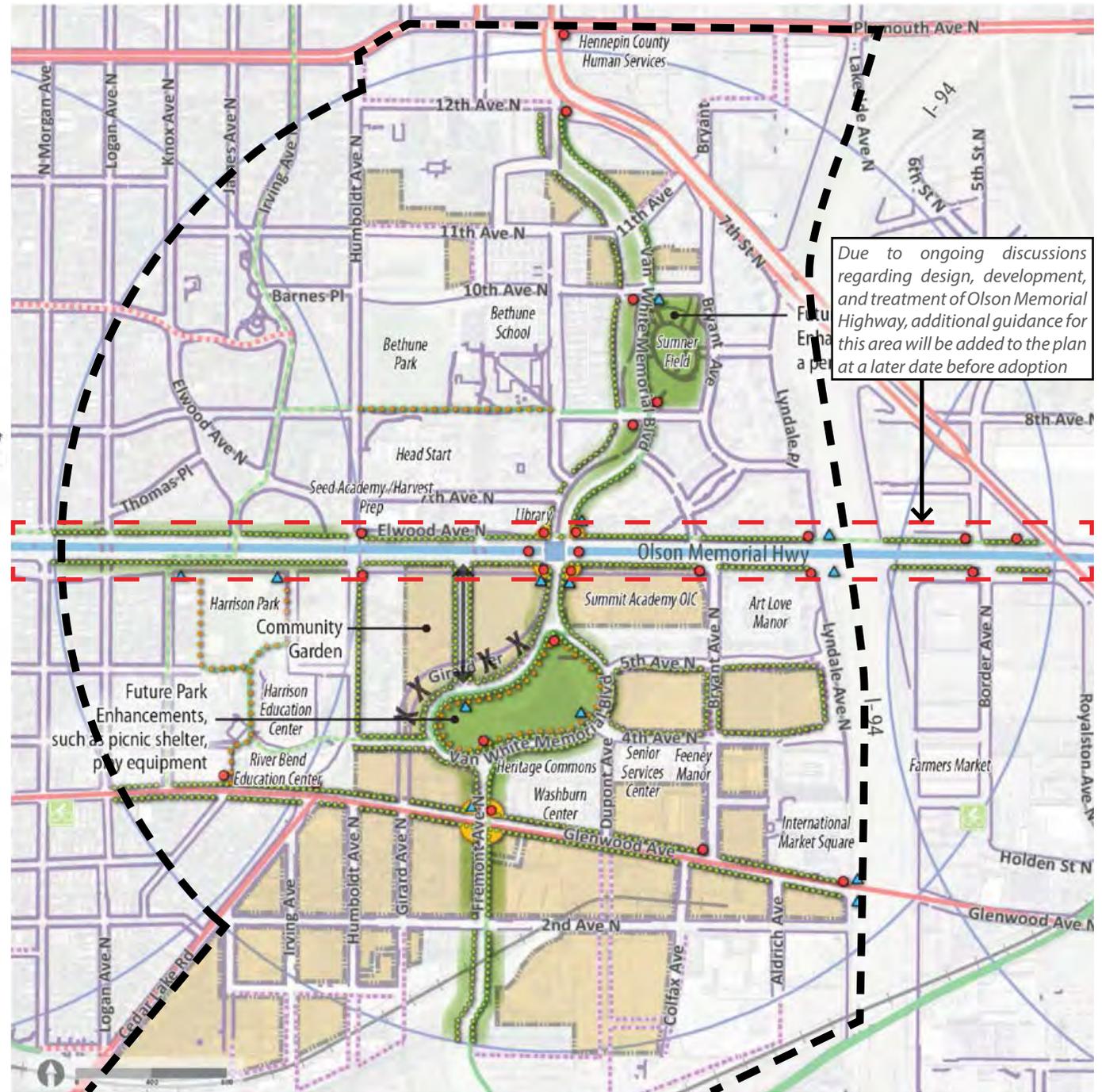


Figure 2.20: Representative Public Realm and Streetscape Improvements

●●● Enhanced Streetscape



Includes sidewalks, lighting, seating, and planting

●●●● Trail Lighting



■ Park



Enhanced park programming, performance venue, and picnic shelter

■ Plaza



● Wayfinding



▲ Public Art

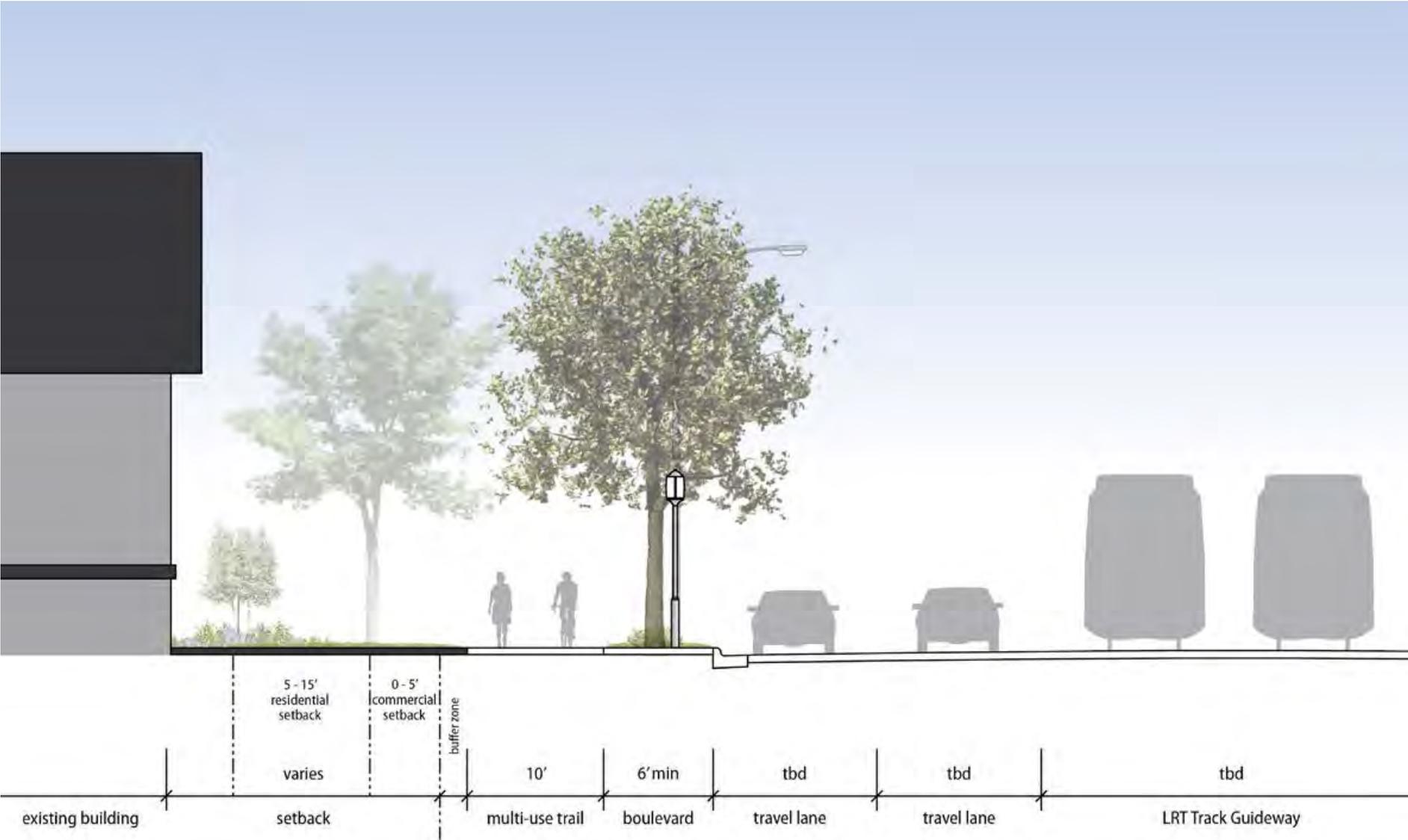


■ Bicycle Parking



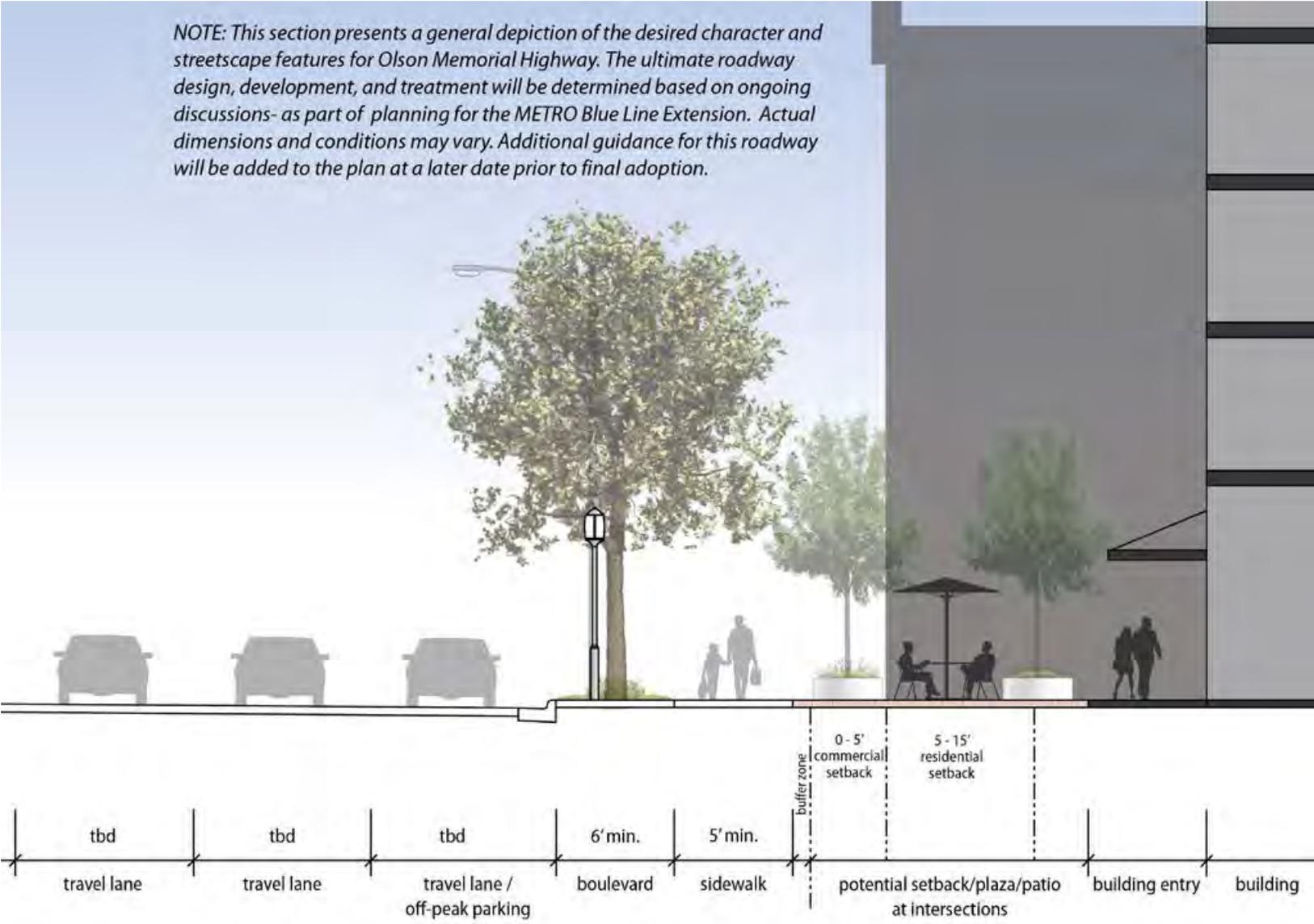
Short-term and long-term parking

Figure 2.21: Olson Memorial Highway Section

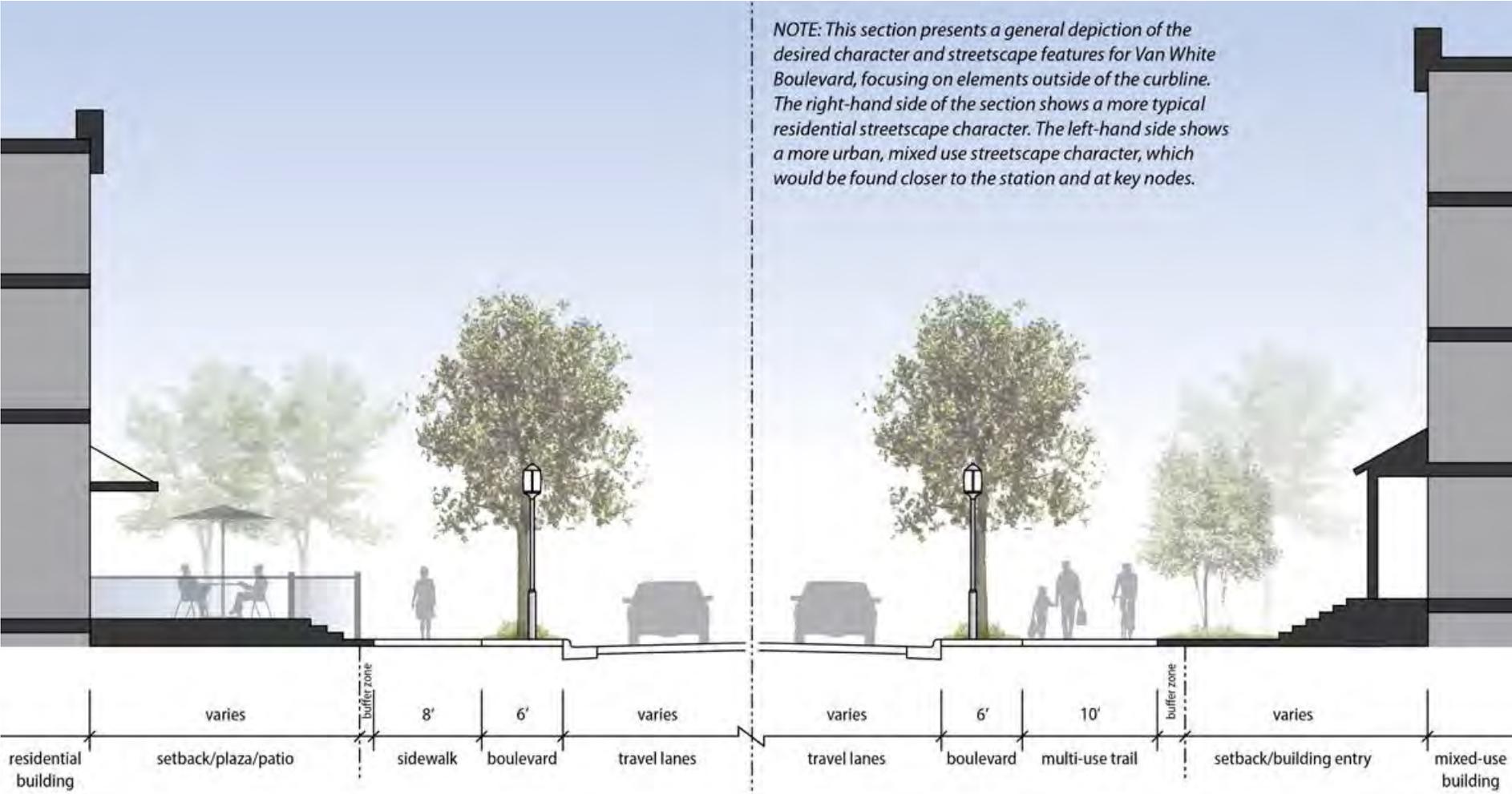


**Olson Memorial Highway Section Continued**

*NOTE: This section presents a general depiction of the desired character and streetscape features for Olson Memorial Highway. The ultimate roadway design, development, and treatment will be determined based on ongoing discussions- as part of planning for the METRO Blue Line Extension. Actual dimensions and conditions may vary. Additional guidance for this roadway will be added to the plan at a later date prior to final adoption.*



**Figure 2.22: Van White Memorial Boulevard Street Section**



**Figure 2.23** depicts the desired character and streetscape features for Glenwood Avenue. Streetscape improvements should be considered along Glenwood from I-94 west to Cedar Lake Road and include the following:

- Minimum 10-foot wide sidewalk from curb to building facades. In order to achieve a 10-foot sidewalk, a one-foot building setback may be required from the street right-of-way.
- Street trees planted with structural soils to ensure robust tree growth
- Pedestrian lighting
- Site furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks) at key intersections
- Signage and wayfinding
- Relocating overhead utilities underground

Committing to the installation of structural soils is a significant commitment that will increase the cost of installing trees throughout the area but is necessary to increase tree survival rates.

### **Plazas**

Outdoor plaza spaces can create a sense of neighborhood identity in the Van White station area and provide places for social gathering. They may include elements like special paving, seating, shelter, planting, public art, special lighting, signage, and wayfinding. In conjunction with streetscape improvements and redevelopment in the station area, public plazas could be considered at the Olson Memorial Highway and Van

White Boulevard intersection and could be considered at the Glenwood Avenue and Van White Boulevard intersection.

### **Wayfinding**

Wayfinding and signage is an important urban design element that orients and directs people to and from their destinations, and enhances the sense of character and identity of a place, neighborhood or community. Wayfinding is also an important element to delivering transit users to the station in a safe and convenient manner. Improved wayfinding can enhance mobility to and from the Van White Boulevard Station and increase transit ridership in the area. An attractive and comprehensive signage and wayfinding system should be incorporated into streetscape improvements. These should be located along Olson Memorial Highway, Van White Boulevard, and Glenwood Avenue, and within public plazas, parks and open spaces.

### **Public Art Opportunities**

Public art is an important placemaking element in the public realm. It can communicate the history or character of a place, and draw connections to the larger community context. The integration of public art opportunities should be considered in conjunction with streetscape enhancements, plaza design, and redevelopment in the station area. Locations well-suited to new public art include sites at Olson Memorial Highway and Van White Boulevard, Sumner Field Park, and key intersections along Glenwood Avenue.

### **Open Space and Parks**

Park enhancements can provide additional amenities for the Near North, Harrison and Sumner-Glenwood

neighborhoods as well as transit users of the Van White Boulevard Station. The following future park enhancements should be considered near the Van White station:

- Add a performance venue at Sumner Field
- Add a picnic shelter and play equipment in the park bound by Van White Boulevard, south of Olson Memorial Highway

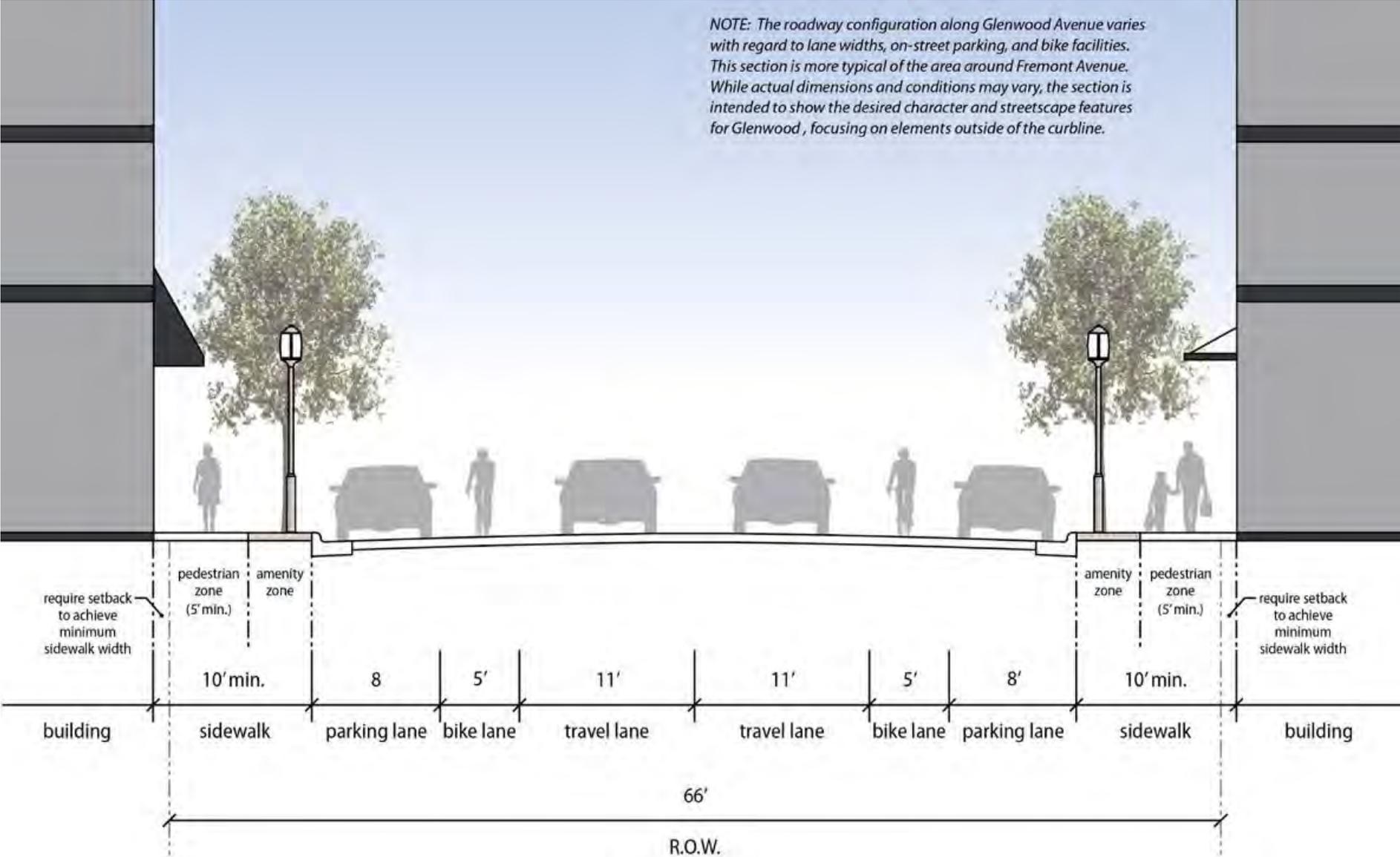
### **Trail Lighting**

Enhanced trail lighting in Bethune Park and Harrison Park will enhance public safety and mobility to and from nearby destinations and the Van White Boulevard Station.

### **Heritage Preservation**

The community has a rich history that is manifested in several select buildings, such as Sumner Library, the Labor Lyceum, Wayman AME Church, and the International Market Square building. In addition, the northwest portion of the station area still maintains the community's original housing styles and block configuration. Portions of the southern station area still reflect the areas' industrial past. While new development is proposed, primarily south of Olson Memorial Highway, existing housing in the northwest section of the station area should be preserved to retain the community's rich character and to make wise use of resources embedded in the existing housing stock. In addition, portions of the southern station area should be considered for adaptive reuse, to once again, preserve community character and wisely use resources embedded in these existing buildings.

**Figure 2.23: Glenwood Avenue Street Section**



---

Even though many of the community's historic resources are not officially designated, any proposed development in close proximity to them should be done in a manner that either avoids or sensitively incorporates these existing historic resources.

### ***Environment and Stormwater Management***

Implementing the LRT system, improving non-motorized access to the LRT stations, installing new street trees, and incorporating of transit-oriented development principles are all consistent with the City's sustainable development goals.

Should any brownfield sites exist within the station area, the City should work with the property owners to facilitate environmental cleanup and site redevelopment. Any building demolition associated with redevelopment should be done in a manner that allows for salvaging and recycling of building materials to the extent possible.

New development should either tie into the regional stormwater features that exist near Van White Memorial Boulevard, if appropriate and feasible, or manage stormwater on site, using stormwater management techniques such as low impact development and green infrastructure. These stormwater management practices attempt to mimic natural hydrologic processes to promote stormwater infiltration and reduce the quantity of runoff entering the storm sewer system, while also meeting water quality, rate control, and volume control requirements.

