



# NOKOMIS EAST LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT STATION AREA PLAN

Adopted by City Council  
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165 US Bank Plaza  
220 South Sixth Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
T. 612.338.4590 F. 612.337.4042



Document Prepared by:  
Hay Dobbs, P.A.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Acknowledgments to:

- Nokomis East Neighborhood Association
- Station Area Plan Steering Committee
- Residents of Nokomis East
- City of Minneapolis, Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED)
- Hennepin County, Department of Housing, Community Works & Transit





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# SECTION I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



*Partial Aerial view of Minneapolis. The blue lines illustrate the Hiawatha LRT Line*

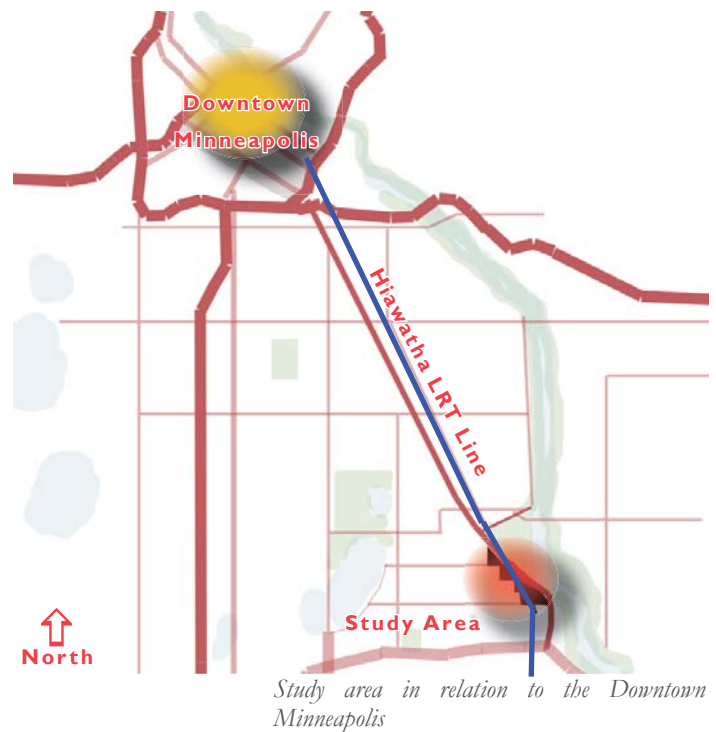
# 1.1 Purpose

Hennepin County, in partnership with the City of Minneapolis and community stakeholders, initiated a planning study in November 2005 to identify transit-oriented development opportunities near the 50th Street and VA Medical Center Light Rail Transit Stations. This study creates a vision for the future of the area and recommends land use and urban design changes in support of this vision.

Dedicated, fixed-route transit service represents increased levels of accessibility for downtown Minneapolis and the neighborhoods that are served. Areas nearest the station may be most appropriate for land-use types that maximize the benefits of transit, such as multi-family housing, work places, and other uses with pedestrian traffic (e.g., schools, entertainment, and retail services). These new opportunities must relate well to existing neighborhoods and build upon their strengths.

The planning process accomplished the following objectives in Nokomis East:

- Engaged the community
- Explored areas of concern and opportunities for positive change
- Defined economic, transportation and design constraints and opportunities
- Made recommendations for land-use and public realm improvements





## 1.2 Urban Strategy and Recommendations



Study Area ca. 2004

Creating a physical sense of connection between the stations is a challenging main objective of the plan. The two stations are approximately 0.8 miles apart from one another. Three distinct physical segments of roughly the same length divide the area. The first segment is on VA Medical Center property. Here, wide open spaces include park-like areas and large surface parking lots. While the parking areas are well landscaped, large surface lots are relatively unfriendly to pedestrians. Steps should be taken to ensure that future VA development is at a scale and orientation that encourages pedestrian activity along Minnehaha. The second segment is along Minnehaha where LRT travels in the street between 54th and 52nd Streets. Here is where old motels, automobile repair uses, and small homes are being replaced by urban residential development. The third segment is Old Hiawatha where residential uses face a frontage road and sound wall behind which light rail travels.

Each end of the planning area, near each station, will be anchored by a focal point of mixed use residential and commercial activity. They are intended to become visual and social anchors for the community that link to each other as well as other important parts of the community. These nodes are also gateways.

At the southern end of the study area, development at the intersection of 54th & Minnehaha is at the threshold of Minneapolis. It is an entrance and gateway to the City. This should be celebrated, with development, streetscape and art creating a sense of arrival to the City.

The two block stretch of Minnehaha between 54th Street and 52nd Street is the only city location outside of downtown where light rail is located away from Hiawatha. Here it travels down the middle of a city street, Minnehaha Avenue. It is akin to a historic streetcar in its alignment. Due to this alignment and with recent development along Minnehaha, a unique urban district is emerging, which should be reinforced with additional developments. The intersection of light rail, Minnehaha Avenue, Hiawatha Avenue and 52nd Street create an awkward intersection that is difficult to navigate on foot. Enhancing this transition point with landscaping, public art, and signage will help connect these two precincts.

As light rail exits this district traveling north, riders experience

their first glimpse of Minnehaha Park before arriving at the 50th Street/Minnehaha Park LRT station. This district is small, but important. Because of the tight right-of-way and interesting topography, development and public realm details become ever more important along this two block stretch. Between 52nd and 50th Streets, residential uses front Old Hiawatha, a frontage road behind the sound wall. It is here where the plan suggests the possibility of a pedestrian promenade fronted by new development.

The 50th Street/Minnehaha Park Station is a gateway to Minnehaha Park and into the heart of the Nokomis East neighborhood, leading to Nokomis Village, several blocks to the west. A signature redevelopment should punctuate this node, acknowledging the park and 50th Street. Eventual replacement of a parking lot with a landscaped pedestrian plaza and an improved pedestrian crossing should give the impression that the station is in Minnehaha Park, not separated from it by a highway. An extension of the promenade could run along Old Hiawatha north of 50th Street if property fronting Old Hiawatha is redeveloped. This would create an opportunity to connect the promenade to Minnehaha Park by bridging the creek.

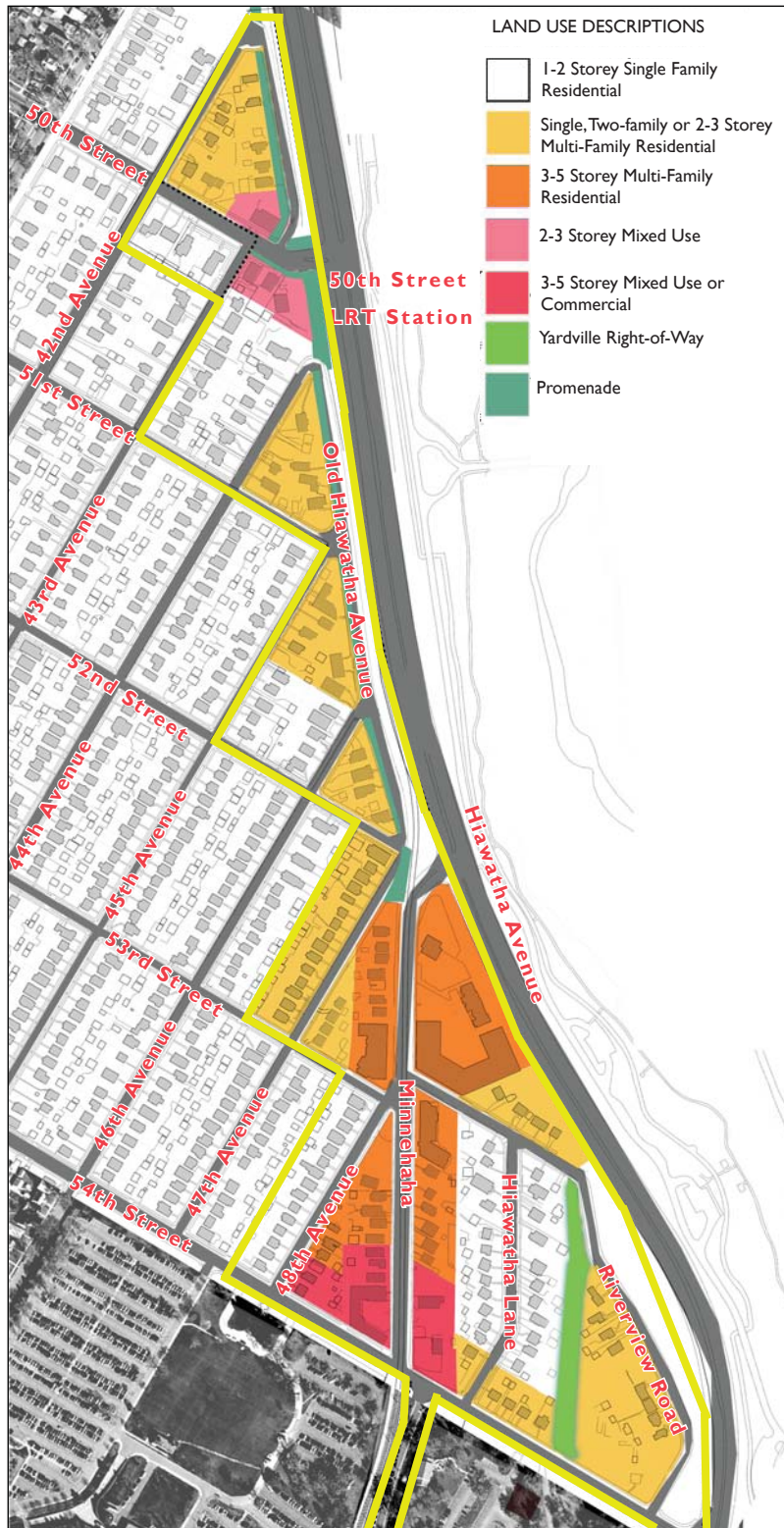


*Diagram of the urban strategy*

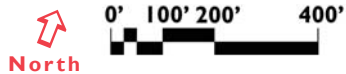




## 1.2.1 LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommended land use within study area



These recommendations for land use and building heights articulate potential use types. As a general land use strategy, these recommendations support the relationship between the study area, Hiawatha Avenue and the greater neighborhood. These land use recommendations have been created as part of the urban strategy and are intended to serve as a reference for future land use and zoning designations within the study area.

The plan supports an increase in commercial services available to nearby residents through the creation of two mixed use nodes at the north and south ends of the planning area. Adjacent to the 50th Street LRT station, the plan recommends building heights between 2 and 3 storeys. At the intersection of 54th Street and Minnehaha, the plan recommends a slightly higher scale of 3 to 5 storeys.

These two mixed-use nodes are connected by residential districts along Minnehaha and Old Hiawatha Avenues. Minnehaha Avenue should be more urban in character, supporting building heights of 3 to 5 storeys. Buildings along Old Hiawatha should be more residential in character, setback from a pedestrian promenade. They should have a more low-rise residential design, but nevertheless support additional density

Similar residential uses have been recommended in areas adjacent to the mixed use nodes and higher density residential uses along Minnehaha. In the context of the urban strategy, these serve as locations where new development is intended to transition into the existing neighborhood land use types and building heights.

Land use recommendations for the properties facing 54th Street and Riverview Road also include single family, 2 family and 2-3 storey multifamily residential land uses, reflecting the presence of vacant land and development opportunities.

## 1.2.2 TRAFFIC AND ACCESS

Although the alignment of the LRT line and the associated adjacent street create sometimes awkward circulation patterns, major changes to roadway alignments are not anticipated within the foreseeable future. Although increases in traffic volumes will occur with new development, the existing roadway network can accommodate increases in traffic volumes and trips of up to fifteen to twenty percent over current levels.

The increased traffic volumes and peak period queuing on 54th Street will continue to affect access to and from Riverview Road and Hiawatha Lane. Pavement marking and signage should be installed requesting drivers not to block the intersection. Parking and access along Minnehaha is restricted, therefore off-street residential parking must be accessed via the alley. Commercial off-street parking should be accessed through the alley wherever possible. Anticipated traffic volumes for the planned commercial and residential uses can be partially offset by use of such an alley. Dedicating right-of-way for parking bays along Minnehaha Avenue should also be considered.

Commercial uses will be limited to the corner of 54th and Minnehaha. Due to the fact that commercial uses and residential uses have different peak use times, the commercial traffic should have little effect on residential access. Although use of the alley is recommended, widening of the alley to accommodate additional traffic is not recommended in lieu of further analysis that would determine any needed functional improvements.

Further study is recommended to determine means to reduce the confusion at the intersection of 54th Street and Minnehaha due to the LRT/vehicle interface. Recommendations might include additional signalization, new signage, or limitations on certain traffic movements. The proximity of Hiawatha Lane and the alley between Hiawatha Lane and Minnehaha contribute to this problem and should be part of this study.

## 1.2.3 ECONOMICS

Consideration was given to both existing market conditions and perceived future market conditions. The recommendations of this study are predicated on responding to market forces that are supported by public policy.

The rental market remains relatively weak, though metro area vacancy rates have improved. Rising interest rates for the purchase of homes make rental units more attractive as a dwelling option. The need for affordable rental housing remains strong, including the need for senior housing.

Condominiums received particular attention in the real estate market as of late. As an example, the condominiums at Minnehaha Place absorbed fairly well, although prices were generally low compared to most new development. It is interesting to note that many residents of Minnehaha Place had moved from another home in the neighborhood. Olin Crossings, another condominium development, has received a great deal of buyer interest and has somewhat higher prices than those of Minnehaha Place. Buyers at Olin Crossings include both neighborhood residents and others who work downtown and want the close proximity to the LRT line.

Although the overall market for office space in the Twin Cities metro area continues to be soft, there is some recent improvement. Interest in professional office condominium space properly designed into mixed-use buildings is increasing. The office market within the study area would support a modest amount of service office use, like professional attorney or accounting offices, realty or insurance services, and/or medical or dental offices. This could be paired with services that are more tailored to the local residential market or LRT user, such as convenience stores, ATMs, dry cleaners, florists, etc. Of particular interest within the study area is the possibility of a hotel located on 54th Street, across from the VA hospital for VA visitors and business travellers. Feasibility suggests that this activity should be limited to a boutique or business express hotel versus a larger conventional model.



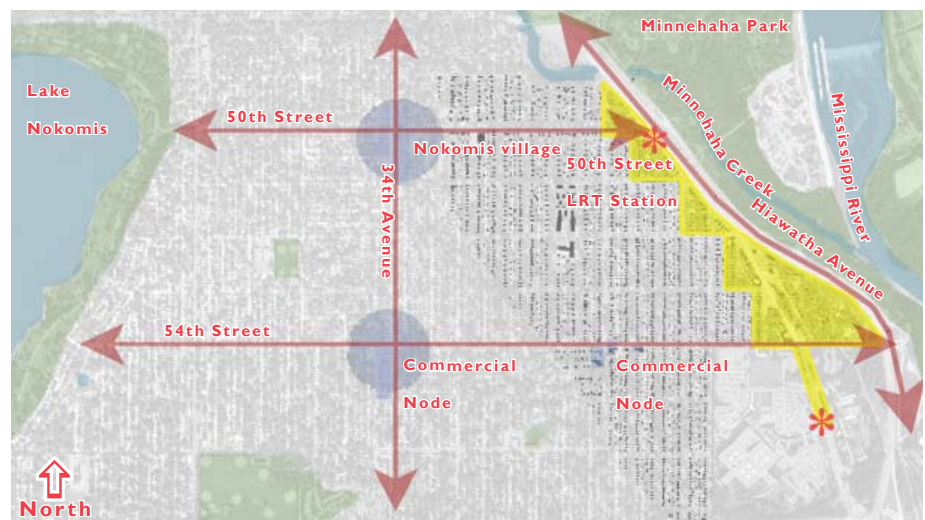
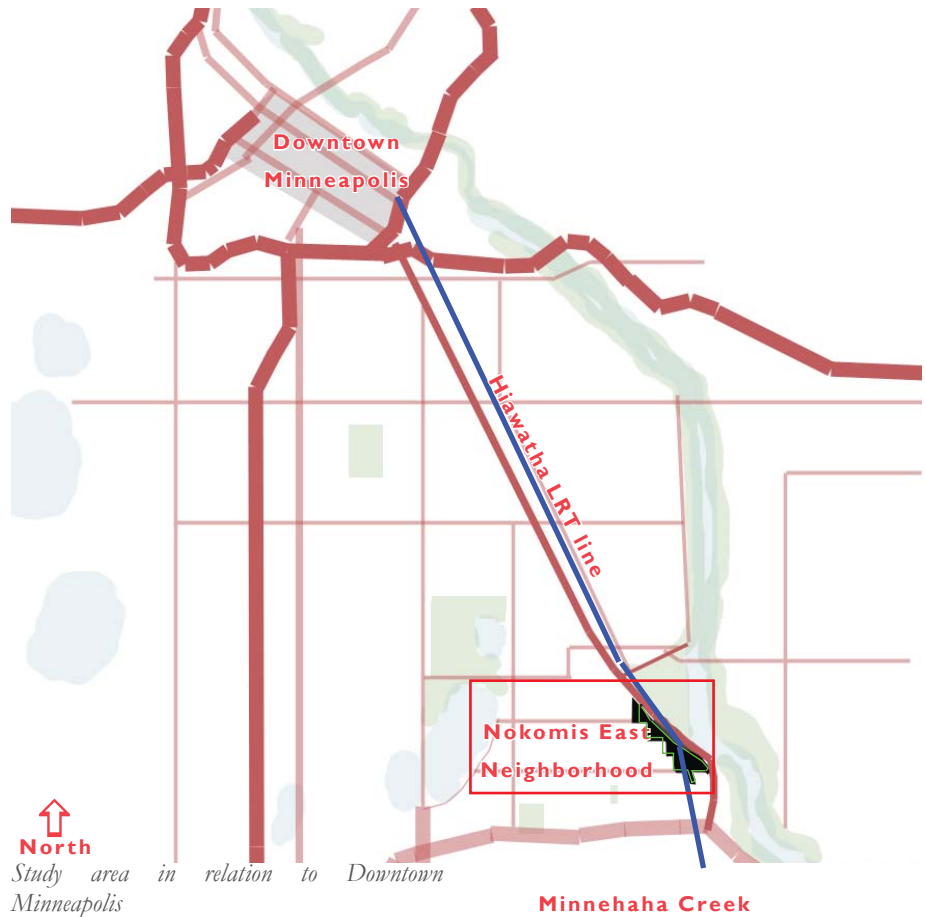
# SECTION 2

## Planning Framework

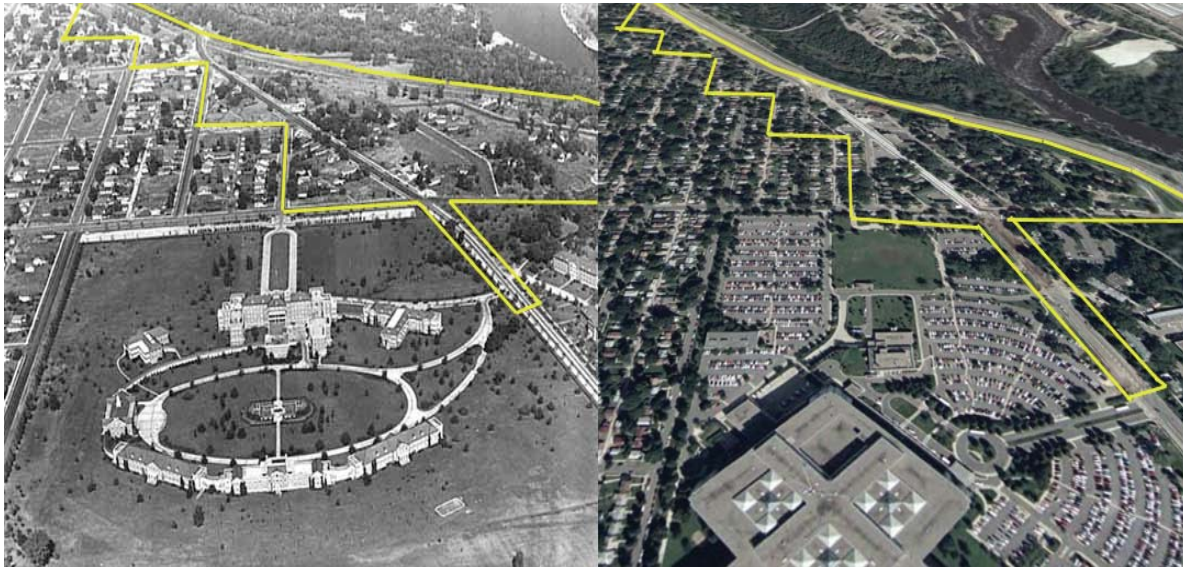
## 2.1 Study Area in Context

The study area is an approximately five block long section bordering Hiawatha Avenue and located between 50th and 54th Streets. The area is adjacent the 50th Street LRT Station and north of the VA LRT Station. It is in the eastern portion of the Minnehaha neighborhood, one of four neighborhoods of the City that make up the area known as Nokomis East, named for one of the lakes on the Minneapolis chain of lakes.

