



# LRT, Development and Neighborhood Planning

A Summary of Planning Efforts along the future Hiawatha LRT line

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# executive summary

Minneapolis has a history steeped in neighborhood planning and public participation. This history has continued into the Light Rail Transit (LRT) era with an extensive planning process including station area plans, master plans, corridor studies, market feasibility studies and reports. This report summarizes the voluminous collection of plans by first identifying the goals and preferences stated in the plans, and then identifying issues that pose potential barriers.

The underlying theme in every plan is transit-oriented development (TOD). TOD manifests itself in a variety of forms, and each plan has chosen pieces of TOD to endorse. Improving the pedestrian environment, inclusion of a mix of land uses and a variety of housing types, enhancing connectivity between the neighborhood and LRT stations and a mitigation of automobile-related externalities are all key components of the various plans. Even though the plans are similar in character and vision, several barriers exist that could obstruct their implementation. These barriers include:

- Regulatory barriers to implementing plan
- Fragmented land ownership
- Market fluctuations as related to real estate
- Crime and safety concerns
- Traffic circulation and transportation modes
- Parking near LRT stations
- Bad (non-conforming to plans) development in locations near LRT stations
- Contamination of sites
- Lack of market interest.

# introduction

1- HCNC

2- Introduction to  
Neighborhood Planning

Background: The Hiawatha Corridor Neighborhood Coalition was formed in the summer of 2000 by neighborhoods along the Hiawatha Light Rail transit corridor with four purposes:

1. Provide a clearinghouse for LRT-related information, including: the roles and responsibilities of the involved public jurisdictions, the schedule and opportunities for public input into various planning processes; “basic LRT 101” background information; contact information for involved jurisdictions and organizations, etc.
2. Identify public resources dedicated to LRT project and related development, and ensure public awareness of and involvement in the allocation of these resources along the entire corridor. Enhance neighborhood resources by working together.
3. Address corridor-wide planning issues that affect all neighborhoods, such as traffic management, inter-modal transfer design, parking, pedestrian and handicapped access to stations, design aesthetics and standards, environmental design guidelines.
4. Identify location specific planning issues that may generate corridor-wide interest. (Principles or guidelines need to be developed to screen or select issues.)

Corridor neighborhood and community organizations include: Cedar-Riverside (West Bank Community Coalition), Ventura Village, Seward (Seward Neighborhood Group and Seward Redesign), East Phillips Improvement Coalition (EPIC), Corcoran (CNO), Longfellow Community (LCC), Standish-Ericsson (SENA), the Green Institute and Nokomis-East (NENA) (Figure 1).

Current Status: Informal representatives from the affected neighborhood and community organizations meet periodically to discuss planning and organizational issues. Research assistance have been provided by CURA, the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota, to work on specific projects.

Future: HCNC is currently exploring the creation of a more formal organization to represent and act on corridor light rail transit and related development issues. Staffing resources to support this work are also being investigated. The new body, possibly named the Hiawatha Corridor Commission, would have the standing and authority to review development plans affecting the LRT corridor to assure they meet the objectives of neighborhood developed plans. All of the City recognized neighborhood organizations along the corridor would be represented on the Commission. By working through the Commission, individual neighborhood organizations collectively will have the standing and authority to effectively review and comment on proposed development proposals to assure conformance with neighborhood plans. The Commission can leverage needed staffing resources to represent neighborhood interests in light rail transit development

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figure 1 - neighborhood organizations



## Neighborhood Planning

Neighborhood master plans and station area plans are created to provide a framework for city policy and development proposals. Each neighborhood plan and station area plan is adopted by the city. After adoption, the city crafts appropriate zoning to achieve the goals specified in the plan. This process can occur over long periods of time and developers are not required to adhere to the plans until they have been adopted as city policy. Also, developers don't need city approval for a project so long as the project is consistent with the zoning code ("as-of-right") and doesn't require special permits.

## Types of Plans

Several different types of plans were reviewed for this report. These categories were created based on the different plans focus and purpose.

**Neighborhood Master Plans** – Neighborhood master plans are long range planning tools that guide future development and city policy within the administrative boundaries of the neighborhood. Master Plans involve a long, in some continuous, citizen participation mechanism and address all facets of life within a neighborhood. Master plans are guiding documents and provide vision, but do not typically address specific developments.

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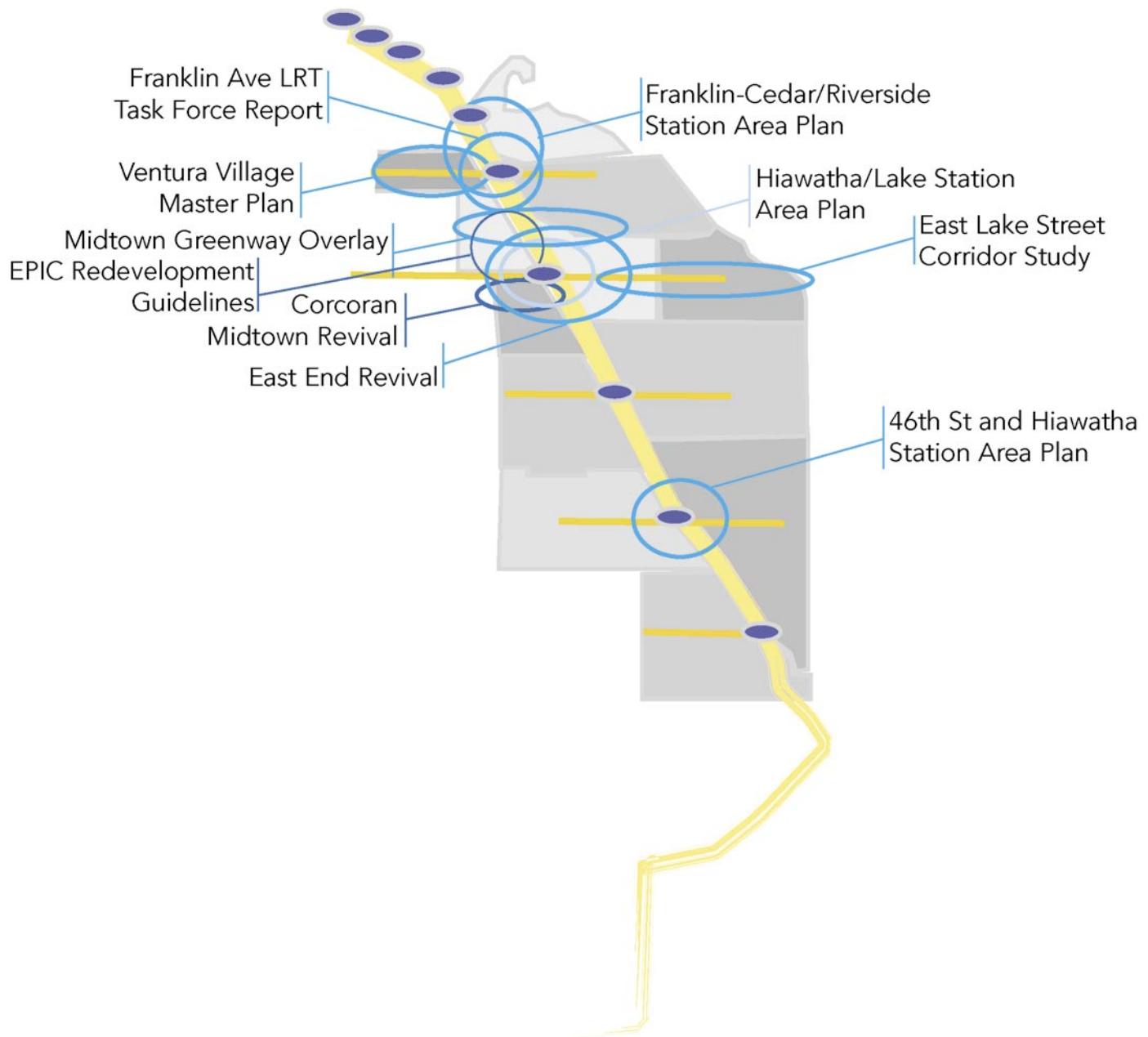
**Station Area Plans** – Station area plans are highly geographically focused, most often focusing on an area within a  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile radius of the station. These plans often overlap administrative boundaries and employ a slightly less extensive citizen participation mechanism. Station-area plans are usually more focused on development, but like master plans act as a guide to achieve a vision.