### ***Maintenance of Public Realm Improvements***

Many of the streetscape elements shown in the document will require further discussions between the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin, County, and adjacent property owners to identify operations and maintenance funding. Special Service Districts have been successfully implemented throughout the city in commercial areas, however current state statutes prevent special service districts in residential areas. Current policy states that street lighting on pedestrian priority corridors will be funded as part of reconstruction project budget. Banners, street benches, colored pavement, pavers, plantings, and trash receptacles may be funded through special service districts or by encroachment permit. Adjacent property owners in residential areas or in commercial areas without special service districts may work with the city to secure encroachment permits or may enter into agreements with the city to operate and maintain a streetscape element. Stormwater elements will also require discussions with the city so that property maintenance is preformed.

Low impact development and green infrastructure often requires higher maintenance commitments, which requires additional resources and acceptance from the maintaining agency.

### ***Community Health Benefits***

The Van White Boulevard Station Area Plan provides development policy guidance and built environment recommendations that affect the key determinants of health identified in the HIA.

The station area plan recommends circulation and built environment improvements that address serious traffic safety issues affecting the community and support additional infrastructure that encourages physical activity near the station. 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. The plan makes recommendations for mixed land uses allowing for community desired business services (specifically a grocery retailer, such as a food coop) to address neighborhood food access challenges. The land use and development policy changes supporting business development can increase employment opportunities for neighborhood residents. Further work will need to be done to understand the potential job types and to encourage connections to the existing community. The station area plan acknowledges the existing employment education assets of this station and suggests that there are additional opportunities to expand education/employment services to the community. These recommendations affirm those found in the HIA and help support health in this station area. **Table 2.2** summarizes healthy community design features that are incorporated into the station area plan.

**Table 2.2: Healthy Community Design Features**

Healthy Community Design Feature	How Station Area Planning Is Addressing Healthy Community Design
Socially <b>equitable and accessible</b> community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The METRO Blue Line Extension will bring light rail transit (LRT) to underserved communities.</li> <li>» Transit helps improve overall health in communities by improving physical activity levels, job access, housing and transportation costs, traffic safety, education access and access to healthy food.</li> </ul>
<b>Housing</b> for different incomes and different stages of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Development concepts show a variety of new housing types that could be either ownership or rental opportunities and show the preservation of a majority of existing housing.</li> <li>» Gaps in sidewalk network are recommended to be filled in.</li> <li>» New bicycle facilities are recommended.</li> <li>» Metro Transit will be investigating potential bus service improvements.</li> </ul>
Easy <b>connections</b> to the METRO Blue Line Extension and the regional transit system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Station area plans show a variety of land uses as appropriate to the station area contexts.</li> </ul>
<b>Mixed land uses</b> where homes, shops, schools and work sites are located close together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The Van White Boulevard station area and Plymouth Avenue/Penn Avenue commercial node show new job/education land uses.</li> <li>» Station area plans maintain existing sources of jobs.</li> <li>» The METRO Blue Line Extension will improve access to jobs and education destinations.</li> </ul>
<b>Jobs and education</b> are accessible from/within the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Safe crossings of Olson Memorial Highway are recommended.</li> <li>» Various options are recommended to safely reach the grade-separated Plymouth Avenue and Golden Valley Road stations.</li> <li>» Sidewalks are recommended to be buffered from the street by a planted boulevard.</li> <li>» New bicycle facilities are recommended.</li> <li>» Enhanced lighting is recommended.</li> <li>» Improved wayfinding signage is recommended to help direct people to the stations.</li> </ul>
<b>Walking and biking</b> are safe and comfortable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Development concepts provide community gathering spaces near the stations.</li> </ul>
Public places for <b>social interaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» New sidewalk and bicycle connections to parks are recommended.</li> </ul>
<b>Parks and green spaces</b> are easy to get to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The mixed-use commercial nodes at the Van White Boulevard Station and at the intersection of Plymouth Avenue and Penn Avenue could accommodate small grocery service or a small farmers market.</li> <li>» Existing community gardens are maintained.</li> </ul>
Outlets for <b>fresh, healthy food</b>	

---

## Implementation Framework

Implementation of the station area plan will require improvements to the physical environment along with policy guidance to support the community's development and neighborhood character goals while maximizing opportunities to improve community health outcomes.

### Adoption and Modification of Policy Guidance

Implementing the development vision for the Van White station area requires modifications to City of Minneapolis policy and regulatory documents.

- **METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau LRT) Phase 1: Station Area Planning.** This plan should be adopted by the City of Minneapolis as official City guidance for the four station areas. The plan should be referenced in the City's comprehensive plan in the list of adopted plans, and its area of impact denoted in the map that illustrates adopted plans.
- **Near Northside Master Plan.** The Near Northside Master Plan should be retired with adoption of this plan, since this plan is designed to cover the entire area of that plan and update its policy guidance.
- **Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan.** Modifications to the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan, and specifically to its land use policy narrative and future land use maps, should be adopted to make it consistent w/ the land use policy guidance of

this plan. Changes to development guidance are focused on areas south of Glenwood Avenue, and are described and illustrated in the previous chapter of this plan.

- **The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth.** Modifications to the City of Minneapolis comprehensive plan, and specifically to its Future Land Use map, should be adopted, so as to make it consistent with the land use policy guidance in this plan. Two land use features—a Transit Station feature, and a Neighborhood Commercial Node feature—should be added to the map at Van White and Olson Memorial Highway, as illustrated in the maps in the preceding chapter of this plan. Some areas of the map's parcel specific guidance should be modified as well, as is also illustrated in the preceding maps.
- **Rezoning of Property.** A rezoning study should follow adoption of this plan. Its purpose would be to propose changes in zoning that are consistent with the policy intent of this plan, and that would advance its objectives. The creation of a new zoning district could be considered to support the active live-work development mix desired in parts of the Bassett Creek Valley area—in a higher density format, and without inviting development with adverse impacts.
- **Minneapolis Health Department Participation.** Because the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) completed in 2013 found that the LRT was likely to have a positive influence on health, and that the potential land use changes and investments that come with the LRT project present a

valuable opportunity to address challenges in the corridor, it is recommended that the Minneapolis Health Department participate and provide input on implementation of these station area plans to ensure the integration of the HIA's findings. These include physical activity, housing + transportation costs, employment, education access, traffic safety, and healthy food access – all public health policy elements that would emphasize and promote health and health equity in the communities of North Minneapolis.

### Development Vision Implementation

The market context, as described in the sidebar, indicates the public sector and community are in a relatively strong position to achieve their desired development vision as the development context is moving in a gradually supportive direction. There is an expectation that this trend will continue over the foreseeable future, and at some point would provide the value necessary to surmount the development challenges. For this reason, there is little reason to entertain a development proposal for this site that does not achieve the City and community's high ideal. But while patience seems likely to yield eventual success, there are a number of actions that should be considered in order to increase the likelihood of high quality outcomes, or to expedite the desired future.

#### 555 Girard Terrace

The initial priority project for the public sector should be a signature development at the northeast corner of the 555 Girard Terrace site. This project would provide the most value to the surrounding community through

---

new public space, new retail goods and services, which will strengthen the area's brand as a high amenity neighborhood. It would also boost the market for subsequent development. By building area value, and reducing uncertainties about market rate rents, it eases the way for additional high quality, market rate development in the rest of Heritage Park.

The following steps are recommended for accomplishing public and community goals on the 555 Girard Terrace site:

- **Retail.** Given the importance of retail on the site, and particularly the value of a strong retail anchor (attracting additional retailers, animating the public space), the public owner of the property (Minneapolis Public Housing Authority) should be willing to reserve space in a future development for one or more highly desired retailers. A secured retail anchor makes every aspect of the future development easier. The coop movement that is trying to find a physical location in north Minneapolis seems a particularly promising anchor. Coops are better suited than most small grocers to meet needs of people across the income spectrum. Addition of a cooperative or other grocery retailer would address neighborhood level food access challenges identified in the Bottineau Health Impact Assessment and during the station area planning community engagement process. It could take advantage of the outdoor plaza space, and create a stream of customer traffic that would be attractive to complementary retailers.
- **Public Financial Support.** An empowered

approach to achieving the 555 Girard Terrace development goals, and getting the ball rolling in the station area, includes the use of public financial support. An appropriate level of public financial resources should be anticipated to support public space elements, to address adverse soil conditions, and to overcome housing and retail market uncertainties in this flagship project. Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County programs that are targeted to transit oriented development are a natural fit for the development. This is also a suitable recipient of tax increment financing or a related finance mechanism that leverages future property tax growth.

- **Timing.** The federal government decision to fund the transit line should be seen as a key decision point. At that time, understanding of the market and development context for 555 Girard Terrace development site should be updated. With current information, a decision can be made to request development proposals for initial development at the site, or to wait for the market to ripen a little further.

### Summit Academy OIC Site

An institution that is highly valued in the community, Summit Academy OIC is also situated on a unique site. It is at the southeast quadrant of the future transit station, which is a prime location for development that would complement a signature development at the 555 Girard Terrace site. The site is also challenging, with the old Bassett Creek storm tunnel traversing the site and poor soil conditions. New development would require deep pilings.

Redevelopment alternatives could utilize the full site, or the portion of the site west of the storm tunnel. But in any scenario, redevelopment of the site would require a full partnership with Summit Academy OIC, who would need to be satisfied that its academic and operational needs continue to be satisfied. Given this, partnership approaches could be utilized to explore whether there are development scenarios that would be beneficial to all parties.

### Other Publicly Owned Sites

There are several other publicly owned sites that have great potential for advancing a high quality, high density, development pattern. Owned by the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, and the City of Minneapolis, these sites include the remainder of the 555 Girard Terrace site, the two vacant blocks between 4th and 5th Avenues east of Van White Boulevard, and land on either side of the Van White Boulevard bridge, south of Glenwood Avenue. With market trends moving in a supportive direction, development of these lands should fully meet the plan aspirations in order to set the tone for the development of privately held lands.

### Retail Node at Van White Memorial Boulevard and Glenwood Avenue

The aspirational neighborhood commercial node at Van White Boulevard and Glenwood Avenue is in the half mile radius of two transit station areas, and could provide complementary goods to the desired neighborhood commercial node on Olson Memorial Highway. The prospects of developing this desired node are, however, diminishing as sites begin to be redeveloped along Glenwood organically. While this is a great sign in general terms, and is yielding some

---

high quality development, at some point it may also represent a missed opportunity for the community if the possibility for a retail node development is eliminated. Although challenging in its own right, consideration should be given to identifying a lead party, and resources, necessary to undertake site assembly, in order to create one or more mixed use development sites at this key intersection.

### Housing Mix

The objective of balancing the household mix by attracting predominantly market rate housing to the remainder of Heritage Park does not mean that subsequent development needs to be uniformly upscale. Market rate housing can be built at a range of price points, unit sizes, bedroom mixes, and amenity packages. Some affordable housing can still be creatively integrated into the mix. Experimentation can occur with market rate affordable products, such as those which include micro-units, or are built without some of the most costly building elements.

Public ownership of many of the best sites provides leverage to ensure that goals of a mixed income community continue to be fulfilled. One approach that could be considered is to package some of the remaining sites for disposition, and invite development proposals which would explicitly address economic mix as a proposal element.

### Physical Environment Improvements

Physical environment improvements have been broken into two phases.

- **Day of Opening Improvements.** These are

improvements recommended to be constructed and functional on the first day that the LRT is operating. Day of opening improvements support safe and convenient access to the station platform for station area residents and visitors.

- **Future Improvements.** These are desired station area improvements that support enhanced livability within the station area and enhanced access, but do not significantly impact access to the station platform.

### Day of Opening Improvements

Recommended day of opening improvements are listed in **Table 2.3** and depicted on **Figure 2.24 - Figure 2.26**. Agencies responsible for implementation of these improvements and the timing of implementation will be discussed and resolved as part of the preliminary engineering phase of the project.

### Future Improvements

**Table 2.4** and **Table 2.5** suggest potential partners who may individually or jointly take on the responsibility for implementation of the future improvement. The list of potential partners does not imply a commitment by the listed agency to implement the future improvement.

Implementation of recommended policy, development and physical environment improvements, while not comprehensive, will support transit ridership through the provision of safe and convenient access to the transit stations. These improvements will also provide economic, social, and environmental benefits to the station area and broader community.

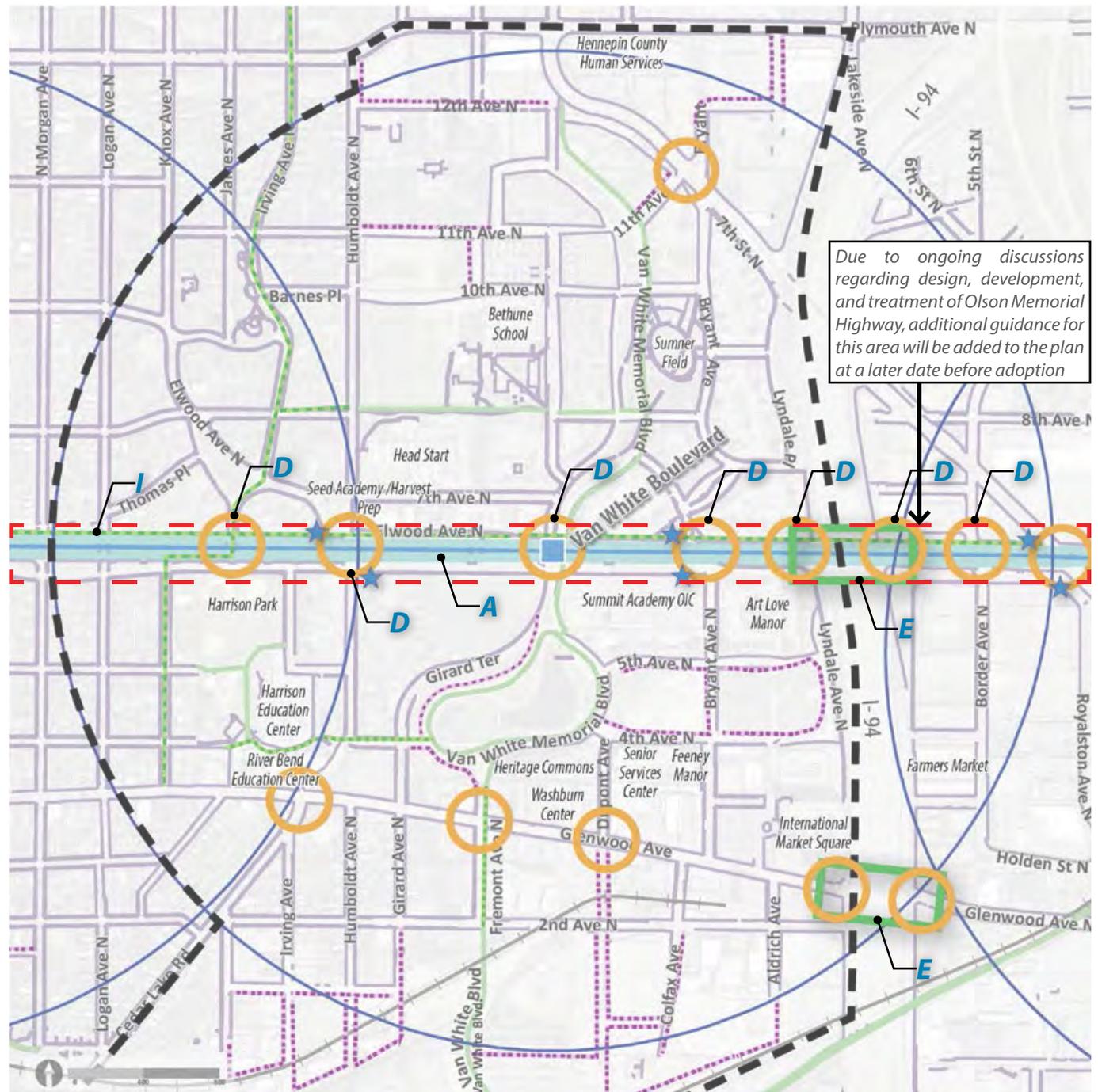
**Table 2.3: Day of Opening Improvements**

Improvements	Comments
<b>A</b> Reconstruction of Olson Memorial Highway	Reconstruction of the roadway will be part of rail project, supplemented with contribution from other agencies as appropriate
<b>B</b> Roadway and wayfinding signage	Legible to people who speak multiple languages and located directly adjacent to platform
<b>C</b> Wayfinding signage (in multiple languages) at key decision points	Legible to people who speak multiple languages. Key decision points include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Glenwood Avenue and Van White Boulevard intersection</li> <li>b. Glenwood Avenue and Lyndale Avenue intersection</li> <li>c. Glenwood Avenue at Cedar Lake Road intersection</li> <li>d. Van White Boulevard at Fremont Avenue</li> <li>e. Van White Boulevard and 7th Street intersection</li> </ol>
<b>D</b> Improved pedestrian and bicycle crossings of Olson Memorial Highway	Crossings located at roadway intersections are recommended to be at-grade with the street
<b>E</b> Improve safety and character of pedestrian and bicycle crossings of I-94	Located at the Olson Memorial Highway overpass of I-94 and the Glenwood Avenue underpass of I-94
<b>F</b> Bicycle parking near platform	Located at one of the Van White Boulevard/Olson Memorial Highway intersection quadrants
<b>G</b> Nice Ride station near platform	Located at one of the Van White Boulevard/Olson Memorial Highway intersection quadrants
<b>H</b> Streetscape treatment along Olson Memorial Highway	Includes sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian lighting
<b>I</b> East-west trail/protected bikeway along Olson Memorial Highway	Currently depicted along the north side of Olson Memorial Highway. Location may change based on final roadway configuration
<b>J</b> Improved lighting in along trails in Harrison and Bethune parks	
<b>K</b> Bus route modifications and bus stop improvements	Note: not depicted on <b>Figure 2.24 - Figure 2.26.</b>

**Figure 2.24: Day of Opening Pedestrian Circulation Improvements**

This map identifies pedestrian circulation improvements that are recommended to be in place by the first day of LRT operations. Map elements not coded with a letter are intended to be future improvements.

-  **Day of Opening Improvements**  
(see Table 2.1)
-  **Enhanced Pedestrian/Bicycle Crossing of I-94**  
Potential Improvements:
  - Dedicated Trails or Bikeways
  - Wider Sidewalks
  - Enhanced Streetscape Treatments
    - Decorative bridge railings
    - Pedestrian-scaled lighting
    - Decorative pavements
-  **Proposed Bus Rapid Transit Connection**
-  **Safe Intersection Crossing**  
Potential Improvements:
  - Crosswalk Marking & Signage
  - Adequate Crossing Time for Pedestrians
  - Median Island Pedestrian Refuges
  - Improved Sight Lines
  - Improved Lighting
  - Countdown Timers
  - ADA Compliant Signals & Pedestrian Ramps
  - Rapid Flashing Beacon
-  **Proposed Sidewalks**
-  **Existing Sidewalks**
-  **Proposed Paved Trail**
-  **Existing Paved Trail**
-  **Planned LRT Station**
-  **Bottineau LRT Alignment**
-  **LRT Station Half Mile Buffer**
-  **Modified Station Area**
-  **Railroad**

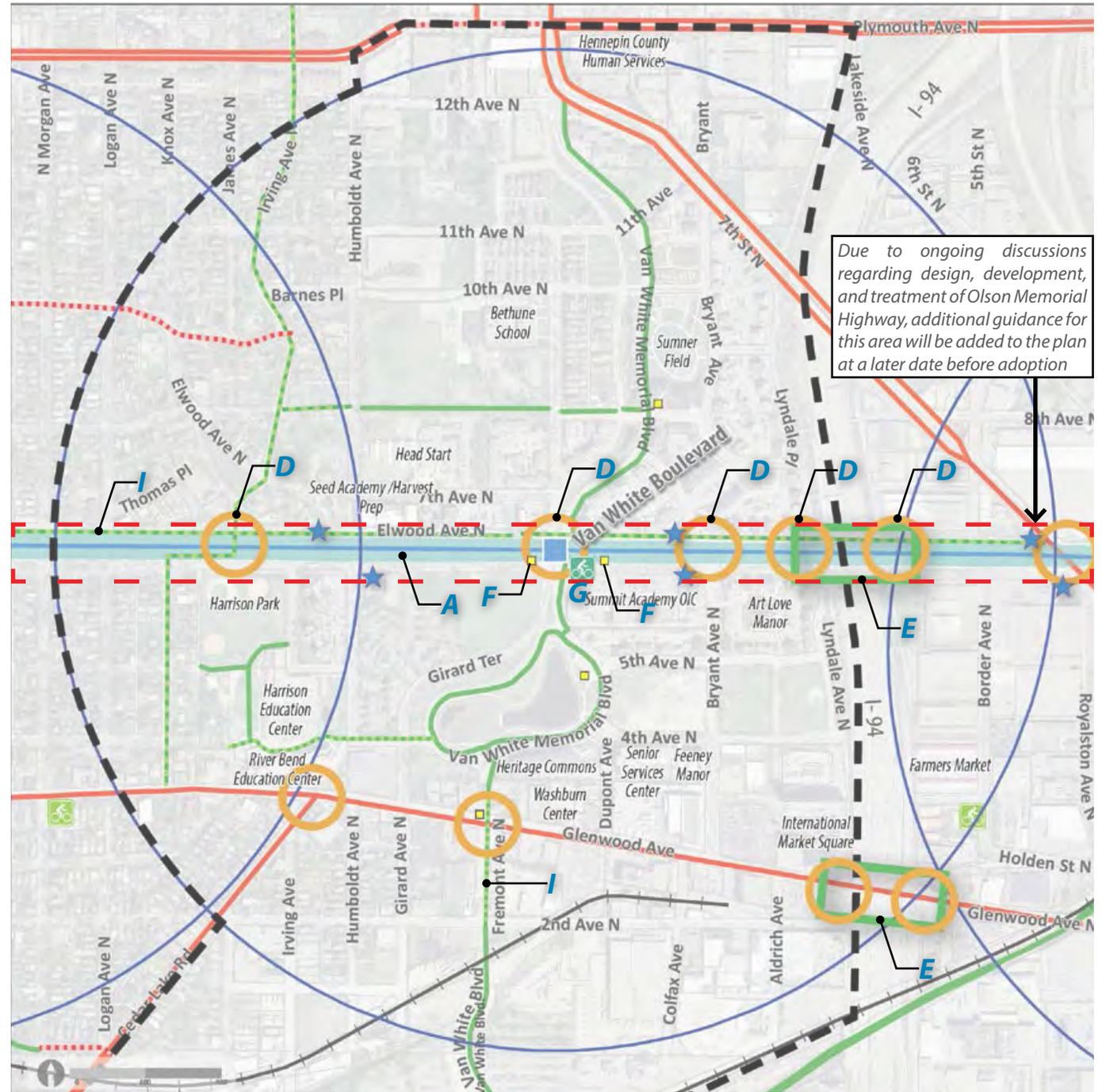


Due to ongoing discussions regarding design, development, and treatment of Olson Memorial Highway, additional guidance for this area will be added to the plan at a later date before adoption

**Figure 2.25: Day of Opening Bicycle Circulation Improvements**

This map identifies bicycle circulation improvements that are recommended to be in place by the first day of LRT operations. Map elements not coded with a letter are intended to be future improvements.