The study area lies at the confluence of a number of natural and built landmarks. Minnehaha Park and the Mississippi River are just across Hiawatha to the east, with the Highland Park area of Saint Paul located on the opposite bank. Since the 19th century, Minnehaha Falls and the park have been one of the greatest tourist attractions in Minneapolis. Minnehaha Creek, which runs into the Mississippi River in Minnehaha Park, lies just to the north of the study area. Located to the south of the study area is the sprawling Veterans Administration hospital facility and grounds



## 2.2 Urban Form and Historic Development Patterns



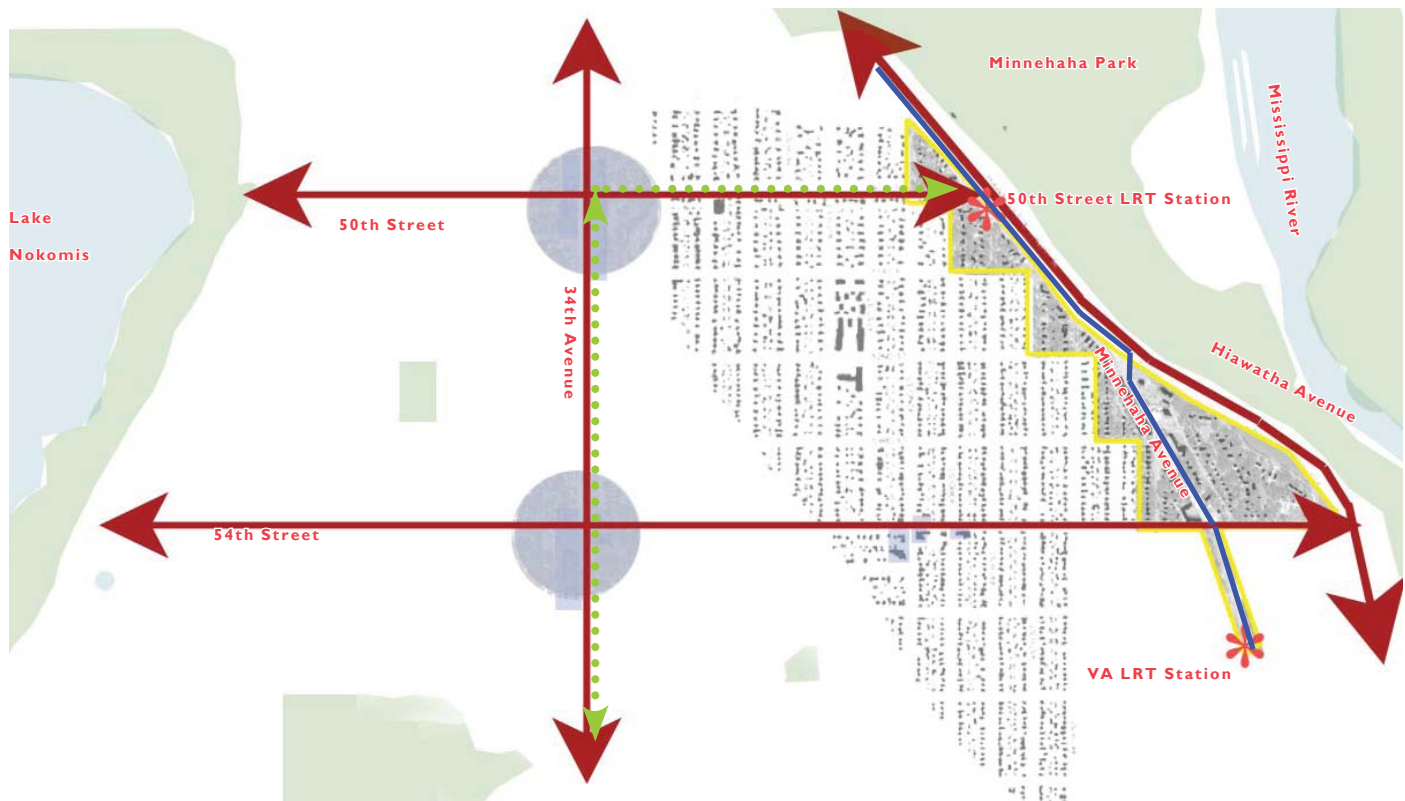
*Aerial view of the study area over the VA hospital property, ca. 1930 and 2004.  
The study area is delineated in yellow.*

Nokomis East has a unique architectural character that was influenced by 19th century tourism at Minnehaha Park as well as the bungalow and Cape Code style development that would follow. Visible from the LRT line are examples of 19th century Italianate and Queen Anne residential design. By World War II, the neighborhood lay at the developing southern edge of the city. Between 1910 and 1940, many craftsman bungalows were built. Neighborhood commercial nodes developed at key intersections to serve the growing population, including a larger concentration at 34th Avenue and 50th Street coined Nokomis Village. After the war, many vacant lots that remained were developed with small Cape Cod style houses.

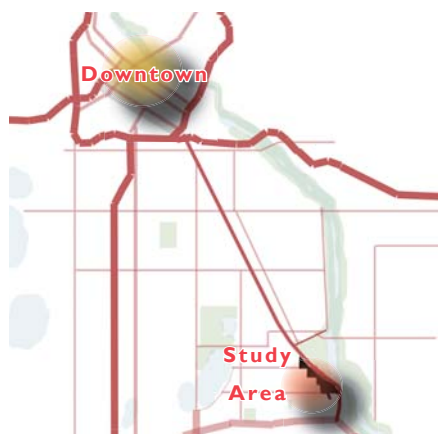
The study area has experienced more change than any other part of Nokomis East due to the evolving role and influence of regional transportation. Hiawatha Avenue, Minnehaha Avenue and the Canadian Pacific Railway are important regional transportation facilities that interrupt the traditional street grid of Minneapolis. In addition to the influence of traffic on land uses, the corridor creates unique intersections and parcels of land as it crosses the north-south/east-west grid. Light rail is the most recent addition, adding another layer of service as well as complexity to this corridor.

These transportation facilities have influenced development in important ways. To serve a growing automotive population as well as VA Hospital visitors and airport users, several small motels grew up along Minnehaha Avenue along with automobile services. With the realignment of traffic to the east along a reconstructed Hiawatha Avenue and with the introduction of LRT, the real estate market has changed from one supporting automobile oriented uses to one that supports transit oriented uses such as multi-family housing. Though proximity to the park adds value to nearby residential uses, crossing Hiawatha Avenue is quite difficult due to traffic volumes and speeds.

## 2.3 Streets and Circulation



*Broad connections within Nokomis East: The study area is delineated in yellow. The green dotted lines illustrate primary transit routes within the community. The blue lines represent the Hiawatha LRT line. The red line represent major vehicular thoroughfares.*



*Study area in relation to Downtown Minneapolis*

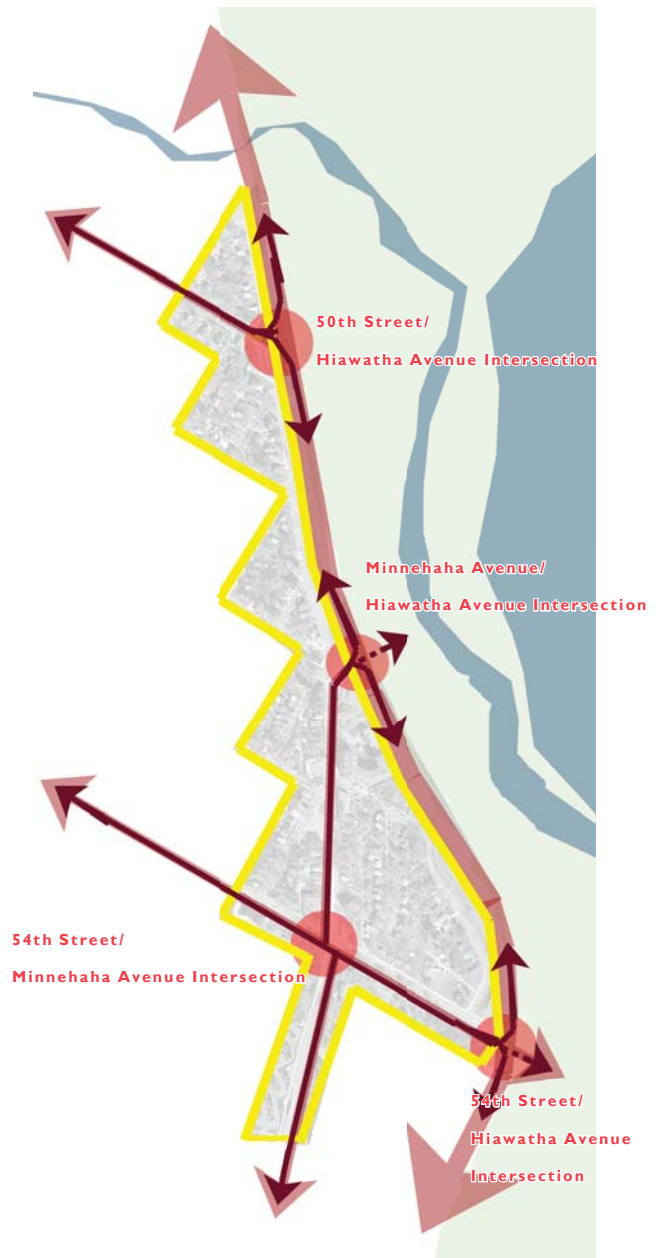
The transportation framework for the study area is unique because of its adjacency to regional transportation facilities that interrupt the street grid. Hiawatha Avenue runs at an angle to the street grid, as do Old Hiawatha (frontage road), Minnehaha and the light rail line. Because Hiawatha Avenue is a limited access highway, streets that intersect Hiawatha in the study area are limited to 50th Street, Minnehaha Avenue and 54th Street. Fiftieth and 54th Streets are the primary neighborhood east-west streets and are anchored by Lake Nokomis on the west and Minnehaha Park on the east. Minnehaha Avenue, however, runs southward, connecting with 54th Street and the VA Medical Center to the south.





Traffic circulation patterns in the study area. Width represents volume.

The highway and light rail provide a higher level of access for the study area, but there are issues related to awkward circulation. Light rail runs down the middle of Minnehaha, resulting in a condition where cars are prohibited from turning across the tracks. Further complicating this condition is that south of 54th Street, the Minnehaha Avenue alignment is off-set to the east, with light rail running along the side. This creates a condition where southbound vehicles must first turn left across the LRT tracks, then right again to continue heading south.



Four key intersections are found within the study area. All four act as gateways into the neighborhood and the city.

Fiftieth Street in particular plays an important role in the larger neighborhood for connecting important destinations via transit, walking and bicycling. An important bus route connects the neighborhood with the 50th Street station, traveling along 50th Street to serve Nokomis Village, then south along 34th Avenue. Fiftieth Street has also been identified by the City of Minneapolis for reconstruction in the near future and is a candidate for a future on-street bicycle lane.

## 2.4 Project Principles and Assumptions

A series of project principles and assumptions were developed with the steering committee to help frame discussions in steering committee meetings and community workshops.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- A. Encourage development that invokes and builds upon the area's history, culture and open space resources.
- B. Create unique and identifiable districts or precincts that build on the area's strengths.
- C. Integrate new development and green space with the area's park and trail amenities.
- D. Ensure that areas designated for new development are integrated with the scale, design and use of areas that are immediately adjacent.
- E. Create an attractive pedestrian environment through streetscape, public art, and attention to building orientation and design.
- F. Meet a diversity of housing needs by providing a variety of housing types, sizes, prices and styles.
- G. Encourage a mix of residential and neighborhood commercial uses in designated nodes or districts.
- H. Encourage development that supports the use of transit and which meets principles of environmental sustainability, including "green" building design.
- I. Encourage development scenarios that meet the life cycle housing needs of neighborhood residents, particularly seniors and those who do not or cannot drive.

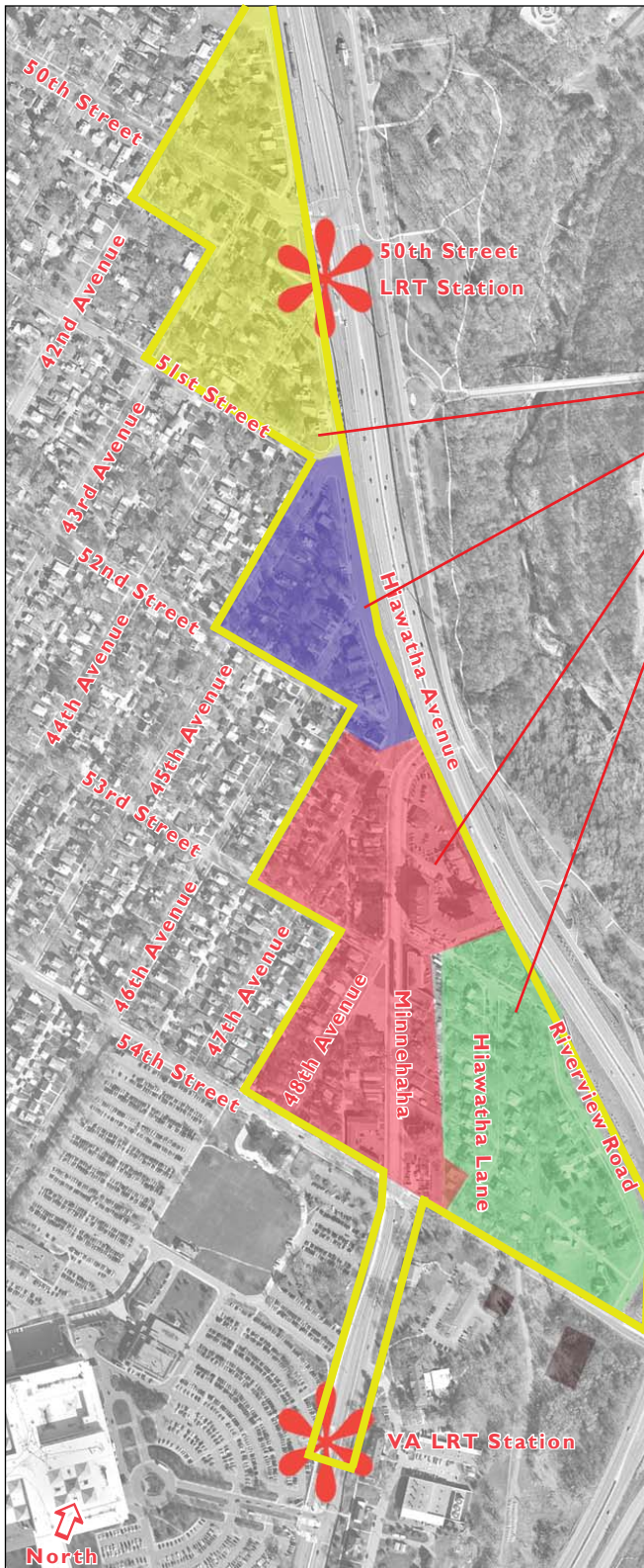
## 2.5 Study Area Precincts

### 2.5 | PRECINCTS

Based on the physical analysis within the study area and the surrounding context, the area has been divided into four precincts. This division facilitated small group discussion at public workshops, allowing participants to focus on areas of particular interest or concern, as well as allowing the study to better respond to specific site conditions. These four precincts are labeled:

- 50th Street Gateway Precinct
- 52nd Street Precinct
- Minnehaha Corridor Precinct
- Yardville Precinct

Land use recommendations for the study area have been organized according to the precincts identified above. This allows a direct extension of public workshops into the land use and urban design recommendations.



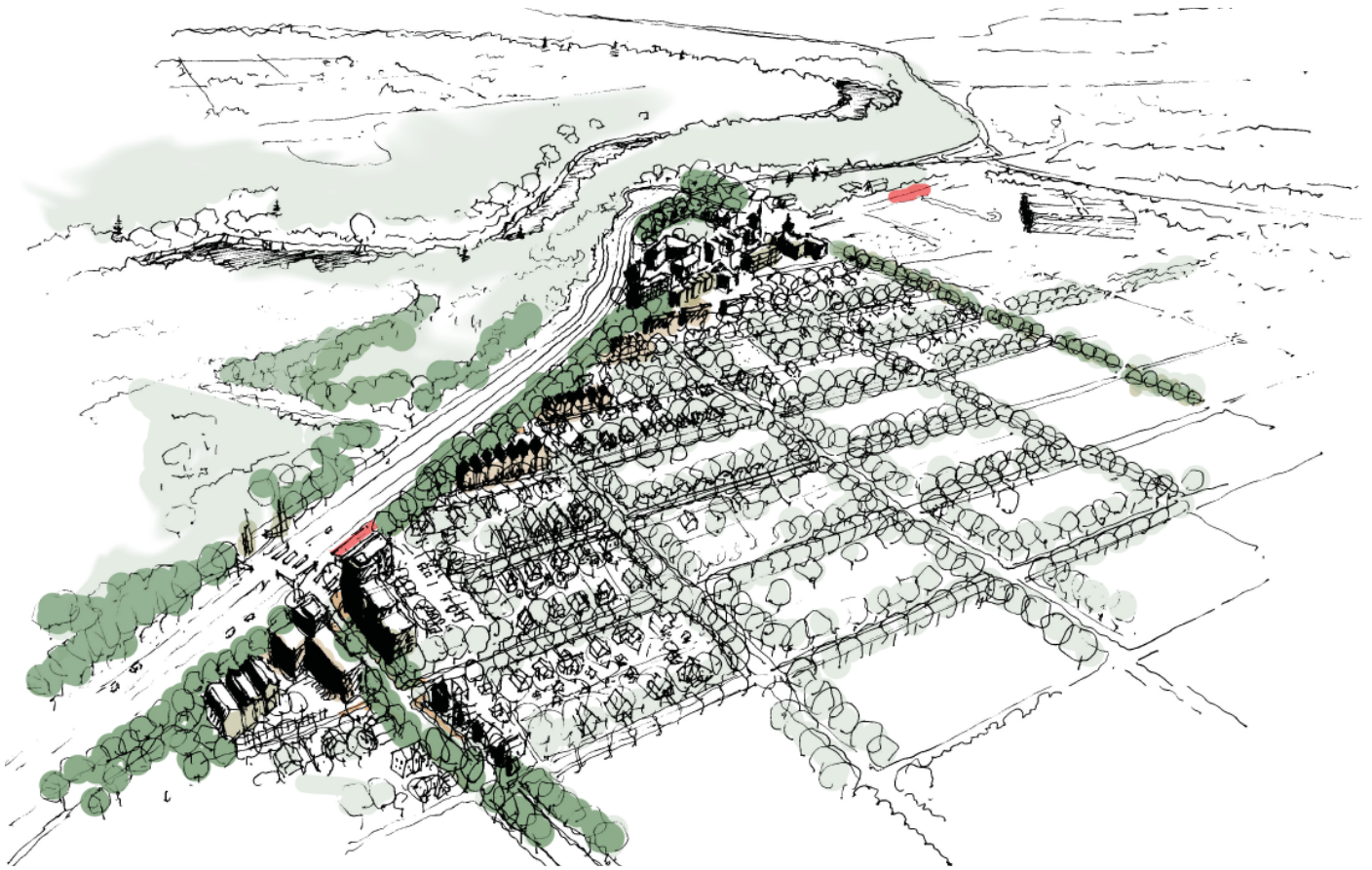
## 2.5.2 PROJECT ASSUMPTIONS

The following project assumptions were generally agreed upon at the outset of the study.

- A. City policies support transit-oriented development in appropriate locations near LRT stations. The extent and nature of such development is to be identified in the small area planning process.
- B. Depending on location, changes in the station area may include housing intensification, mixed-use development, and/or improvements to the pedestrian character of the area.
- C. No particular long-range vision (15-20 years) exists for this area; this planning process will create that vision.
- D. The planning process will strive, whenever possible, for consensus among station area residents, the Nokomis East Neighborhood Association, the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County. Steering Committee members will represent their constituents throughout the decision-making process to enable thorough public input.
- E. The plan will include a framework that guides and establishes parameters for redevelopment, also indicating where land use change is not appropriate.
- F. To ensure feasibility, the planning process will include redevelopment scenarios that are largely informed by current and predicted future real estate market conditions.
- G. To ensure feasibility, redevelopment scenarios should not depend upon significant public subsidy. Scenarios with funding gaps should be highly competitive for limited resources.
- H. The alignment of the LRT Line and Hiawatha Avenue are fixed.
- I. There are currently few, if any, public funds available for infrastructure projects or development incentives. However, redevelopment scenarios should not preclude long-term improvements to existing infrastructure, including right-of-way, intersection, and pedestrian realm improvements.
- J. Social policy objectives unrelated to land use and urban design are not within the scope of the plan.
- K. While this plan may result in the recommendation of zoning modifications as implementation tools for development, the execution of these recommendations will be the responsibility of the City.
- L. The specific design/predesign of individual development projects, along with detailed streetscape designs, will be undertaken outside of the scope of this project, as defined by the consultant's agreement with Hennepin County.
- M. The planning process acknowledges overall city goals and policies, and neighborhood participation will guide how these goals and policies relate to the objectives of the plan.



## 2.6 Land Use Recommendations



*Illustrative aerial view of potential long term development looking southeast with the proposed 50th Street node in the foreground. LRT stations are in red.*

The land-use recommendations have been prepared in order to provide the following:

- A feasible set of recommendations that can be implemented by the city.
- A set of recommendations that recognize the goal of the city to foster growth through transit station areas while acknowledging the concerns of the local community.
- A set of guidelines that take advantage of the unique opportunities afforded by the proximity of the two light rail transit stops.
- A set of recommendations that create a framework for continued growth and development near LRT stations.
- A set of recommendations that address issues relative to infrastructure and market forces.
- A set of guidelines that aid in creating a vision for the neighborhood over the course of the next 20 years.
- A document that can be used to foster discussions regarding change within the study area between the members of the community, representatives of the city and developers.

## 2.7 50th Street Gateway Precinct

The 50th Street Gateway Precinct is the portion of the study area north of 51st Street. The precinct is described as a gateway due to the break in the sound wall for the intersection between 50th Street and Hiawatha Avenue and the manner in which the existing commercial structures frame 50th Street. From Hiawatha Avenue, 50th Street is a direct route to Nokomis Village and Lake Nokomis. The street section for 50th Street consists of a wide street with on-street parking on both sides. In addition, the residential properties have deep setbacks and wide sidewalks, creating a strong pedestrian oriented street.

The change in topography between Hiawatha Avenue and 42nd Avenue along 50th Street enhances the gateway experience. At this location, 50th Street climbs noticeably from Hiawatha before leveling out at 42nd Avenue and continuing west. The sloped ground plane creates a condition where buildings step down the hill while framing 50th Street from Hiawatha Avenue. This is visible from Hiawatha Avenue and on 50th Street headed east from 42nd Avenue.

The 50th Street light rail station is located at the bottom of the rise, allowing for pedestrian access into the neighborhood to the south along Old Hiawatha Avenue and west on 50th Street. Alternatively, 50th street is a recommended primary transit route, served by bus route number 27. This route has a stop near the light rail station and provides access to Nokomis Village.

All of the conditions combine to create the impression of a neighborhood gateway or threshold. The combination of the sloping road and the commercial buildings re-enforce the relationship of 50th Street to Hiawatha Avenue. The homes to the south and west serve to create a neighborhood face that is older and more formal or architecturally detailed relative to the other precincts. The break in the sound wall also aids in the creation of this threshold, as it is one of the three points of access from Hiawatha Avenue.

This precinct also has the benefit of the being adjacent to the Minnehaha watershed to the north. This watershed is part of a larger greenway system that includes Minnehaha Falls to the east.



Image Number 1- View looking west on 50th Street



Image Number 2- View looking east on 50th Street



## 2.7.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Community workshops and steering committee feedback was used in the process of determining the land use recommendations for the precinct. Preferences expressed in community workshops included residential and commercial redevelopment. Interest in a mixed-use transit center was also expressed as a possible redevelopment option. There were a number of properties within the limits of the precinct that were identified as non-designated but “historic” structures that should be preserved. Participants also expressed a keen interest in creating a pedestrian connection to Minnehaha Park over Minnehaha Creek or at Hiawatha Avenue, in addition to a promenade along Old Hiawatha Avenue.

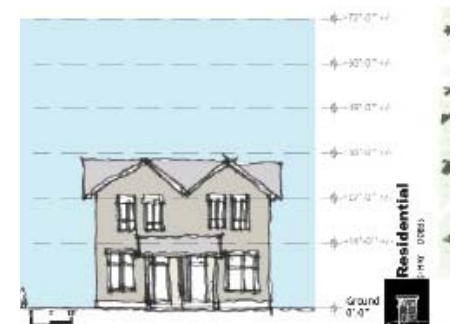
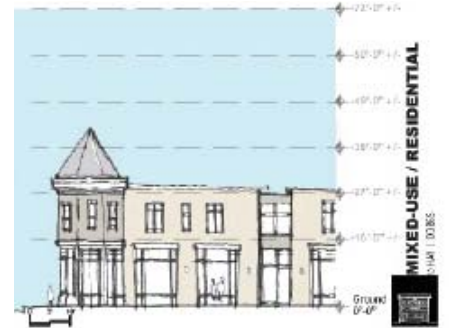
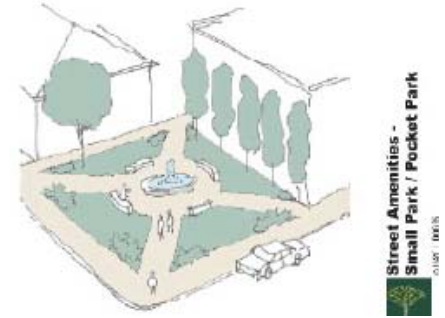
Community workshop participants expressed interest in redevelopment based on existing land uses. Preferred land uses included mixed use and residential types. Additional documentation of the community workshops can be found in section 4.