**Small-area Plans** – Small-area plans typically are smaller than a neighborhood and provide greater detail on development guidelines. These plans most often focus around a united district, corridor or social area that doesn't adhere to neighborhood boundaries.

**Studies and Market Analyses** – Studies and market analyses are typically highly focused on specific sites. These have typically manifest as task force reports and market feasibility studies. These usually prescribe specific actions and recommendations, and incorporate less long term 'vision' of station area plans and master plans

This report specifically focuses on 18 such documents (appendix a). These documents often overlap geographically, but each document provides a unique perspective. Figures 2 and 3 provides a visual perspective on the way that the many neighborhood and small-scale plans overlap (Figure 3 on page 10)

figure 2 - neighborhood plans



## List of Plans

- **The Minneapolis Plan**
- **The Minneapolis Zoning Code**  
Coverage: Entire City of Minneapolis

Sponsor: City of Minneapolis, updated regularly.

Summary: These documents are legally enforceable and set forth long range city-wide policy. The zoning code is the implementation tool for achieving the goals set forth in the Minneapolis Plan.

- **Hiawatha/Lake staff report**
- **Franklin/Cedar-Riverside staff report**
- **46<sup>th</sup> and Hiawatha staff report**
- **Development Objectives for the Hi-Lake Center (City of Minneapolis)**

Coverage: Areas described in the titles and the plans the staff reports analyzed.

Sponsor: City of Minneapolis Planning Department and the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA)

Summary: Reports and comments on the Station Area Plans and small area planning efforts.

- **Hiawatha/Lake Street Station Area Plan**  
Coverage: 1/2 mile radius of Hiawatha-Lake LRT Station

Sponsor: Metropolitan Council. Conducted by Calthorpe Associates, IBI Group and Coen and Stumpf Associates. Completed June 2000.

Summary: Examined strategies for creating pedestrian-friendly environments, developed land use and circulation frameworks, identified Hi-Lake Shopping Center as a “catalyst development” project and outline implementation strategies. Prescribed pedestrian friendliness, enhanced neighborhood-serving retail, an expanded employment base, increased housing opportunities and employing “Smart Growth” principles.

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- **East End Revival**

Coverage: Cedar Ave (west) to 32nd Ave (east), and 28th St (north) and 32nd St (south).

Sponsor: Longfellow Community Council and Corcoran Neighborhood Organization. Conducted by Hoisington Koegler Group, IBI Group and Bonz/REA. Completed September 27, 2001

Summary: Provides implementation guidelines for TOD, while examining project feasibility. Builds on Hiawatha-Lake Station Area Plan and identifies initiatives chosen by the neighborhood residents.

- **Midtown Revival**

Coverage: Cedar Ave (west) to Hiawatha Ave (east), and Lake St (north) and 32nd St (south)

Sponsor: Corcoran Neighborhood Organization. Conducted by Hoisington Koegler Group, IBI Group and Bonz/REA. Completed May of 2002.

Summary: Created a vision for the Midtown area of the Corcoran neighborhood based on a series of themes. The themes include: pedestrian orientation, transit-oriented development, sustainability, inviting and safe, development models appropriate to Corcoran and a neighborhood arts center. The document also created a series of design policies to guide future development and achieve the vision described by residents.

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- **Greenway Corridor Development Framework**

Coverage: Area within approximately 2.5 block distance from the Midtown Greenway

Sponsor: Midtown Community Works Partnership. Conducted by Dewar and Associates, Smith Parker, Close Landscape Architecture, SRF Consulting Group and Design Center for the American Urban Landscape.

Summary: Creates a vision for the area surrounding the Greenway and provides a framework to revitalize this commercial/business corridor and guide development.

- **Ventura Village Master Plan**

Coverage: The entire Ventura Village neighborhood area.

Sponsor: Ventura Village Inc. Conducted by Community Design Group, Travis Gislason, Andrew Johnson, Josh Williams and Grubner and Associates. Completed September 2001, updated regularly.

Summary: Identified several initiatives to fund and support including carriage housing, land bridging, a diverse housing stock, and transit oriented development. Provides a vision for the future of the neighborhood and institutional enhancements to improve planning of and around the neighborhood.

- **EPIC Hi-Lake Redevelopment Plan**

Coverage: Cedar Ave (west) to Hiawatha Ave (east) and 26th St (north) to Lake St (south).

Sponsor: East Phillips Improvement Coalition (EPIC). Conducted by DJR Architecture. Completed December 2000.

Summary: The plan is a part of a larger planning process for the neighborhood. Describes a transit-oriented neighborhood (TON) instead of transit-oriented development. Focuses on retention of existing businesses and residents.