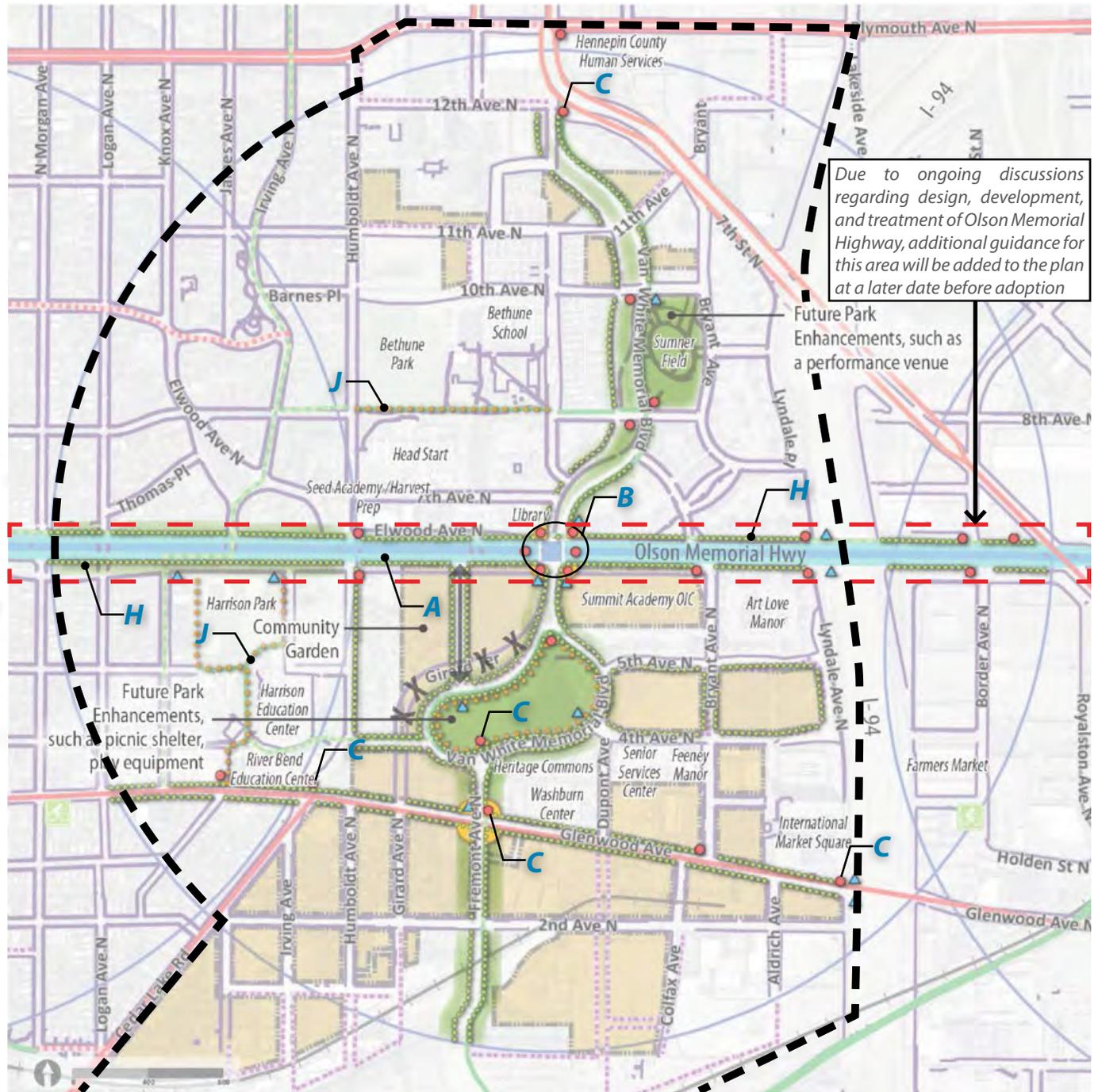
-  Enhanced Pedestrian/Bicycle Crossing of I-94  
Potential Improvements:
  - Dedicated Trails or Bikeways
  - Wider Sidewalks
  - Enhanced Streetscape Treatments
    - Decorative bridge railings
    - Pedestrian-scaled lighting
    - Decorative pavements
-  Proposed Bus Rapid Transit Connection
-  Safe Intersection Crossing  
Potential Improvements:
  - Crosswalk Marking & Signage
  - Adequate Crossing Time for Pedestrians
  - Median Island Pedestrian Refuges
  - Improved Sight Lines
  - Improved Lighting
  - Countdown Timers
  - ADA Compliant Signals & Pedestrian Ramps
  - Rapid Flashing Beacon
-  Proposed Bicycle Parking
-  Proposed Nice Ride Station
-  Existing Nice Ride Station
-  Proposed Paved Trail
-  Existing Paved Trail
-  Proposed On-Street Bike Facility
-  Existing On-Street Bike Facility
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Modified Station Area
-  Railroad



**Figure 2.26: Day of Opening Public Realm Improvements**

This map identifies public realm improvements that are recommended to be in place by the first day of LRT operations. Map elements not coded with a letter are intended to be future improvements.

- X** Day of Opening Improvements (see Table 2.1)
- Enhanced Streetscape
- Trail Lighting
- Park
- Plaza
- Wayfinding
- Public Art
- Redevelopment Opportunity Site
- New Street (conceptual - exact street location to be part of site redevelopment)
- Modify/Eliminate Existing Street
- Planned LRT Station
- Bottineau LRT Alignment
- LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
- Railroad
- Modified Station Area
- Proposed Sidewalks
- Existing Sidewalks
- Proposed Paved Trail
- Existing Paved Trail
- Proposed On-Street Bike Facility
- Existing On-Street Bike Facility



**Table 2.4: Future Improvements - Part I**

Improvements	Potential Partners	Comments
Park enhancements at Sumner Field and parkland south of Olson Memorial Highway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB)</li> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> </ul>	MPRB will be developing the North Service Area Master Plan in 2017, which will include the creation/update of individual park master plans in the North Service Area. Park enhancement recommendations in the station area plans will be considered as part of the North Service Area Master Plan process.
Streetscape enhancements along Glenwood Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Hennepin County</li> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Minimum 10 foot wide sidewalk</li> <li>» Street trees</li> <li>» Pedestrian lighting</li> <li>» Site furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, bike racks)</li> <li>» Signage and wayfinding</li> <li>» Relocate existing overhead utilities underground</li> </ul>
Streetscape enhancements along streets adjacent to MPHA development sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> <li>» Property Developers</li> </ul>	Will occur concurrent with future development of these sites
Plazas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Hennepin County</li> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> <li>» Minneapolis Public Housing Authority</li> <li>» Private Property Owners</li> </ul>	Incorporate through redevelopment along Van White Boulevard at Olson Memorial Highway and at Glenwood Avenue
Public Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Hennepin County</li> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> </ul>	Opportunities at Olson Memorial Highway and Van White Blvd, Sumner Field Park, new park south of Olson Memorial Highway, and along Glenwood Avenue
Complete remainder of wayfinding system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Hennepin County</li> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> </ul>	Opportunities at Olson Memorial Highway and Van White Blvd, Sumner Field Park, new park south of Olson Memorial Highway, and along Glenwood Avenue
New street between Olson Memorial Highway and Van White Boulevard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> <li>» Property Developers</li> </ul>	Will occur concurrent with future development of these sites

**Table 2.5: Future Improvements - Part II**

Improvements	Potential Partners	Comments
Eliminate or reconfigure Girard Terrace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> <li>» Property Developers</li> </ul>	Will occur concurrent with future development of these sites
Improved pedestrian and bicycle crossings of Glenwood Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Hennepin County</li> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> </ul>	
Improved pedestrian and bicycle crossings of 7th Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> </ul>	
Fill in remaining sidewalk gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> <li>» Adjacent Property Developers</li> </ul>	
Complete bicycle network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> </ul>	
Bicycle parking at key neighborhood destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> <li>» Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board</li> </ul>	Includes plaza at intersection of Glenwood Avenue and Van White Boulevard, Sumner Field, parkland south of Olson Memorial Highway, and other neighborhood parks and schools as needed.
BRT stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Metro Transit</li> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> </ul>	



# **3** PENN AVENUE STATION AREA

- 1. Existing Conditions Analysis**
- 2. Station Area Vision**
- 3. Implementation Framework**

# PENN AVENUE STATION AREA

The proposed Penn Avenue Station is located at the intersection of Penn Avenue and Olson Memorial Highway. The station area extends one-half mile around each proposed light rail transit (LRT) station, or the distance the average person can walk to/from the station in ten minutes. One-half mile is the transit industry standard for the maximum length that people are willing to walk to reach a transitway station. While a one-half mile is equated with a ten-minute walk, in reality this does not always hold true on the ground as factors such as terrain and the transportation network affects how people move through the station area. Please see **Figure 3.1** for a map of the station location, half-mile radius, and ten-minute walk extent.

The Penn Avenue Station Area is located in a community experiencing substantial disparities in health outcomes (chronic disease and life expectancy) as is evident in from **Figure 3.2** and racial disparities in key social determinants of health (employment, income, food access, et cetera) that contribute towards health outcomes documented in the Bottineau Transitway

Health Impact Assessment (HIA). The HIA explored the following determinants of health: employment, location affordability, food access, physical activity, traffic safety, and education access. Additionally, **Table 3.1** demonstrates that 38 percent of residents are living in poverty, 80 percent of residents are people of color, 31 percent of households do not own a car. These are populations most impacted by disparities and may have the most to gain by improved transit access and changes in the station area.

## Existing Conditions Analysis

### Roadways

Olson Memorial Highway (Minnesota State Highway 55) is owned and operated by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and has road functional classification of Primary Arterial. West of the proposed station at Thomas Avenue, Olson Memorial transitions from a four-lane highway with a

50 mph posted speed limit, to a six-lane highway with a 40 mph posted speed limit and a grassy median. The METRO Blue Line Extension will be constructed in this median, then transition underneath a new bridge for westbound Olson Memorial Highway to the BNSF Railroad trench on the east side of Theodore Wirth Regional Park. Also beginning at Thomas Avenue, Olson Memorial Highway is supplemented by the Olson Highway Service Road, a frontage road on the south side of the highway extending from Thomas Avenue to Bryant Avenue, with gaps at Penn Avenue and Van White Memorial Boulevard. A north side frontage road also intermittently exists between Logan and Upton Avenues. Approximately 24,300 vehicles used the segment of Olson Memorial Highway near the station on a daily basis in 2013. Parking is not permitted on Olson Memorial Highway, but is allowed on Olson Highway Service Road.

Penn Avenue (Hennepin County Road 2) is a two-lane undivided minor arterial roadway with a posted speed limit of 30 mph. On-street parking is permitted on both sides of the street. Penn Avenue is an integral part of the urban street grid in north Minneapolis and carries approximately 9,200 vehicles per day north of Olson Memorial Highway, and 5,900 vehicles per day south of Olson Memorial Highway in 2012. Please see **Figure 3.3** for a map of streets in the station area.

**Table 3.1: Penn Avenue Community Profile**

	Half-Mile Station Area	Minneapolis	Hennepin County
<b>Population (2010)</b>	5,743	382,578	1,152,388
<b>Persons under 18 years</b>	33%	20.2%	22.4%
<b>Persons over 65 years</b>	6%	8.0%	12.2%
<b>Minority</b>	80%	36.2%	23.6%
<b>Zero car households</b>	31 %	19%	10.5%
<b>Living in poverty<sup>2</sup></b>	38%	22.5%	12.8%

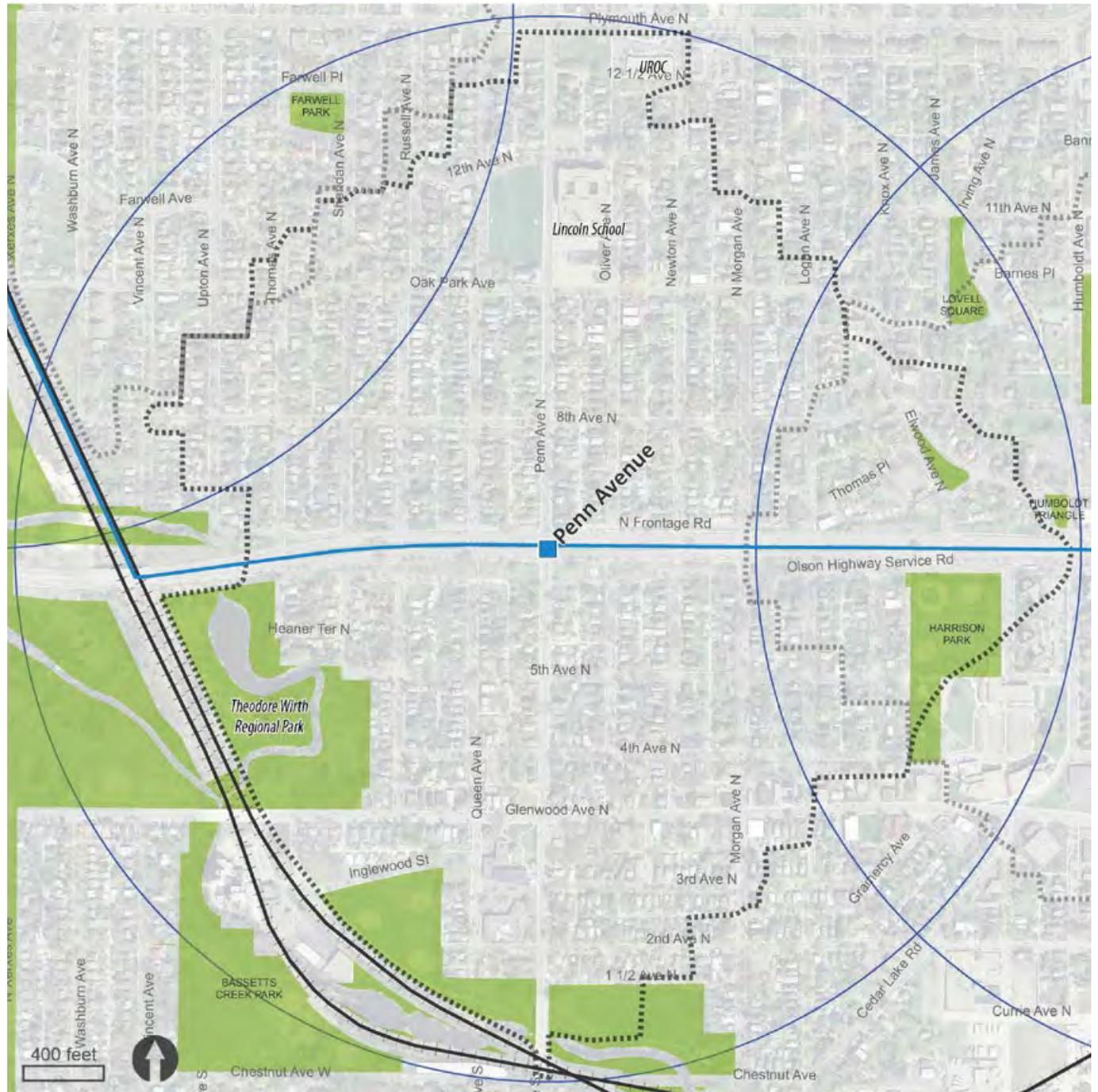
Data sources: U.S. Census (2010); American Community Survey 2007-2011 5-year summary file

<sup>2</sup>Living in poverty is defined as populations living in households whose income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty thresholds. As a reference, this threshold was \$22,300 in 2010 for a family of four. Minority is defined as non-white.

**Figure 3.1: Penn Avenue Station Area**

This map shows the half mile buffer and 10 minute walking extent for the station area.

-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Adjacent Station 10-minute Walking Extent
-  Penn Station 10-minute Walking Extent
-  Railroad

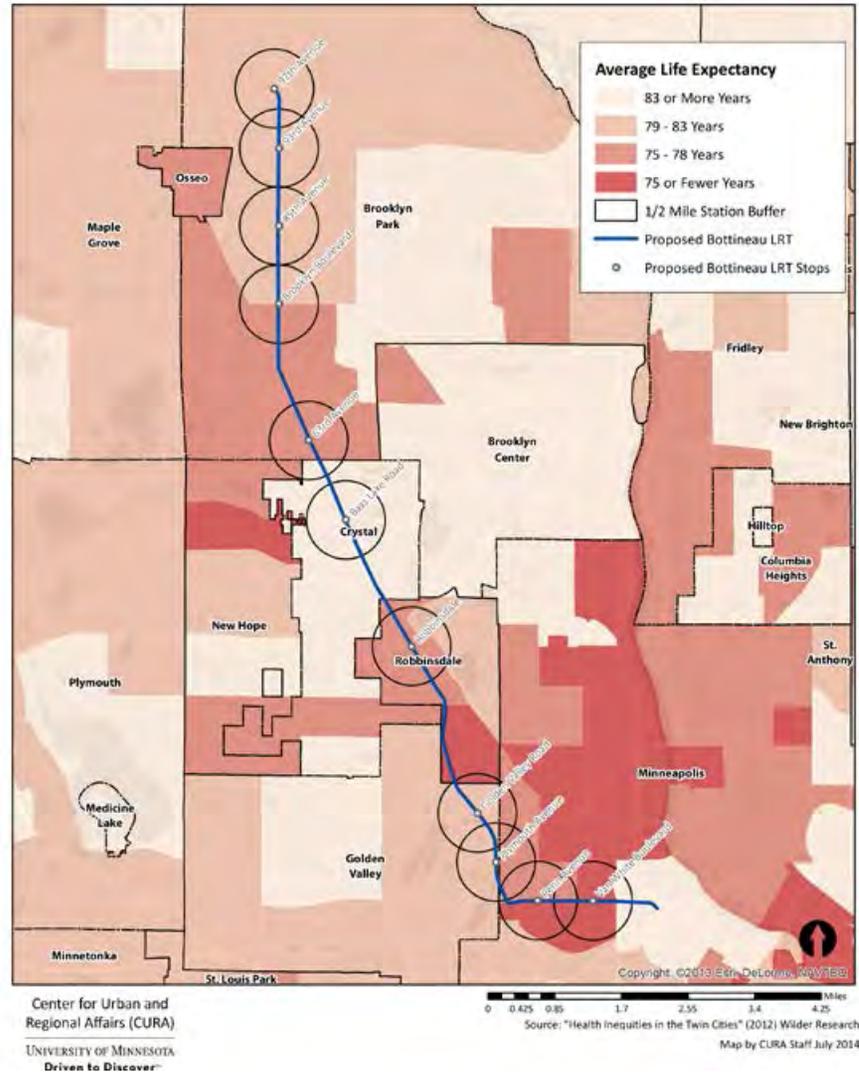


### Primary Community Input

Community members who participated in engagement activities indicated that Olson Memorial Highway is a significant barrier to cross for people who walk and bike. Some community residents felt that cars are traveling faster than the posted speed limit and that the highway is not well lit. West of Thomas Avenue, Olson Highway is a four-lane roadway with paved shoulders and has a posted speed limit of 50 miles per hour. At Thomas Avenue, Olson Highway transitions to six-lane roadway with curb and gutter and to a 40 mile per hour posted speed limit. Starting at Thomas there is a sidewalk along both the north and south sides of the highway. At times the sidewalk is located directly behind the curb and at times the sidewalk is separated from the highway by a turf boulevard. Within the station area, the highway has a grassy median island where the METRO Blue Line Extension will be constructed. Neighborhood residents who participated in engagement activities reported that pedestrian signals at intersections are not long enough to complete the crossing of the highway.

There were 22 bicycle/automobile and pedestrian/automobile crashes in the station area between 2009-2013, 12 of which occurred along Olson Memorial Highway and eight along Penn Avenue. While an effort can be made to improve individual crossing locations, a broader effort to change the character of Olson Memorial Highway is desired so that the highway is no longer a barrier to mobility in the station area. See **Figure 3.4** for a map of crashes in the study area, along with an analysis of current crossing locations for pedestrians that were proposed in the draft EIS to be closed upon LRT opening. Distances to remaining or new signalized crossings per the draft EIS are also

Figure 3.2: Average Life Expectancy at Birth by Census Tract in 2007



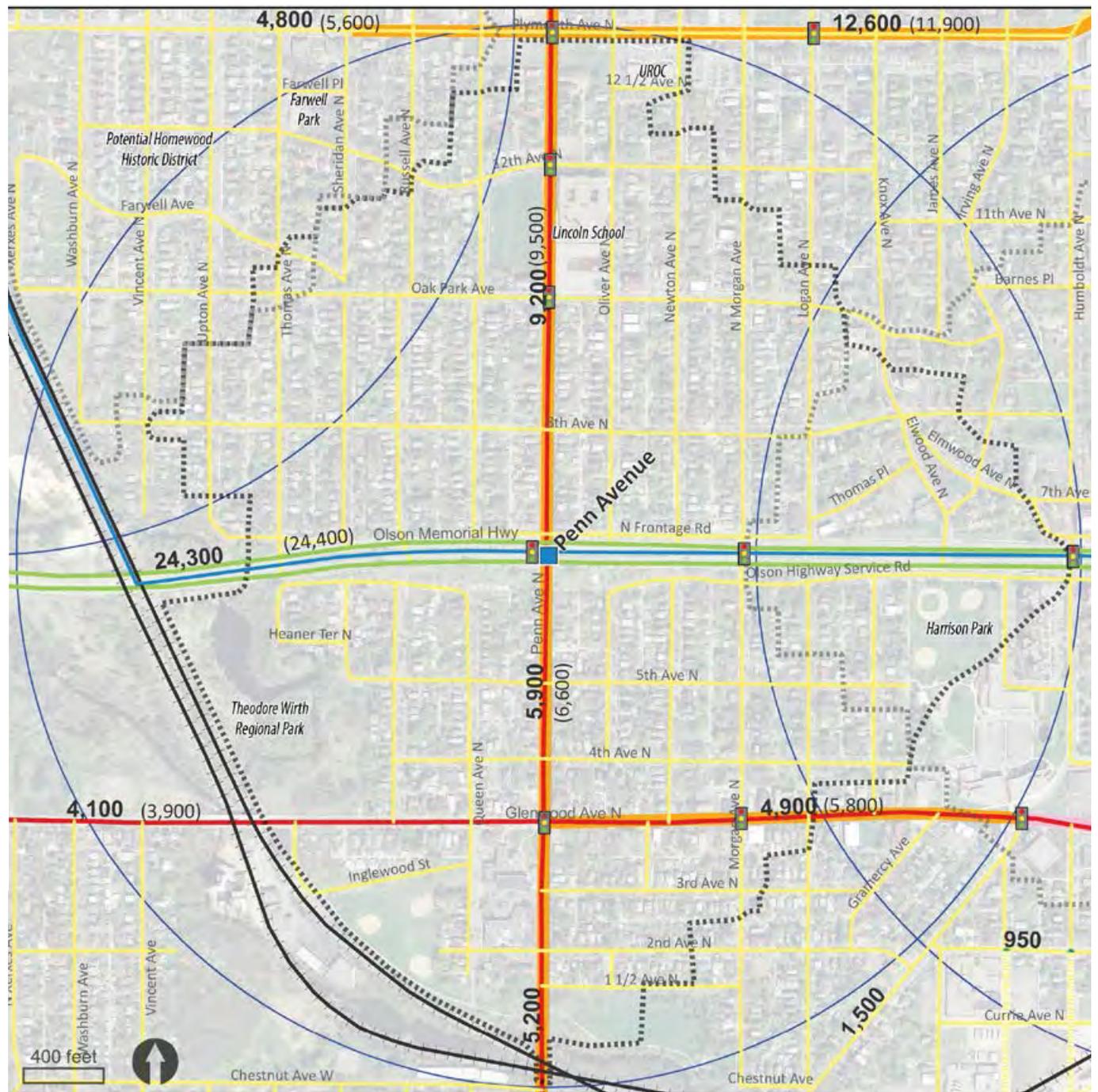
**Figure 3.3: Existing Streets and Highways**

This map depicts roadway jurisdictions, roadway classifications, and existing and forecasted traffic volumes.

Note: The City of Minneapolis defines a Commercial Corridor as historically prominent destinations consisting of a mix of uses, with commercial uses dominating.

The City of Minneapolis defines a Community Corridor as primarily residential with intermittent commercial uses clustered at intersection nodes.