### Preferred massing strategy



*Much of the input from the community workshops suggested a desire for retail or mixed-use at the 50th Street and Hiawatha Avenue intersection*

### Selected visual preference cards



*These selected images are representative of expressed visual preferences that were defined during a workshop.*

*Taking advantage of the change in grade at 50th Street and Hiawatha Avenue can create opportunities for transitions in height and density that can weave new development into the existing neighborhood.*



A

*View of 50th Street looking north shows how development can “step down” the hill towards Hiawatha*

## 2.7.2 LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS AND URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

Three ideas drive the recommendations for the 50th Street Precinct. The first is to maintain or re-enforce the “gateway” function that the intersection forms, creating a defined entry sequence into the neighborhood. The second goal is to re-enforce connections between the commercial nodes that presently exist at this location with those at Nokomis Village at 50th Street and 34th Avenue. The third goal is to strengthen the connection with Old Hiawatha and the envisioned pedestrian promenade or greenway to the south.

In order to achieve these goals, the land use recommendations call for increased density at existing properties with commercial and mixed use services along 50th Street, possible improved walkways, and plazas or parks to encourage pedestrian traffic. In addition, commercial uses for the properties facing Old Hiawatha Avenue to the north of 50th Street would increase pedestrian traffic and define the neighborhood entry points. The recommended

building heights for these locations are not to exceed four storeys, with the intention of allowing development to take advantage of the sloping topography to create a gradual transition into the neighborhood from Hiawatha Avenue as shown in Illustration A above.

The partial block defined by 51st Street along with 44th and Old Hiawatha serves as a transition zone. This transition is to occur between the existing single family residences surrounding the block and the proposed promenade on Old Hiawatha Avenue. This block is also meant to serve as a transition from buildings at the intersection of 50th Street and Hiawatha Avenue to the buildings within the 52nd Street Precinct.

In addition, if the proposed promenade is actualized, the connections of 50th and 51st Streets to Old Hiawatha should be emphasized to pull pedestrian traffic toward the promenade. This could be accomplished through wider sidewalks or a pedestrian plaza, better pedestrian lighting, or tasteful signage.

### 2.7.3 POTENTIAL BUILDING EXPRESSIONS

Future development in the 50th Street Precinct should realize the goal of creating a gateway entry into the neighborhood and a “village” adjacent the 50th Street LRT station. Redevelopment at the intersection of 50th Street and Hiawatha Avenue should be sympathetic to the historic residential construction along Old Hiawatha will creating prominent new street frontage. New development along 50th Street should also be designed to create an “enfilade”, or connected spatial sequence, that cohesively connects development at Hiawatha Avenue westward into the neighborhood.

In addition to creating a more commercial face, future construction should be coordinated with open space in front of the buildings to create a small neighborhood gathering place between mixed use designated properties and the street and LRT line. A large hard surfaced plaza or widened sidewalk along with decorative lighting and other amenities such as planters, bike racks and kiosks should be provided to reflect the significance of this location as a commercial node within the study area.

*Existing Conditions*



*Potential Building Expressions*

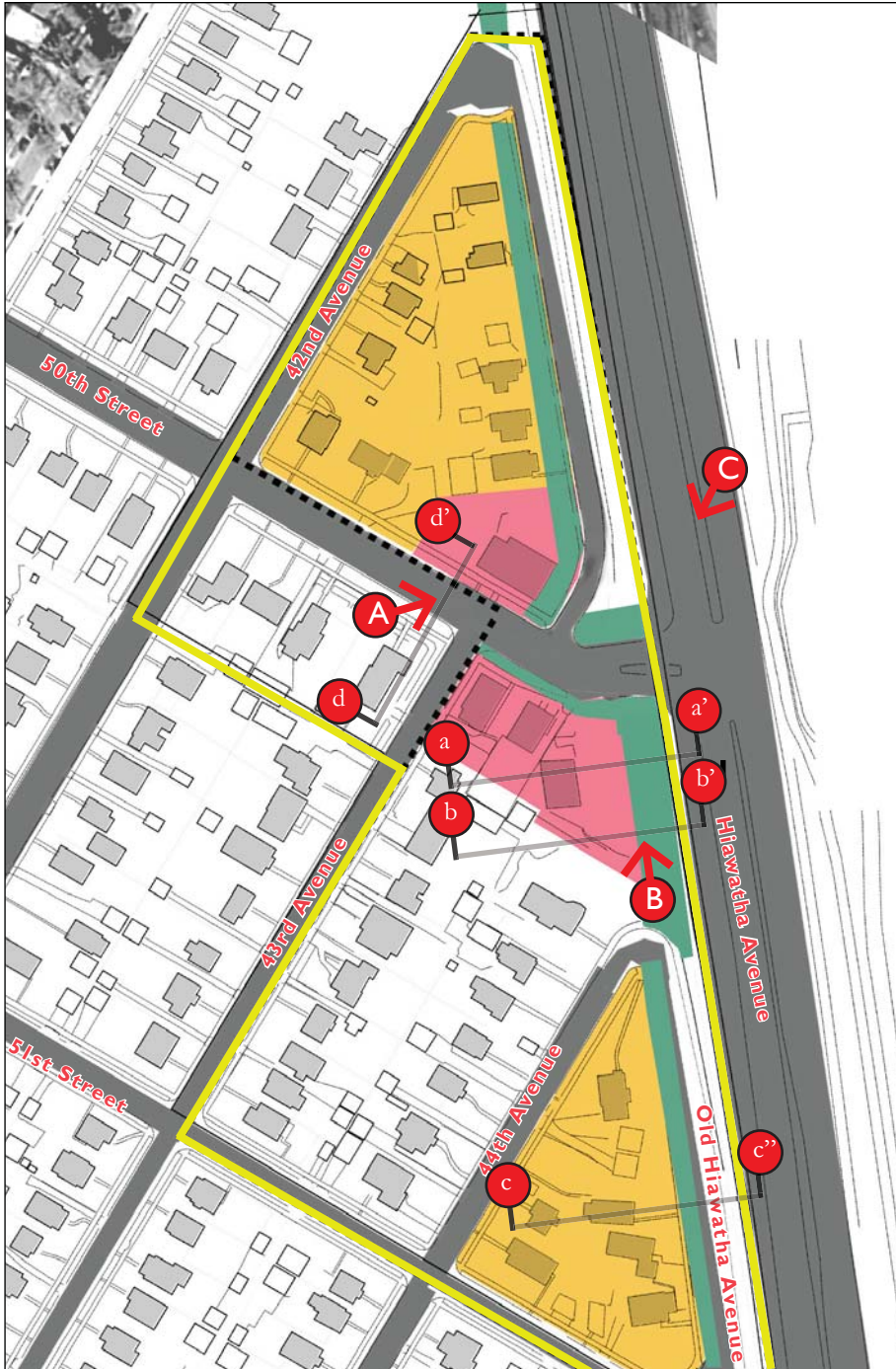


*Above:*

*Existing conditions in the 50th Street Gateway Precinct and photographs of potential building expressions of future development.*



## 2.7.4 LAND USE RECOMMENDATION MAP






### LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS



-  1-2 Storey Single Family Residential
-  Single, Two-family or 2-3 Storey Multi-Family Residential
-  3-5 Storey Multi-Family Residential
-  2-3 Storey Mixed Use
-  3-5 Storey Mixed Use or Commercial
-  Yardville Right-of-Way
-  Promenade



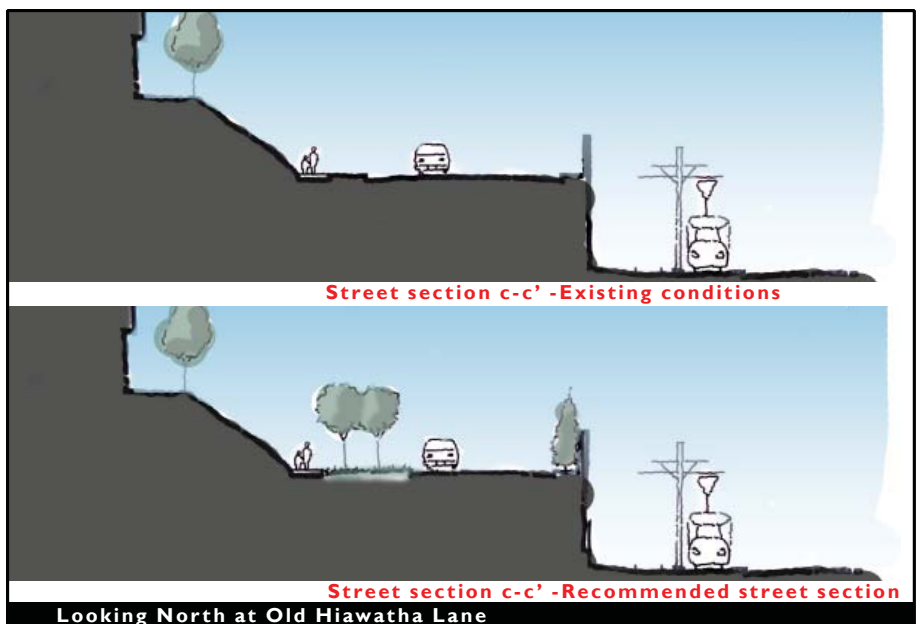
Precinct key plan



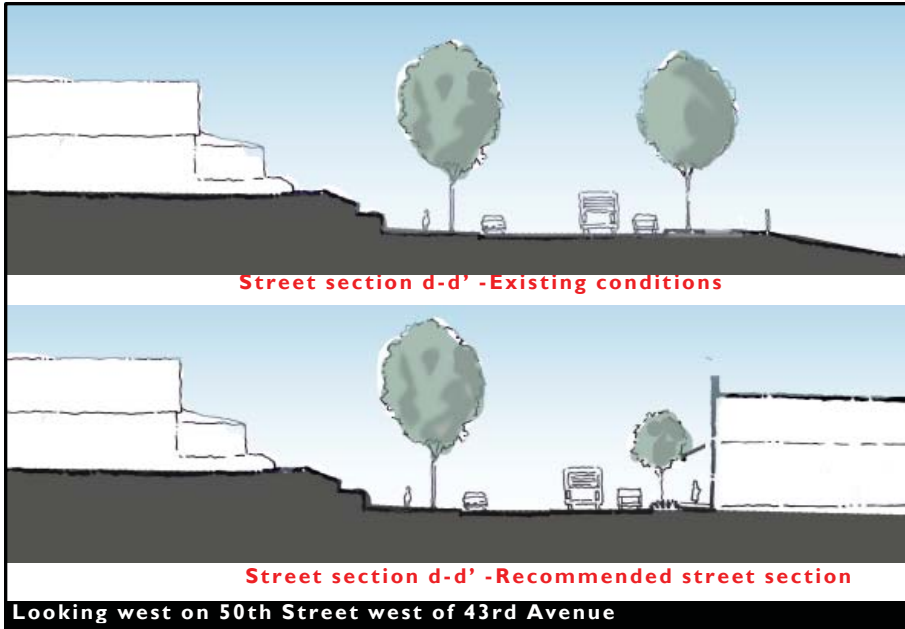
-  Viewpoint for illustration A on page 2-12
-  Viewpoint for illustrative annotated perspective on page 2-16
-  Viewpoint for illustration on page 2-17

-   Location of cross-section drawings on pages 2-15 and 2-16

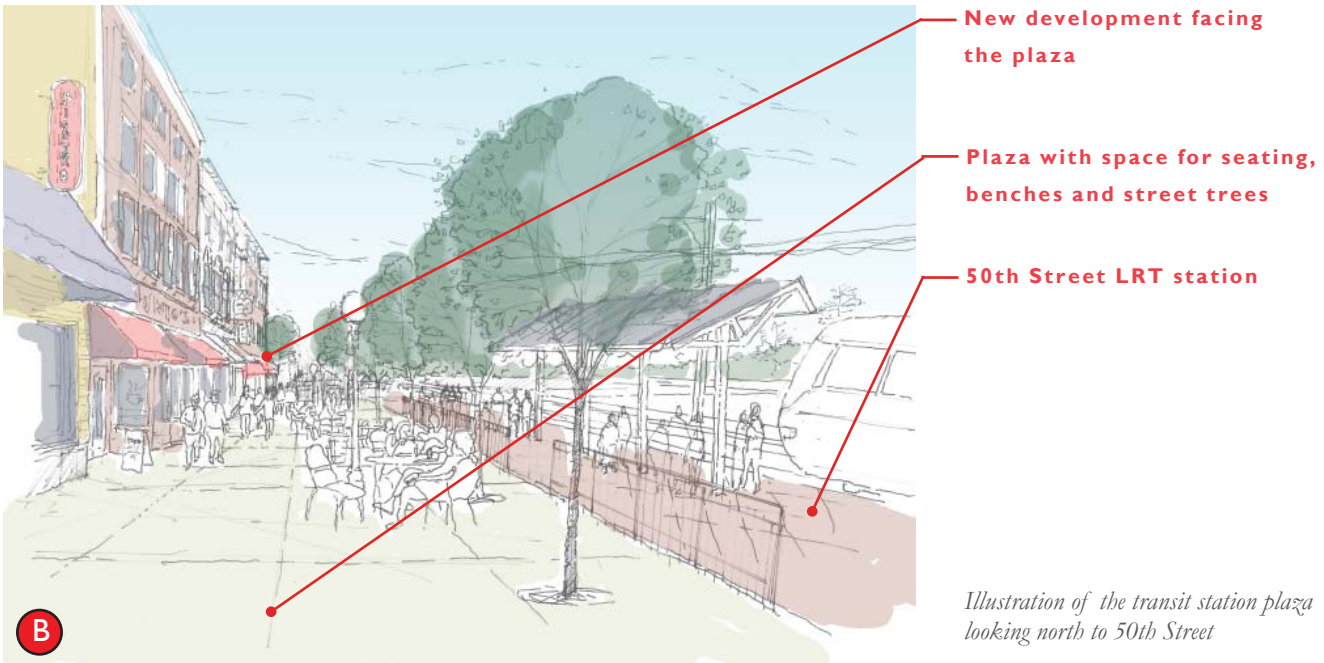
## 2.7.5 STREET SECTIONS



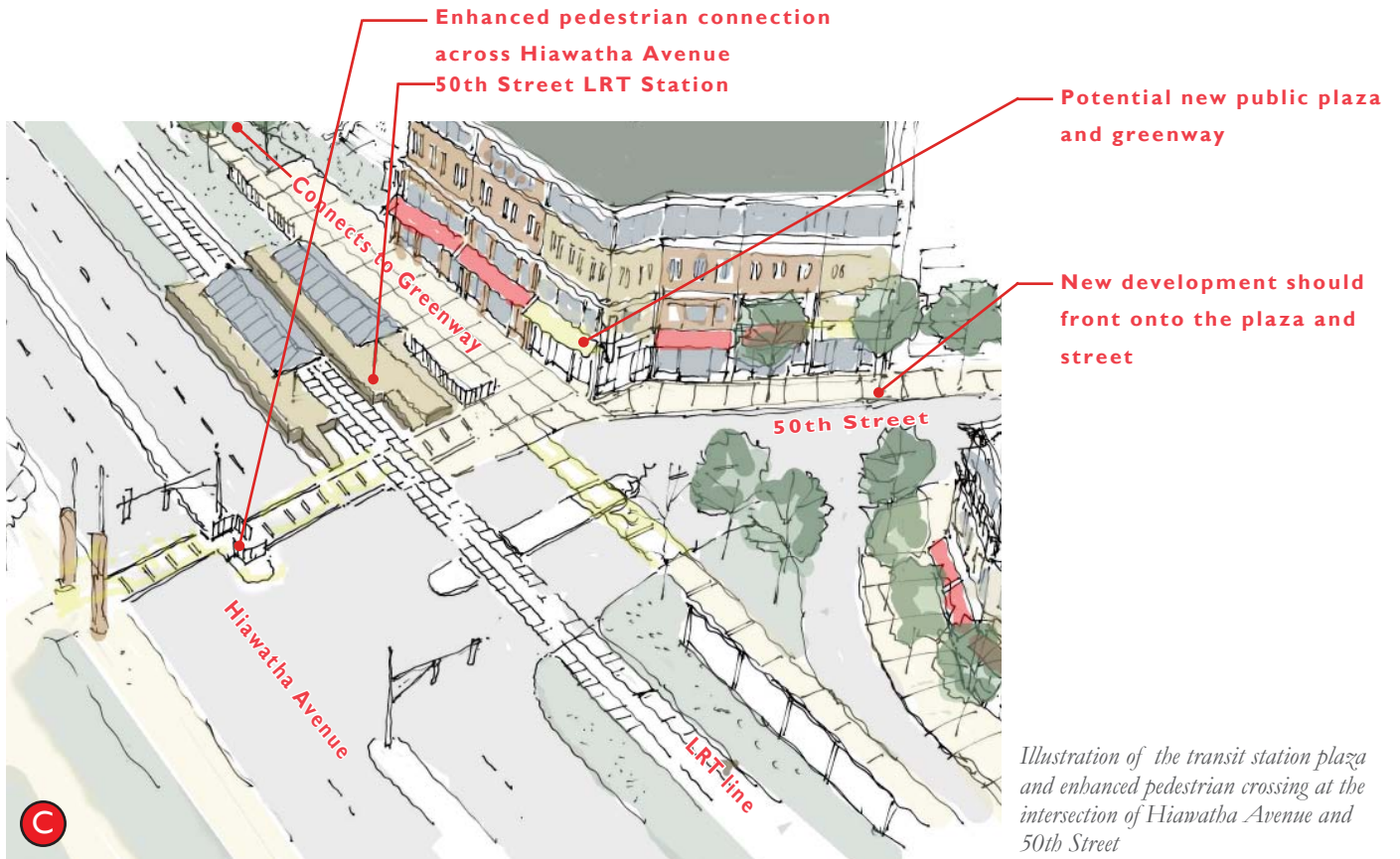
## STREET SECTIONS, CONTINUED



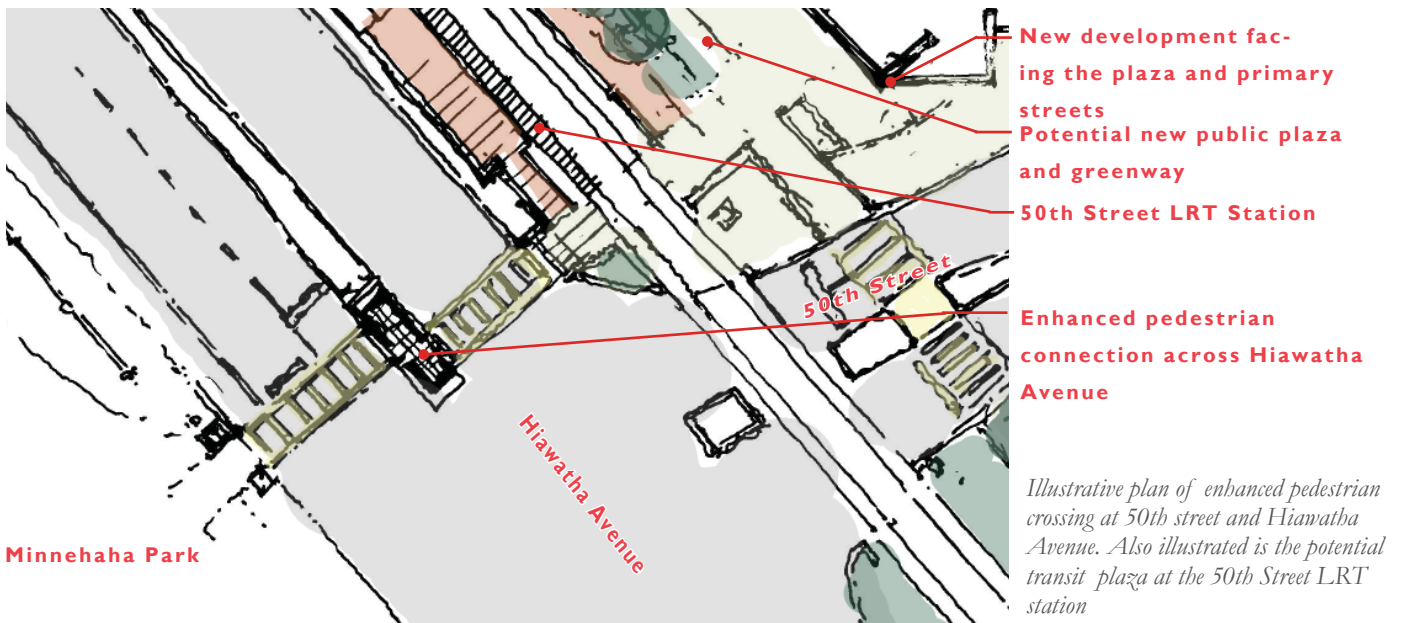
## 2.7.6 ILLUSTRATIVE ANNOTATED PERSPECTIVES







*Illustration of the transit station plaza and enhanced pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Hiawatha Avenue and 50th Street*



*Illustrative plan of enhanced pedestrian crossing at 50th street and Hiawatha Avenue. Also illustrated is the potential transit plaza at the 50th Street LRT station*

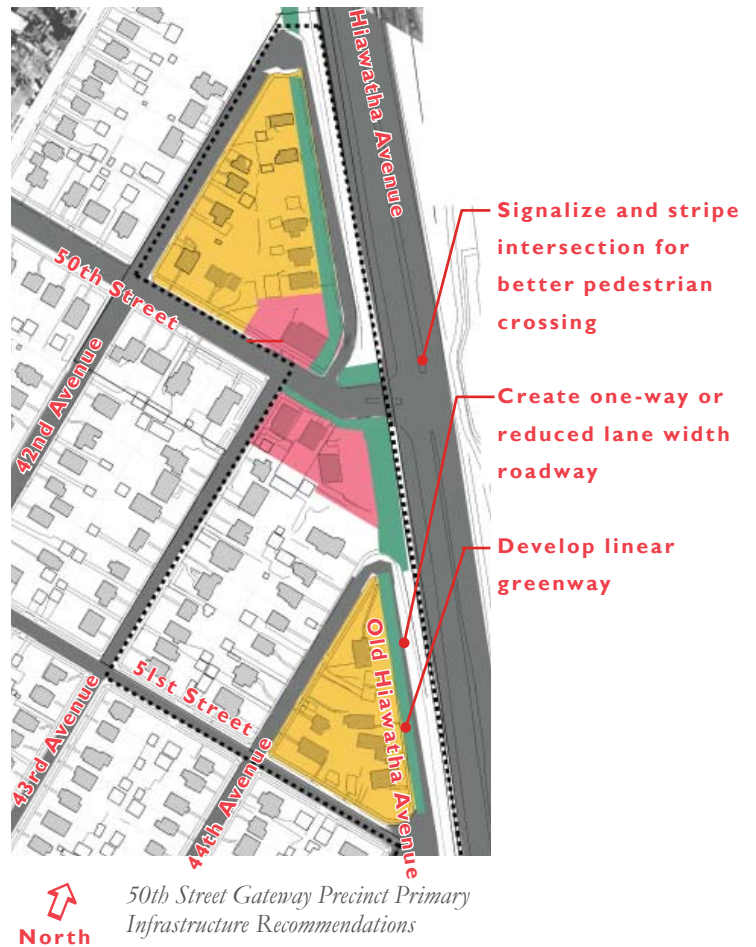
## 2.7.7 TRAFFIC AND PARKING

The preferred traffic and parking strategy in this precinct involves the possible conversion of Old Hiawatha into a one-way or narrowed two-way street in order to improve the public realm, discourage commuter parking, and manage access to properties. This could allow for the introduction of a continuous linear promenade from Minnehaha Creek through the 52nd Street Precinct to the Minnehaha Precinct to the south.