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- **Franklin-Cedar Riverside Transit Oriented Development Master Plan**

Coverage: a 10 minute walk from the Franklin Ave and Cedar-Riverside LRT stations.

Sponsor: City of Minneapolis. Conducted by SRF Consulting Group, OTAK Architects and Urban Strategies Inc. Completed August 2001.

Summary: Several principles were developed to guide implementation, development and planning. The plan advocates for enhancing the pedestrian environment, using transit-oriented principles to guide development and suggests infrastructure improvements to accomplish the goals.

- **Franklin Avenue LRT Task Force Report**

Coverage: 1/2 mile radius of Franklin Ave LRT Station.

Sponsors: Minneapolis Foundation, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture. Conducted by neighborhood members, city and regional staff members and public officials. Completed March 2000.

Summary: Community stakeholders identified issues related to LRT station and developed recommendations as to how the issues shoudl be addressed.

- **46<sup>th</sup> and Hiawatha Station Area Plan**

Coverage: 1/2 mile radius of 46th Street LRT Station..

Sponsors: Conducted by Farr and Associates, ZHA and Parsons Transportation Group, Inc. COnpleted July 2001.

Summary: Proposes a plan that strikes the best balance between competing opportunities and risks. Describes the many challenges to development in the station area and identifies the role of the public sector in future development of the site.

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- **East Lake Street Corridor Study**

Coverage: Lake Street from 36th Ave (west) to the Mississippi River (east).

Sponsors: Longfellow Community Council. Conducted by Close Landscape Architecture, Hokanson Lunning Wende Associates, Dewar and Associates and Zimmerman/Volk Associates.

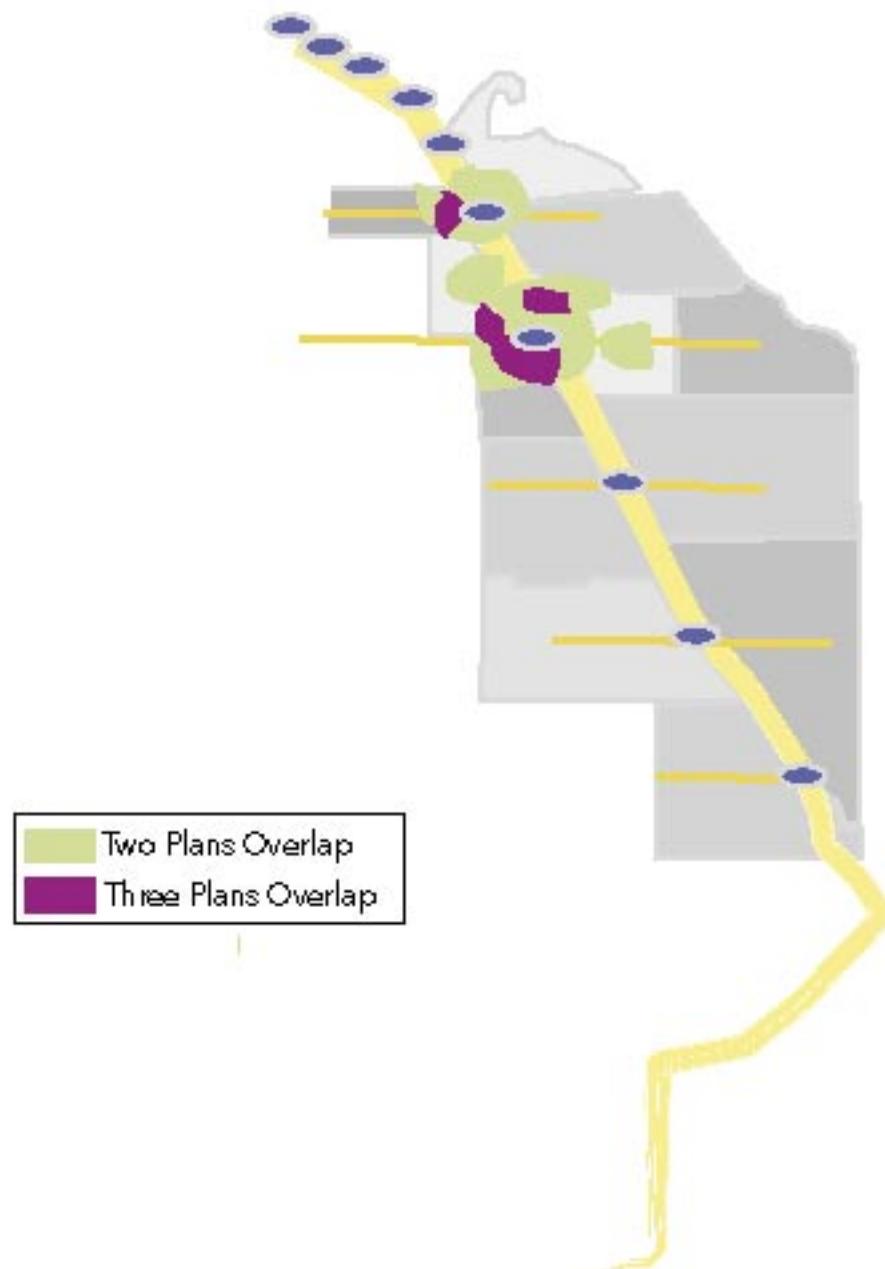
Summary: Created a neighborhood action plan to provide direction for enhancing East Lake Street.

- **Hiawatha LRT Corridor Transit Oriented Development Market Study**

- **Retail Market Analysis for the Hi-Lake Shopping Center**

These market studies will be discussed in the existing conditions section.

figure 3 - overlap of neighborhood plans



# research and other cities

## preview

Existing research generally agrees that light rail systems are rarely cost effective transit options and development is highly contingent on site specific attributes.

Although several other cities have recently constructed systems, it is difficult compare LRT related planning efforts here due to the highly unique nature of citizen participation mechanisms.

However, after reviewing the experiences of other cities several serious challenges remain. These challenges require a concerted effort by all involved parties.

1- What has happened in  
other cities.

2- What the research says.

## Portland: A Case Study

Portland has often been cited as the model for modern planning and transit-oriented development. The use of urban growth boundaries, parking management policies and investment in transit has drawn national attention. Although much of this attention is perhaps unwarranted (it is certainly primarily auto dependent), it provides a good example for comparison.