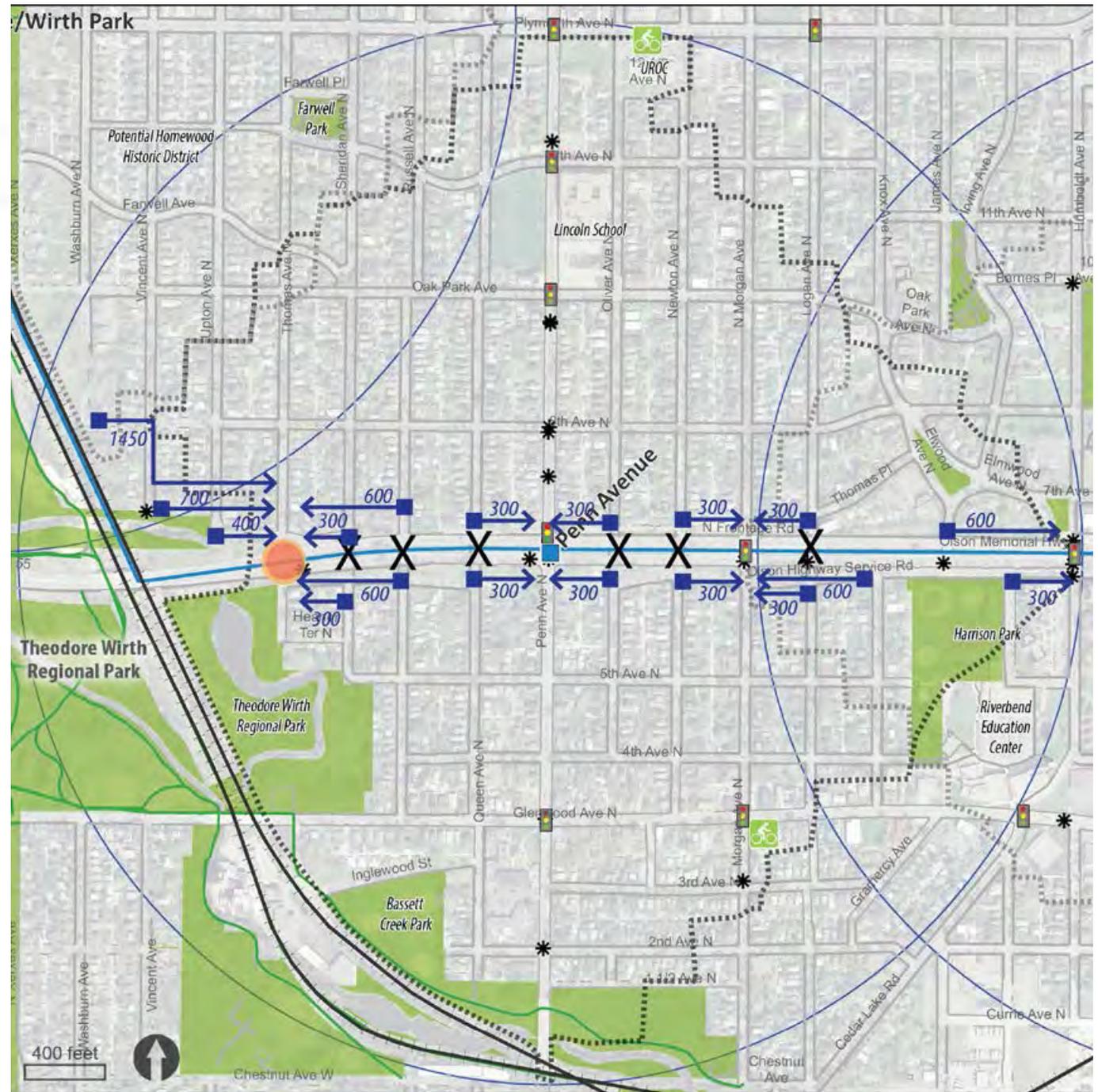
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  MnDOT Roads
-  City Roads
-  Hennepin County Roads
-  Proposed Roads
-  Signalized Intersection
-  Commercial Corridors
-  Community Corridors
-  MnDOT Traffic Volumes  
Existing 2012/2013 (Forecast 2030)
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Adjacent Station 10-minute Walking Extent
-  Penn Station 10-minute Walking Extent
-  Railroad



**Figure 3.4: Olson Memorial Highway Diversions to Signalized Intersections**

This map depicts distances pedestrians need to walk to reach proposed signalized intersections as shown in the draft Environmental Impact Statement.

- Distance to Signalized Intersection
- Loss of Pedestrian Crossing
- Bike/Ped and Vehicle Crash Incident (2009-2013)
- Planned LRT Station
- Bottineau LRT Alignment
- LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
- Railroad
- Signalized Intersection
- Proposed Signalized Crossing Per Draft EIS
- Adjacent Station 10-minute Walking Extent
- Penn Station 10-minute Walking Extent



---

shown. The character of Penn Avenue, along with potential bicycle and pedestrian safety and circulation solutions are being explored as part of Hennepin County's Penn Avenue Community Works project.

## Transit

As shown in **Figure 3.5**, three local routes serve the station area: the high-frequency Route 19 on Olson Memorial Highway and the Route 9 on Glenwood Avenue; Route 7 serves the northern part of the station area on Plymouth Avenue. Limited stop Route 755 operates on Olson Memorial Highway with a stop at Penn. Local Route 32 also serves the station area but operates just once in the morning and once in the afternoon, on weekdays while school is session, as this branch of Route 32 operates to serve students bound for Edison High School. Due to the very limited service this route offers, it is not included in **Figure 3.5**. The proposed C Line Arterial Bus Rapid Transit service is currently planned to operate on Penn Avenue and Olson Memorial Highway; stations are planned at the intersection of Penn and Plymouth Avenues, and along Olson Memorial Highway at Penn Avenue and Humboldt Avenue.

### *Primary Community Input*

C Line Arterial BRT will follow the current Route 19 pattern and use Olson Memorial Highway to access downtown Minneapolis. Community members have expressed a strong desire to explore a transit connection that would continue south on Penn Avenue and connect to the planned Penn Avenue Green Line Extension station.

## Bikeways and Sidewalks

Sidewalk infrastructure in the station area is consistent with the regular urban street grid, with sidewalks on both sides of local and arterial streets. Sidewalks along local streets are separated from the roadway by a planted boulevard with grass, street trees, or landscaping, while sidewalks along Penn Avenue and Olson Memorial Highway are back of curb with no boulevard. Olson Memorial Highway is also missing sidewalks between Humboldt and Russell Avenues on the south side, and on the north side between Russell and Sheridan Avenues. Pedestrians walk immediately adjacent to the highway, with no buffer from fast-moving traffic. This configuration is coupled with a lack of sidewalks west of Sheridan on the north side, and sidewalks along the Service Road only on the south side between Humboldt and Bryant Avenues. In addition, lighting along the highway and on Penn Avenue is geared toward the roadway and not the sidewalks, creating a dark walking environment at night. All of these conditions on Olson Memorial Highway make for an uncomfortable, disconnected, and unintuitive pedestrian network. Please see **Figure 3.6** for a map of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the station area.

Bicycle infrastructure in the station area is not particularly well developed. Bicycle improvements are planned as part of the Penn Avenue Community Works project and will provide a missing north-south connection in the station area. As part of a concurrent study being performed by the City of Minneapolis, the City identified a proposed 3.5-mile greenway route extending from the intersection of Humboldt Avenue N and 47th Avenue N to the intersection of Irving Avenue N and Golden Valley Road. As part of

the study, several alternative routes were identified between Golden Valley Road and Glenwood Avenue that were taken into consideration during station area planning. **Figure 3.7** depicts the route alternatives that were identified as part of the greenway study. The route alternatives are composed of two options (A and B) between Golden Valley Road and 16th Avenue and six different route options (1 – 6) between 16th Avenue N and Glenwood Avenue. Implementation of the proposed north Minneapolis Greenway, would further improve north-south bicycle movement in the station area. East-west users can use on-street bicycle lanes on Plymouth Avenue to the north of the station, or on Glenwood Avenue to the south of the station, but are otherwise limited in their options. An additional on-street bikeway planned for Oak Park Avenue will improve bicycle connections in the immediate area.

### *Primary Community Input*

Some community members have expressed an interest in having a bike facility along the Olson Memorial Highway corridor that would significantly improve east-west bicycle connectivity in the area and connect to Theodore Wirth Regional Park. Pedestrian-scale lighting, similar to the lighting along Glenwood Avenue, is also desired along Olson Memorial Highway and Penn Avenue.

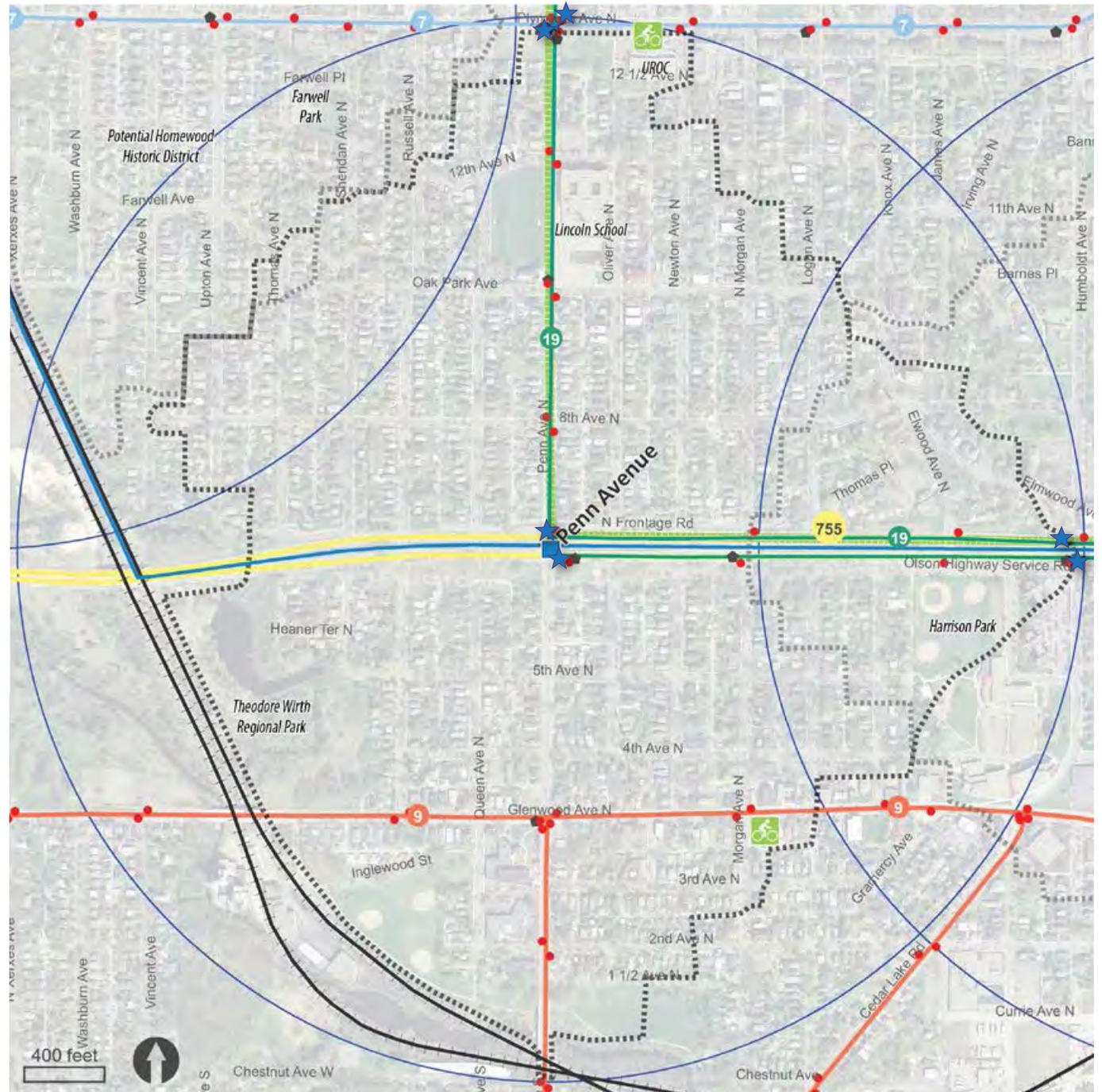
## Land Use

Land uses in the Penn Avenue station area are depicted in **Figure 3.8**. The land use map was created from data received from the Metropolitan Council 2010. The land uses shown on this map represent a period in time and may not exactly match actual land uses

**Figure 3.5: Existing / Planned Transit Routes**

This map depicts existing bus routes and planned arterial BRT routes.

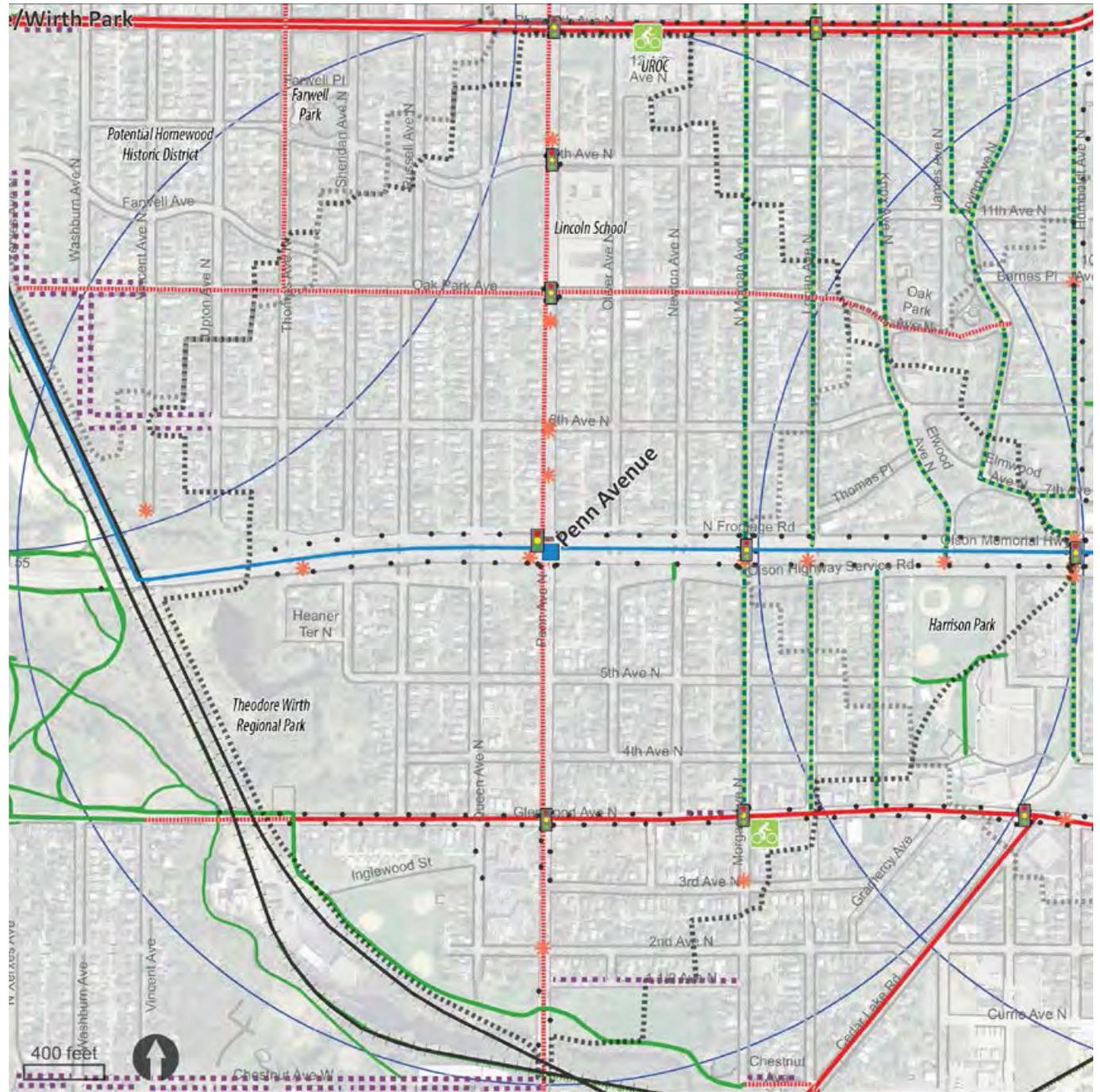
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  Planned C Line (Arterial BRT)
-  Planned C Line Station
-  Route 7
-  Route 9
-  Route 19
-  Route 755
-  Transit Stop
-  Transit Shelters
-  Nice Ride Station
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Adjacent Station 10-minute Walking Extent
-  Penn Station 10-minute Walking Extent
-  Railroad



### Figure 3.6: Existing / Planned Sidewalks and Bikeways

This map shows existing sidewalks and bikeways, along with identified sidewalk gaps, planned sidewalks and planned bikeways previously identified in city policy documents.

-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  Railroad
-  Nice Ride Station
-  Bike/Ped and Vehicle Crash Incident 2009-2013
-  Existing Sidewalks
-  Sidewalk Gap
-  Existing On-Street Bike Lane
-  Planned On-Street Bike Lane in an Existing Policy Document
-  Existing Paved Trail
-  Potential North Minneapolis Greenway Route
-  Signalized Intersection
-  Street Light
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Adjacent Station 10-minute Walking Extent
-  Penn Station 10-minute Walking Extent



### Figure 3.7: Proposed North Minneapolis Greenway - Potential Route Options

This map depicts potential route options for the proposed North Minneapolis Greenway that were previously identified in the *North Minneapolis Greenway: Technical Investigation Progress Report*.

Note: Route alternatives are composed of two options (A and B) between Golden Valley Road and 16th Avenue and six different route options (1 – 6) between 16th Avenue N and Glenwood Avenue.

- Planned LRT Station
- Bottineau LRT Alignment
- - - Modified Station Area
- LRT Station Half Mile Buffer



### Figure 3.8: Existing Land Use

This map shows existing land uses with data received from the Metropolitan Council (2010).

- Single-Family Detached
- Two-Family
- Multifamily
- Retail and Other Commercial
- Mixed Use Residential
- Industrial and Utility
- Institutional
- Park, Recreational or Preserve
- Major Highway
- Undeveloped
- Parcels
- Planned LRT Station
- Bottineau LRT Alignment
- LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
- 10-minute Walking Extent



source: Metropolitan Council, 2010

---

or the City's existing land use maps. Please note that while it provides project context, it is not the City of Minneapolis' official land use map.

The area around the future Penn Avenue station is a traditional Minneapolis neighborhood of older homes, over half of which were built in the 1920s or earlier. While the majority of structures are single family homes, duplexes are also common. Owner occupied and rental housing are thoroughly intermixed, with rental housing somewhat more prevalent at the eastern side of the station area, and owner occupied housing becoming more prevalent to the west. Vacant lots are not uncommon. Many or most blocks have at least one. But in most cases they are not clustered or situated such that they provide a clear redevelopment opportunity, aside from the construction of new single family homes.

There are some older apartment buildings scattered through the neighborhood. On the Harrison Neighborhood side of the highway, most of these are along Glenwood Avenue. On the Near North Neighborhood side of the highway, all of the apartment buildings are in the blocks east of Penn.

There is an important neighborhood commercial node at the edge of the study area to the north at the Plymouth and Penn intersection. It offers a major health care facility, NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center, owned and operated by Hennepin County in partnership with a community board of directors. The University of Minnesota's UROC (Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center) facility, and the Minneapolis Urban League, are also important community-based institution at Plymouth and Penn. There is potential for additional development at the

node, with 2.2 acres of City-owned property at the southeast and southwest corners of the Plymouth/Penn intersection. One of these sites is being pursued for the development of a grocery store (Praxis Grocery). There are few commercial businesses in the Penn station area and most are situated on Glenwood Avenue.

The extremely wide right-of-way for Olson Memorial Highway provides the most evident development opportunity near the station. If determined by the Minnesota Department of Transportation to be excess, it could provide some land for new development—although some additional property would probably still need to be acquired, and combined with it, to provide sufficient land area.

## Community Character

The Penn Avenue Station will serve the Harrison, Near North and Willard Hay neighborhoods as well as nearby amenities and destinations as depicted in **Figure 3.9**.

Olson Memorial Highway is a wide, planted roadway with public art, including the Floyd B. Olson Memorial, located near the proposed station. Several parks are within convenient walking distance including Theodore Wirth Regional Park, one of Minneapolis's finest parks and a regional destination. Two synagogues, Mikro Kodesh and Sharie Zedeck, near Penn and Oak Park Avenues, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The station area is an urban neighborhood with moderate potential for change given the lack of available land for large-scale development. Recent growth and activity along Glenwood Avenue and at the Plymouth and Penn node, along with plans to

strengthen these nodes, may have an influence on future ridership at the Penn Avenue Station. PUSH Interactive, a growing health and wellness internet marketing company, is working to turn the vacant Glenwood Inglewood Co. bottled water plant in Minneapolis into a contemporary business campus, including a new company headquarters, a microbrewery, and restaurant. With an approximate station population of 6,000, the Penn Avenue station area will be a destination for a few transit riders and origin for many, who will arrive mostly on foot or by bicycle or bus.

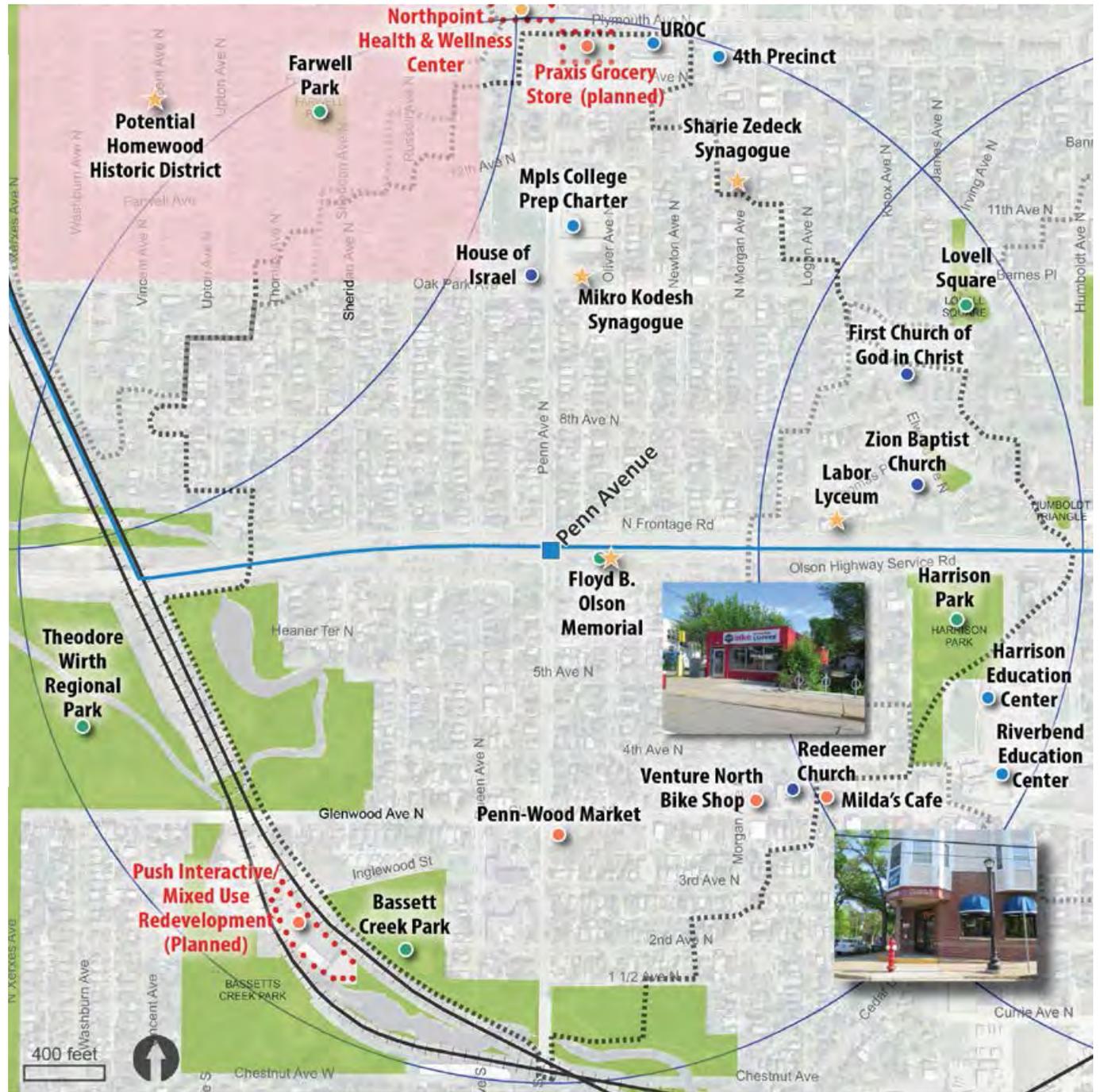
## Primary Community Input

Community members expressed a desire for additional retail and service-oriented businesses including a neighborhood-scaled grocery. Neighborhood residents are generally comfortable with some higher density development near the intersection of Olson Memorial Highway and Penn Avenue, but do not want development to displace current residents. To this end, community members were comfortable with senior housing development and high quality affordable housing opportunities, though there is concern about heavy concentrations of affordable housing in the area. Maintaining greenery along Olson Memorial Highway was also a priority.