Parking strategies in this precinct should respond to the proximity of the 50th Street LRT station. Future parking strategies should seek the reduction of on-street parking by persons who are not residents or patrons of the neighborhood. Creative solutions to provide non-resident and patron parking might include parking structures over or under new commercial construction, stand-alone, sub-surface parking, or metered/permit parking only. A combination of permit and time limit or metered parking might assist in reducing daily parking by LRT riders or long-term airport parking. Metered parking should be limited to sections of street not immediately in front of single family residential properties.

## 2.7.8 MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

The land use recommendations respond to current and perceived future market conditions and call for an increase in mixed-use development in order to take advantage of the proximity to the 50th Street LRT station. This would include development that would complement or relocate the existing restaurant and provide additional other complementary services such as coffee shops, dry cleaners, restaurants and small office spaces. An ideal scenario would be to develop a new mixed-use project and then relocate desirable existing uses into the project as primary tenants or owners followed by redevelopment of the formerly occupied buildings.



## 2.8 52nd Street Precinct



The 52nd Street Precinct is the smallest of the precincts. It is comprised of the partial blocks in the study area from 51st Street, south to 52nd Street. This area is primarily defined by the relationship of the streets to Old Hiawatha Avenue. All west to east traffic terminates into Old Hiawatha Avenue, which provides no clear or easy automotive traffic circulation through the neighborhood.

Typically, the existing street section is that of a traditional residential street with sidewalks, boulevards, and residences on each side except along Old Hiawatha Avenue. Along Old Hiawatha Avenue the street section is defined by the sound barrier and a narrow swath of land to the east of Old Hiawatha. Due to the sloped topography, the residential properties on the west side of the street are higher than the street and sidewalk. The sound wall along Old Hiawatha Avenue is relatively prominent in this location, isolating Old Hiawatha Avenue from the LRT line, Hiawatha Avenue and Minnehaha Park. The resulting condition is one that is relatively quiet, although there is some park-and-ride activity associated with the 50th Street station.

Within the precinct, there are only two existing commercial structures, both of which provide local community services. The remainder of the buildings are residential use, ranging from detached single-family homes to owner occupied and rental multi-family unit buildings.



*Image Number 1- View on Old Hiawatha Avenue Looking north*



*Image Number 2- View looking north from 52nd Street and Old Hiawatha Avenue with existing retail use in the foreground.*

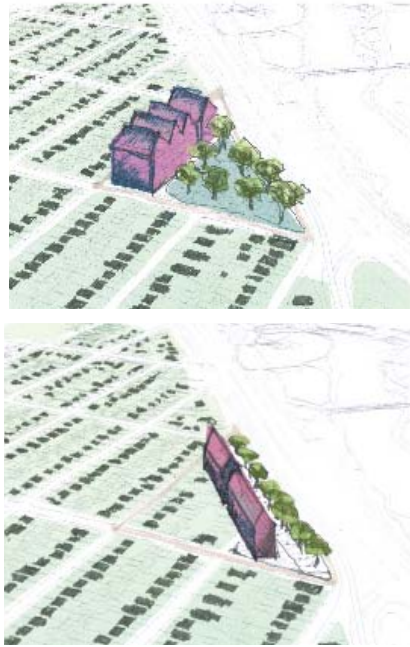


## 2.8.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Community workshop participants provided a limited range of comments regarding redevelopment within the limits of the precinct. Comments included the desire to maintain the residential feel to the area with a possible addition of a coffee shop in the area. Public infrastructure focused on making pedestrian connections in and outside of the study area, including to Minnehaha Park via the 50th Street crossing to the north.

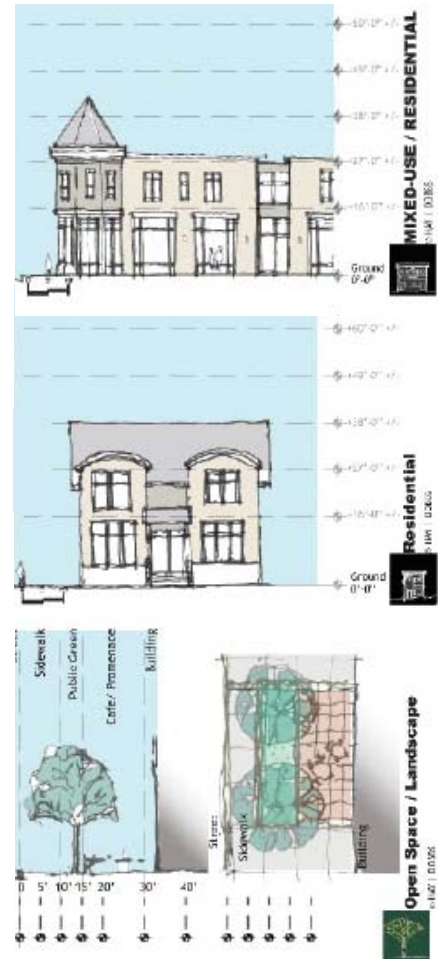
Community participants expressed a desire for redevelopment that would face Old Hiawatha Avenue, and to provide a park or promenade in front of redevelopment. Attention to paving, sidewalks and street trees was also expressed. Additional documentation of the community workshops can be found in section 4.

### Preferred massing strategies



*Community input from the workshops was in favor of creating greenspace in front of future development along Old Hiawatha Avenue.*

### Selected visual preference cards



*These images are a selected few from a visual preference workshop that express scale and types of development including public amenities desired by workshop participants.*



*Illustration A: This view looking south along Old Hiawatha Avenue illustrates one possible greenway/promenade. The inset image is of the current conditions.*

## 2.8.2 LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS AND URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

All of the recommended land uses for the 52nd Street Precinct are residential. The recommendation for a portion of the precinct is to retain the present detached single family land use. The recommendation for the remainder of the area is to include duplexes and multi-family residential land use types. Given the lack of easy access into this precinct, commercial uses are not recommended.

Because this area is residential, public infrastructure changes should include traffic calming measures to support foot traffic and should coordinate with the creation of a promenade/greenway that would include a wide sidewalk and extensive boulevard planting. (See Illustration A, above). This promenade can connect the precincts to one another and to the greater neighborhood, and would be predicated on extensive redevelopment along Old Hiawatha Avenue. This would involve approval by the city in order to develop a portion of the right-of-way as the promenade, creating a shared amenity.

The combined goal could be accomplished through a narrowing of the street width, allowing wider sidewalks and boulevards; planting of street trees and creating a pedestrian-friendly and safe promenade; setting new residential development back from the sidewalk; and discouraging commuter parking.



### 2.8.3 POTENTIAL BUILDING EXPRESSIONS AND RELATIONSHIP TO OLD HIAWATHA

Redevelopment in this precinct should be residential. An increase in scale and density should respect the existing neighborhood scale and type while creating a stronger spatial relationship to Old Hiawatha and the promenade/greenway. Primary building frontage should face Old Hiawatha. The proposed residential buildings would face this new green corridor, serving as both as a buffer and as a transition from the existing neighborhood to the sound wall.

The promenade would create a public amenity, connect to trail and park systems and enhance the pedestrian access to the light rail stations. The promenade would serve as a connector between the Minnehaha Corridor Precinct to the south, and the 50th Street Gateway Precinct to the north.

Landscaping, public art and signage would all contribute to create a friendly area for local and pedestrian traffic without losing the residential feel of the precinct. Landscaping strategies include vegetated swales, or rainwater gardens, to complement the infrastructure and topography within the precinct while creating a unique public/private amenity. Decorative street lighting should be used to create a street that is distinct from others within the precinct and to enhance pedestrian safety, encouraging use of the promenade for bicycle and foot traffic to and from the LRT Station.

*Existing Conditions*



*Potential Building Expressions*



*Above:*

*Existing conditions in the 52nd Street Precinct and photographs of potential building expressions of future development.*

## 2.8.4 LAND USE RECOMMENDATION MAP



### LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS

- 1-2 Storey Single Family Residential
- Single, Two-family or 2-3 Storey Multi-Family Residential
- 3-5 Storey Multi-Family Residential
- 2-3 Storey Mixed Use
- 3-5 Storey Mixed Use or Commercial
- Yardville Right-of-Way
- Promenade



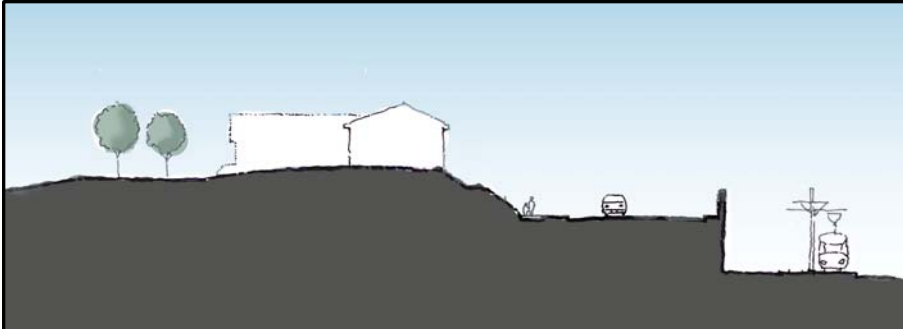
**A** Viewpoint for Illustration A on page 2-21

**a** **a'** Location of cross-section drawings on page 2-24



Precinct key plan

## 2.8.5 STREET SECTIONS



Street section a-a' - Existing conditions



Street section a-a' - Recommended street section

Looking North at Old Hiawatha Lane



*New development should front onto the promenade/greenway to provide a residential edge to linear open space. This will enhance the linear feeling of the promenade while creating a usable amenity for adjacent residents.*







Create one-way or reduced land width roadway

Develop linear greenway



North

52nd Street Gateway Precinct Primary Infrastructure Recommendations

## 2.8.5 TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Traffic circulation in this precinct is defined by the relationship of the conventional street grid to the diagonal created by Old Hiawatha Avenue and results in an awkward “dead end” circulation pattern. This is compounded by the closed pattern relative to 50th Street and Minnehaha Avenue. Possible strategies for improving circulation while calming traffic include narrowing lane width or changing traffic patterns to one-way for Old Hiawatha Avenue. Decreasing the width of Old Hiawatha Avenue would decrease traffic and reduce on-street parking by light rail passengers.

## 2.8.6 MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

The land use recommendations call for an increase in residential housing types. Due to the proximity to the LRT station, the market will favorably support multifamily residencies that increase density. These types may include rental and owner-occupied multifamily development.

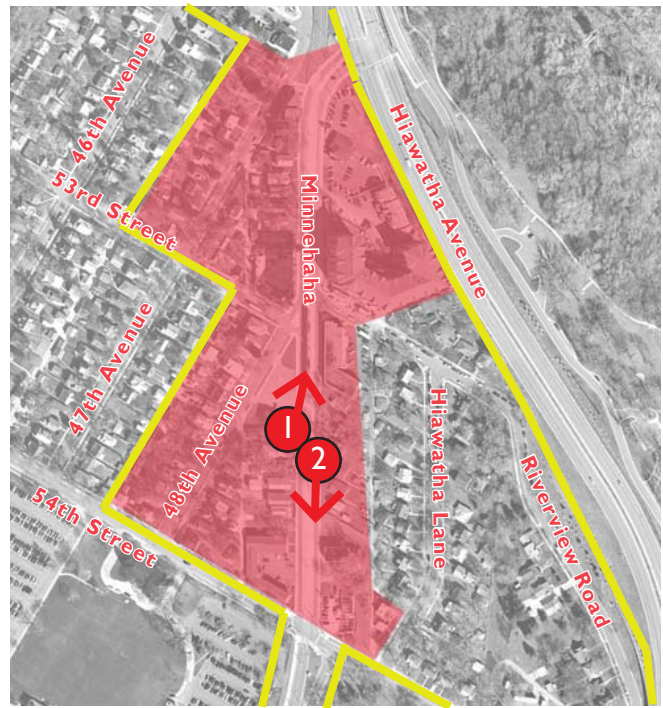


*There is a market opportunity for developing higher density housing close to the LRT station. Providing a linear promenade/greenway will create an amenity that will enhance the value of such development.*

## 2.9 Minnehaha Corridor Precinct

The Minnehaha Corridor Precinct is the most “urban” of the four precincts. Minnehaha Avenue is relatively narrow due to the width of the street and the presence of the light rail line down the center of the right of way. The setbacks from Minnehaha Avenue are shallow relative to the remainder of the study area.

Despite the narrowness per se of the right-of-way being a problem, there are two main issues on Minnehaha: 1) the pedestrian realm is extremely constrained; and 2) the sidewalk sits at the edge of the right-of-way and there is no room to expand or shift the sidewalk within the right-of-way. In many cases there is no buffer other than the curb between the traffic moving in a 13’ lane and the narrow 5’ sidewalk. Ordinarily, there might be a parking lane (8’) as well as a curbside zone or boulevard between the moving vehicles and the pedestrian travel zone, but this is not present on Minnehaha Avenue. Combined, these conditions create a substandard pedestrian realm in an area that is experiencing demand for development. Efforts to create a better pedestrian conditions and a better sense of connection between the VA and 50th Street Stations are also at risk.



*Image Number 1- Minnehaha Avenue looking north*



*Image Number 2- Minnehaha Avenue looking south*

## 2.9.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public input displayed a wide range of desires. Residential land use preferences were identified as detached single family residences, duplexes, townhomes and multi-family residential unit buildings. Commercial land use preferences ranged from mixed-use construction to theatres, hotels and restaurants.

Suggested public infrastructure changes included new pocket parks, public art and a stop light to allow pedestrians to cross Hiawatha Avenue to Minnehaha Park.

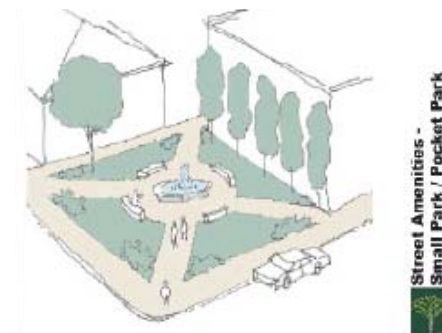
Participants imagined land use in the corridor as primarily residential, with mixed-use commercial development at the intersection of 54th Street and Minnehaha Avenue. Additional documentation of the community workshops can be found in section 4.

### Preferred massing strategy



*Community workshop outcomes favored creating a mixed-use development node with a pocket park facing the intersection of 54th Street and Minnehaha Avenue.*

### Selected visual preference cards



*These images are representative of a visual preference workshop that gave participants the ability to express scale and types of development, including public amenities that they desired.*



*Minnehaha Avenue should continue to be developed as a very urban corridor with the most dense development occurring at 54th street*



*View of the west side of Minnehaha Avenue from 54th Street*

## 2.9.2 LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS AND URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

The plan designates the intersection of Minnehaha and 54th Street as future 3 to 5 storey mixed use development. While this does create an opportunity for increased development and public amenities, it does pose some complications relative to the public realm. In general, mixed-use commercial zoning in Minneapolis does not require any setbacks from the front property line. Furthermore, it limits setbacks to eight feet from the property line. These requirements are intended to maintain an urban quality to development in Minneapolis commercial districts. However, it presumes a variety of conditions that normally include on-street parking, street furnishings, a boulevard and sidewalk. Given the absence of most of these conditions, a setback of some kind is needed in order to accommodate pedestrian enhancements with new development at the corner and along Minnehaha. This setback is needed to provide an expanded buffer (i.e., boulevard), pedestrian (i.e., sidewalk) and building frontage zones (e.g., landscaped setback or paving).

An absolute minimum scenario for new commercial and mixed-use development at this scale should be that no portion of the building shall be located closer than 13 feet from the property line or 18 feet from the curb, with the sidewalk moved just inside the property line. This will create a five-foot boulevard, five-foot sidewalk and eight-foot building frontage zone between the building and sidewalk. Residential, multifamily development could have front porches and steps extend up to five feet into the eight foot building frontage zone. Traffic and regulatory signs, ornamental lighting, trees in structured soils and decorative paving could be placed in the boulevard.

*Existing Conditions*



*Potential Building Expressions*



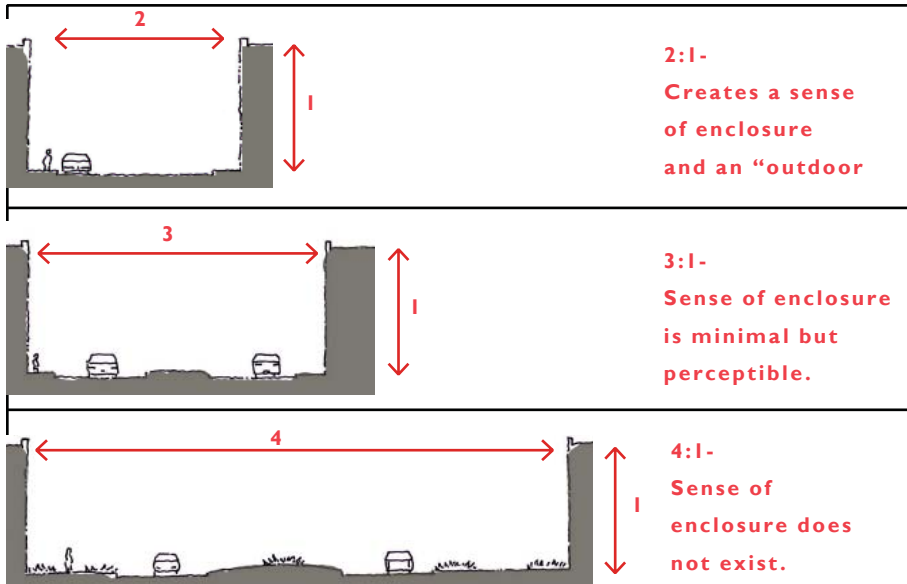
**2.9.3 POTENTIAL BUILDING EXPRESSIONS**

The Minnehaha Corridor serves as the second TOD node within the study area and future mixed-use construction should reflect this. New buildings should have open facades to be inviting to pedestrians, automotive traffic, and light rail passengers. In order to increase the ease of pedestrian circulation, future construction should be set back from the existing right-of-way. This would allow for the creation of seating areas on the sidewalks or areas for street trees.

The residential construction within the Minnehaha corridor should also be set back from the easement in order to allow for spaces such as stoops and porches, which will enhance the residential feel of the street. Creating a continuous line of setback will also re-enforce the urban qualities of the Minnehaha corridor, creating an urban space with a diverse set of uses.

*Below: A desirable spatial condition created by buildings and open space is that of an “outdoor room”. Common building height to street width ratios that can create this sense of enclosure (and “outdoor room” are illustrated here.*

*Above: Existing conditions in the Minnehaha Corridor Precinct and photographs of potential building expressions of future development.*

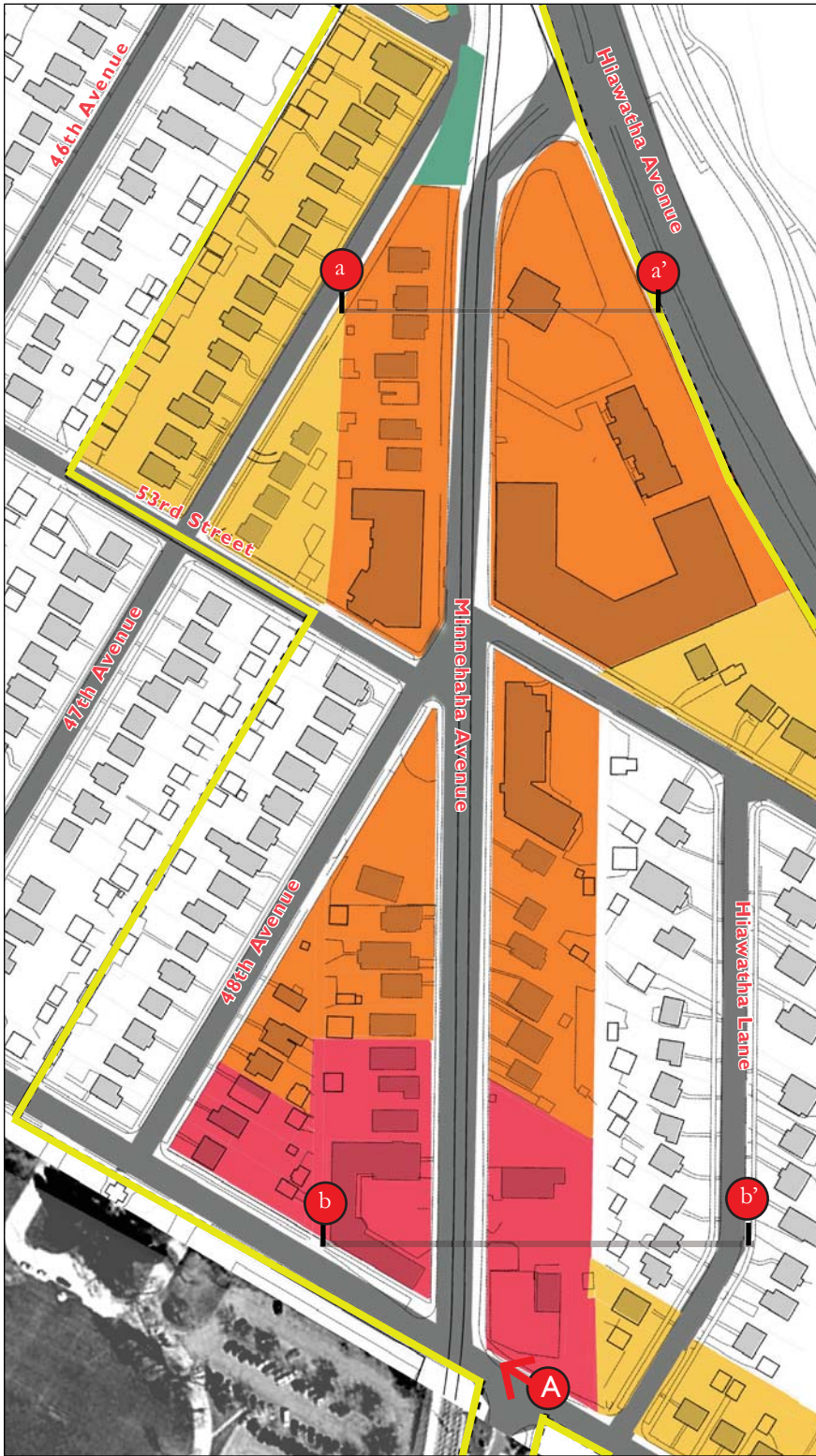


Urban amenities such as planters, bike racks and kiosks should be limited to the commercial areas within the precinct. However, decorative street lighting could be used on Minnehaha Avenue in order to tie all future development on the street together.