Portland constructed two light-rail lines in the late 1980s and is continuing to expand its system today. According to a report from Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP), over \$1.23 billion dollars of development has occurred adjacent to the Eastside MAX line since the decision to construct it. Much of this development occurred in or near downtown, and most likely would have occurred anyway. This development is a result of the inception of LRT along with several regional policies including:

- > Employing urban growth boundaries
- > Developing a regional consensus on balanced transportation
- > Encouraging a pedestrian friendly environment
- > Managing the parking supply and location
- > Shaping public opinion and policy through non-profit organizations

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Portland employed Station-Area Planning policies including:

- > Locating stations near vacant land or in areas with redevelopment potential.
- > Zoning station areas for higher density, transit-friendly development.
- > Employing interim zoning measures to prevent unacceptable uses during the planning period.
- > Locating government and entertainment facilities near light-rail stations.
- > Entering joint-development agreements with excess right-of-way and private property.
- > Using redevelopment agencies to facilitate private investments in station areas.

LRT has been successful in Portland, due primarily to intense efforts by public officials, widespread public support, dedication of a large amount of public funds. The experience in Portland differs in several key ways from Minneapolis:

- > Portland's planning process was not neighborhood driven.
- > The planning process was much more proactive in Portland.
- > Portland spent significant public funds to ensure success.
- > The planning environment in Portland is much stronger, specifically regarding parking and public control of land.
- > Stations were located where development potential and land existed.
- > The line in Portland stretched from downtown well out into the undeveloped suburbs.

## Examples from other cities

### Atlanta - Lindbergh Center

The Lindberg Center is a 51 acre development totaling 4.8 million square feet adjacent to the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) Lindbergh LRT station. BellSouth, the Southern equivalent of Qwest, plans to consolidate most of its leases in this center and two other office buildings near MARTA stations. The Lindbergh Center is mixed use and built on land leased from MARTA. The master developer is Carter and Associates as a part of a joint development agreement with MARTA.

### Denver - Englewood Civic Center

The City of Englewood (an inner-ring suburb of Denver) and the Denver Regional Transit District (RTD) collaborated to contract for a master plan for a 55 acre parcel located near a transit station. This redevelopment is on the former site of a 1960s-style shopping mall. The new building will house many city government functions including the library, city council chambers and courtrooms. There will be a mix of uses on the site, however, the residential and commercial uses are mostly in separate structures.

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### New Jersey - Lafayette Commons

The New Jersey public transit agency awarded a long-term ground lease to two developers in October of 2000. This development consists of 226 market-rate rental units, 8,000 square feet of ground level retail and 780 parking spaces in a ramp screened by townhomes. This three acre site across from the Morristown station will provide the transit agency with \$230,000 a year in rent.

### Dallas - Mockingbird Station

Mockingbird Station is a mixed-use development connected to the LRT station via a pedestrian bridge. The developer, UC Urban, purchased a 290,000 square foot warehouse next to the then abandoned rail line. The warehouse has since been converted into 211 rental apartments. A 200,000 square foot retail development and parking structure were incorporated into the base of the warehouse .

## LRT, land use and development

At present there is little consensus regarding the effect of LRT systems and transit on land use and development. This lack of consensus is due primarily to the highly complex nature between land use and transportation, as well as the difficulty in comparing cities.

Robert Cervero of the University of California (Berkeley) has dedicated much of his research to the study of planning, rail transit and development. His research has suggested that joint developments, between rail stations and developments serve the interests of both the developer and the city or transit agency (Cervero, 1994). He also proposes the development of “Transit Villages” along key corridors.

Many barriers to TOD development near rail stations have been mentioned in literature and other cities including; the difficulty in acquiring large tracts of land near stations, lack private market interest for new development, existing land use patterns not compatible with TOD, political disagreement over the value of TOD and local economic and fiscal circumstances (Boarnet, 1999).

A TCRP report (Seskin et al. 1996) examining the relationship between land use and public transit concluded that regions with successful transit-focused development have the following characteristics:

- > Commitment to a regional vision of high-capacity transit connections between regional centers or along development corridors.
- > Strong, respected institutions to deliver transit services.
- > Political institutions that value transit.
- > High-quality, attractive transit services.
- > Regional growth that channels development to station areas.
- > Transit stations located in areas that support new development.
- > Regional policies that channel growth in transit corridors while simultaneously limiting growth elsewhere.
- > Station-area policies and programs to support private sector investments and transit-friendly development.
- > Long-term commitment.

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The long and short of it is LRT *c n* have significant impact on development patterns, property values, development intensity, land use and urban morphology. The degree of impact depends on existing land use, land availability, economic conditions, public policy and many other site and city specific characteristics. Due to the intensly complex nature of the issue, it is very difficult to compare between cities and studies. It is useful, however, to learn from other cities successes and failures and examine whether or not it may be applicable in Minneapolis.

The introduction of the LRT into Minneapolis poses several potential obstacles and simultaneously opens the doors for new opportunity. The situation in Portland paints a rather rosy picture, perhaps too rosy for Minneapolis. Given the state of public finance in Minneapolis, residents cannot expect the same amount of public spending as was seen in Portland, and the Portland Planning Department has had the authority to enforce planning policy without much interference from other agencies or the public. Stations were located in areas where significant development opportunity existed. Also, public agencies entered into joint development agreements prior to construction, which allowed the government to offset costs and guarantee development at the same time. None of these actions have occurred in Minneapolis.

Minneapolis has had much stronger citizen input than most cities however. A dedicated effort from neighborhood organizations and citizens could help overcome some of these barriers. Also, a strong residential market may help bolster higher-density residential development near stations.

The situation in Minneapolis, based on lessons from other cities and existing research looks poor. A lack of financial support, the auto-oriented nature of the Twin Cities, the lack of pre-planning and joint development, limited available land and other obstacles pose a significant threat to the success of LRT-related development. However, Minneapolis can learn from past mistakes, and with a dedicated effort from public officials and residents, substantially benefit from LRT.

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# existing conditions

## preview

A look at the existing conditions uncovers that land use and zoning along the line are primarily industrial. Transit service is adequate, but will improve once tied into the LRT line. Market studies show that substantial potential exists at a few station area locations, but many of the other areas will require either public sector investment or long time periods to support new development.