**Figure 3.9: Existing / Planned Amenities and Destinations**

This map identifies amenities and destinations located in the station area.

-  Civic / Institutional
-  Religious
-  Health & Wellness
-  Retail / Restaurant / Grocery
-  Parks
-  Historic Property/District
-  Major Development / Destinations
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Adjacent Station 10-minute Walking Extent
-  Penn Station 10-minute Walking Extent
-  Railroad



---

## Station Area Vision

### Future Station Area Character

The Penn Avenue Station area is envisioned as:

- A diverse community that welcomes and embraces new immigrants through sustainable and affordable housing options;
- A community that is knit together by the new design of Olson Memorial Highway and the LRT line and that advances pedestrian and bicycle safety through improved street lighting and crossings of the highway; and
- A community poised for future neighborhood-scale commercial activity along Penn Avenue at the Plymouth, Olson Memorial Highway, and Glenwood intersections.

This vision statement can be used as a guide for city staff and community members as they evaluate future development proposals to ensure that new development is consistent with and supportive of the desired community character for this station area.

### Circulation

#### Roadways

The City of Minneapolis' vision for Olson Memorial Highway is the transformation from an open-feeling highway with high-speed through traffic, to an urbanized street with an enclosed feel from buildings

and greenery on both sides for the purpose of visually and experientially reconnecting the neighborhood across Olson Highway. Given the neighborhood's close proximity to downtown Minneapolis, Olson Highway should support community livability while also providing a gracious entrance to downtown. It needs to accommodate the transit, walking, biking and vehicular needs of neighborhood residents while accommodating regional mobility; allowing traffic from areas further west to move through the community in a safe and controlled manner. New developments that face Olson Highway, lining both sides of the street with sidewalks and/or bikeways, turf boulevards with street trees, and pedestrian-scale lighting, and potentially narrowing the highway are other urban design approaches that may help change the character of the corridor. These changes may cue drivers to slow down, provide safe and comfortable crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists, and result in a cohesive and organized visual environment along the street.

#### Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Improving pedestrian and bicycle crossings are critical to safety in the station area. The following improvements should be considered at locations where pedestrians and bicyclists are expected to cross higher volume roadways, such as Olson Memorial Highway, Penn Avenue and Glenwood Avenue.

#### All Intersections

- Median island pedestrian refuges or curb extensions
- Improved intersection and pedestrian realm lighting

- Crossing signage
- ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps

#### Signalized Intersections

- High visibility crosswalk markings and signs
- Traffic signal timing modifications to provide adequate crossing time for pedestrians
- Countdown timers that allow pedestrians to make informed decisions whether there is adequate time to safely cross the roadway.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - compliant signals

#### Non-signalized Intersections

- Rapid flashing beacons

Grade separated crossings were investigated as part of station area planning and are currently not recommended for Olson Highway as these approaches are not supportive of the urban character desired for the roadway and they pose their own personal safety and connectivity challenges. A paved multi-use trail on the north side of the highway is recommended, which would greatly improve east-west bicycle and pedestrian connectivity in the station area and could be an instrumental part of reshaping the roadway's character. Alternatively, a two-way protected bikeway with a parallel sidewalk could be considered if sufficient right-of-way or easement space is available. The trail would connect to a planned on-street lane on Thomas Avenue, proposed bicycle improvements on Queen Avenue, and a planned future greenway on Irving Avenue. A critical

---

part of realizing the vision for improved bicycle and pedestrian circulation in the Penn Avenue Station area is to create a direct and intuitive connection to Theodore Wirth Regional Park and its trails. The METRO Blue Line Extension will need to reconstruct the westbound lanes of the Olson Memorial Highway bridge over the BNSF Railroad trench, an opportunity that would allow for incorporation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the reconstructed bridge and provision of a trail connection to Theodore Wirth Regional Park west of the railroad trench. In conjunction with these improvements, a Nice Ride station is proposed at Penn and Olson Memorial Highway.

Finally, there are several gaps in the sidewalk network along 8th Avenue and Oak Park Avenue near Vincent Avenue, along Upton Avenue just north of Olson Highway, and along an alley between Upton and Vincent that functions similar to a street. Sidewalks should be constructed in these gaps to provide a consistent walking environment in the station area. For a map of envisioned pedestrian and bicycle circulation enhancements, see **Figure 3.10** and **Figure 3.11**.

### Transit

The C Line arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) is currently planned to operate on Penn Avenue and Olson Memorial Highway with three stops in the station area: at Penn Avenue and Plymouth Avenue, at Penn Avenue and Olson Memorial Highway, and at Humboldt Avenue and Olson Memorial Highway as shown in **Figure 3.10** and **Figure 3.11**. A safe and intuitive connection is envisioned between the C Line station at Penn and Olson Memorial and the Penn Avenue LRT Station, including wayfinding, lighting, and well-

marked pedestrian crossings. If connecting bus service south to the Penn Avenue Station on the METRO Green Line Extension is established, its stop should be easily visible and reachable from both the C Line and METRO Blue Line Extension Stations.

### Future Development

The Penn Avenue intersection has the potential to become a distinctive address for community residents. It is envisioned that new development will, over time, anchor all four corners of the intersection. Some neighborhood oriented retail is desired as a component of one or more of these developments.

Additional housing along the south side of Olson Memorial Highway could take advantage of any acquired excess highway right-of-way, slow traffic by narrowing the wide vista of the motorist, and provide high quality physical design that contributes importantly to the desired urban character of Olson Memorial Highway.

Additional opportunities for new development are present along Penn Avenue and Glenwood Avenue.

### Land Use

This plan offers land use guidance for the Penn Avenue Station Area by proposing changes to the Future Land Use map in *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* (the comprehensive plan for the City of Minneapolis), and by providing a more detailed Future Land Use map in this small area plan that would have additional policy effect upon adoption. **Figure 3.12** depicts the Future Land Use Map in the adopted *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*.

Important land use policy goals are represented by symbols on the Future Land Use maps in *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*. To provide policy support for the new housing development envisioned for the area, the addition of one symbol is proposed for the map as shown in **Figure 3.13** and **Figure 3.14**.

- The station location at Olson Memorial Highway and Penn Avenue is designated a “Transit Station”.

A Transit Station designation on the Future Land Use Map establishes policy support for high density development “in ways that encourage transit use and contribute to interesting and vibrant places.” Pedestrian oriented retail and services, and the creation of public spaces, are also encouraged near designated Transit Stations. The policy excerpt on the following page provides more detail about the policies that are supported at designated Transit Stations.

**Figure 3.15** is consistent with the Future Land Use map in the City’s comprehensive plan, and offers additional detail to it. For example, it puts residential development in the Penn Avenue station area in one of three density categories—low density, medium density, or medium to high density.

Although the colors on the future land use map seem to imply great precision, that is not their intent. For example, a medium density residential development that incorporates a “low-density” property or two may be deemed consistent with the policy intent of this plan without plan amendment.

**Figure 3.16** contributes additional clarity concerning the desired density of future development. The map is parcel-specific, similar to the plan’s Future Land Use map (although as described above, that should not

## **Policy Excerpts from The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth**

**Policy 1.13:** *Support high density development near transit stations in ways that encourage transit use and contribute to interesting and vibrant places.*

**1.13.1** *Encourage pedestrian-oriented services and retail uses as part of higher density development near transit stations.*

**1.13.2** *Pursue opportunities to integrate existing and new development with transit stations through joint development.*

**1.13.3** *Discourage uses that diminish the transit and pedestrian character of areas around transit stations, such as automobile services, surface parking lots, and drive-through facilities.*

**1.13.4** *Encourage architectural design, building massing and site plans to create or improve public and semi-public spaces near the station.*

**1.13.5** *Concentrate highest densities and mixed use development adjacent to the transit station and along connecting corridors served by bus.*

**1.13.6** *Encourage investment and place making around transit stations through infrastructure changes and the planning and installation of streetscape, public art, and other public amenities.*

be taken to imply complete policy precision). Darker shades of blue indicate policy support for medium or higher density development. Light blue indicates policy support for lower density development.

The map assigns property in the Penn Avenue station area—whether residential, commercial or mixed use—to one of three development districts. The three development districts represent different acceptable density levels. The Transit Scale development district supports the highest density development and suggests a five-story upper limit on development; the Urban Scale development district suggests a four-story upper limit on development; and the Neighborhood Scale development district supports low to medium density development types that are more compatible with the character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Density is frequently measured using parameters like floor area ratio, or dwelling units per square foot of property area. Those density measures are not very intuitive, in part because they don't lend themselves to being depicted visually. The density scale employed in this plan attempts to make the proposed density levels more intuitive by correlating each district with a mix of compatible development types that are common in Minneapolis and will be easily recognized by most Minneapolis citizens. Where commercial development occurs, it should be of a similar scale to the listed residential building types, or it may be situated on the ground level of an otherwise residential development.

At the time of the writing of this report the Penn Avenue Vision and Implementation Framework group is concurrently conducting a study of Penn Avenue North through the study area that will be completed at

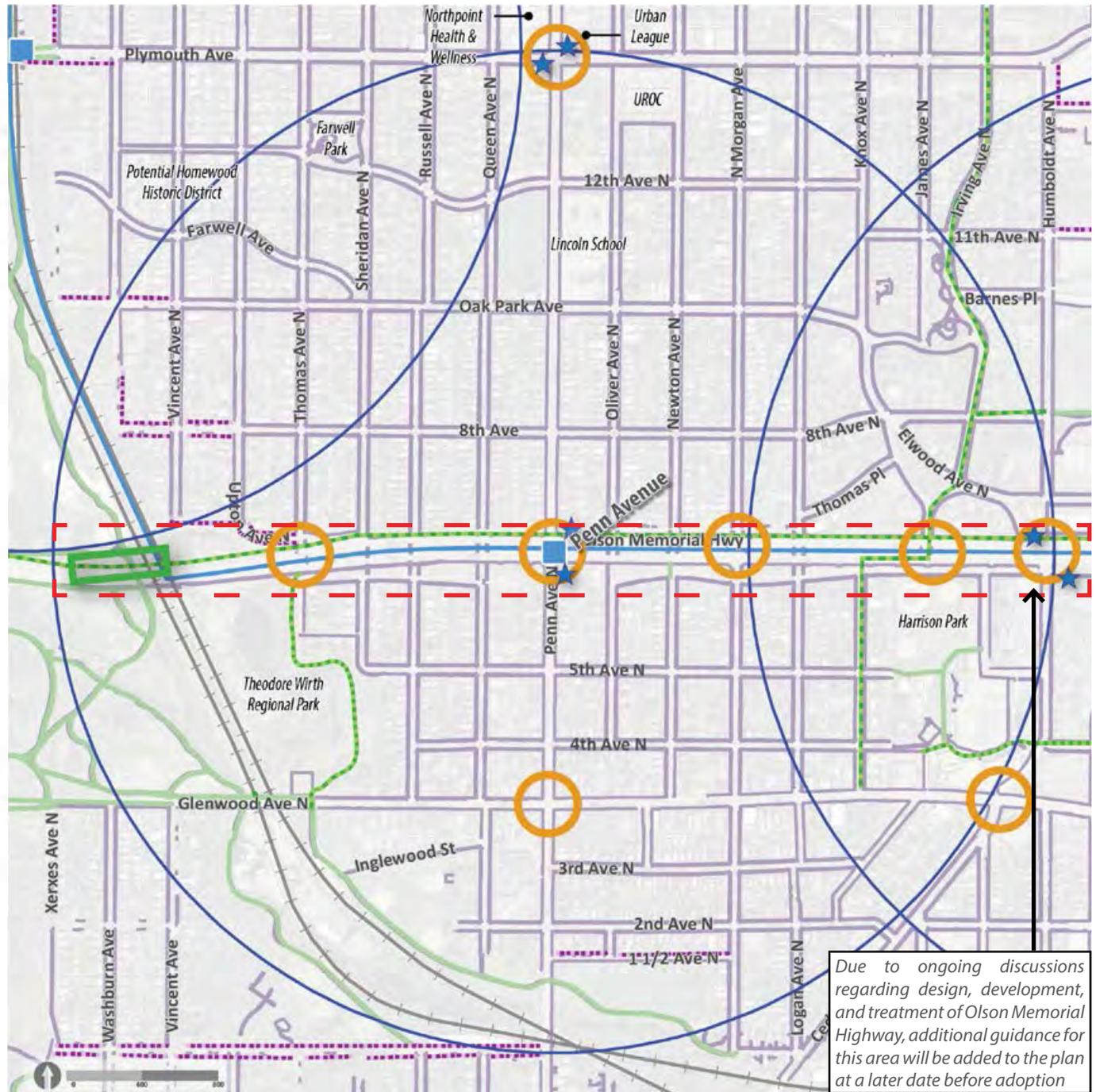
a date later than the station area plan. This study will also produce a land use map. While the goal has been for the two projects to coordinate and for the station area planning to provide the land use guidance for the Penn Avenue Station area, timing and process may prevent that from happening exactly. The Penn Avenue Station land use plan shows the land use plan that is expected to be adopted, but the Penn Avenue Vision and Implementation Framework may have additional work at the Penn-Plymouth and the Penn-Glenwood intersections that may result in refinements. When referencing the land use map of the Penn Avenue Station Area Plan one should also check the Penn Avenue Vision and Implementation Framework (after its adoption) to see if there have been refinements or changes. Any refinements or changes made by Penn Avenue Vision and Implementation Framework will be clearly noted in that plan.

The corners of Penn and Olson Memorial Highway are shown on the land use maps as mixed-use and transit scale. The adjoining blocks across the alley to the west on Queen Avenue North and to the east on Oliver Avenue North are shown as mixed-use close to the intersection and medium-density for the rest of the block, all at an urban intensity. The intent is to provide flexibility for larger development projects (with property owners as willing sellers) at the station area. The scale and intensity of the development should step down from the intersection at the station stop toward the single-family homes to the east and west. Greater height and intensity should be closer to the intersection and station. The development on Queen and Oliver Avenues would be limited to residential, except near the transit stop, where retail would be allowed as a part

**Figure 3.10: Pedestrian Circulation Enhancements**

This map shows recommended pedestrian circulation enhancement to better support station area livability and LRT station access.

-  Incorporate Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities on New Olson Highway Bridge Over Railroad
-  Proposed Bus Rapid Transit Connection
-  Safe Intersection Crossing  
Potential Improvements:
  - Crosswalk Marking & Signage
  - Adequate Crossing Time for Pedestrians
  - Median Island Pedestrian Refuges
  - Improved Sight Lines
  - Improved Lighting
  - Countdown Timers
  - ADA Compliant Signals & Pedestrian Ramps
  - Rapid Flashing Beacon
-  Proposed Sidewalks
-  Existing Sidewalks
-  Proposed Paved Trail
-  Existing Paved Trail
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Railroad

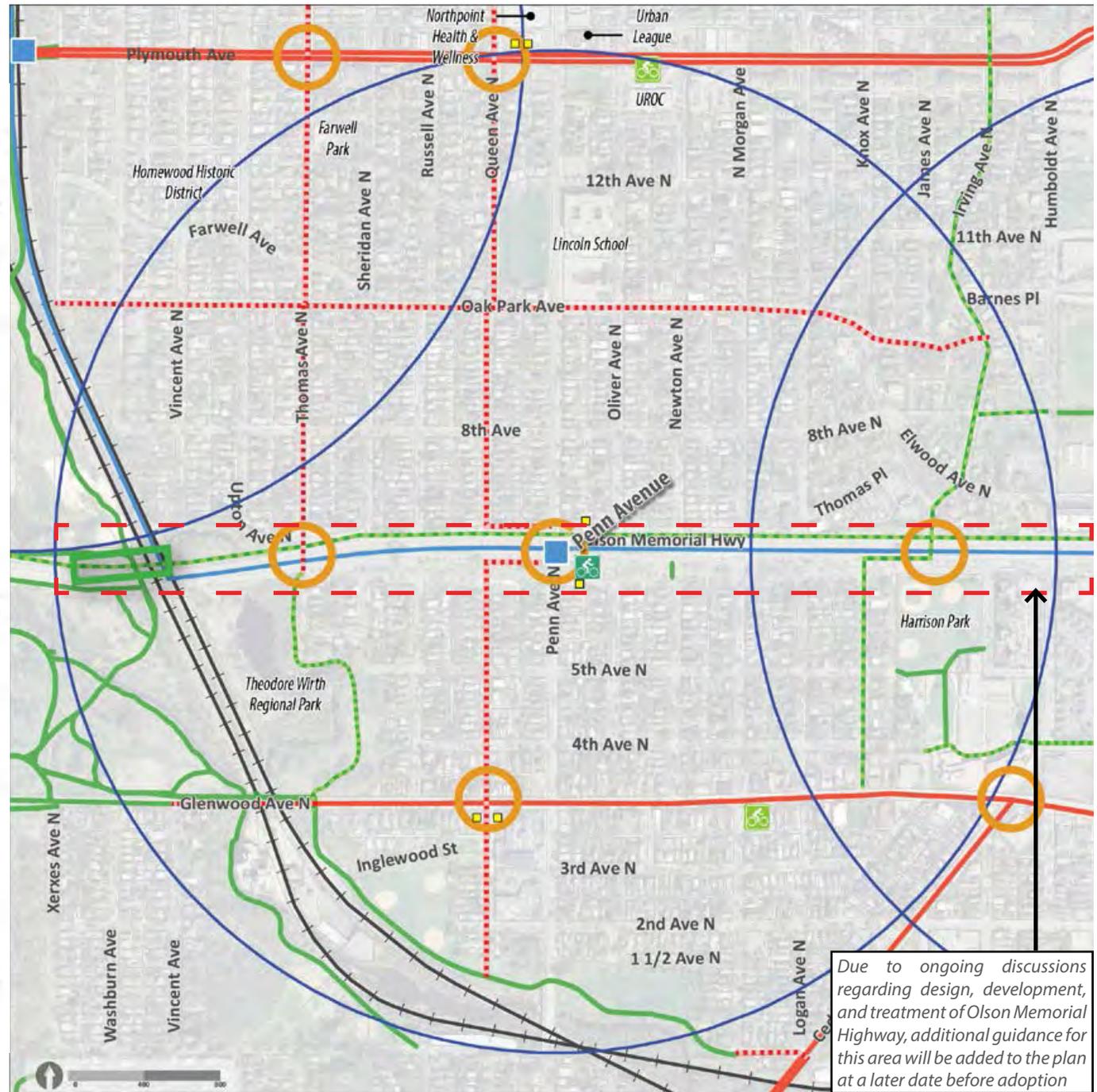


Due to ongoing discussions regarding design, development, and treatment of Olson Memorial Highway, additional guidance for this area will be added to the plan at a later date before adoption

### Figure 3.11: Bicycle Circulation Enhancements

This map shows recommended bicycle circulation enhancement to better support station area livability and LRT station access.

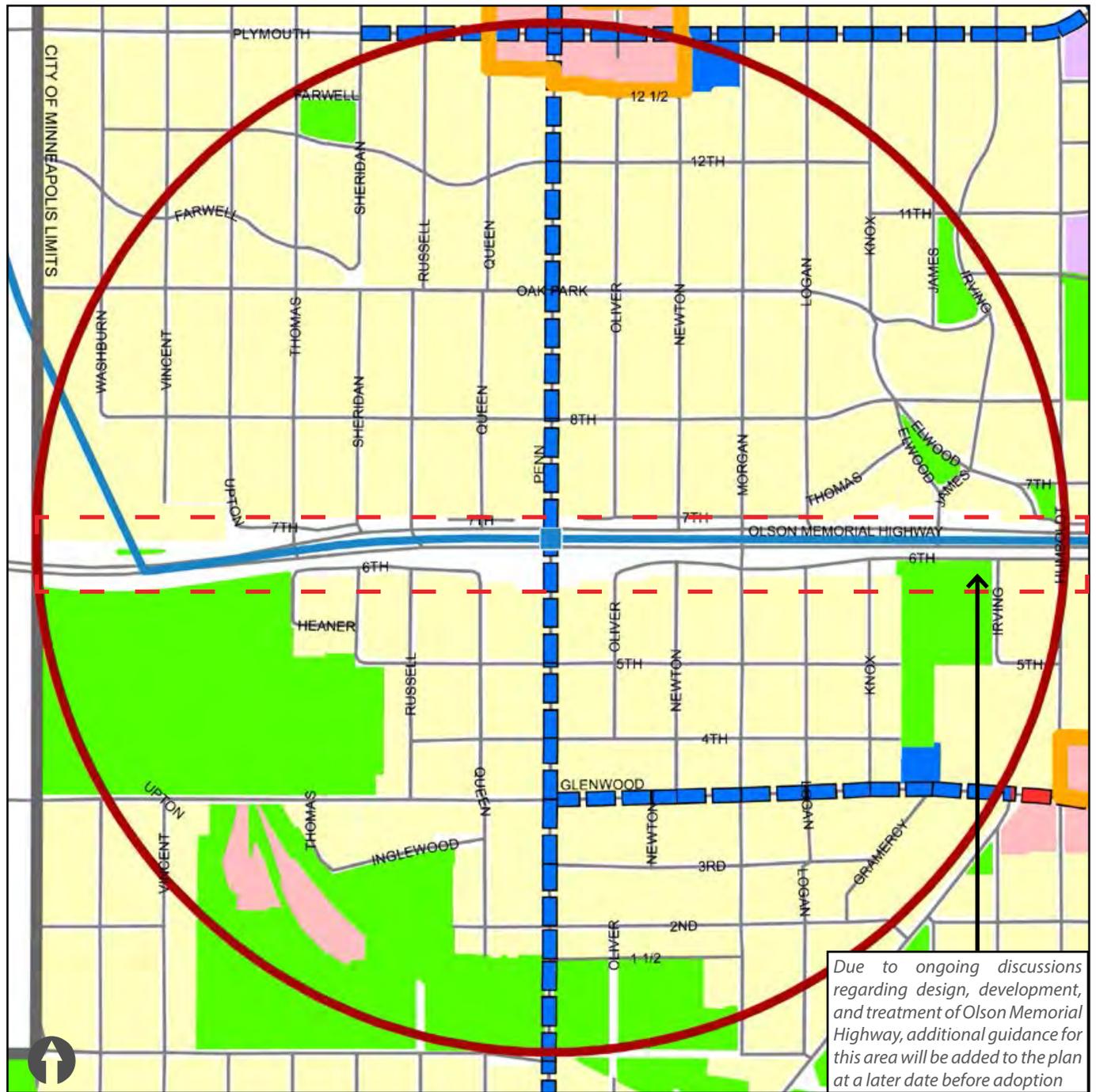
-  Incorporate Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities on New Olson Highway Bridge Over Railroad
-  Proposed Bus Rapid Transit Connection
-  Safe Intersection Crossing Potential Improvements:
  - Crosswalk Marking & Signage
  - Adequate Crossing Time for Pedestrians
  - Median Island Pedestrian Refuges
  - Improved Sight Lines
  - Improved Lighting
  - Countdown Timers
  - ADA Compliant Signals & Pedestrian Ramps
  - Rapid Flashing Beacon
-  Proposed Bicycle Parking
-  Proposed Nice Ride Station
-  Existing Nice Ride Station
-  Proposed Paved Trail
-  Existing Paved Trail
-  Proposed On-Street Bike Facility
-  Existing On-Street Bike Facility
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Railroad



**Figure 3.12: Existing Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use**

This map depicts the Future Land Use map in the adopted Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth.