Development along Minnehaha should be of sufficient scale to create a sense of an “outdoor room.” The ratio of building heights to distance between buildings opposite one another is critical to this endeavor. The height guidelines allow for such a sense of enclosure.



## 2.9.4 LAND USE RECOMMENDATION MAP







### LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS

-  1-2 Storey Single Family Residential
-  Single, Two-family or 2-3 Storey Multi-Family Residential
-  3-5 Storey Multi-Family Residential
-  2-3 Storey Mixed Use
-  3-5 Storey Mixed Use or Commercial
-  Yardville Right-of-Way
-  Promenade

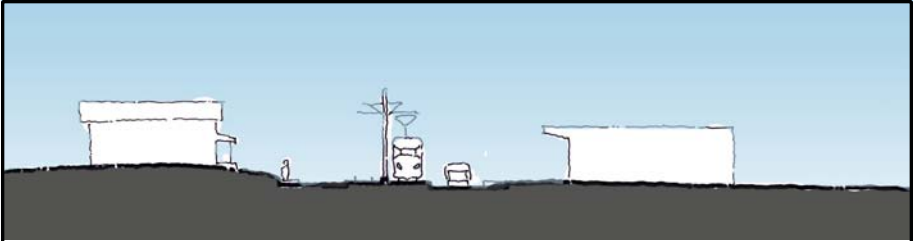


Precinct key plan

 North  
 0' 100' 200'  
 Viewpoint for Illustration A on page 2-28

 Location of cross-section drawings on page 2-31

2.9.5 STREET SECTIONS

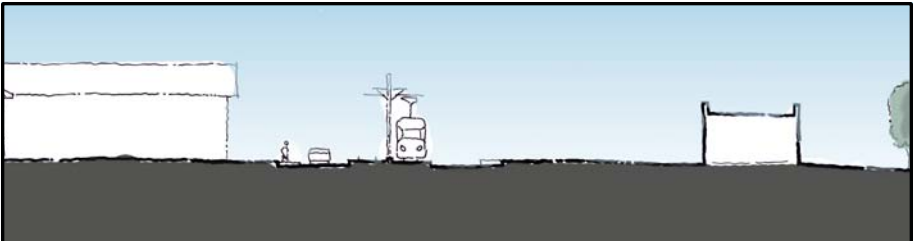


Street section a-a' -Existing conditions



Street section a-a' -Recommended street section

Looking North at Minnehaha Avenue south of 52nd Street



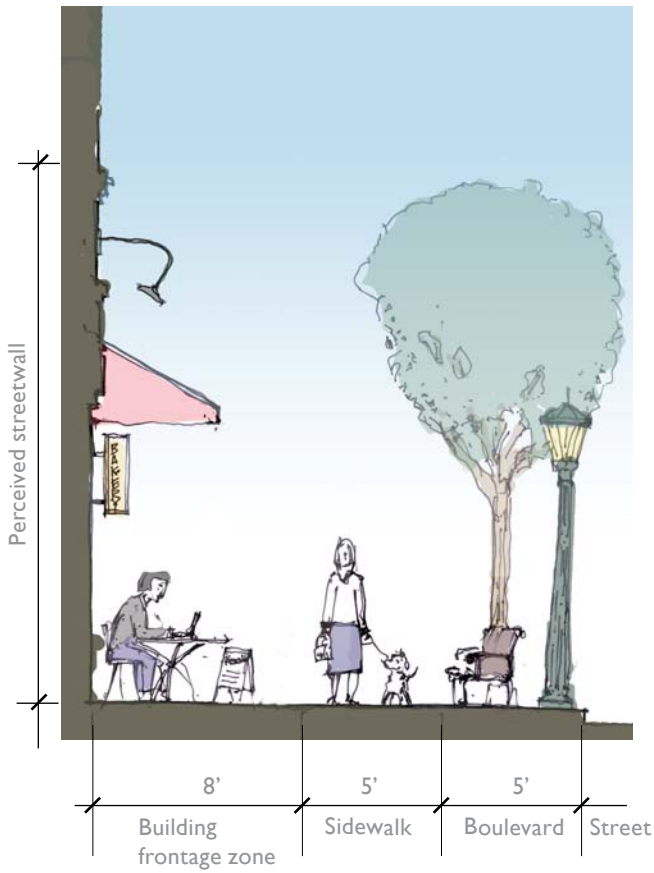
Street section b-b' -Existing conditions



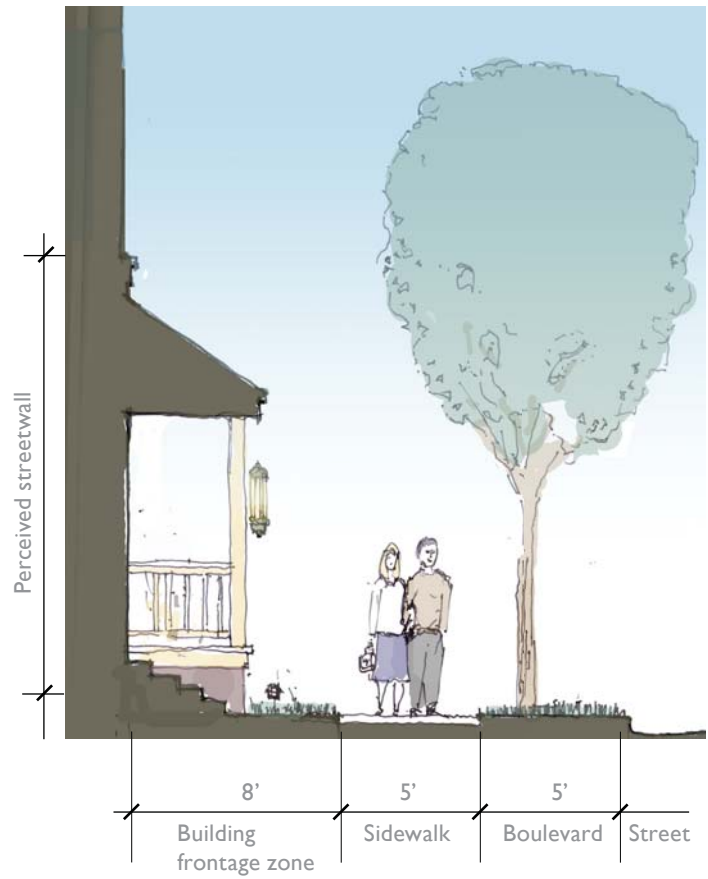
Street section b-b' -Recommended street section

Looking North at Minnehaha Avenue north of 54th Street

# STREET SECTIONS, CONTINUED



*Above:*  
Street section diagram illustrating the proposed sidewalk and building frontage at the mixed-use section of the Minnehaha Corridor Precinct.



*Above:*  
Street section diagram illustrating the proposed sidewalk and building frontage at the residential section of the Minnehaha Corridor Precinct.



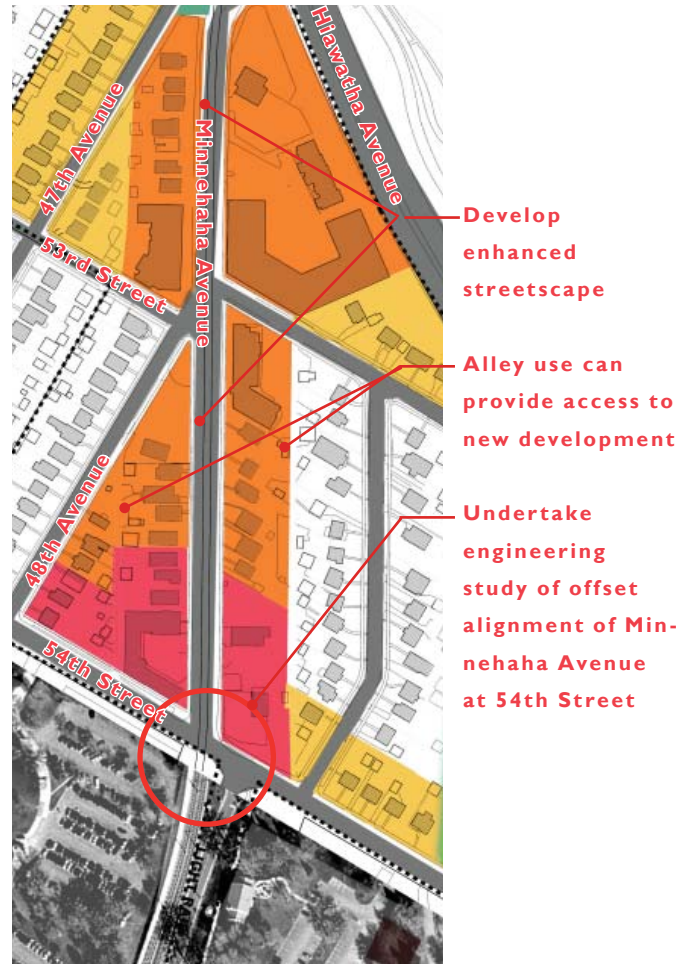
## 2.9.6 TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Traffic circulation in the Minnehaha Corridor Precinct can be technically defined as two-way street traffic. However, the light rail tracks located in the center of Minnehaha Avenue serve to separate the two sides of the street. In addition to this pair of one-way streets, curb cuts and on-street parking are not permitted on Minnehaha Avenue.

The lack of on-street parking and the awkwardness of access mean that the viability of commercial uses along Minnehaha should be limited to the intersection of Minnehaha Avenue and 54th Street. The City of Minneapolis has a policy of prohibiting new curb cuts on Minnehaha because of the risk of traffic turning left against the one way or across the LRT tracks. Although this improves pedestrian conditions along the sidewalk, it limits access to and location of off-street parking. The creation of parking bays to support commercial and visitor parking is encouraged, but will require a dedication of ROW. The design of parking bays should be consistent with a unified, long-term streetscape plan along Minnehaha.

However, 54th and Minnehaha remain a viable location for limited commercial services in addition to residential development. To accommodate automotive and service access without further curb cuts, alley access to off-street parking is appropriate. Future development should be designed to allow access to surface parking or access to in-building parking spaces from the alley behind buildings facing Minnehaha Avenue. This would allow a more pedestrian focus to the Minnehaha Avenue and 54th Street frontages and reduce congestion along 54th Street. Additionally, any development plans should leave enough distance between the building's rear façade, including access ramps and permanent landscaping, to allow for future access or width adjustments should they become necessary. Speed issues may be mitigated by traffic calming devices such as speed bumps.

In addition, signal controls could also be installed at the intersection of Minnehaha Avenue and 54th Street in order to create more order for drivers and pedestrians. This would have the added benefit of allowing for automobiles to enter and exit the alleyways and offset roadways in a more structured manner.



 *Minnehaha Corridor Precinct Primary Infrastructure Recommendations*

## 2.9.7 MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

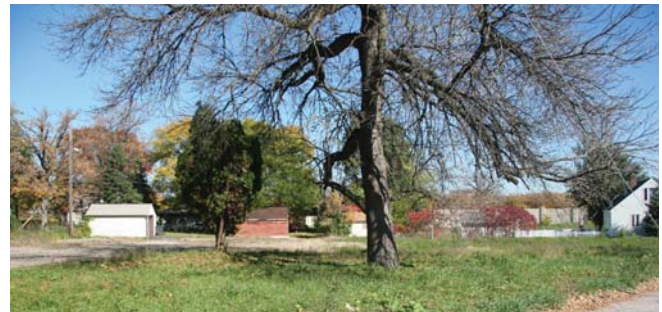
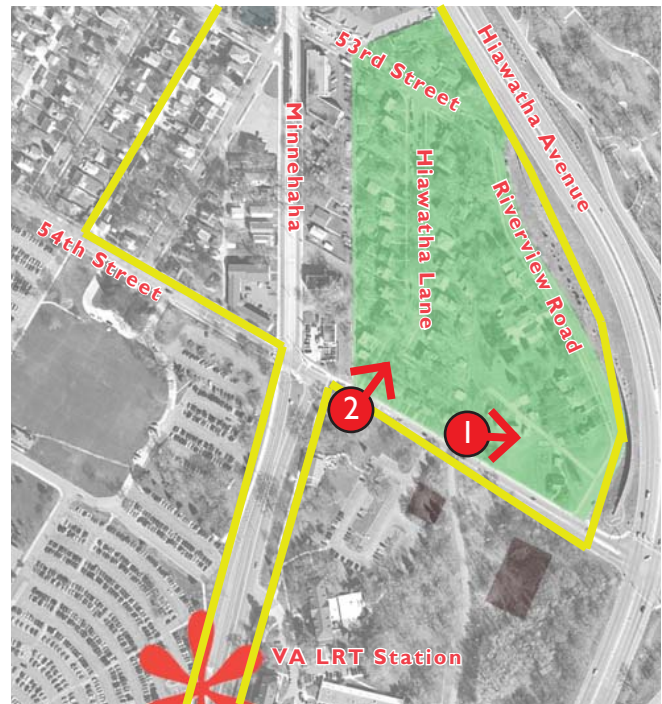
The proximity of the Minnehaha corridor to the VA LRT station results in an opportunity for new commercial and residential mixed land use. The added proximity of the VA hospital re-enforces this opportunity to support commercial service at the southern end of Minnehaha Avenue. Differing from the 50th Street precinct, recommendations are geared towards services that will benefit from visitors to the VA, in addition to local residents. Hence, suggested retail types include hotel, small office space and restaurants, in addition to convenience retailing similar to that recommended at 50th Street.

## 2.10 Yardville Precinct

The Yardville Precinct is named for the “Yardville USA” plan promoted by McCall’s magazine in 1949, as returning soldiers and their families considered new ways to modernize their homes and communities. The Yardville USA plan suggested that homeowners combine parts of their yards to form semi-public shared areas.

Today, the Yardville Precinct contains open space including right of way running between the back yards of Riverview Road and Hiawatha Lane. This is treated as de facto common green space for residents. The City maintains an easement, but the underlying owner is the Minnesota Department of Revenue. To the immediate east is rental property and vacant land owned by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. To the south of 54th Street, but outside of the project area, is federally owned property.

The Yardville Precinct is located to the east of the Minnehaha Corridor Precinct. This precinct is comprised almost entirely of single family homes and is relatively isolated due to the street pattern and the presence of the sound barrier to the east, separating it from Hiawatha Avenue. Due to the limited number of streets within the precinct, options for traffic circulation are currently quite limited. This is both an asset and a liability; an asset because traffic within the precinct is typically limited to residents because there are no through streets. However, exiting the precinct along 54th Street is difficult during peak periods and Minnehaha Avenue is restricted to one way traffic.



*Image Number 1- View looking east from 54th Street*



*Image Number 2- View looking north on Hiawatha Lane from 54th Street*



## 2.10.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Preferences expressed in community workshops were primarily for residential redevelopment. The types of residential redevelopment ranged from single family detached housing to owner occupied duplexes and multi-family housing. Of great concern was that any redevelopment be of reasonably similar scale and style.

Participants expressed three desires relative to public infrastructure. The first was a desire to relieve the traffic problems associated with access to 54th Street occurring during the peak hours of use and at the intersection of 54th Street and Hiawatha Avenue. The second set of comments were in regards to a desire for formal designation of the unused right-of-way within the precinct as a public green space. Finally, workshop participants expressed a desire to improve pedestrian crossings at Hiawatha Avenue to Minnehaha Park. Additional documentation of the community workshops can be found in section 4.

Preferred massing strategy



*Community input from the workshops was in favor of development that was similar in scale to the existing residences and included a public green space.*

Selected visual preference cards



*These images are a selected few from a visual preference workshop that express scale and types of development including building types and public amenities desired by workshop participants.*



*View of 54th Street looking west to Minnehaha Avenue*

## 2.10.2 LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS AND URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

Given the availability of public land and the development pressure along Minnehaha, this precinct is certain to experience change over time. However, given the desire of the residents within this precinct to retain the character and feel of Yardville, the existing low density residential enclave along Hiawatha Lane should be respected.

The plan encourages redevelopment over time in the area designated as “single-family, two family and two- to three-storey multi-family”. However, the plan also recognizes that development outcomes will depend upon a combination of market pressure and property owner participation. In its consideration of future development in the Yardville precinct, the City should develop more explicit guidelines for the potential transfer of the Mn/DOT property and Yardville ROW which preserve the spirit of the historic Yardville name and shared nature of the open space.

The land use recommendations should support a range of possibilities that include existing and new single-family, new duplexes and new two- to three-storey multi-family

residences. Because of the largely single-family context, increased residential density is encouraged, but the scale should be respectful of the existing context.

The public owned right-of-way would become a buffer and transition area between existing single-family homes on Hiawatha Lane and what future development scenarios might occur along Riverview Road and 54th Street. Redevelopment with extensive property owner participation could incorporate this ROW. Although it would be inappropriate as a public park, the City could stipulate that it remain as open space as part of development, perhaps maintaining a public easement along its length. As a feature and internal focus for future development (e.g., a mews or courtyard), it could be of aesthetic benefit to the residents of the entire area.

A more limited redevelopment scenario could also involve subdividing the Yardville ROW among existing and future property owners. Any design and/or distribution of this amenity should make it clear that this is private space intended for the adjacent residents rather than general public use.

### 2.10.3 POTENTIAL BUILDING EXPRESSIONS

The Yardville Precinct should continue to be a residential area with associated greenspace. Future development should encourage pedestrian traffic and access to the light rail station and the proposed commercial node at Minnehaha Avenue and 54th Street.

Residential uses may be at a higher density, but with a compatible character such as “big house” design, or stacked rowhouses. In addition to this, development on infill parcels should not orphan existing single family homes such that future redevelopment at a similar scale and massing becomes infeasible. In the case of more extensive development projects, the center of gravity for building mass should generally be at 54th and Riverview Road.

While future development should primarily face 54th Street or Riverview Road, all future development should be designed to take advantage of the proposed greenspace. As a feature and internal focus for future development (e.g., a mews or courtyard), it could be of aesthetic benefit to the residents to the precinct. Any design and/or distribution of this amenity should make it clear that this is private space intended for the adjacent residents rather than general public use.

*Existing Conditions*



*Potential Building Expressions*

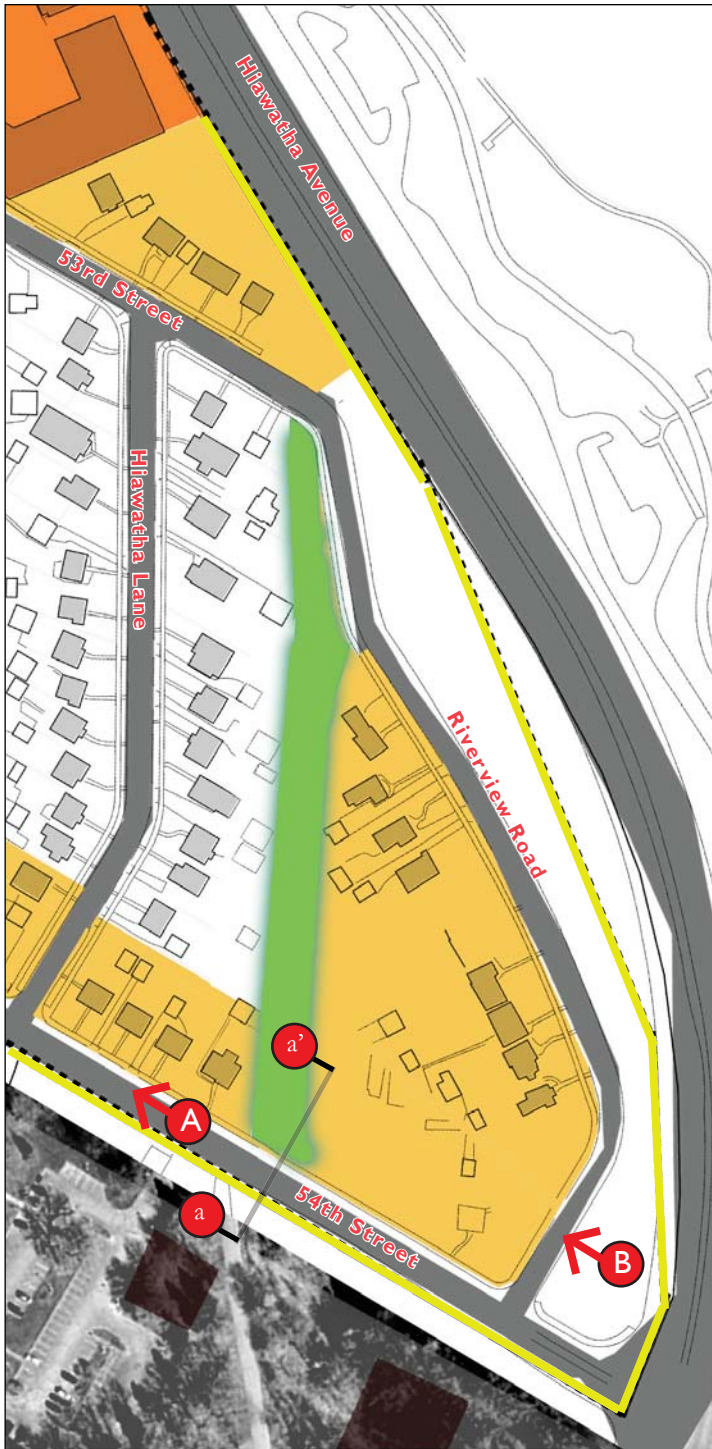


*Above:*

*Existing conditions in the Yardville Precinct and photographs of potential building expressions of future development.*



## 2.10.4 LAND USE RECOMMENDATION MAP

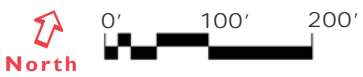


### LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS


-  1-2 Storey Single Family Residential
-  Single, Two-family or 2-3 Storey Multi-Family Residential
-  3-5 Storey Multi-Family Residential
-  2-3 Storey Mixed Use
-  3-5 Storey Mixed Use or Commercial
-  Yardville Right-of-Way
-  Promenade