1- Land Use

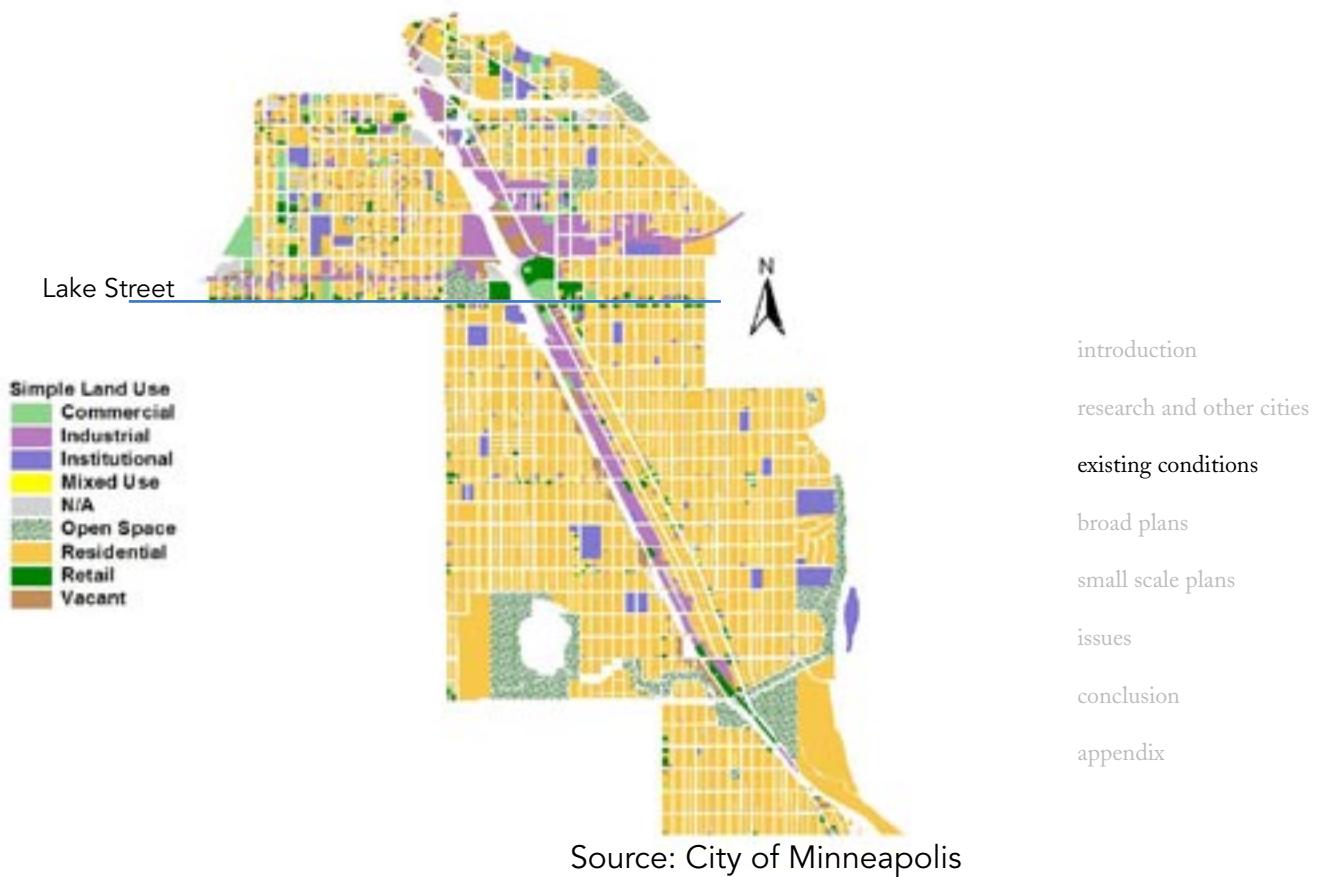
2- Zoning

3- Transit Service

4- Estimated Market Value

5- Market Analysis

figure 4 - land use



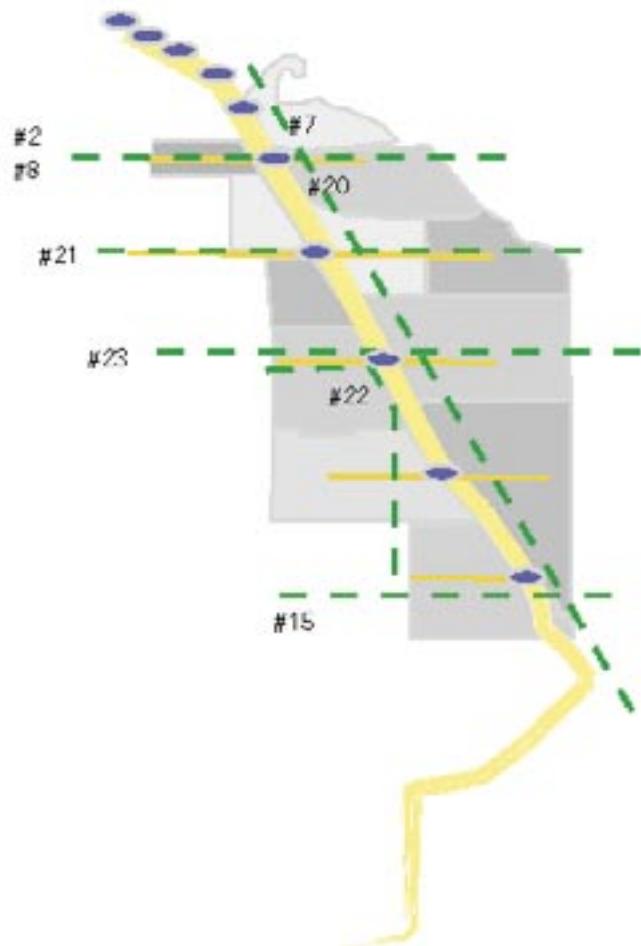
Much of the land adjacent to the Hiawatha LRT is industrial, with commercial nodes located at Lake St and 46th St.

figure 5 - zoning



Much of the land adjacent to the Hiawatha LRT is zoned industrial, although the City is currently devising a overlay zoning district that would promote transit-oriented development (TOD).

figure 6 - connecting bus routes



Metro Transit has changed several of its routes to coordinate with the LRT line once in operation.

figure 7 - estimated market value per square foot of parcel



Much of the land is currently valued much lower than many of the surrounding areas.

The MCDA contracted the ZHA-ZVA Consulting team to examine the market feasibility of TOD along the Hiawatha LRT line. The key findings and recommendations include the following:

- Market demand, market supply and competitive/relative location are often the most important determinants of success of a development.
- Challenges include established images of industrial areas, the ability to assemble and prepare land, and unfamiliarity with TOD projects.
- Strategic targeting of development opportunities in selected “catalyst” areas, implementation of public investment and public-private development partnerships, and the ability to demonstrate TOD successes along the corridor are integral to development success.
- Catalyst stations include Downtown East, Lake Street, 46<sup>th</sup> Street and the Bloomington station. The other station areas will likely benefit but will require longer time frames or public sector intervention.
- The entire corridor should enjoy enhanced property values, enhanced retail market opportunities and enhanced availability to labor for business along the corridor, and new stimuli for neighborhood redevelopment and investment.