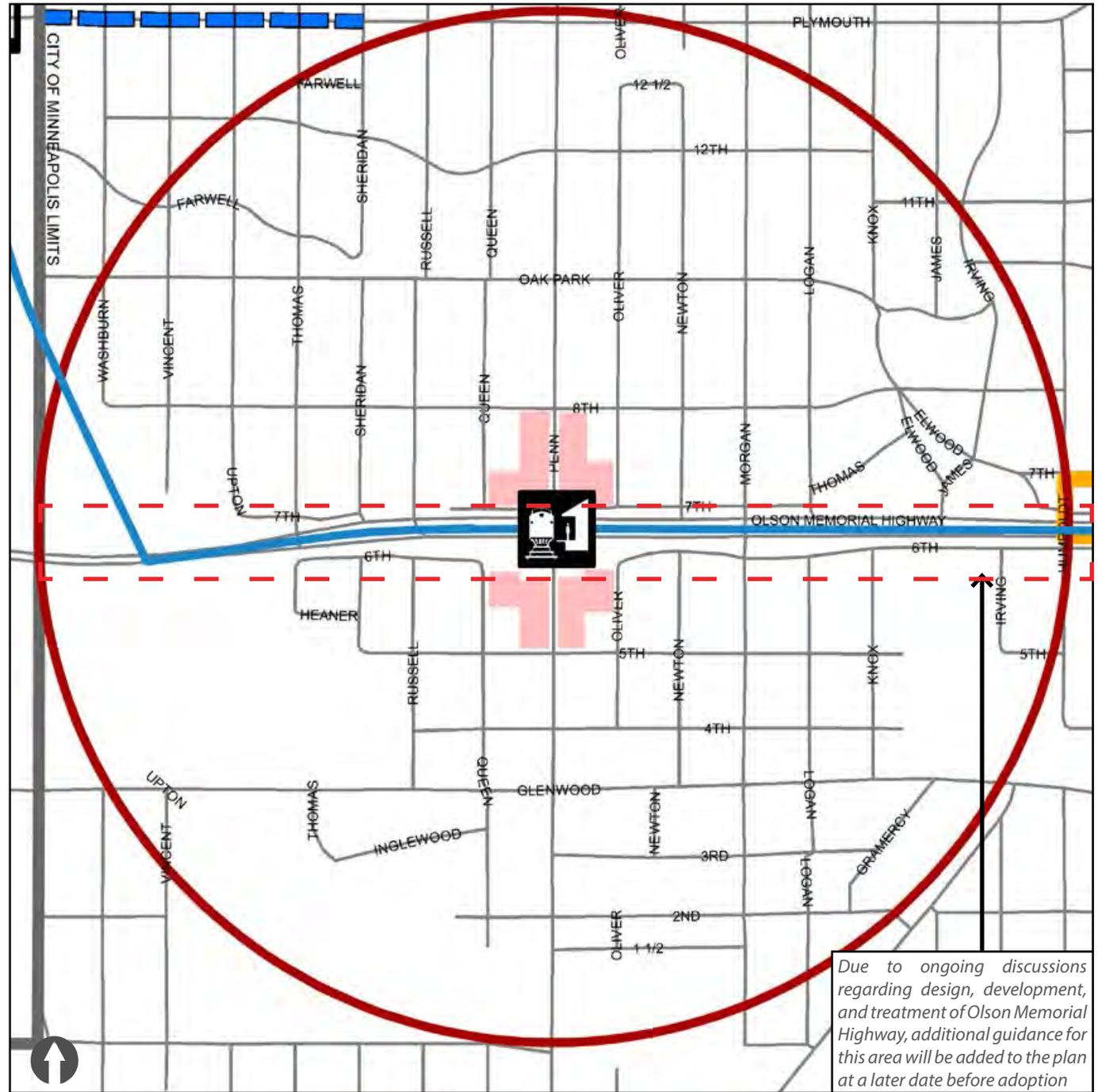
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  LRT Half Mile Buffer
-  Neighborhood Commercial Node
-  Commercial Corridor
-  Community Corridor
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Public and Institutional
-  Transitional Industrial
-  Urban Neighborhood



### Figure 3.13: Future Land Use Modifications

This map highlights proposed modifications to the City of Minneapolis' future land use.

-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  Transit Station
-  LRT Half Mile Buffer
-  Neighborhood Commercial Node
-  Mixed Use
-  Community Corridor



Due to ongoing discussions regarding design, development, and treatment of Olson Memorial Highway, additional guidance for this area will be added to the plan at a later date before adoption

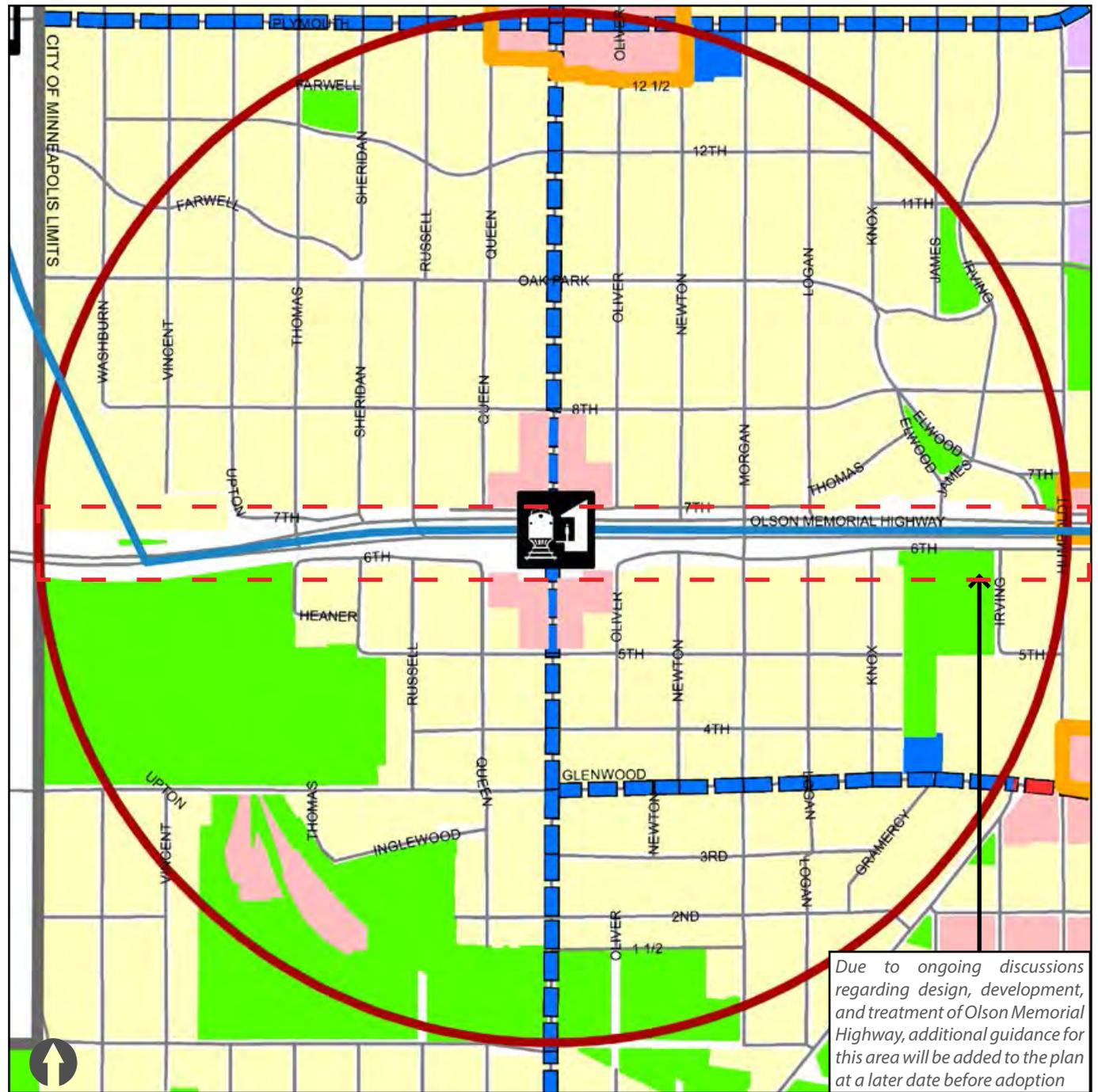
**Figure 3.14: Future Land Use**

This map depicts proposed modifications to the City of Minneapolis' future land use in context with the City's adopted future land use map.

Note: The City of Minneapolis defines a Commercial Corridor as historically prominent destinations consisting of a mix of uses, with commercial uses dominating.

The City of Minneapolis defines a Community Corridor as primarily residential with intermittent commercial uses clustered at intersection nodes.

-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  Transit Station
-  LRT Half Mile Buffer
-  Neighborhood Commercial Node
-  Commercial Corridor
-  Community Corridor
-  Mixed Use
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Public and Institutional
-  Transitional Industrial
-  Urban Neighborhood

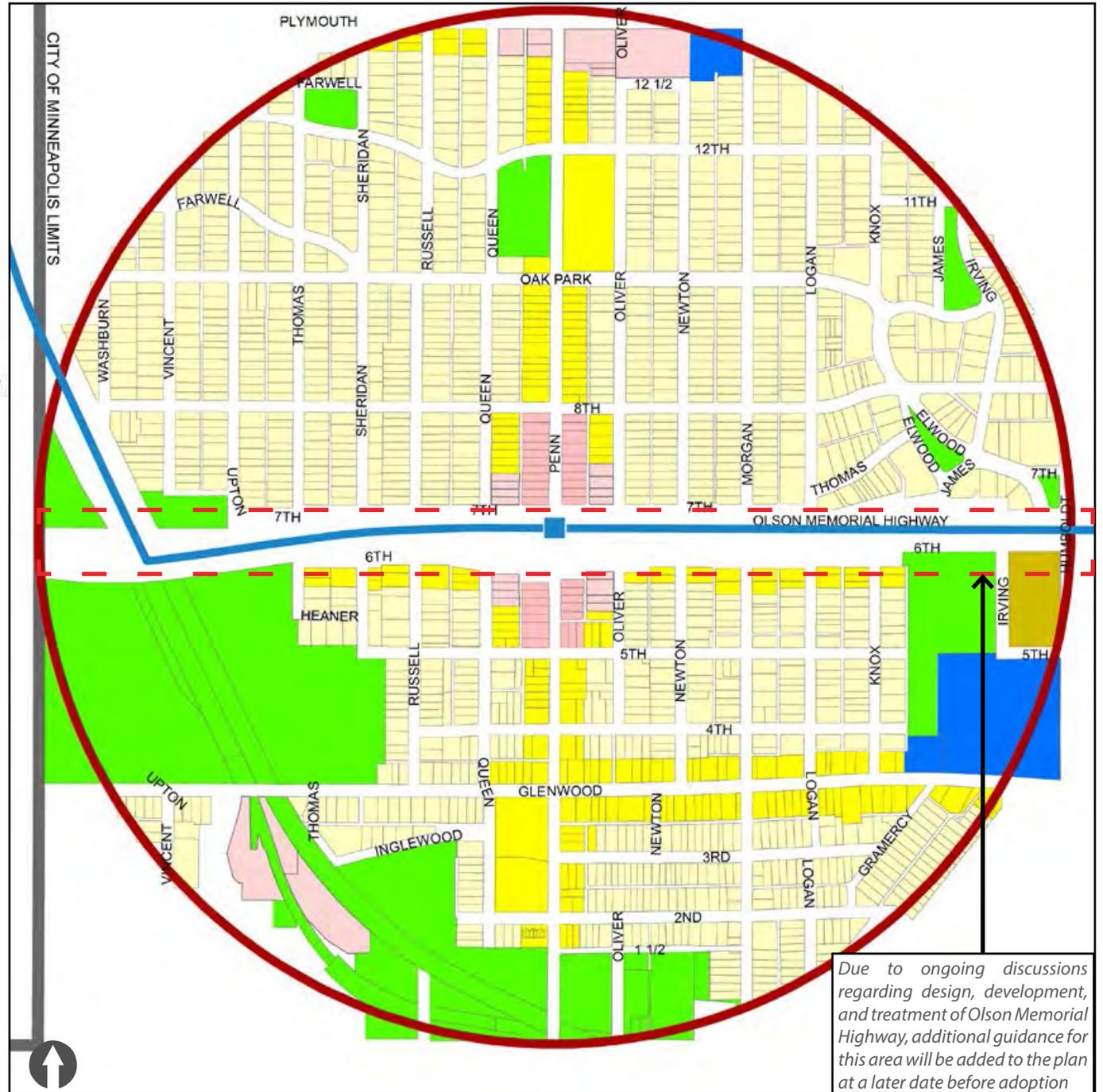


Due to ongoing discussions regarding design, development, and treatment of Olson Memorial Highway, additional guidance for this area will be added to the plan at a later date before adoption

**Figure 3.15: Future Land Use (Parcel Basis)**

This map depicts recommended City of Minneapolis future land use on a parcel-specific basis.

- Planned LRT Station
- Bottineau LRT Alignment
- LRT Half Mile Buffer
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Medium to High Density Residential
- Mixed Use Medium Density Residential
- Mixed Use Medium to High Density Residential
- Parks and Open Space
- Public and Institutional



### Figure 3.16: Development Intensity

This map provide guidance concerning desired density of future City of Minneapolis development.

-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  LRT Half Mile Buffer
-  Neighborhood Scale  
Single family homes, townhomes, and two to three story small apartment/condominium buildings.\*
-  Urban Scale  
Townhomes, and apartment/condominium buildings up to four stories.\*
-  Transit Scale  
Apartment/condominium buildings up to five stories.\*
-  Parks and Open Space

\*Note that in commercial districts, apartment/condominium buildings may include commercial businesses on the ground floor. Commercial-only buildings should be of comparable height.



Due to ongoing discussions regarding design, development, and treatment of Olson Memorial Highway, additional guidance for this area will be added to the plan at a later date before adoption

of a larger development facing onto Penn and Olson Memorial. The height on Queen and Oliver Avenues should be compatible with single-family homes across the street; at a three to four story limit. These future land use designations are not intended to facilitate a demolition of a few houses in the area to build a small residential property or a single-use commercial building, or to develop at the ends of the blocks away from the transit stop before the area near the station stop, or to redevelop parts of Queen and Oliver Avenues without being part of a larger development on Penn Avenue North. Absent a proposal for a unified residential development at transit scale, with the option of mixed use retail sales and services commercial on the first floor, city policy is to keep the zoning and land use in its current pattern.

## Public Realm Improvements

Public realm improvements are critical components of the station area as they create a safe and comfortable environment that support walking and biking to the station. These improvements also provide economic, environmental and social benefits that are supportive of overall neighborhood livability. **Figure 3.17** shows recommended public realm improvements; **Figure 3.18** shows representative public realm improvement images.

### Streetscaping

Enhancing the streetscape environment in the Penn Avenue Station area will facilitate improved mobility to and from the station platform from nearby amenities, destinations, homes and businesses, and improve the character of the public realm. Streetscape

enhancements may include improvements to pedestrian facilities, greening the streets, street and pedestrian lighting, street furnishings, signage and wayfinding elements. Specific streetscape improvements recommended near the Penn Avenue Station area include the following:

### Penn Avenue

The Hennepin County sponsored Penn Avenue Community Works project has engaged with the community and they have weighed in with several priorities for an improved streetscape, including enhanced pedestrian facilities, greening of the corridor, safety and security, and better wayfinding.

**Figure 3.19** depicts the desired character and streetscape features for Penn Avenue consistent with community goals. Recommended improvements include:

- Desired 6-foot wide sidewalk (5-foot minimum width) detached from the curb on both sides of the street
- Desired 6-foot wide turf boulevard (5-foot minimum width) on both sides of the street
- Street trees located within the boulevards
- Pedestrian lighting
- Site furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks) at key intersections
- Signage and wayfinding
- Relocating overhead utilities underground

### Olson Memorial Highway

**Figure 3.20** depicts the potential character and streetscape features for Olson Memorial Highway. Streetscape improvements could extend from 7th Street west to Theodore Wirth Regional Park and include the following:

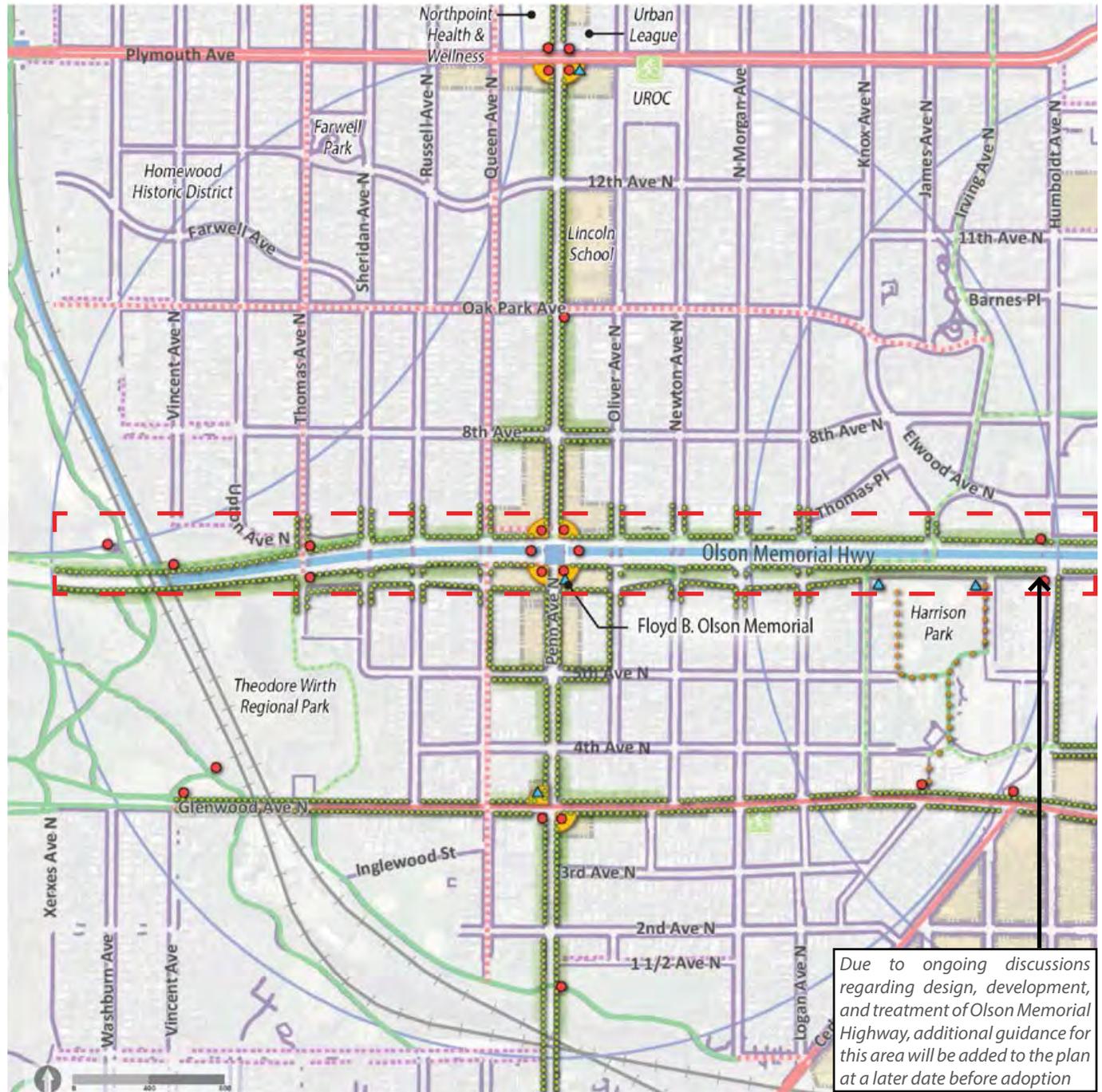
- Minimum 5-foot wide sidewalk detached from the curb (along the south side of the roadway)
- Minimum 10-foot wide multi-use trail detached from the curb (along the north side of the roadway). Alternatively, a two-way protected bikeway with a parallel sidewalk could be considered if sufficient right-of-way or easement space is available.
- Minimum 6-foot wide turf boulevard (along both sides of the roadway)
- Street trees within the boulevard areas
- Pedestrian lighting
- Site furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks) at key intersections
- Signage and wayfinding

The change in roadway character associated with improvements such as wide sidewalks, trails, and street trees, along with buildings close to the street with frontage roads realigned behind them, will likely be further enhanced if the highway width is narrowed.

**Figure 3.17: Public Realm Improvements**

This map depicts public realm improvements that provide economic, environmental and social benefits that are supportive of station area livability.