Precinct key plan

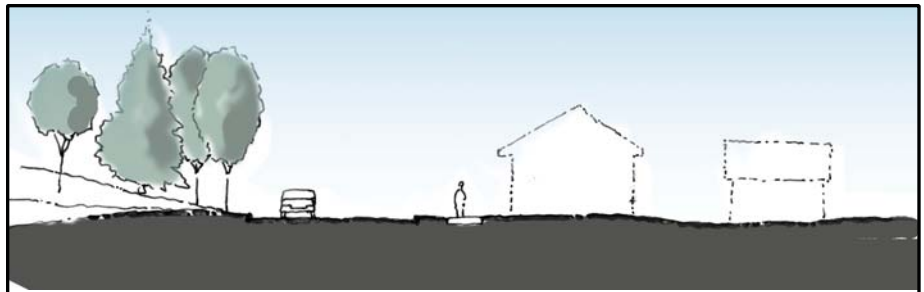


 Viewpoint for Illustration A on page 2-36

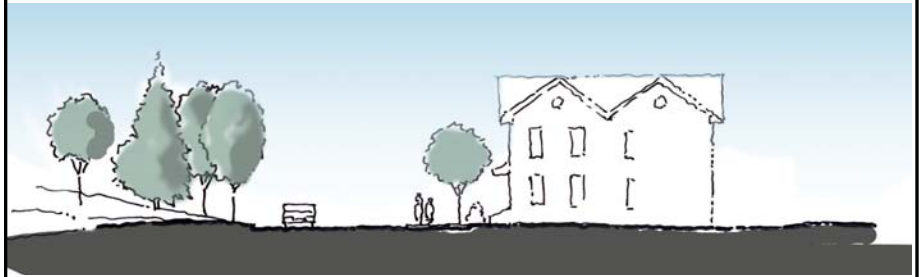
 Viewpoint for annotated illustrative perspective on page 2-40

  Location of cross-section drawings on page 2-39

## 2.10.5 STREET SECTIONS



**Street section a-a' -Existing conditions**



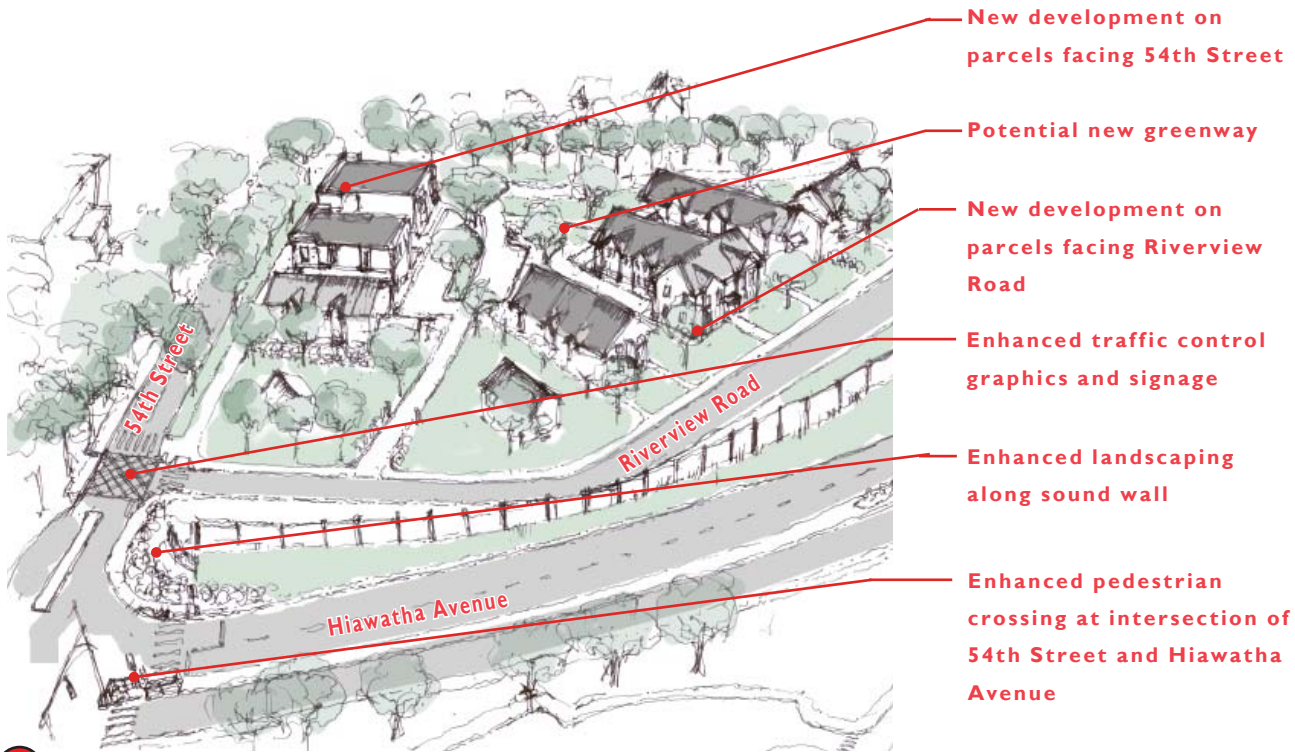
**Street section a-a' -Street section, small scale infill**



**Street section a-a' -Street section, larger scale redevelopment**

Looking West at 54th Street

2.10.6 ILLUSTRATIVE ANNOTATED PERSPECTIVES



**B** Small scale infill and redevelopment



**B** Larger scale redevelopment



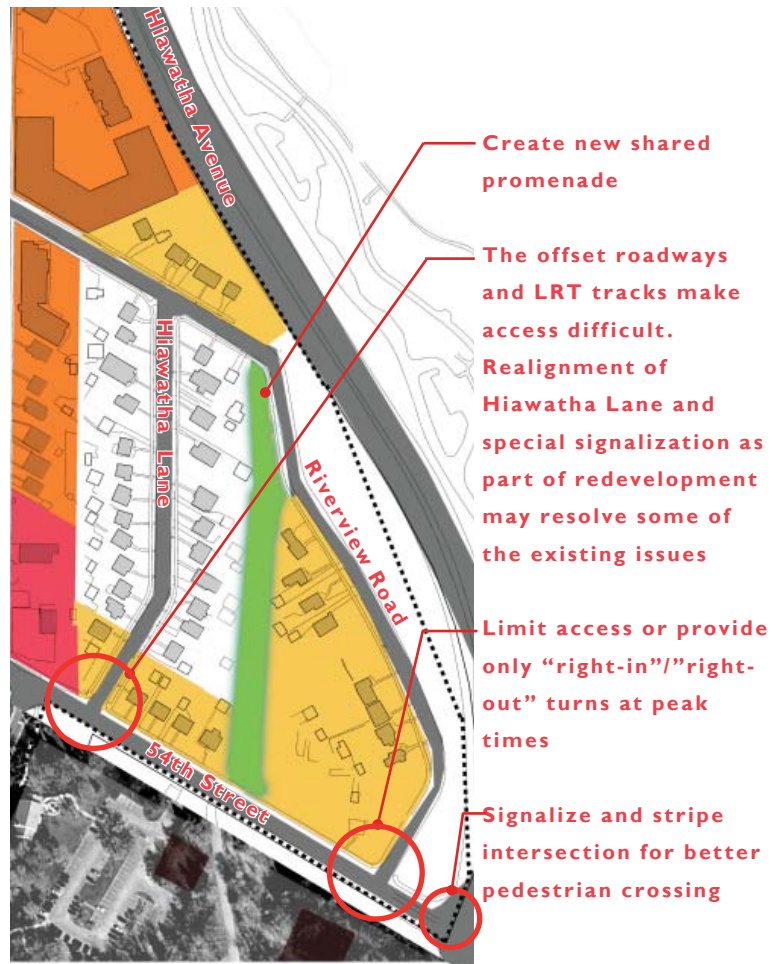
## 2.10.7 TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Traffic volume and vehicular circulation within the limits of the Yardville Precinct are relatively low due to the limited access routes and limited destinations within the precinct. The low number of detached residences results in low trip generation. However, there are peak period traffic queues on 54th Street that interfere with access to and from Hiawatha Lane and Riverview Road.

Traffic control measures should be taken in order to aid vehicles exiting the precinct during peak hours. Possible measures include signage requesting drivers not to block the intersection and painted pavement defining an area to keep clear at the intersections. These preventative measures would be located at 54th Street where it intersects with Hiawatha Lane and Riverview Road.

## 2.10.8 MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

Given that Yardville is within close proximity to the VA LRT station, higher density residential housing can be supported in this area. The type of residential development could range from detached single family to multi-family, and include a mix of owner-occupied and rental units. Given the amount of publicly owned land within the precinct, the sale of this property will be the first market opportunity. The subsequent development opportunities on this property will be determined partly by the purchaser. This is an opportunity for a public/private partnership which would involve market rate and affordable housing types.



- Create new shared promenade
- The offset roadways and LRT tracks make access difficult. Realignment of Hiawatha Lane and special signalization as part of redevelopment may resolve some of the existing issues
- Limit access or provide only "right-in"/"right-out" turns at peak times
- Signalize and stripe intersection for better pedestrian crossing

 North  
Minnehaha Corridor Precinct Primary Infrastructure Recommendations



# SECTION 3- GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS



## 3.1 General Development Guidelines

In addition to the precinct specific recommendations found in the planning framework (Section 2), these development guidelines apply to the entire study area as follows.

### 3.1.1 TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

Access to transit is the catalyst for future development and investment in the study area. In general, the area should be “urban” in scale with increased densities and a mix of uses, and these use types should support and transition into the existing neighborhood. Upgrades and improvements to existing building facades and development of streetscape should also re-enforce the walkability and livability of the area.

### 3.1.2 REDEVELOPMENT

This plan outlines a long term framework for investment and redevelopment. Redevelopment can take on many forms, including building remodeling and/reuse, selected building razing and site clearing, infill projects on existing underutilized land, and clean-up of polluted “brownfield” sites.

### 3.1.3 SCALE

The recommended scale of development varies between the study area precincts. Refer to the individual precinct land-use recommendations in order to identify the maximum recommended height. These recommendations are not to suggest that the volume of new construction should use the maximum allowable envelope. Instead, future development should follow the general strategy of the land use recommendations and be designed with the goal of physically clarifying relationships between the centers and edges of the specific study area nodes. This can be achieved through the careful articulation of the building facades and building heights relative to the context and neighboring structures. Particular attention should be paid to transitions in scale that blend new development into the existing neighborhood.



*New development should transition in scale to blend into the existing neighborhood.*

### 3.1.4 DEVELOPER ENGAGEMENT AND TOD PRINCIPLES

Current and future developers, owners and tenants should actively participate in the plan implementation. Therefore, it is recommended that:

- This document be readily available to all parties as a means of describing the desired course of development within the neighborhood.
- Developers be engaged in an active discussion and dialogue regarding the goals of the plan and implementation of its ideas.
- Developers actively integrate TOD design principles/ideas into their projects with respect to the recommendations provided in this document.

The City of Minneapolis actively participates with and alongside private parties in a similar fashion.

### 3.1.5 IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

In addition to private sector development activity, the plan points to a number of implementation scenarios that would require government involvement and which warrant further exploration. They include the following:

- **50th Street Station Redevelopment and Pedestrian Plaza**

The City and neighborhood should explore a specific redevelopment scenario involving Caps Grill seeks to incorporate Caps as a primary tenant or property owner. This project should seek to create a pedestrian plaza connection with Old Hiawatha/44th Avenue South. This scenario should explore the possibility of removing the retaining wall adjacent to the station, better opening up the station into the neighborhood and creating a more active use fronting the station, such as a restaurant or café use (with parking behind, within or beneath the building rather than next to the station). The redevelopment scenario should also consider incorporating the adjacent properties on the south side of 50th Street.

- **Old Hiawatha Promenade**

The plan envisions a promenade or greenway being created along Old Hiawatha from north of the 50th Street Station to where the LRT enters Minnehaha at 52nd Street. Amenities might include wider sidewalks, boulevards, street trees and ornamental lighting. Such a scenario might include a narrowing of the street to provide space for the promenade and/or redevelopment alongside the promenade. This should be studied to determine potential funding sources and if this idea might leverage and/or be contingent upon redevelopment.

- **Minnehaha Avenue**

Exploration of signalization and/or changes in access/flow at 54th Street.

- **Streetscape design and implementation**

Develop consistent streetscapes on the primary roadways with emphasis on the 50th and 54th Street nodes.

- **Mn/DOT Land Disposition / Yardville ROW**

In its consideration of future development in the Yardville precinct, the City should develop more explicit guidelines for the potential transfer of the Mn/DOT property and Yardville ROW which preserve the spirit of the historic Yardville name and shared nature of the open space.

- **VA Medical Center engagement**

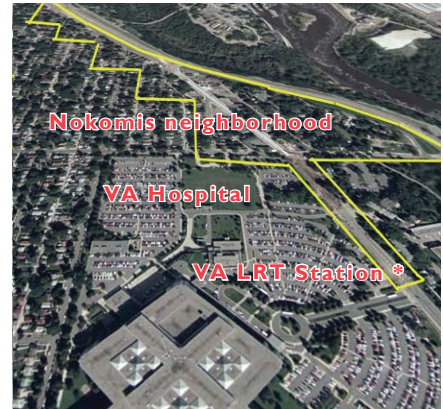
The City should seek to work closely with the VA to help promote the goals of this plan on the federal/VA property.

- **Rezoning (40-Acre) Study**

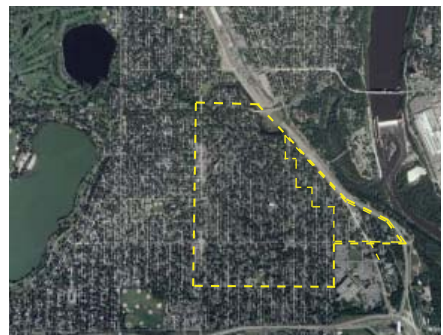
The City should incorporate this plan into the city comprehensive plan and should undertake a “40 acre study” as required for rezoning in support of this plan.

- **Pedestrian Lighting**

Decorative pedestrian lighting should be considered a priority for all precincts. Pedestrian lighting would increase safety throughout the plan area, and should be part of any redevelopment plans. It may also be initiated as a separate project independent of new development.



*Partnerships between the City and VA should be pursued to improve connections between the hospital and surrounding community*



*Study area within the larger neighborhood context*



*Pedestrian lighting can help create a sense of place while improving safety*



## 3.2 Streets, Parking and Infrastructure

*Underutilized space can be used as small pocket parks, including public art and seating to create casual neighborhood meeting places.*



*Illustrative view of the land between Old Hiawatha Avenue and Minnebaha Avenue transformed into a pocket park for community use and activities. Minnebaha Place is visible in the distance with potential new development being shown surrounding this public open space.*

### 3.2.1 TRAFFIC AND PARKING COMPONENTS

With respect to parking and traffic, overall impact and opportunity is comprised of two components: the transit station/facility and the land uses surrounding the station/facility. Each type of land use will have its own parking and traffic generation characteristics. The characteristics of the overall area vary by location and type of station as well as by the frequency of service and range of the overall transit system. Urban LRT stations often have limited parking, but still generate traffic demand as passengers are dropped off or picked up. On-street parking may also increase due to the absence of park and ride facilities.

Presently, the 50th Street Station generates traffic and parking associated with travel to work in downtown Minneapolis as well as sporting events in downtown. It is currently neither desirable nor practical to provide large volumes of off-street parking to alleviate the use of nearby streets being used for parking. The desired character of the station area is compact and neighborhood-like. Large parking areas or structures may diminish this character and are discouraged at this time. Long-term this may change and it should be evaluated over the next decade. Regulation of on-street parking may be used to discourage long-term parking near stations. This approach is consistent with creating an environment where walking and bicycling is encouraged.

### 3.2.2 A COOPERATIVE APPROACH TO MINIMIZING PARKING AND TRAFFIC

TOD best practices combine urban design, transit and transportation planning, context-sensitive street and infrastructure design, and architecture. A successful strategy requires an interdisciplinary approach including all of these areas; because in order to encourage people to walk, use transit, and realize the fundamental economic and opportunity cost savings of the internalization of trips, TOD planners must encourage the growth of well designed communities. This includes considering how light rail impacts daily commutes. To date, there has been no comprehensive research on the Hiawatha LRT line regarding how light rail ridership has impacted automobile trip generation/reduction, or on-street parking. As more data is collected and as the area evolves, cooperative efforts to minimize parking and traffic impacts should be pursued by all parties.

### 3.2.3 TRIP REDUCTION AND STREET DESIGN

It is important that TOD and the networks of roadways and streets that support it remain pedestrian-oriented while still accommodating service and passenger vehicles. The following overall strategies and guidelines can help foster more livable TOD neighborhoods:

- 1) Closer is better. Effective TOD places residential and office uses as close to transit as possible. 500 to 1000 feet is optimal; approximately two to three blocks.
- 2) The grid works. A dense grid of streets shortens overall walking distances and provides opportunities for more variety.
- 3) Make broader connections. Provide connections to local and regional routes, paths and trails that encourage longer walking and biking trips while improving greater community and regional access.
- 4) Create multimodal street designs. Developing a hierarchy of street designs that vary in modal emphasis provides a balanced transportation and access system.
- 5) Revise LOS (Level of Service) Standards. Local and regional agencies establish LOS requirements to maintain traffic flow at “acceptable” levels. Widening streets often alleviates congestion, but only temporarily while also discouraging walking and biking.
- 6) Balance local and regional travel needs. Local and regional routes and streets should look and function differently.
- 7) Integrate transportation demand management (TDM). TDM is a broad range of strategies and incentives that result in more efficient use of transportation resources. Combining land use, TDM, transit and infrastructure strategies together offers the greatest potential to reduce single-occupant vehicle travel.

### 3.2.4 PARKING

In addition to charging for parking, which is one of the most effective ways to change travel behavior, there are several other strategies that can be employed within the study area.

- 1) Configure parking so that it does not dominate. This includes four techniques: “Move it”, “Share it”, “Deck it” and “Wrap it”.
- 2) Reduce off-street parking requirements for development.
- 3) Protect the surrounding neighborhood(s). Institute neighborhood parking permits and time limits.
- 4) Utilize on-street parking.
- 5) Create parking districts. Larger areas near but not directly adjacent to the TOD can be used.

A comprehensive approach to examining how new development will impact existing parking conditions will be required in order to create an effective means of mitigating the impact of parking on residents and pedestrians.

# SECTION 4- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



# 4.1 Framework for Public Participation

The planning process began in 2005, when a steering committee consisting of local residents, property owners, businesses, community-based organizations, and developers assembled to guide and inform the process in cooperation with representatives of Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis.

Acknowledging the need for public participation, the City of Minneapolis created a framework by which the community could provide guidance and commentary regarding potential land use, design, urban form, and overall recommendations. The community was engaged in four public workshops and through ongoing steering committee input.

In December of 2005, Hay Dobbs was brought in to assist with the process of developing a station area plan. Data from the city, local community members and consultants were all used to help define the twenty-year vision for the study area articulated in this document. Included in the team were urban design, planning, traffic engineering and economic consultants.

The steering committee and community meetings that took place provided the Hay Dobbs team with appropriate insight and guidance to develop a plan and to prepare a document that addressed the best interests of the entire community in the most effective manner possible. The discussions were held with the understanding that the presence of light rail would have an impact on future development in the Nokomis neighborhood.

## 4.1.1 STEERING COMMITTEE PARTICIPATION

The steering committee was comprised of members of the community and representatives of Nokomis East Neighborhood Association (NENA). NENA is the official neighborhood organization established to represent the neighborhoods of Keewaydin, Minnehaha, Morris Park and Wenonah. A goal of the association is to foster neighborhood improvement, revitalization, and citizen participation. As part of their efforts, the neighborhood association assisted in the process and advertising of public meetings in the community. The steering committee was responsible for the review and approval of the project assumptions and the project goals.

## 4.2 Public Process

EVENT:	DATE:	ACTION:
Steering Comm. Mtg #1	30 November 05	Project kickoff, discussion of assumptions and goals
Community Workshop #1 (Not Hay Dobbs led)	8 December 05	Public presentation by NENA on the planning process, the study area, and planning and urban design principles.
Steering Comm. Mtg #2	11 January 06	Review of assumptions, goals and principles, preliminary site analysis and market review
Community Workshop #2	26 January 06	Public participation meeting to determine general preferences for potential change within the study area. Review of opportunities and constraints
Steering Comm. Mtg #3	22 February 06	Review of public workshop #2 results, presentation of precincts and workshop #3 strategy
Community Workshop #3	23 March 06	Public participation meeting to determine preferred building types, physical forms, public amenities and of potential change within specific locations of the study area
Steering Comm. Mtg. #4	26 April 06	Preliminary presentation of land use, market and traffic recommendations
Final Plan Presentation #4	11 May 06	Public presentation of land use, market and traffic recommendations with collective feedback

## 4.3 Public Participation Summary Statement

The summary statements below represent the goals and desires expressed by members of the community in a condensed format. They include comments made by members of the steering committee and participants in the community workshops.

### MEASURED CHANGE TO BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY

#### Nokomis East is residential in nature

- The Nokomis East Neighborhood is a residential neighborhood of Minneapolis. It is not part of the dense fabric of downtown, and should not be treated as such.
- Existing architectural qualities and scales should be maintained as a guideline for future neighborhood development

#### Protect the neighborhood

- As a neighborhood, the Nokomis East area has a long established history that is visible in several ways. These should be recognized and respected as part of the future of Nokomis East.
- Protect the historic homes of the neighborhood while encouraging residential development.
- Encourage development that is sensitive to the community and the architecture in which it is embodied. The existing neighborhood density should be respected.

#### Encourage diversity

- As a community, the Nokomis East neighborhood recognizes the diversity of people and needs within any given community, including their own.
- Future development should address and encourage economic diversity within the Nokomis East neighborhood where appropriate.

#### Keep Nokomis East green

- Historically, the Nokomis East neighborhood had a strong relationship with the Mississippi River and Minnehaha Falls. This history should be reflected in future public work within the neighborhood. Watersheds and other natural resources should be respected and protected as the community changes.



## 4.4 Public Participation Summaries

Members of the community at large were invited to assist in providing a vision for future development within the limits of the study area. In the second workshop, participants were asked to generate ideas of what form these developments would take. In the third workshop, participants were asked to identify potential building use types and physical forms specific to each precinct.

### 4.4.1 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP NUMBER 2

In the second of the four community workshops, participants were given large aerial photographs showing the entire project study area. Ten tables of eight to ten participants each noted perceived opportunities and constraints as well as specific desires and directives.

These comments and observations were then catalogued and summarized by the consulting team. Comments noted in green were in reference to infrastructure and public realm, while comments in blue were related to private development. Cautionary comments were noted in red.

Community participants were also asked to indicate their preference for various project and building types. These were generated at each table and then compiled by the consulting team. Red dots indicated a negative response and green dots represented a positive response to the image. These results are shown on the following two pages.