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The MCDA also contracted Maxfield Research to conduct a market analysis for the Hi-Lake Shopping Center. The report, entitled “A Retail Market Analysis For the Hi-Lake Shopping Center In Minneapolis, Minnesota”, was completed in April of 2001. Findings included:

- There is a growing base of ethnic-oriented business.
- The shopping centers surrounding Hi-Lake are leased to capacity.
- Lease rates at nearby shopping centers range from a low of \$3.00 to a high of \$15.50.
- Local retailers and franchisers are more likely to consider the Hi-Lake area than national chains.
- According to a customer intercept survey in March of 2001, most people visit center by vehicle (car).
- Traditional size retail uses will have to draw their customers from an area that is greater than the immediate Station Area in order to survive, even with new construction.

# broad plans

## preview

In the Twin Cities, residents enjoy strong support of transit investment from both the Met Council and the City of Minneapolis. One of the primary barriers to successful transit projects, and the accompanying development, is proper the regulatory framework, financial support from the city and leadership. The support is necessary to implement the goals and wishes of residents living near the line. A continued collaborative approach is integral to the success of development and community vitality along the line.

### 1- Metropolitan Council and the Regional Blueprint

### 2- City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Plan

The Twin Cities is one of the few metropolitan areas with a regional form of government. The Metropolitan Council has provided coordination and planning for the metropolitan area since its inception in the 1970s. Much of the Council's function lies in its ability to coordinate the planning of the region's municipalities into one vision. This vision has manifest in the form of the Blueprint 2020 plan.

The Metropolitan Council has been a major proponent of increasing transportation options for the metropolitan area. The regional transit goals include:

- Double the capacity of the bus system, the backbone of the regional transit system.
- Dedicated transit corridors.
- Efficient use of land and public infrastructure.
- Implement policies capable of carrying twice the current rides with easy-to-use, high-quality service by 2020.
- Incorporate new technologies, special transitways, faster express service, more routes, buses and customer incentives to combine to provide superior transit service to a greater number of people.

One of such options is light-rail transit. The Met Council has recently embraced the notion of transit-oriented development and smart growth. Light-rail transit is one way to achieve these smart growth goals and is a part of a larger set of policies to enhance the livability of the region.

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The City of Minneapolis is responsible for the implementation of the City's master plan, the Minneapolis Plan. The Master Plan is implemented through the City's zoning code, changes to which require approval from the affected residents, the Minneapolis Planning Commission and the City Council.

The Minneapolis Plan explicitly states eight primary goals:

- Increase the population and tax base by developing and supporting housing choices
- Increase safety and confidence in the City of Minneapolis Strengthen citizen participation
- Create strong vital commercial corridors city-wide through mixed-use development
- Improve public transportation
- Preserve, enhance and create a sustainable natural and historic environment
- Market downtown as a place to live, work, play and do business
- Strengthen our city through infrastructure investments

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The goals of the Minneapolis plan are used to create land use regulations and fiscal policies that help accomplish those goals. However, the city has applied significant effort planning areas affected by the LRT line.

The City goals for the Hiawatha Light Rail Corridor include:

- Preserve livability of adjacent neighborhoods through careful planning and active neighborhood participation
- Strengthen neighborhoods by reinvesting in housing, multi-use facilities and renovation projects
- Attract new employment opportunities along the corridor and improve transportation to existing business
- Improve alternative transportation options within the city
- Promote continued growth, accessibility and economic vitality of Downtown Minneapolis through light rail transit service in the Hiawatha Corridor

The city has begun crafting a transit-oriented overlay district to accomplish these goals.

# small scale plans

## preview

Transit-oriented development is the one underlying theme in all the neighborhood plans. The most common aspects of the plans along the Hiawatha LRT corridor include; improving the pedestrian environment, including a mix of land uses near the station, offering a variety of housing types, enhancing connectivity between the neighborhood and LRT stations and mitigating of automobile-related externalities.

1- What is TOD?

2- Ideas from plans

3- Examples of initiatives

4- Matrix of issues

The many neighborhood plans along the corridor have unanimously backed transit-oriented policies to drive the future development near the light-rail line. Some of the key components of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) include:

- Encourage land uses that generate pedestrian activity and transit ridership
- Stimulate compact growth by managing the residential density
- Concentrate employment and housing in station areas
- Increase mix of complementary land uses
- Design streets for multimodal use
- Manage parking supply introduction
- Connect streets and sidewalks to link to transit research and other cities
- Design development for pedestrians existing conditions
- Provide usable public open space broad plans  
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## Housing:

Each of the plans discusses the importance a mix of housing types. The exact densities primarily depend on the surrounding land uses, proximity to the LRT station, and neighborhood character. However, there is general agreement that higher densities should be targeted for areas adjacent to the LRT station.

A variety of housing types were prescribed by the plans. Plans called for multi-family apartments located above first floor retail near transit stations to increase “eyes on the street”, place high-density uses near transit to mitigate the need for automobile trips, and provide opportunities to live adjacent to high frequency transit.

In addition, a general propensity toward “invisible density” exists. Invisible density would include townhomes, smaller apartment buildings and accessory housing units. These housing types provide a greater density than single family homes, but don’t alter the neighborhood character and have fewer negative associations related to them.

Single-family housing is prescribed in most of the plans, but usually at the fringe of the station area, approximately a half mile away. The general popularity of single family homes remains high, and so there is a general expectation that they must be accounted for. However, single family homes are more (though not by definition) auto-oriented and so it has been generally recommended to push those uses farther away from the LRT stations.

In addition to the various types of housing prescribed, the need for affordable housing was discussed. Providing housing at different levels of affordability allows a continuing effort to diversity in these neighborhoods.

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**Land Use:**

The plans stress the importance of mixing land uses, especially near the stations. Specifically, the plans support uses that promote pedestrian activity, such as first floor retail with residential or office uses above.

Each of the plans highlights the need for first floor retail near the station. Much of the desired retail will be neighborhood-based. The upper floors will consist of office space and/or residential uses depending on the location. In some cases the upper floors should be constructed in a flexible manner so as to allow efficient use of space during market fluctuations.