-  Enhanced Streetscape
-  Trail Lighting
-  Park
-  Plaza
-  Wayfinding
-  Public Art
-  Redevelopment Opportunity Site
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Railroad
-  Proposed Sidewalks
-  Existing Sidewalks
-  Proposed Paved Trail
-  Existing Paved Trail
-  Proposed On-Street Bike Facility
-  Existing On-Street Bike Facility



Due to ongoing discussions regarding design, development, and treatment of Olson Memorial Highway, additional guidance for this area will be added to the plan at a later date before adoption

Figure 3.18: Representative Public Realm and Streetscape Improvements

●●● Enhanced Streetscape



Includes sidewalks, lighting, seating, and planting

●●●●● Trail Lighting



■ Park



Green streets

■ Plaza



Incorporate Floyd B. Olson Memorial in plaza space

● Wayfinding



▲ Public Art



■ Bicycle Parking



Short-term and long-term parking

Figure 3.19: Penn Avenue Street Section

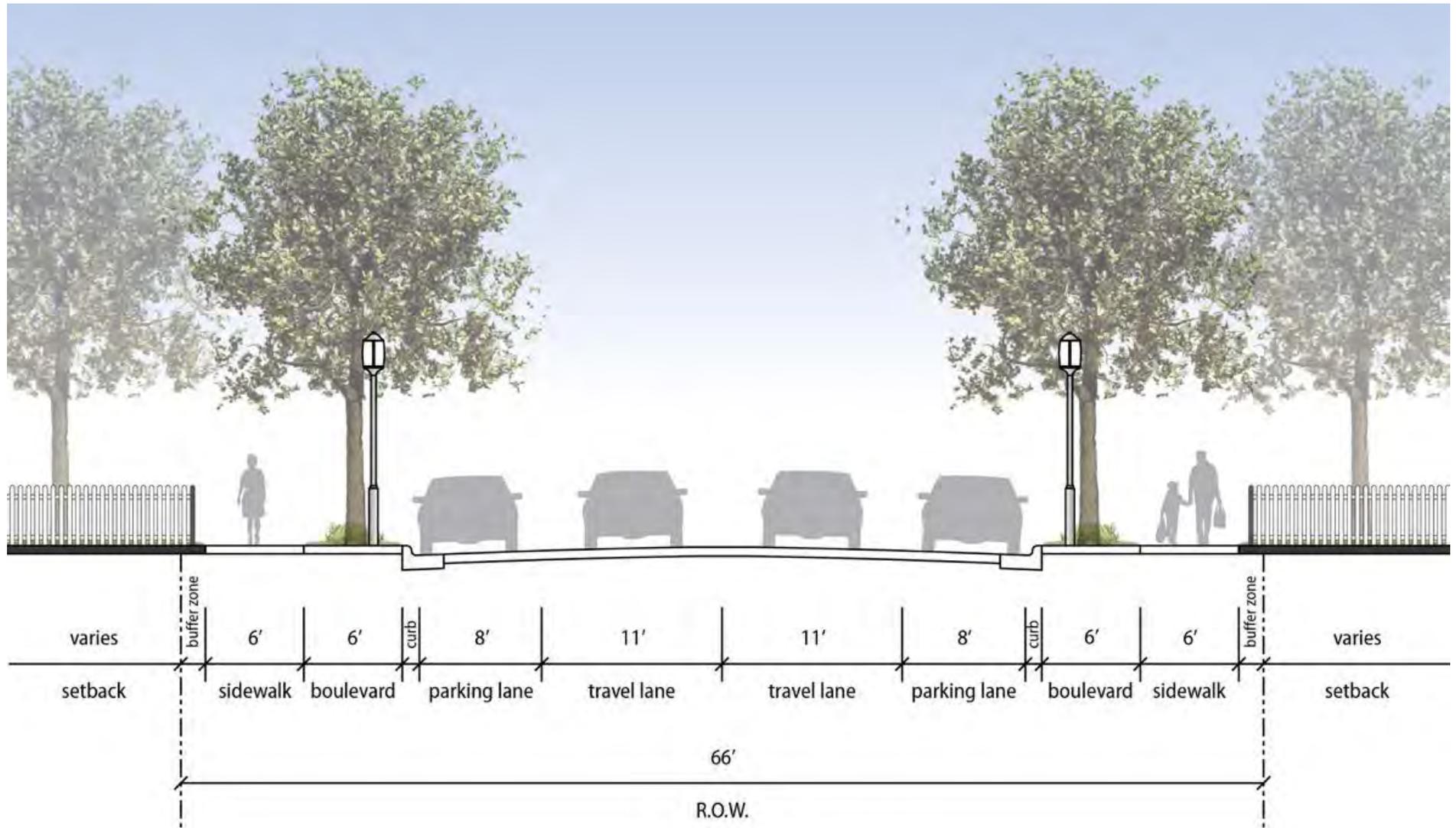
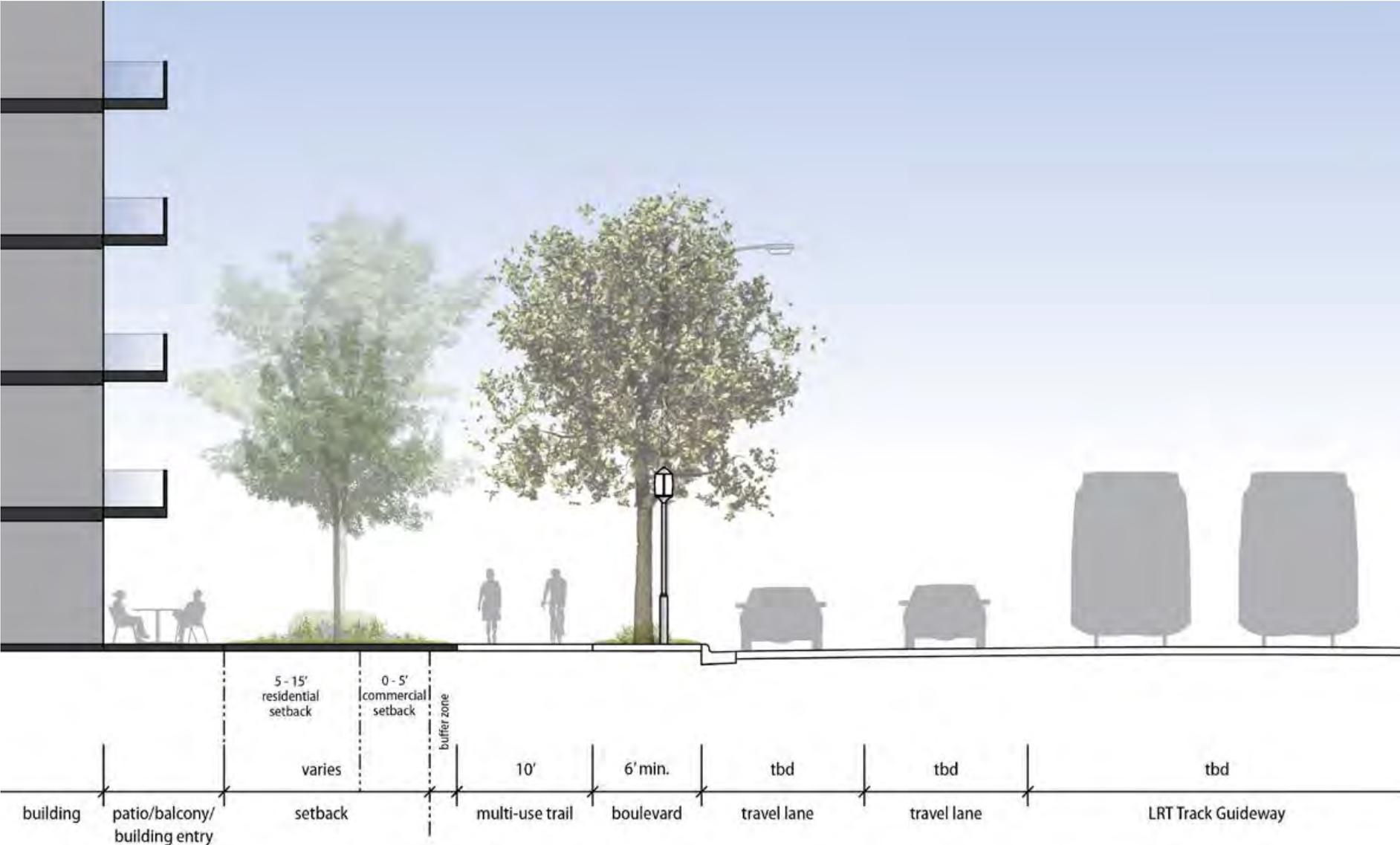
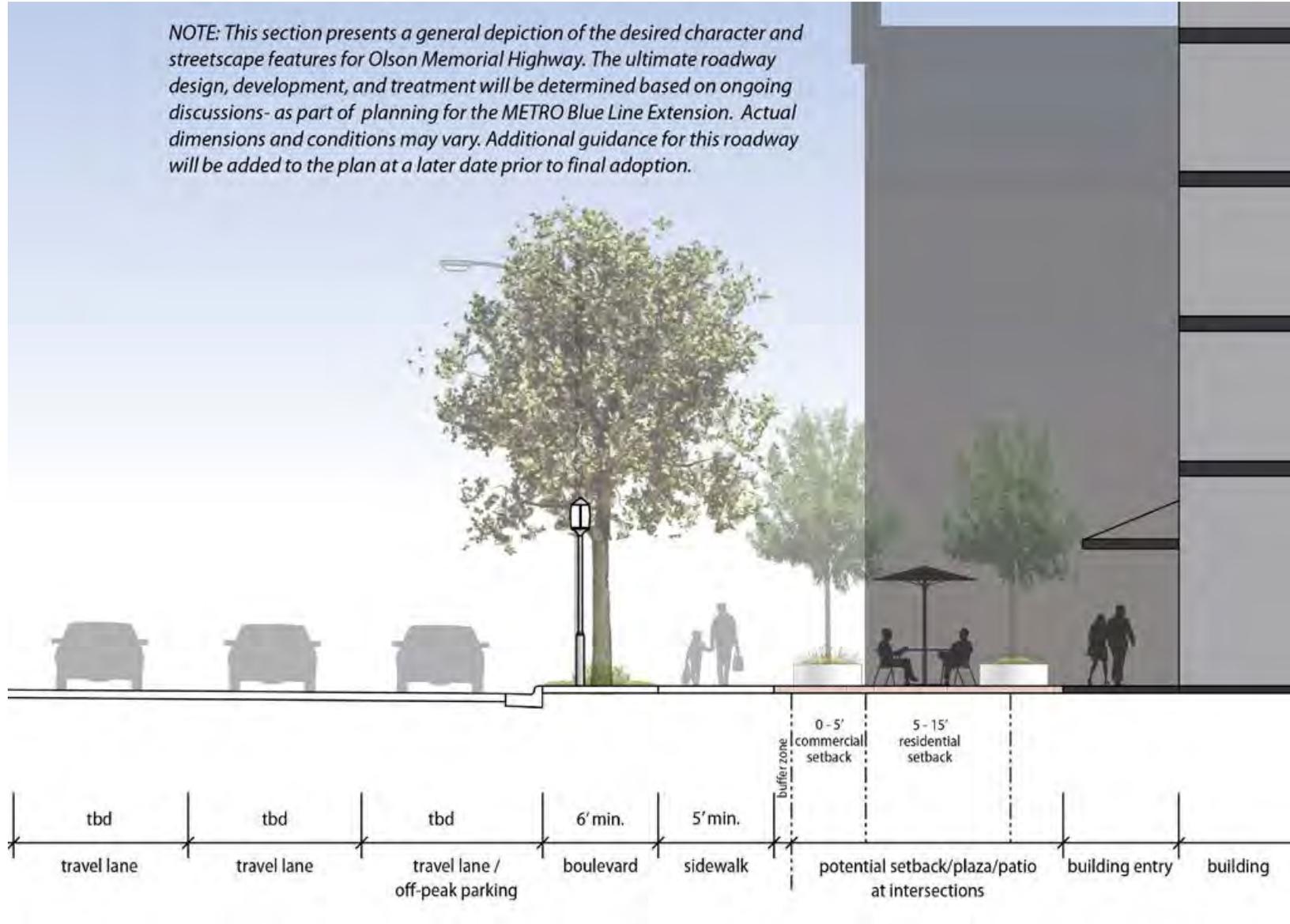


Figure 3.20: Olson Memorial Highway Section



## Olson Memorial Highway Section Continued

*NOTE: This section presents a general depiction of the desired character and streetscape features for Olson Memorial Highway. The ultimate roadway design, development, and treatment will be determined based on ongoing discussions- as part of planning for the METRO Blue Line Extension. Actual dimensions and conditions may vary. Additional guidance for this roadway will be added to the plan at a later date prior to final adoption.*



---

## Glenwood Avenue

Glenwood Avenue is a designated community corridor from Cedar Lake Road west to Theodore Wirth Regional Park and should be designed to include streetscape enhancements that create a pedestrian-friendly corridor.

**Figure 3.21** depicts the desired character and streetscape features for Glenwood Avenue. Streetscape improvements should include the following:

- Minimum 5-foot wide sidewalk detached from the curb on both sides of the street
- Minimum 5-foot turf boulevards on both sides of the street
- Street trees located within the boulevards
- Pedestrian lighting
- Site furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks) at key intersections
- Signage and wayfinding
- Relocating overhead utilities underground

## Plaza

Outdoor plaza spaces can create a sense of neighborhood identity in the Penn Avenue Station area and provide places for social gathering. They may include elements like special paving, seating, shelter, plantings, public art, special lighting, bike racks, signage and wayfinding. In conjunction with streetscape improvements and redevelopment in the station area, public plazas are recommended

at the Olson Memorial Highway and Penn Avenue intersection. Additional plazas could be considered at the Glenwood Avenue and Penn Avenue, and the Plymouth Avenue and Penn Avenue intersections. These plazas could also be considered in conjunction with streetscape improvements and/or redevelopment.

## Wayfinding

Wayfinding and signage is an important urban design element that orients and directs people to and from their destinations, and enhances the sense of character and identity of a place, neighborhood or community. Wayfinding is also an important element to delivering transit users to the station in a safe and convenient manner. Improved wayfinding can enhance mobility to and from the Penn Avenue Station and increase transit ridership in the area. An attractive and comprehensive signage and wayfinding system should be incorporated into streetscape improvements. These should be located along Olson Memorial Highway, Penn Avenue, and Glenwood Avenue, and within public plazas, parks and open spaces.

## Public Art Opportunities

Public art is an important placemaking element in the public realm. It can communicate the history or character of a place, and draw connections to the larger community context. The integration of public art opportunities should be considered in conjunction with streetscape enhancements, plaza design and redevelopment in the station area. Locations well-suited to new public art include sites at Olson Memorial Highway and Penn Avenue, Harrison Park, and at the intersection of Glenwood Avenue and Penn Avenue. The future plaza located at the southeast

corner of Penn Avenue and Olson Memorial Highway should incorporate the existing Floyd B. Olson Memorial statue so that it becomes more visible and accessible to residents, visitors and transit users of the Penn Avenue Station. Contingent on the form of future development, the Harrison Neighborhood Gateway: Antionette and James may need to be relocated or repositioned.

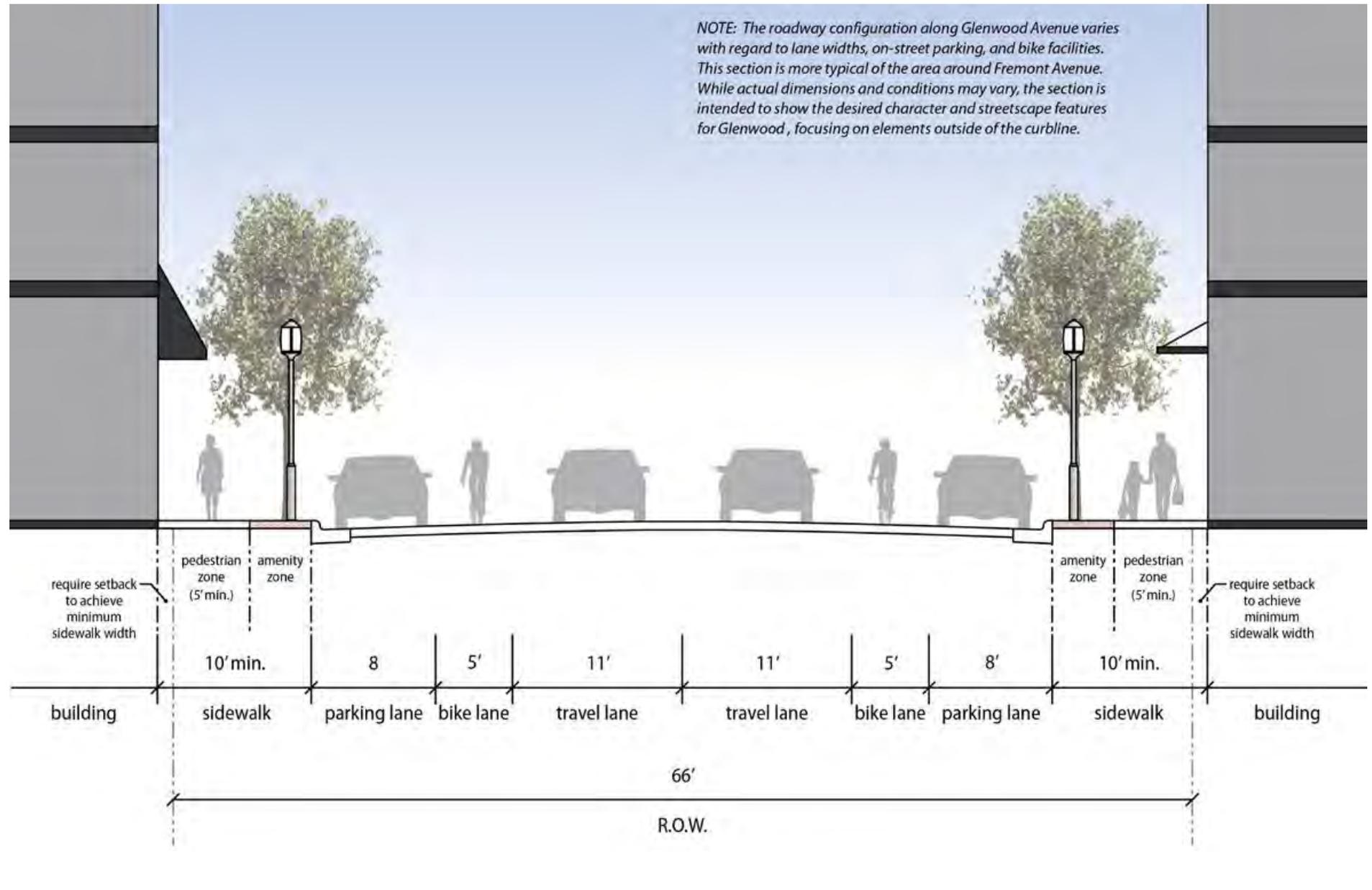
## Heritage Preservation

As mentioned in the existing conditions analysis chapter and the above public art section, the Floyd B Olson statue should be relocated into a prominent location within a public plaza associated with new development at the Penn Avenue intersection. In addition, design of the LRT platform and track should be done in a manner to minimize impacts to the historically designated Theodore Wirth Regional Park and Grand Rounds.

The community has a rich history that is manifested in several select buildings and artworks, but also in the general neighborhood character, which includes the housing styles, street and block configurations, and existing or remnant commercial nodes. This is particularly true for the potential Homewood Historic District. While new development is proposed along community and commercial corridors, preservation of a majority of the neighborhood is desired to retain this community's rich character and to make wise use of resources embedded in the existing housing stock.

Even though many of the community's historic resources are not officially designated, any proposed development in close proximity to them should be done in a manner that either avoids or sensitively incorporates these existing historic resources.

**Figure 3.21: Glenwood Avenue Street Section**



---

### ***Environment and Stormwater Management***

Implementing the LRT system, improving non-motorized access to the LRT stations, installing new street trees, and incorporating of transit-oriented development principles are all consistent with the City's sustainable development goals.

Should any brownfield sites exist within the station area, the City should work with the property owners to facilitate environmental cleanup and site redevelopment. Any building demolition associated with redevelopment should be done in a manner that allows for the salvaging and recycling of building materials to the extent possible.

New development should manage stormwater on site, using stormwater management techniques such as low impact development and green infrastructure. These stormwater management practices attempt to mimic natural hydrologic processes to promote stormwater infiltration and reduce the quantity of runoff entering the storm sewer system, while also meeting water quality, rate control, and volume control requirements.

### ***Maintenance of Public Realm Improvements***

Many of the streetscape elements shown in the document will require further discussions between the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin, County, and adjacent property owners to identify operations and maintenance funding. Special Service Districts have been successfully implemented throughout the city in commercial areas, however current state statutes prevent special service districts in residential areas. Current policy states that street lighting on pedestrian priority corridors will be funded as part of reconstruction project budget. Banners, street

benches, colored pavement, pavers, plantings, and trash receptacles may be funded through special service districts or by encroachment permit. Adjacent property owners in residential areas or in commercial areas without special service districts may work with the city to secure encroachment permits or may enter into agreements with the city to operate and maintain a streetscape element. Stormwater elements will also require discussions with the city so that property maintenance is reformed.

Low impact development and green infrastructure often requires higher maintenance commitments, which requires additional resources and acceptance from the maintaining agency.

### ***Community Health Benefits***

The Penn Station Area Plan provides development policy guidance and built environment recommendations that affect the key determinants of health identified in the HIA.

The station area plan recommends circulation and built environment improvements that address serious traffic safety issues affecting community and support additional infrastructure that encourages physical activity near the station. The built environment recommendations include streetscaping to improve mobility, plazas supporting social gathering, potential dedicated bike lanes on or a paved bike/pedestrian trail on the north side of Olson Memorial Highway.

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. The plan addresses the issue of location affordability (intersection of housing and

transportation costs) by recommending the inclusion of affordable housing in new developments to address potential rises in property values and rents in the existing housing that is "inexpensive to own or rent." The plan also makes recommendations for mixed-use pedestrian-oriented services and retail services." These recommendations affirm those found in the HIA and help support health in this station area. **Table 3.2** summarizes healthy community design features that are incorporated into the station area plan.

**Table 3.2: Healthy Community Design Features**

Healthy Community Design Feature	How Station Area Planning Is Addressing Healthy Community Design
Socially <b>equitable and accessible</b> community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The METRO Blue Line Extension will bring light rail transit (LRT) to underserved communities.</li> <li>» Transit helps improve overall health in communities by improving physical activity levels, job access, housing and transportation costs, traffic safety, education access and access to healthy food.</li> </ul>
<b>Housing</b> for different incomes and different stages of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Development concepts show a variety of new housing types that could be either ownership or rental opportunities and show the preservation of a majority of existing housing.</li> </ul>
Easy <b>connections</b> to the METRO Blue Line Extension and the regional transit system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Gaps in sidewalk network are recommended to be filled in.</li> <li>» New bicycle facilities are recommended.</li> <li>» Metro Transit will be investigating potential bus service improvements.</li> </ul>
<b>Mixed land uses</b> where homes, shops, schools and work sites are located close together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Station area plans show a variety of land uses as appropriate to the station area contexts.</li> </ul>
<b>Jobs and education</b> are accessible from/within the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The Van White Boulevard station area and Plymouth Avenue/Penn Avenue commercial node show new job/education land uses.</li> <li>» Station area plans maintain existing sources of jobs.</li> <li>» The METRO Blue Line Extension will improve access to jobs and education destinations.</li> </ul>
<b>Walking and biking</b> are safe and comfortable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Safe crossings of Olson Memorial Highway are recommended.</li> <li>» Various options are recommended to safely reach the grade-separated Plymouth Avenue and Golden Valley Road stations.</li> <li>» Sidewalks are recommended to be buffered from the street by a planted boulevard.</li> <li>» New bicycle facilities are recommended.</li> <li>» Enhanced lighting is recommended.</li> <li>» Improved wayfinding signage is recommended to help direct people to the stations.</li> </ul>
Public places for <b>social interaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Development concepts provide community gathering spaces near the stations.</li> </ul>
<b>Parks and green spaces</b> are easy to get to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» New sidewalk and bicycle connections to parks are recommended.</li> </ul>
Outlets for <b>fresh, healthy food</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The mixed-use commercial nodes at the Van White Boulevard Station and at the intersection of Plymouth Avenue and Penn Avenue could accommodate small grocery service or a small farmers market.</li> <li>» Existing community gardens are maintained.</li> </ul>

---

## Implementation Framework

Implementation of the station area plan will require improvements to the physical environment along with policy guidance to support the community's development and neighborhood character goals while maximizing opportunities to improve community health outcomes.

### Adoption and Modification of Policy Guidance

Implementing the development vision for the Penn Avenue station area requires modifications to City of Minneapolis policy and regulatory documents.

- **METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau LRT) Phase 1: Station Area Planning.** This plan should be adopted by the City of Minneapolis as official City guidance for the four station areas. The plan should be referenced in the City's comprehensive plan in the list of adopted plans, and its area of impact denoted in the map that illustrates adopted plans.
- **The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth.** A modification to the City of Minneapolis comprehensive plan, and specifically to its Future Land Use map, should be adopted, so as to make it consistent with the land use policy guidance in this plan. A Transit Station feature should be added to the map at Penn Avenue and Olson Memorial Highway, as illustrated in the preceding chapter.
- **Rezoning of Property.** A rezoning study should follow adoption of this plan. Its purpose would

be to propose changes in zoning that are consistent with the policy intent of this plan, as described in the narrative, and as illustrated in this plan's Future Land Use and Development Intensity maps.

- **Minneapolis Health Department Participation.** Because the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) completed in 2013 found that the LRT was likely to have a positive influence on health, and that the potential land use changes and investments that come with the LRT project present a valuable opportunity to address challenges in the corridor, it is recommended that the Minneapolis Health Department participate and provide input on implementation of these station area plans to ensure the integration of the HIA's findings. These include physical activity, housing + transportation costs, employment, education access, traffic safety, and healthy food access – all public health policy elements that would emphasize and promote health and health equity in the communities of North Minneapolis.

### Development Vision Implementation

**Critical Path.** In order to facilitate development adjacent to the Penn Avenue station, during Blue Line Extension Project Development, the City, Hennepin County, and MnDOT should make it a priority to determine if excess right-of-way exists along Olson Memorial Highway and whether MnDOT would allow acquisition of this land for development.