*Comment summary map from public workshop number 2 at a reduced scale*

# RESIDENTIAL AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE TYPES



*Comment summary*

COMMERCIAL AND MIXED USE  
TYPES



*Comment summary*

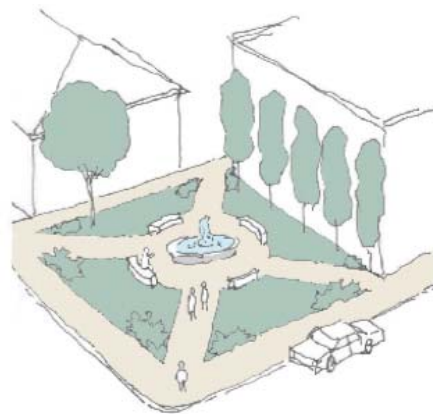


## 4.4.2 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP NUMBER 3

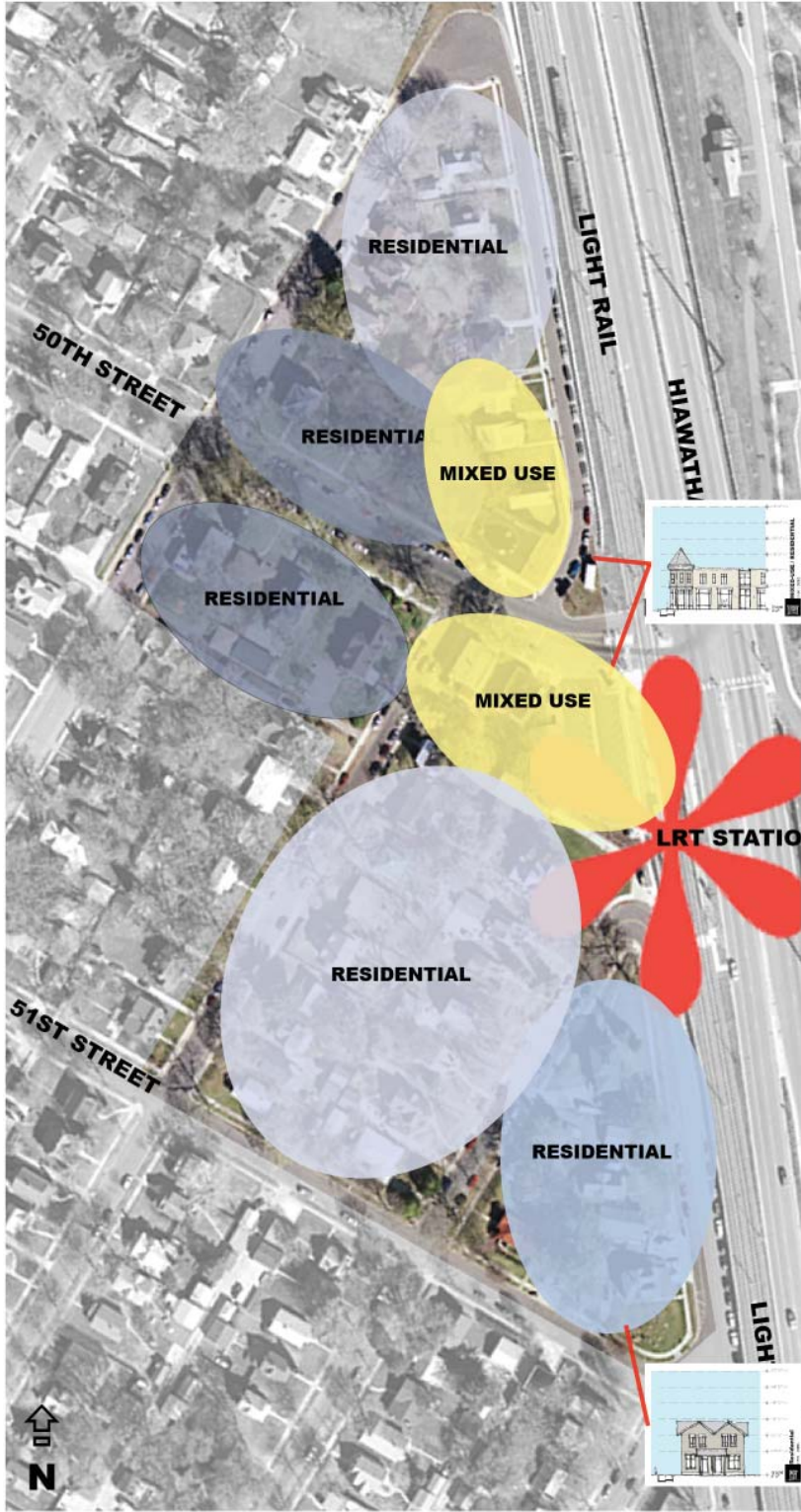
During community workshop number 3, public participants were requested to identify preferable building types and public infrastructure amenities on a precinct by precinct basis.

Groups of eight to ten persons were provided with large scale aerial maps of individual precincts and deck of visual preference cards. The cards illustrated a range of building types, heights and styles. Cards that illustrated public infrastructure were also included with each deck. These cards illustrated amenities including public art, parks and street lighting.

Participants were asked to use the cards as a means to describe their preferred vision of how redevelopment might appear in the precincts. The maps were later compiled by the consultant team, including comments written on the maps and visual preference cards. The following pages contain the summary maps from this exercise at a reduced scale.



*Visual preference cards*

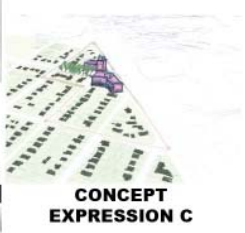
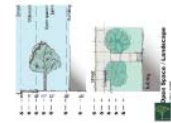


**WE DON'T NEED A GATEWAY- WE NEED A HOUSE. RESPECT THE RESIDENTS**

**IF WE ARE FORCED TO MOVE, THIS NEIGHBORHOOD WILL NO LONGER BELONG TO US.**

**SAN FRANCISCO STYLE ROW HOUSES STAGGERED TOWARD HIAWATHA**

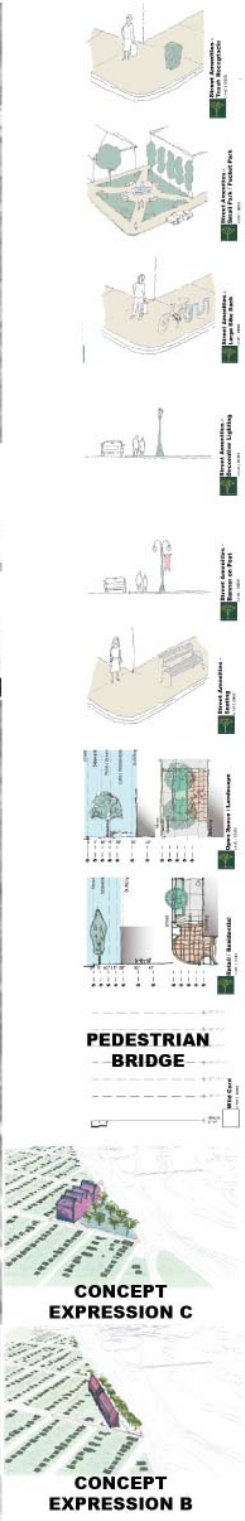
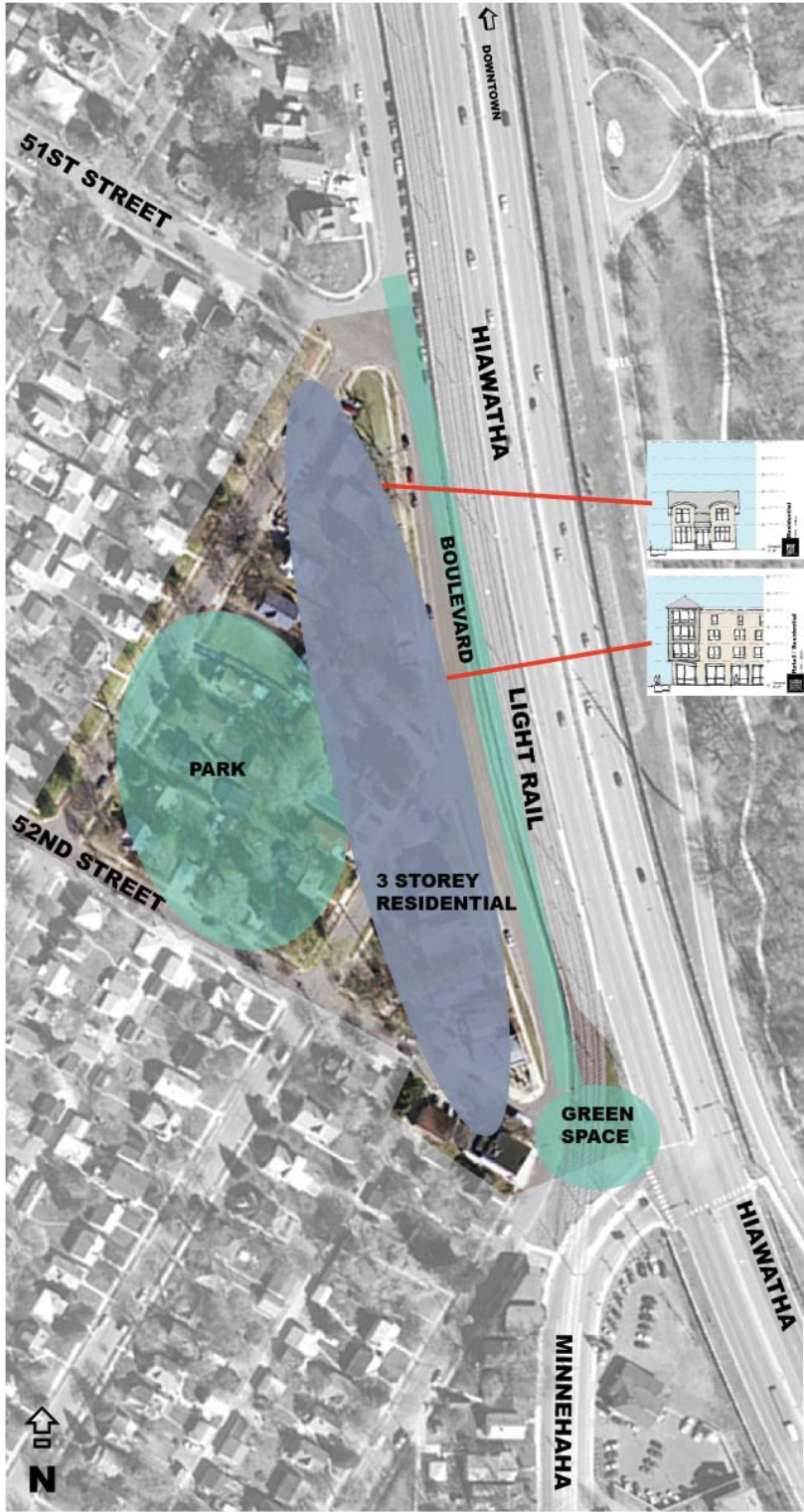
**SET BACKS TO MATCH 50TH STREET BOULEVARD**



Game Board Analysis - 50th Street Gateway Precinct  
 Nokomis East LRT Master Plan  
 Community Advisory Meeting Member 3  
 May 1, 2018  
 Date: 1 May 2018  
 Project No: 20041.001  
 Scale: 1:50

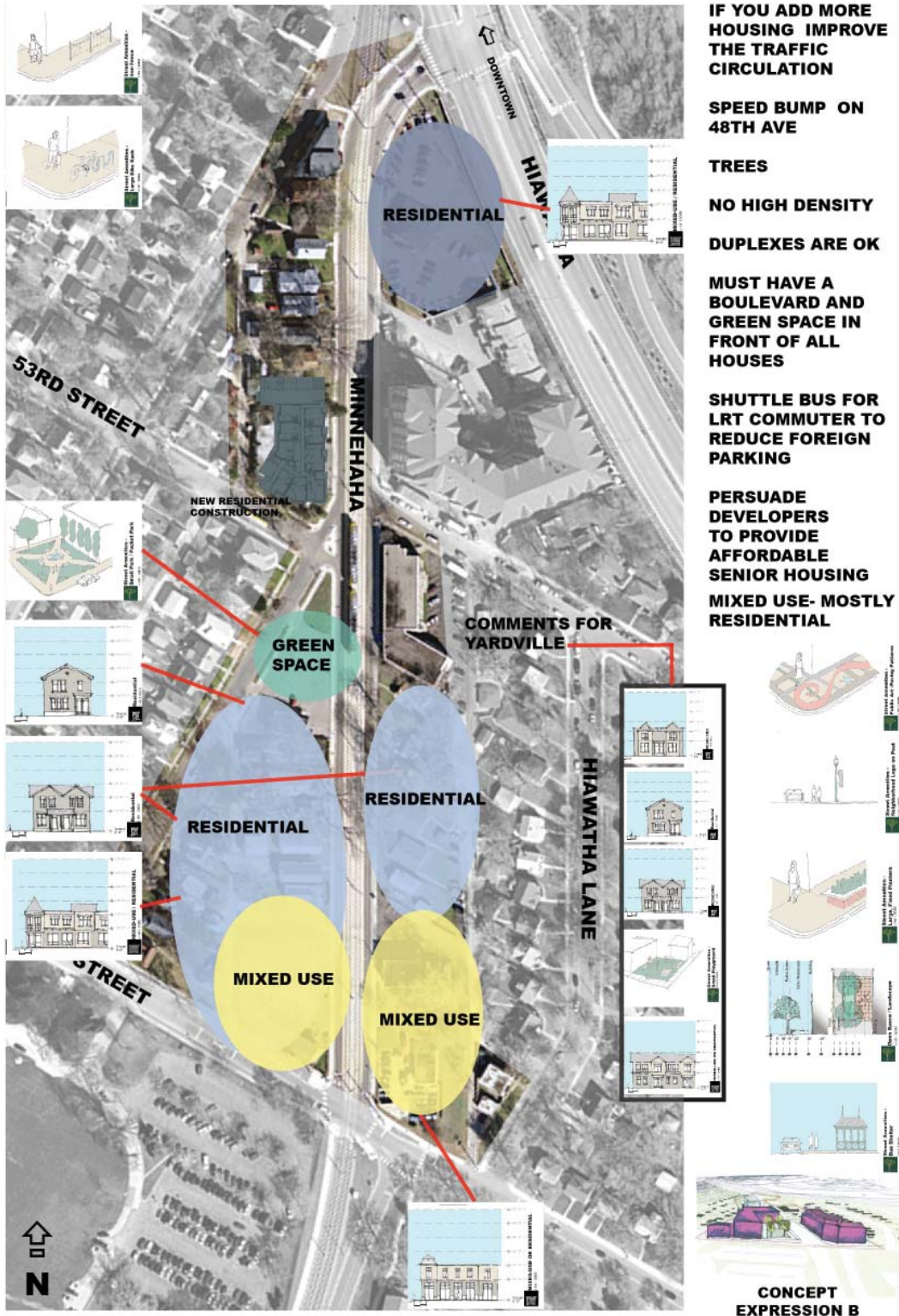
*50th Street gateway precinct summary map*





Date: 13 May 2008  
 Project No: 00401-001  
 Game Board Analysis - 52nd Street Precinct  
 Nokomis East LRT Master Plan  
 Community Advisory Meeting Number 3  
 May 13, 2008  
 Scale: 1:50

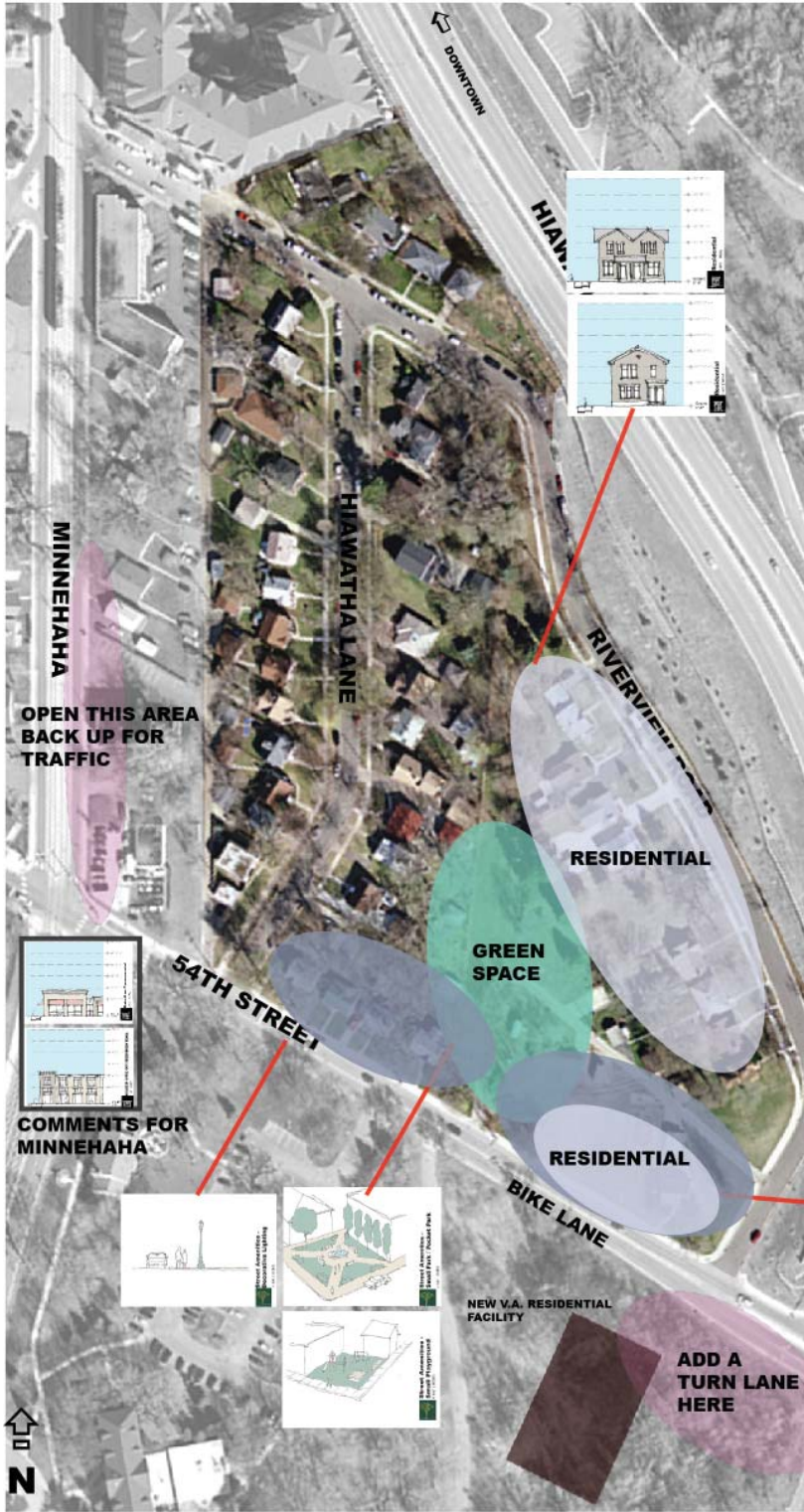
52nd Street precinct summary map



Date: 13 May 2009  
 Project No. 00045.001  
 Game Board Analysis - Minnehaha Corridor  
 Nokomis East LRT Master Plan  
 Community Advisory Meeting #3  
 May 13, 2009  
 Scale: 1:50

*Minnehaha corridor  
 precinct summary map*





**NO "FOREIGN" CAR PARKING**

**SINGLE FAMILY HOMES- NO CHANGE**

**LET PRESENT RENTERS BUY HOMES**

**800-100 SF HOMES (INFILL)**

**MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING**

**OPEN SPACE**



Date: 13 May 2008  
Project No: 00461.001

Game Board Analysis - Yardville  
Nokomis East LRT Master Plan  
Community Advisory Meeting #3  
May 13, 2008

Scale: 1:50

*Yardville precinct summary map*

# SECTION 5: Appendix

## 5.1 TOD 101

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) has the potential to form a unique and value-added approach to development. Trends in regional and national demographics, consumer preferences, energy use and new attitudes towards urban living all point to TOD as a fundamental tool for building communities. The presence of transit coupled with the creation of appropriate street patterns, neighborhood amenities, mixed uses and regional supporting systems, creates a powerful model for planning and design. Recent research and publications have created a performance-based definition of TOD that refers to projects that achieve the following goals:

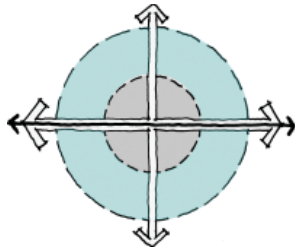
- Placement of homes in proximity to transit systems
- Rich mix of choices
- Value Capture - the savings of transportation costs due to access to transit
- Place Making
- Resolution of tension between Node and Place - a stop vs. a neighborhood

Although relatively unique less than a decade ago, TOD is gaining momentum, as communities understand the value that it provides. The common expectation of TOD is that it enhances overall livability, adds to the quality of life and reduces the cost of living

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is designed to:

- Create more livable, pedestrian-friendly communities
- Include an identifiable center and a prominent public realm
- Reduce the dependency on use of single-occupant vehicles
- Increase the convenience of transportation alternatives, including walking, bicycling, public transportation, car pools, and van pools
- Include a mix of commercial, retail and residential land uses with high job and residential concentration near major intersections
- Locate buildings and walking areas to promote pedestrian movement, safety, and an appealing environment
- Regionally improve air and water quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and efficiently use land





Ideally, a development proposed in a TOD area would take into account the following general design and layout principles:

- **Development hierarchy**

The relationship between the center, middle and edge of the development should be clearly represented.



- **Multiple building types**

Each TOD development includes a mix of building types that correspond to appropriate street frontages.

- **Civic use**

Civic uses oriented to the public are essential components of a transit-oriented development. TOD developments are encouraged to include civic uses.



- **Open space**

Open space integrated in residential and commercial areas is a necessary component of a TOD development. These areas may serve as areas for community gatherings, landmarks, and as neighborhood organizing elements. Open space may include squares, plazas, greens, preserves, parks, trails and greenbelts.

- **Streets and alleys**

A TOD should be pedestrian-oriented. To accomplish this goal, street pattern and design should reduce vehicle travel speeds and encourage pedestrian activity. An interconnected network of streets and alleys is encouraged. Sidewalks and paths are required and shall be designated on a development plan.

## 5.2 TRANSIT STATION AREAS

Transit Station Area (TSA) is a land use policy feature arising from regional investment in dedicated, fixed-route transit lines (e.g., LRT, commuter rail, and busway). The purpose of identifying TSAs as a land use feature in the Minneapolis Plan is to emphasize that station areas represent unique opportunities and challenges that require special policy consideration. As such, TSAs call for tools that maximize the potential community development benefits of transit, while also strengthening and protecting the surrounding neighborhoods.

Dedicated, fixed-route transit service represents increased levels of accessibility for downtown Minneapolis and the neighborhoods served. This increased level of accessibility will attract investment. Areas nearest the station may be most appropriate for uses that maximize the benefits of transit, such as multi-family housing, high employment work places, and other uses with high pedestrian traffic (e.g., schools, entertainment, and retail services). These new opportunities must relate well to existing neighborhoods and build upon their strengths.

A goal of the city is to promote activities that foster transit ridership. These include redevelopment as well as regulations that prevent the introduction or expansion of uses that do not support transit.