Industrial uses are desirable due to the potential for job creation, but rather undesirable for enabling transit-oriented development. These uses are very valuable to the community and should be accounted for, but not adjacent to the transit station. These uses can be placed in areas less suitable for residential and retail spaces. In addition, quality design and planning can turn industry into a neighborhood amenity.

Open space is very important near the stations according to the plans. The public open space allows the transit stations to become public gathering areas and serve a social purpose, in addition to the functional purpose. The 46<sup>th</sup> Street plan calls for green space near the station in the form of a town square, and all desire green space to be incorporated with larger developments.

The plans discourage parking lots, and call for various screening measures when they are necessary. It should be noted that parking management policy at the ends of the light-rail line will significantly impact ridership and land use at all locations along the line.

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## Transportation:

The transportation elements of the various plans are perhaps the most united; each calls for significant improvements to the pedestrian environment, strong connectivity between the stations and the neighborhoods, a reduction on the reliance of auto-dependent business and increased bicycle accessibility.

Each of the plans stressed the importance of creating and maintaining a pedestrian friendly environment. In order to maximize the benefits of the LRT access, high connectivity is needed between the LRT station, the bus stops and the various uses near the station.

Forming strong connections between existing bus routes and the LRT is important because most existing bus riders will remain reliant on the bus. A significant number of riders will be transferring from bus routes in South Minneapolis.

Bicycle accessibility has been discussed in the plans as another way to enhance transportation options. This accessibility is of increased importance at Lake Street due to the Midtown Greenway. Also, a strong connection between the LRT and the neighborhoods could increase cycle commuting near the corridor. In addition, bicycle parking should be provided near transit access, commercial activity and open space.

In general, the plans discourage developments that are exclusively auto-oriented. It is obviously important not to condemn the automobile traffic that comprises nearly all of the travel, and subsequent business. However, the plans call for an environment that is less focused on auto traffic and more focused on other modes, namely walking, cycling and transit.

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**Design:**

Encouraged:

- Orientation to street
- Lighting near sidewalks should be pedestrian scaled
- Street level retail is strongly encouraged
- “storefronts” should be required for street level retail
- On-street parking to provide buffer for pedestrians
- Shared parking is encouraged
- Parking lots should be manicured the same way as sidewalks
- Bicycle parking should be provided (*1 space for every 2000 square feet of net floor area*) *Hi-lake station area plan*
- Improved transit waiting areas are desired
- Articulated building facades and awnings encouraged
- Undesirable non-residential uses should be screened from pedestrian and residential uses.
- TODs should be approximately 60-125 acres
  - ^ 10-50% mixed-use (core of site)
  - ^ 20-50% employment
  - ^ 20-50% residential
  - ^ minimum of 10% civic uses

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Discouraged

- Large surface parking lots
- Drive-thru businesses
- Parking ramps that build-to sidewalk
- Buildings that don’t conform to neighborhood character
- Other auto-oriented uses

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## Specific Initiatives:

### > Hi-Lake Shopping Center -

Hi-Lake Shopping Center has long been at the center of controversy regarding the Lake Street LRT station. The existing center is auto-oriented with much of the parking located between the street and the businesses. Plans call for a new development to move up to the sidewalk, with parking in back or underground. Due to the popularity of existing tenants, they should be given an opportunity to remain in the new development. The plans call for first-floor retail with apartments or office space above.

### > 27<sup>th</sup> and Lake Entertainment District -

The possibility of creating a entertainment district on the south side of Lake across from Target. The could act as an extension of the nascent entertainment area forming at 27th.

### > Restructuring Cedar, Minnehaha and Franklin intersection -

Several differnet realignments of Cedar, Minnehaha and Franklin have been discussed. The possibilities include two versions of a roundabout where the current trianlge is located and a village green alternative which would leave a large tract of land (about one city block) open in the center of the road network. This would require large public investment, but could enhance the potential for development, and improve the pedestrian and bicycle environment.

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### > Hi-Lake Loop -

Due to the poor pedestrian and bicylcle accessibility at Hiawatha and Lake, alternatives are being examined. The Hi-Lake Loop, or Ring Road, would involve infrastructure improvements on 28th St, Minnehaha Ave, 32nd St and 21st Ave to increase the accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and local residents. In addition, this would likely link to the Midtown Greenway and provide access to most retail activities in the area.

### > Town Square -

At 46th St, the possibility of a Town Square was discussed next to the station in order to allow a gathering spot for residents and workers in the area.

### > Carriage Housing -

Carriage houses are accessory housing units, typically located above garages. These units have been discussed in Ventura Village (where zoning permits them) and endorsed by the 46th St Station Area Plan. These units can increase safety, provide low-profile housing density, and additional housing opportunities at low cost.

Issue Discussed	Franklin- Cedar Riverside Station Area Plan	Ventura Village Master Plan	Hi-Lake Station Area Plan	East End Revival	Midtown Revival	46th Street Station Area Plan
Transit-oriented development	*	*	*	*	*	*
Connectivity to bus/transit	*	*	*	*		
Pedestrian-friendly enhancements	*	*	*	*	*	*
Circulator buses	*	*				
Increase bicycle access and parking	*	*	*	*		*
Realign street pattern	*					
Loop/ring roads				*	*	
Mix of uses	*	*	*	*	*	*
Uses oriented to the street	*	*	*	*	*	
Variety of housing types	*	*	*	*	*	*
Include affordable housing		*				*
Infill housing		*	*	*	*	
Live-work spaces	*	*	*			
Maintain existing character	*	*				
Screen parking	*		*	*	*	
More parking/better management					*	*
Crime/Safety	*	*			*	
Continuing Process		*				
Zoning reform needed	*	*	*	*	*	*

An “issue” is something ***explicitly detailed*** in the specific plan.

# issues

## preview

Substantial obstacles may prevent the neighborhoods from attaining their vision. A wide variety of potential barriers have been identified in the different plans, public agencies and literature. These barriers include;

- Regulatory barriers to implementing plans
- Fragmented land ownership
- Market fluctuations as related to real estate
- Crime and safety concerns
- Traffic circulation and transportation modes
- Parking near LRT stations
- Bad (non-conforming to plans) development in locations near LRT stations
- Contamination of sites
- Lack of market interest

1- Problems and solutions to issues related to neighborhood planning and the LRT line.

- **Regulatory barriers to implementing plan**

Problem: The existing zoning code in many cases doesn't allow the type of development suggested in the neighborhood and station area plans. The difficulty and time associated with rezoning individual parcels prohibit development as prescribed.