As transit comes on line, the City and County should invite developer interest in the four quadrants of the

station area as potential development sites and provide the support required (as described in the next section) to realize such development at a high standard of quality. Setting the tone with one or two high quality developments at the station area is likely to invite further development interest in locations along Penn Avenue or fronting along the south side of Olson Memorial Highway.

**Public Financial Support.** Although the market context for development at the site is challenging, there are sources of financing that could be pursued to support new development.

Given that the site is seen as a suitable location for affordable housing, the existing array of affordable housing funding programs could be employed to support new affordable housing development. These include federal housing tax credits, and state and local affordable housing financing programs. Additionally, development at the site would be eligible for Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County programs that are targeted to transit-oriented development. This collection of resources is likely adequate to support high quality housing development at the station intersection, even with a modest retail presence.

**Market Rate Housing.** Attracting and supporting market rate housing, as part of the housing mix, introduces greater challenges, since the range of resources targeted to affordable housing are not available for market rate housing development. New resources are required to support such development in any quantity, as is the political will to employ new practices that are outside of the traditional public finance toolkit.

### Market Context Summary

*Housing development in the Penn Avenue station area would require significant financial support now and well into the foreseeable future. Public finance programs are available to support affordable housing development. This, in conjunction with area transit-oriented development programs, may well be sufficient to invite high quality affordable housing development. If and when it is deemed important to include market rate housing in the mix, more assertive public sector interventions will be required.*

*Retail development will be financially challenging. The expectation should be that rents that could be charged would not support the development cost without subsidy.*

A value capture fund, which is capitalized by the increases in property tax values, is an example of such a resource. It has the flexibility to help surmount the development challenges prevalent in north Minneapolis in general, without competing with existing community development programs and priorities. In the context of this plan, it could be focused on the Penn Avenue station, or it could be utilized in a broader context to address a broader set of development challenges. If such a tool encompassed the Van White station area as well as the Penn Avenue station area, for example, it could leverage the stronger development market at the Van White station area to more completely realize the development goals at both station areas.

**Gentrification.** Building community assets, and making the community a better place to live, will always have an upward effect on property values. This is the reason

for community concerns about gentrification in the Penn Avenue station area. Rising property values may lead to rent raises, which in turn could result in the displacement of low income households in the community.

Much of the new housing in the Penn Avenue station area is proposed to be affordable to low and moderate income households—at least initially. This helps to ensure that the neighborhood continues to provide options for low income neighborhood residents.

Beyond this, it is worthwhile to establish mechanisms for monitoring property values and rent levels since rent raises and displacement are not foregone conclusions in the short term. Over the longer term, programmatic approaches to preventing displacement may be adopted, and there may be value in putting some of these in place before significant market appreciation takes place. Referred to as gentrification mitigation strategies, they encompass ownership approaches such as using land trusts or cooperatives to lock in reasonable housing rents and acquisition costs, and support for tenant households related to such things as financial stabilization and eviction support.

### Physical Environment Improvements

Physical environment improvements have been broken into two phases.

- **Day of Opening Improvements.** These are improvements recommended to be constructed and functional on the first day that the LRT is operating. Day of opening improvements support safe and convenient access to the station platform for station area residents and visitors.

- **Future Improvements.** These are desired station area improvements that support enhanced livability within the station area and enhanced access, but do not significantly impact access to the station platform.

### Day of Opening Improvements

Recommended day of opening improvements are listed in **Table 3.3** and depicted on **Figure 3.22 - Figure 3.24**. Agencies responsible for implementation of these improvements and the timing of implementation will be discussed and resolved as part of the preliminary engineering phase of the project.

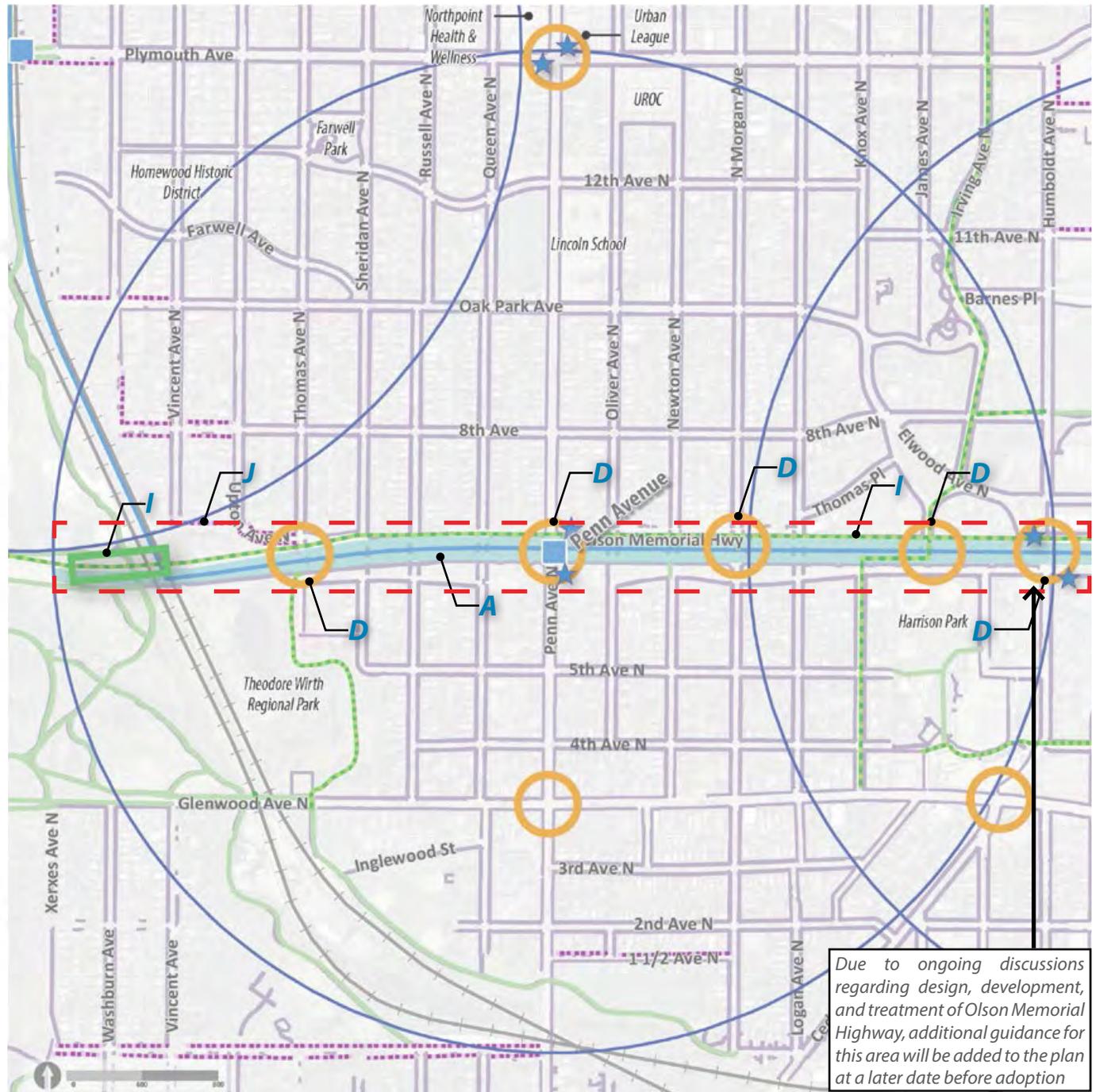
**Table 3.3: Day of Opening Improvements**

Improvements	Comments
<b>A</b> Reconstruction of Olson Memorial Highway	Reconstruction of the roadway will be part of rail project, supplemented with contribution from other agencies as appropriate
<b>B</b> Roadway and wayfinding signage	Legible to people who speak multiple languages and located directly adjacent to platform
<b>C</b> Wayfinding signage at key decision points	Legible to people who speak multiple languages. Key decision points include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Glenwood Avenue and Penn Avenue intersection</li> <li>b. Plymouth Avenue and Penn Avenue intersection</li> <li>c. Olson Memorial Highway trail/Theodore Wirth Regional Park trail intersection</li> </ul>
<b>D</b> Improved pedestrian and bicycle crossings of Olson Memorial Highway	Crossings located at roadway intersections are recommended to be at-grade with the street
<b>E</b> Bicycle parking near platform	Located at one of the Penn Avenue/Olson Memorial Highway intersection quadrants
<b>F</b> Nice Ride station near platform	Located at one of the Penn Avenue/Olson Memorial Highway intersection quadrants
<b>G</b> Streetscape treatment along Olson Memorial Highway	Includes sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian lighting, and seating
<b>H</b> Streetscape treatment along Penn Avenue	Includes sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian lighting, and seating
<b>I</b> East-west trail/protected bikeway along Olson Memorial Highway that connects to Theodore Wirth Regional Park	Currently depicted along the north side of Olson Memorial Highway. Location may change based on final roadway configuration
<b>J</b> New sidewalk along Olson Highway Service Road on the north side of the highway, between Thomas Avenue and Upton Avenue	
<b>K</b> New on-street bikeway along Queen Avenue	
<b>L</b> Bus route modifications and bus stop improvements	Note: not depicted on <b>Figure 3.22 - Figure 3.24.</b>

**Figure 3.22: Day of Opening Pedestrian Circulation Improvements**

This map identifies pedestrian circulation improvements that are recommended to be in place by the first day of LRT operations. Map elements not coded with a letter are intended to be future improvements.

- X Day of Opening Improvements (see Table 2.1)
- Incorporate Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities on New Olson Highway Bridge Over Railroad
- ★ Proposed Bus Rapid Transit Connection
- Safe Intersection Crossing Potential Improvements:
  - Crosswalk Marking & Signage
  - Adequate Crossing Time for Pedestrians
  - Median Island Pedestrian Refuges
  - Improved Sight Lines
  - Improved Lighting
  - Countdown Timers
  - ADA Compliant Signals & Pedestrian Ramps
  - Rapid Flashing Beacon
- Proposed Sidewalks
- Existing Sidewalks
- Proposed Paved Trail
- Existing Paved Trail
- Planned LRT Station
- Bottineau LRT Alignment
- LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
- Railroad

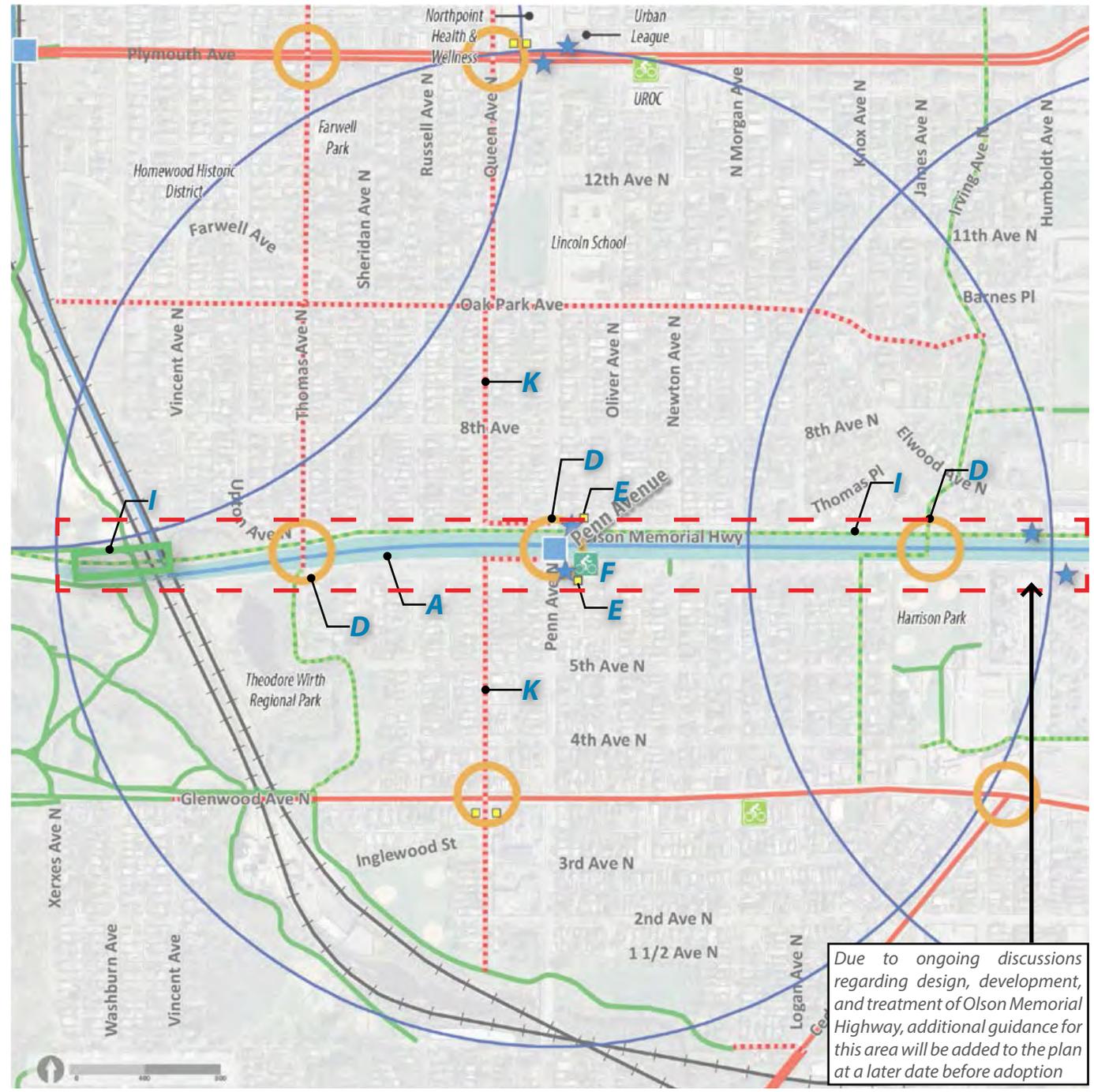


Due to ongoing discussions regarding design, development, and treatment of Olson Memorial Highway, additional guidance for this area will be added to the plan at a later date before adoption

**Figure 3.23: Day of Opening Bicycle Circulation Improvements**

This map identifies bicycle circulation improvements that are recommended to be in place by the first day of LRT operations. Map elements not coded with a letter are intended to be future improvements.

- X** Day of Opening Improvements (see Table 2.1)
-  Incorporate Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities on New Olson Highway Bridge Over Railroad
-  Proposed Bus Rapid Transit Connection
-  Safe Intersection Crossing Potential Improvements:
  - Crosswalk Marking & Signage
  - Adequate Crossing Time for Pedestrians
  - Median Island Pedestrian Refuges
  - Improved Sight Lines
  - Improved Lighting
  - Countdown Timers
  - ADA Compliant Signals & Pedestrian Ramps
  - Rapid Flashing Beacon
-  Proposed Bicycle Parking
-  Proposed Nice Ride Station
-  Existing Nice Ride Station
-  Proposed Paved Trail
-  Existing Paved Trail
-  Proposed On-Street Bike Facility
-  Existing On-Street Bike Facility
-  Planned LRT Station
-  Bottineau LRT Alignment
-  LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
-  Railroad

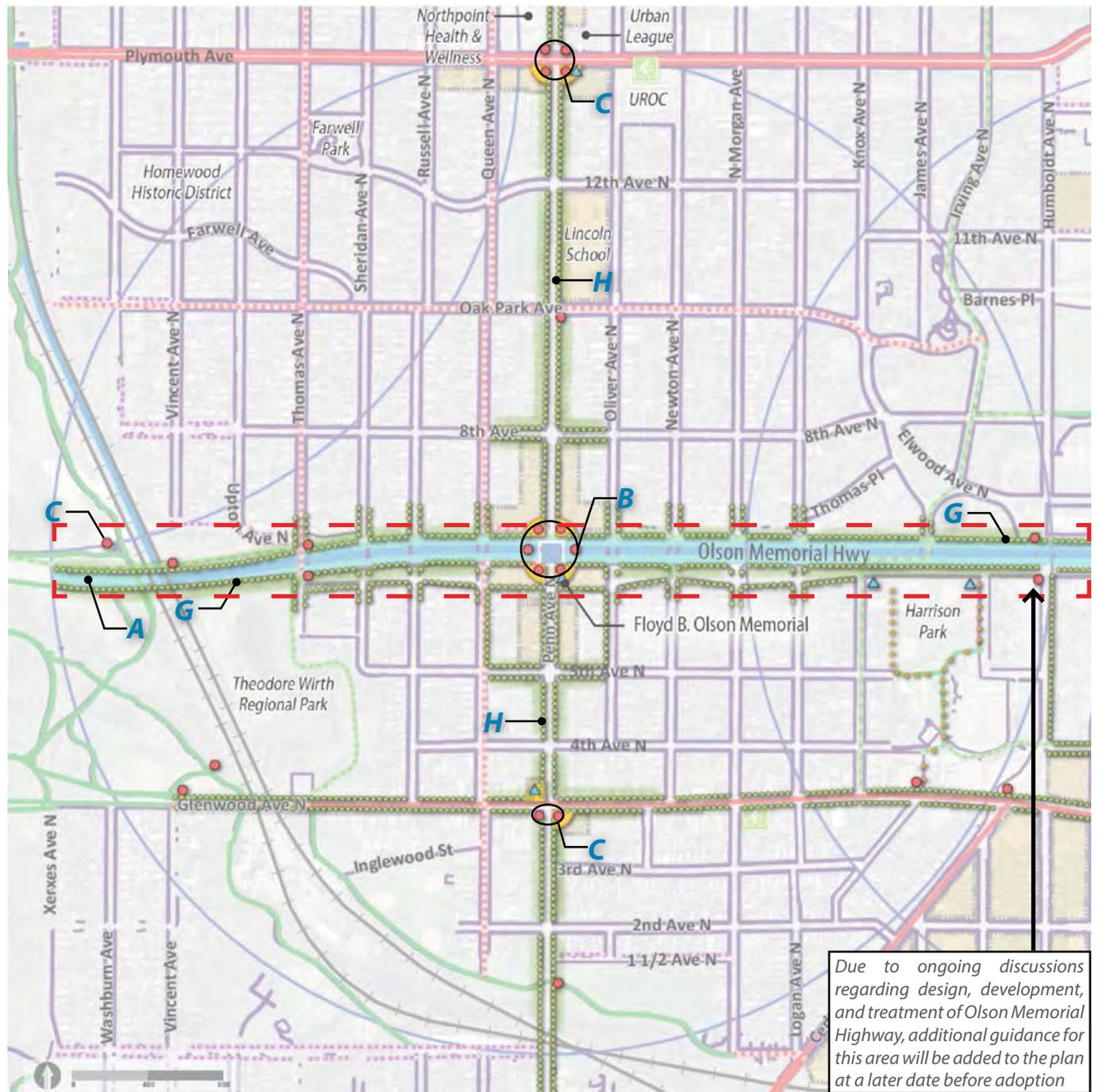


Due to ongoing discussions regarding design, development, and treatment of Olson Memorial Highway, additional guidance for this area will be added to the plan at a later date before adoption

**Figure 3.24: Day of Opening Public Realm Improvements**

This map identifies public realm improvements that are recommended to be in place by the first day of LRT operations. Map elements not coded with a letter are intended to be future improvements.

- X** Day of Opening Improvements (see Table 2.1)
- Enhanced Streetscape
- Trail Lighting
- Park
- Plaza
- Wayfinding
- Public Art
- Redevelopment Opportunity Site
- Planned LRT Station
- Bottineau LRT Alignment
- LRT Station Half Mile Buffer
- Railroad
- Proposed Sidewalks
- Existing Sidewalks
- Proposed Paved Trail
- Existing Paved Trail
- Proposed On-Street Bike Facility
- Existing On-Street Bike Facility



**Future Improvements**

**Table 3.4** and **Table 3.5** suggest potential partners who may individually or jointly take on the responsibility for implementation of the future improvement. The list of potential partners does not imply a commitment by the listed agencies to implement the future improvements.

Implementation of the recommended policy, development and physical environment improvements,

while not comprehensive, will support transit ridership through the provision of safe and convenient access to the transit stations. These improvements will also provide economic, social, and environmental benefits to the station area and broader community.

**Table 3.4: Future Improvements - Part I**

Improvements	Potential Partners	Comments
Relocate existing overhead utilities underground along Penn Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Hennepin County</li> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> <li>» Xcel Energy</li> </ul>	
Streetscape enhancements along Glenwood Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Hennepin County</li> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Minimum 10 foot wide sidewalk</li> <li>» Street trees</li> <li>» Pedestrian lighting</li> <li>» Site furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, bike racks)</li> <li>» Signage and wayfinding</li> <li>» Relocate existing overhead utilities underground</li> </ul>
Plazas at:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Olson Memorial Highway and Penn Avenue,</li> <li>» Plymouth Avenue and Penn Avenue</li> <li>» Glenwood Avenue and Penn Avenue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> <li>» Property Developers</li> </ul>	Incorporate through redevelopment at these locations
Public Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Hennepin County</li> <li>» City of Minneapolis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Incorporate Floyd B. Olson statue into future plaza at southeast quadrant of Olson Memorial Highway and Penn Avenue.</li> <li>» Contingent on the form of future development, the Harrison Neighborhood Gateway: Antionette and James may need to be relocated or repositioned.</li> <li>» Other opportunities exist at the plazas at Plymouth Avenue and Penn Avenue and at Glenwood Avenue and Penn Avenue</li> </ul>

**Table 3.5: Future Improvements - Part II**

Improvements	Potential Partners	Comments
Park enhancements along linear park/ parkway on the south side of Olson Memorial Highway not planned for redevelopment	» Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) » City of Minneapolis » MnDOT	Incorporate public art, seating and lighting
Complete remainder of wayfinding system	» Hennepin County » City of Minneapolis	Less critical, but important locations located along Penn Avenue, Glenwood Avenue and Olson Memorial Highway
Realign Olson Memorial Highway Service Road	» City of Minneapolis » MnDOT	Could occur concurrent with future development of these sites
Reconnect local streets to Olson Memorial Highway	» City of Minneapolis » MnDOT	
Improved pedestrian and bicycle crossings of Glenwood Avenue	» Hennepin County » City of Minneapolis	
Improved pedestrian and bicycle crossings of Plymouth Avenue	» City of Minneapolis	
Fill in remaining sidewalk gaps	» City of Minneapolis » Adjacent Property Developers	
Complete bicycle network	» City of Minneapolis	
Bicycle parking at key neighborhood destinations	» City of Minneapolis » Property Developers » Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Includes plazas at the intersection of Penn Avenue and Glenwood Avenue, intersection of Penn Avenue and Plymouth Avenue, and other neighborhood parks and schools as needed.
BRT stations	» Metro Transit » City of Minneapolis	



# ***APPENDIX A***

## **GLOSSARY**

---

**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.

**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 or railroad so that they will not disrupt each other’s traffic flow when they cross.

**Green Infrastructure:** A stormwater management practice that attempts to mimic natural hydrologic processes to remove pollutants, promote stormwater infiltration, and reduce the quantity of runoff entering the storm sewer system.

**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, et cetera — that are structured in such a way that they benefit one population unfairly, whether intended or not)<sup>3</sup>.

**Low Impact Development:** A stormwater management practice that attempts to mimic natural hydrologic processes to remove pollutants, promote stormwater infiltration, and reduce the quantity of runoff entering the storm sewer system.

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

**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.

**Mobility:** The ability of people and goods to move freely within the transportation system.

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

**Passenger Drop-off:** Dedicated location on the street for short term use where LRT passengers can exist or enter vehicles.

**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.

**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.

**Ten Minute Walk:** See Light Rail Transit (LRT) Station Area definition.

**Wayfinding:** An important urban design element that orients and directs people to and from their destinations, and enhances the sense of character and identity 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.

---

<sup>3</sup>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](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/healthequity/ahe_leg_report_020414.pdf)