Public infrastructure and design standards should create a high quality environment that is pedestrian and bicycle friendly, and which generates vital urban areas. The success of these efforts will be measured by the extent to which development supports the overall city well being, the neighborhoods surrounding the stations, and the transit system itself.

The city acknowledges its essential role in ensuring that these critical public components of TSAs are realized. To achieve these public components, the city may need to acquire land and build or modify public infrastructure. The city further acknowledges that successful implementation will depend on partnerships with other units of government, neighborhood organizations, the not-for-profit sector, and the private sector.

### 5.2.1 HIAWATHA LRT

The Hiawatha LRT line connects Minneapolis neighborhoods with downtown Minneapolis, the airport and the Mall of America. Six LRT stations along Hiawatha Avenue serve Minneapolis neighborhoods. Although the VA Medical Center does not fall within the city limits, portions of the station area do. The areas around each of these stations are designated as TSA's.

Downtown Minneapolis is home to four stations along 5th Street. An extension of Hiawatha LRT will be built and a fifth station constructed near 5th Avenue North to connect with the future Northstar commuter rail line. The downtown station areas are described, along with relevant policies, in the Downtown East/North Loop Master Plan. (In general, the Minneapolis Plan provides policy and direction for downtown Minneapolis through the Downtown 2010 Plan, which, as a stand-alone document, is included in its entirety in The Minneapolis Plan.)

### 5.2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF TSA'S

Transit Station Areas (TSAs) are designated on the Land Use Policy Map. The Minneapolis Plan does not delineate the precise geographic extent of these policy areas. The following general characteristics should be used to guide policy application and implementation:

- TSAs will be the subject of established master plans that identify and/or prioritize areas for change (and preservation), as well as specific goals and objectives for redevelopment, public infrastructure, density and urban design.
- TSAs are areas approximately one-half mile in radius from transit stations, reflecting an understanding that most walking trips to and from transit stations are ten minutes or less in duration. Density, urban design, and public infrastructure is, therefore, especially critical in these areas. The actual size of this area is influenced by directness of routes, physical barriers, and the potential for those barriers to be bridged.
- Potential TSA densities and/or redevelopment opportunities are generally highest within 1/4 mile of the transit station, but are also dependent upon factors such as existing neighborhood character, land cost and availability.
- TSA development is designed with the pedestrian, bicyclist, and/or transit user in mind.

## 5.3 Urban Analysis

At the start of the project, physical analysis of the project study area was conducted. Key components of that analysis are included here.



*Figure 5.3.1  
Building Patterns*





Figure 5.3.2  
Block Pattern

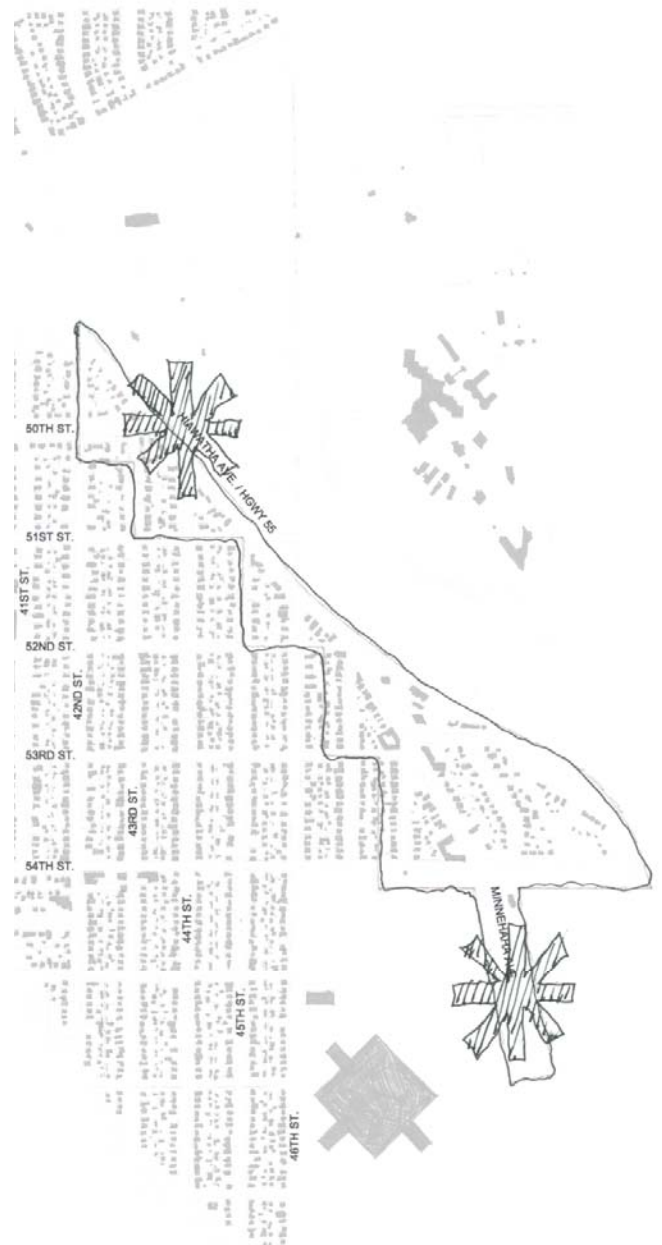


Figure 5.3.3  
Station Locations  
and Study Area



Figure 5.3.4  
Grid Patterns



Figure 5.3.5  
Barriers and Thresholds



Figure 5.3.6  
Traffic Patterns

# 5.4 Transportation Recommendations

## Transportation Characteristics

The Nokomis East area's transportation system is influenced both by TH 55/Hiawatha Avenue and the topography of the area as it slopes down to the Mississippi River to the east. The Hiawatha corridor is a diagonal that interrupts the street grid that underpins access and movement in the area. Combined with the Hiawatha LRT alignment, the highway limits access to and from the street grid to 50<sup>th</sup> Street and 54<sup>th</sup> Street. Further, the LRT alignment limits crossings on Minnehaha Avenue to 54<sup>th</sup> Street, which separates the Yardville neighborhood from the rest of the study area to the west.

These discontinuities in the street system are both positive and negative forces in the study area. From the positive side, the limited number of access points tends to limit the amount of overall traffic that uses the local street grid. This tends to constrain traffic and limits it in most blocks to traffic that is truly local in nature. From the negative side, the limited access points concentrate the traffic that does use the local network at two points. This tends to exacerbate queuing and delays at the intersections of TH 55/Hiawatha Avenue at 50<sup>th</sup> and at 54<sup>th</sup> Streets and at Minnehaha and 54<sup>th</sup> Street. The Hiawatha LRT has priority at the intersections of Minnehaha Avenue and 54<sup>th</sup> Street and Hiawatha Avenue and 50<sup>th</sup> Street. The LRT crossings add to queuing and auto delay at these intersections.

Although much of the intersection queuing is found during peak commute periods, the operation of TH 55 as a higher-speed facility near 54<sup>th</sup> Street is sufficient to cause sporadic delay and queuing on 54<sup>th</sup> Street during daytime hours. Similarly, the LRT crossing of 54<sup>th</sup> and Minnehaha Avenue causes intermittent queuing over the day. The spacing of Hiawatha Lane and Riverview Road on 54<sup>th</sup> Street is such that the above queuing makes access to and from these streets difficult, even though traffic volumes are low.

The intersections of TH 55/Hiawatha Avenue at 50<sup>th</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> Avenues currently operate at acceptable levels (Level of Service D or better) during peak commute periods. Traffic volumes in the area vary by facility type. TH 55 at 54<sup>th</sup> Street carries approximately 30,000 vehicles per day, while 50<sup>th</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> Streets only carry about 3,000 vehicles per day. Volumes on the local streets like 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue are in the range of 1,500 to 2,000 vehicles per day.

In addition to the LRT (route 55) that connects the Study Area to Downtown Minneapolis, to the International Airport and the Mall of America, local Metro Transit bus routes operate in the area. The route 27 operates on 50<sup>th</sup> Street in the study area, providing service between downtown and south Minneapolis, and the route 515, which connects between the Mall of America and Southdale, operates on 54<sup>th</sup> Street. An off-street bicycle trail is provided along Hiawatha Avenue/TH 55 through the study area. Sidewalks are provided along the local street grid.



## Transportation Recommendations

The recommendations for the Nokomis East area’s transportation system are organized by the four precincts of the study area – 50<sup>th</sup> Street, 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, Minnehaha and Yardville.

### 50<sup>th</sup> Street

The transportation opportunities in the 50<sup>th</sup> Street precinct focus on the pedestrian connection between the commercial node at 50<sup>th</sup> Street/Hiawatha Avenue and the 52<sup>nd</sup> Street precinct along the alignment of Old Hiawatha Avenue. The opportunity for the 52<sup>nd</sup> Street precinct would provide for an enhanced linear pedestrian/bicycle corridor along Old Hiawatha Avenue. The existing connection that is adjacent to Cap’s parking (that is over the alignment of Old Hiawatha Avenue) could be enhanced as a shared plaza (in the European model) that would serve as a focal point/gateway for the 52<sup>nd</sup> Street precinct into the commercial node at 50<sup>th</sup> Street. A shared plaza in place of the current connection, residential driveway and parking lot would expand the pedestrian/bicycle environment through paving treatments, bollards, and landscape elements, but would continue to allow circulation and parking. If the site currently occupied by Cap’s redevelops in the future to a mixed use building that would relocate the parking area, then the shared plaza could convert to a pedestrian/bicycle plaza as part of the redevelopment, which would provide for an enhanced pedestrian edge to the LRT station.



### 52<sup>nd</sup> Street

The primary opportunity in this neighborhood area is to enhance the pedestrian and bicycle environment along Old Hiawatha Avenue by converting the current two-way street to a one-way southbound street. This would allow the travel way to be reduced in width, which would be given over to the pedestrian and bicycle system to provide for a linear promenade that would connect from Minnehaha Avenue to 50<sup>th</sup> Street. The one-way operation of Old Hiawatha would affect the residences that front on this street and would cause some out of direction travel as the one-way would introduce a clockwise circulation pattern for these users. By leaving the north-south streets (44<sup>th</sup>, 45<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> Avenues) two-way, the effect of the one-way circulation on Old Hiawatha would be minimized. Introducing a promenade and reducing the travel width on Old Hiawatha would provide a traffic calming effect similar to that found on parkways in Minneapolis.

### **Minnehaha**

Transportation opportunities along Minnehaha Avenue focus primarily on establishing access away from Minnehaha to reduce the effect of the LRT tracks. The effect of placing the LRT in the median of Minnehaha has been to limit access to right-in/right-out only and to eliminate any on-street parking. While access to adjacent properties was maintained, it is difficult in some cases and limits the utility of some of the commercial areas, particularly those at the intersection with 54<sup>th</sup> Street. The opportunity available is to develop parking accessible from the mid-block alleys to support the commercial areas as they redevelop – this would support re-orienting building frontage at the two corners and would help to disperse traffic from the commercial uses such that not all of it would have to use the Minnehaha Avenue approaches at the intersection of Minnehaha and 54<sup>th</sup> Street. The Master Plan recommendation to make the commercial areas L shaped would provide the opportunity to access these nodes from Hiawatha Lane and 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue rather than 54<sup>th</sup> Street, which would allow a more pedestrian focus to the Minnehaha Avenue and 54<sup>th</sup> Street frontages. Minnehaha between 53<sup>rd</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> Streets would continue to be needed as a public street to provide access to parcels and to provide for through circulation.

The other recommendation in this district is to adjust the intersection control at the Minnehaha Avenue/54<sup>th</sup> Street intersection. Currently stop sign controlled (and gate-controlled when an LRT passes through), the split nature of Minnehaha Avenue and the offset south leg of the intersection are sufficiently confusing that some motorists find the intersection difficult to navigate. Signalizing the intersection, as requested by some during the public involvement process, would provide a more positive control that would reduce the uncertainty that some motorists experience. However, detailed operational analysis of a signal and its interaction with the LRT crossing is needed before this recommendation should move forward. The length of clearance intervals needed for the LRT crossing over the extended area of the intersection with the portions of Minnehaha both north and south of 54<sup>th</sup> Street may exacerbate queuing at this location.

Alternatively, the introduction of medians on 54<sup>th</sup> Street near the LRT to convert Minnehaha Avenue on the north side of 54<sup>th</sup> Street to right-in/right-out only would reduce the complexity of the offset intersection while retaining the access necessary for the VA facility to the south. This treatment, combined with the alternate circulation/access opportunity noted above would maintain an adequate level of access to the redeveloped commercial areas in this precinct.

### **Yardville**

Recommendations in the Yardville area focus mainly on operations at Riverview Road and Hiawatha Lane. Providing positive guidance on 54<sup>th</sup> Street to not block these intersections would reduce the amount of delay experienced by neighborhood residents and visitors. This guidance could be provided by signage on 54<sup>th</sup> Street or combined with pavement markings that box out each intersection with a “keep clear” message on the pavement.

# 5.5 Economic Research

## Technical Memorandum Market Analysis

To: Hay Dobbs and Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development  
From: Steve Quam, Principal, QSA, Inc.  
Date: June 21, 2006  
Re: Nokomis East Station Area

### Introduction

This technical memorandum provides an assessment of market and financial realities as they exist today and as they could be enhanced, for an area that surrounds the 50<sup>th</sup> Street Station, extending south to the Veterans Administration station on the Hiawatha light rail line in Minneapolis.

### Purpose and Scope

Market information provided here supports the Nokomis East Station Area Plan. Tailored to allow a broad range of interested developers to consider participation in the plan and to extend the viability of the planning effort, it is limited in scope to the suggestion of general recommended uses within the plan and appropriate building types for these uses, based on metro area market trends. Its scope also includes a brief identification of the type of potential costs associated with the plan and potential sources and uses available for its implementation.

### Methodology and Assumptions

Methodology for the compilation of this memorandum includes the determination of base market data (some of which has been provided by Maxfield Research where indicated) for the uses in the plan. In some cases, as specified, data obtained concerning the site is drawn from referenced broader neighborhood analysis and assumed to apply as specified to the smaller station area. Market draw areas depend on use for this study and are stated in the following data sections.

QSA, Inc.  
6/22/06

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## **Market Trends**

### Multi-unit Housing – Rental

The rental market remains relatively weak, though metro area vacancy rates have improved from 6.9% to 5.5% in the first quarter of 2006 (GVA Marquette Advisors). With improving employment, and rising interest rates for the purchase of homes that might compete with rental units as a dwelling option, this trend is likely to continue.

In Minneapolis, affordable rental units priced below market are in short supply. To the extent that they are included in this plan, they will be absorbed within a short time.

### Multi-Unit Housing – Owned

Between market rate rental and owner occupied properties, for-sale condominiums have been the most popular recently. Evaluating the market in the immediate area, the condominiums at Minnehaha Place sold rapidly, although prices were generally low compared to most new development.

New projects nearby have not been able to meet the prices at Minnehaha Place. Olin Crossings, a smaller development across the street has also been absorbing well at somewhat higher prices but development quality is also higher. Two-bedroom units have been selling more rapidly than one-bedroom units. Many buyers at Minnehaha Place were from the neighborhood. The market draw area is the immediate south Minneapolis area supplemented by metro area buyers who work downtown. Buyers at Olin Crossings have been mixed, some from the neighborhood and others who work downtown and want the close proximity to the LRT line.

Potential nearby market competition includes a proposed 1,000 unit development at the 38<sup>th</sup> Street Station along with a substantial amount of retail space and some office that would be developed by Capital Growth Real Estate of St. Paul. Although still in the initial planning stages, the size of this development could capture a significant amount of demand if the retail component is sizeable (150,000 square feet or more).

That said, buyers are generally looking for smaller, more intimate buildings of about 80 units or less. If they can afford it, two-bedroom units are more popular than one-bedroom units due to potential resale (Maxfield Research).



### Neighborhood Retail

In view of the large-scale retail planned for 38<sup>th</sup> Street if that moves ahead and additional retail located at 46<sup>th</sup> Street, retail in the plan area should be neighborhood-convenience retail, modest in scale. Goods and services that primarily serve residents, and some light rail riders and drive-by traffic will be supportable. There may be a couple of specialty retailers that prefer the location because of access and will draw customers from a wider distance (Maxfield Research).

Traffic patterns, accessibility and the unavailability of large parcels of land do not suggest that this area should be used for community wide or regional retail. The abundance of residences in the area however, will support a modest amount of service and convenience retail. The presence of light rail while it will not, by itself, support convenience retail, will certainly enhance its market and likelihood of success.

### Office

Although the overall market for office space in the Twin Cities metro area continues to be soft, with metro area vacancy rates between 18 and 20%, there is some recent improvement. Demand is from small businesses as well as from larger major employers who require back office space.

The industry sectors that have continued to expand their office space include health care and health care administration, financial services, specifically mortgage and mortgage capital, medical technology, and the bio-medical industry (Source, Maxfield Research). QSA has also observed a growing interest in small professional office condominium space properly designed into mixed-use buildings.

Like the market for service or convenience retail, the office market in this area would also support a modest amount of service office use, like professional attorney or accounting offices, realty or insurance services, medical or dental offices or the like.

### Mixed-Use

Since mixed-use is not defined as a specific set of uses, it draws its market from the uses it contains. Since this area's strongest demand is for housing, the predominant use in any mixed-use development will be housing. That can be coupled with retail or service office uses as appropriate to their market demand.

### Hospitality

The market for hospitality uses is very site specific. The presence of the VA and Light Rail Transit that can connect travelers to the airport, the Mall of America and downtown, suggests a potential viable market for a limited-service hotel.

### **Site-specific Influences**

The plan area lies within the Minnehaha Neighborhood. The median household income within the census tract encompassing that neighborhood was \$45,380 in 2000, higher than the median income in the City of Minneapolis as a whole (US Census).

In 2000, about 13 percent of occupied housing units in that census tract rented their home and 8.6 percent of the workforce used public transportation. (Note: LRT was available to residents starting in 2001.)

The area is now connected by light rail to the airport, the Mall of America and downtown Minneapolis, none of which is more than a 15 minute ride. The round trip price for two \$2.00 rush hour tickets to commute to and from downtown still adds up to less than one-half the average cost of parking downtown for a day.

Hennepin County contains over 1.1 million residents and is projected to grow to almost 1.4 million by 2030. Of those residents nearly 700,000 are located in Minneapolis and it's near to intermediate southern and western suburbs. Population projections for this market predict this population to grow by nearly 100,000 by 2030. (Metropolitan Council, Forecasts of Population, Households and Employment, January, 2004)

It is anticipated that the attraction of light rail through the plan area will attract its share of additional residents near the two stations within the plan area.

Additional unique attributes of the plan area are the Veterans Hospital, which attracts veterans as patients from throughout the state, and Minnehaha Park, just across Hiawatha Avenue, which provides a nearby amenity known city-wide.

### **Recommended Uses & Building Types**

#### Multi-Unit Housing

At this location, with the uses surrounding the site, it is reasonable to project an absorption rate over the coming five years approaching 400 units, either rental or owned. They can be located throughout the precincts of the plan wherever multi-family residential units are indicated. In the event the large-scale development projected for the 38<sup>th</sup> Street station does not come about, a larger market would exist immediately.

Beyond 5 years, the residential market for the plan area should continue to grow.

### Office and Retail

Street level service offices and retail that provides goods and services that primarily serve residents and some drive-by traffic will be supportable. There may be a couple of specialty retailers that prefer the location because of access and will draw customers from a wider distance (QSA and Maxfield Research).

At this time, speculative retail space should be contained primarily within new mixed-use buildings where indicated at 50<sup>th</sup> Street and in the blocks along Minnehaha just north of 48<sup>th</sup> Street. No more than about 20,000 square feet of retail/service office space should be built in these areas unless pre-leased. This would allow for a couple of small restaurants/sandwich shops, convenience market, gifts, dry cleaning, coffee shop, and one or two other small retail or office users. In addition, it would not compete with the large-scale retail planned for 38<sup>th</sup> Street if that moves ahead.

It is only safe to assume that up to 10 percent of the space in any one mixed-use residential/retail building can be supported at the ground floor for retail or service office unless any additional retail/office space is pre-leased.

### Hospitality

At the intersection of 54<sup>th</sup> and Minnehaha, it is appropriate to consider replacing the current motel facility with a new limited service hotel.

The primary demand for hotel units in the area would come from three segments – visitors to the Minnehaha Park area and surrounding residential neighborhoods; visitors to the VA Hospital; and business travelers to the area using the Hiawatha Corridor as their primary travel route. We view the location as a modest price location that would accommodate a traditional limited service facility with some extended stay suites for those visiting the VA Hospital. We recommend no more than 50 hotel rooms with rates generally between \$90 and \$110 per night for traditional rooms. Extended stay pricing would be higher. This site would be attractive because of its location on the LRT and its close proximity to the Airport.

Access is convenient, but visibility would be constrained by the distance of the LRT station area from the Hiawatha Avenue corner. Although we believe that this would not hamper visitor usage of the facility, it may reduce the ability to interest various operators in locating at the site (QSA and Maxfield Research).

### **Associated Costs of the Plan**

The public costs associated with this plan include potential landscape, traffic regulation and road reconfiguration work along a connection corridor between 50<sup>th</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup>, parallel to Hiawatha, and improvements along Minnehaha between 52<sup>nd</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup>. Land acquisition may be a public cost of redeveloping major parcels through tax increment financing or abatement where already developed parcels are made available by willing sellers for demolition and higher density development.

In particular, development along Minnehaha between 52<sup>nd</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> may require parking and service access configurations that do not presently exist, along with their incident land acquisition costs.

### **Sources and Uses**

The most obvious sources of funding for this development are tax increment financing and abatement

Another possible resource is Hennepin County allocated funding for Transit Oriented Development funding. It is available for property acquisition, community corridor connections, development or redevelopment of housing and existing commercial, job creation and other uses that serve the public purpose.

Other sources of funding that could be applied to redevelopment or transportation aspects of the Implementation scenario include Metropolitan Council Livable Communities Grants, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) grants (if improved transit ridership can be projected). For road or transportation improvements there are a variety of funding sources that could be investigated under metropolitan Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) funding.

### **Phasing & Implementation**

Since this plan is intended to provide a guideline for redevelopment as voluntary opportunities occur, and since we are not advising that wholesale changes should occur in the general character of market and uses intended for this area, it is appropriate to use an opportunistic approach to accomplishing the plan.

No single development within the plan represents a critical catalyst. As transit-oriented housing and convenience retail begin to appear within the plan, the market for similar uses will strengthen. The full plan may not occur, particularly since it will not be driven by active city property acquisition, in less than twenty years.



Specific developments like the development of a mixed-use district, or a limited service hotel along Minnehaha may provide greater impetus to development around them, than, for example, multi-family residential developments on sites located between 50<sup>th</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup>. This would be particularly true, if it were possible to solve the difficult property access issues posed in this area through use of a broader plan that coordinated front and back access, as well as traffic to and from the area.

But at the 50<sup>th</sup> street station intersection any new mixed-use building developed there, could serve as a catalyst to new development at that station.

It is recommended that within this plan, any initial private interest in redevelopment that supports the plan should be fostered whenever it occurs without regard to priority by location or use.