Solution: Create a TOD overlay for the Hiawatha corridor that would promote transit-oriented development. Also, this needs to be done in a very timely manner or else an interim process should be devised to prevent non-conforming developments from being constructed.

- **Fragmented land ownership**

Problem – Many of the prime locations for market driven development consist of a large number of smaller parcels. The fragmented nature of the land ownership makes it difficult for developers to go forward with development ideas. This problem is often cited by developers as a significant barrier, but there is little local governments can do.

Solution: Several options are available to help overcome this problem. One such option is the “master developer” idea. This idea is a derivation of the development that occurred along rail corridors in the 1800s. In this scenario, a developer would attain exclusive development rights for large tracts of land near the LRT station in order to increase the flexibility of development.

A second option is to have developers and local governments enter into a public private partnership. In this case the city and developer enter a joint agreement to develop the land. The outcome is similar, but in this case the local government typically gets more help with land acquisition and overhead costs.

- **Market fluctuations**

Problem: Shifts in the market could deter development or create financial hardship on new developments. This possibility will significantly deter developers from TOD projects, especially relatively untested developments.

Solution: Encouraging flexible space allows developers and managers to off-set potential losses in one market (e.g. office) with stability in another (e.g. residential).

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- **Crime and safety**

Problem: Some areas where stations will be constructed experience crime regularly, while others are perceived to experience crime. In both cases, people will be much less likely to use transit.

Solution: The single greatest deterrent of crime at a local level is good land use planning. Through employing CPTED principles, including pedestrian lighting, windows facing the street, a mix of land uses, regular pedestrian activity and creating defensible space, crime can easily be deterred.
- **Traffic circulation and transportation modes**

Problem: The existing street network along Hiawatha breaks from the traditional grid pattern. This creates odd shaped parcels for development and breaks up the continuity of the community fabric.

Solution: Realignment has been discussed at the Franklin Avenue and Lake St stations in the Franklin Ave station area plan and the East End Revival respectively. At Franklin Ave, a complete realignment is discussed in several different ways, all of which would achieve a more pedestrian friendly environment and connect Ventura Village to Seward. At Lake Street the possibility of a ring road would allow alternate routes for pedestrians, cyclists and local travelers.
- **Parking**

Problem: Many people will presumably drive to places near LRT stations along the line and park on local streets. Many of these areas are already experiencing a parking crunch and this increased burden would cause serious difficulties for residents.

Solution: At present, parking signage, critical parking areas and other existing parking management tools will be employed. According to a report conducted by the Met Council, neighborhood-based volunteer parking management and enforcement, privatization of parking management or using revenues from selling permits in station areas in the surrounding neighborhoods could be used to help deter parking problems in the surrounding neighborhoods.

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- **Resisting bad (non-TOD) development**

Problem: The neighborhoods along the corridor have invested unbelievable time and effort trying to prepare for the LRT line. Unfortunately all of these efforts aren't legally enforceable until they are incorporated in the Minneapolis Zoning Code. Undesirable development could occur before the wishes of residents become code.

Solution: Undesirable development can be staved off through proactive development and inter-neighborhood coordination and collaboration. By seeking good developers and projects for prime parcels, the developable areas can be filled according to neighborhood and station area plans.

Perhaps the most effective way to accomplish the coordination would be through a permanent governing body along the corridor. HCNC stands to be the best body to fill this role. By solidifying HCNC's status and garnering regular members, a body could expedite the development process, coordinate cross-neighborhood developments and work together to create a desirable corridor.

- **Contamination (Brownfields)**

Problem: Many of the land adjacent to the LRT corridor is currently contaminated, in some cases with several different pollutants. Clean-up is costly and potentially hazardous. Also, there is a lack of information on pollution location and extent and so discovering contamination requires costly and time-consuming.

Solution: Contamination poses a significant barrier to market driven development. However, a large number of funding sources are currently available for both brownfield remediation and transit orientated development. It is unlikely that these funding sources will bare the full cost of the clean-up costs.

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# conclusion

Transit-oriented development has been prescribed by all the plans along the Hiawatha corridor. This unity in vision makes a strong statement to public officials and developers and shows that most people desire a pleasant environment where they are offered the opportunity to walk, use transit, bike or drive to their destinations. This unity of vision also makes a strong statement for a single governing body for the corridor. A governing body, with proper financial and staff support from the city and regional body would be a significant step in the right direction toward attaining these goals.

The neighborhoods along the Hiawatha LRT face an enormous challenge. Much of the development benefits related to LRT are a result of pre-planning development via joint agreements between the transit agency and developers. Also, little suitable land exists, which eliminates the possibility of the larger-scale developments that are needed for properly mixing uses. The limited length of the line, the lack of public money for development, and the poor image of public transit in the Twin Cities will greatly dampen the effect of LRT in the Twin Cities.

However, many actions can be taken to increase the likelihood of success. Implementing strict parking regulations, creating zoning that conforms to neighborhood plans in a timely manner, acquiring and cleaning available land and collecting funding from a variety of sources *are necessary* for success.

Minneapolis and its NRP program are examples to which cities across the country look at to improve their citizen participation environment. We can also be an example to the rest of the country regarding planning around LRT. We face significant barriers, and will need a lot of help, but success is possible. We will need to place real pressure on public officials, developers, foundations, larger bodies of government and ourselves to ensure success. We will also need to find and implement our own solutions to these barriers, while drawing from lessons from other cities. We've already envisioned what the future could look like, now it's time to make it happen.

# appendix

## List of Plans

- The Minneapolis Plan
- The Minneapolis Zoning Code
- Development Objectives for the Hi-Lake Center (City of Minneapolis)
- East Lake Street Corridor Study
- Minnehaha Avenue Corridor Study
- Hiawatha/Lake Street Station Area Plan
- Hiawatha LRT Corridor Transit Oriented Development Market Study
- Retail Market Analysis for the Hi-Lake Shopping Center
- 46<sup>th</sup> and Hiawatha Station Area Plan
- East End Revival
- Midtown Revival
- Greenway Development Framework
- Ventura Village Master Plan
- Epic Hi-Lake Redevelopment Plan
- Franklin-Cedar Riverside Transit Oriented Development Master Plan
- Franklin Avenue LRT Task Force Report
- Hiawatha/Lake staff report
- Franklin/Cedar-Riverside staff report
- 46<sup>th</sup> and Hiawatha staff report

## Maps

- Neighborhoods
- Neighborhood Organizations
- Small Area Plan Coverage
- Overlap of Plans
- Bus Connections
- Simple Land Use
- Zoning
- Estimated Market Value Per Square Foot

# appendix

## neighborhoods

