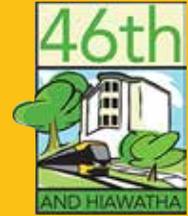




## INTRODUCING THE

# 46th AND HIAWATHA

## TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



The 46th Street LRT Station is located in Minneapolis at the intersection of Hiawatha Avenue and East 46th Street on the Blue Line (formerly the Hiawatha Line) of the growing Twin Cities transit network. LRT opened in 2004. Since then, access by transit to employment and housing, natural amenities, retail and entertainment choices is increasing rapidly as the transit system grows and new transit-oriented development opens near the LRT stations. Community planning for growth and significant land use changes around the 46th Street LRT station began in 2000, and has been updated several times by additional land use, infrastructure and market studies, including the 46th and Hiawatha Transit Oriented Development Strategy.

This brochure briefly introduces the 46th and Hiawatha Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Strategy, a planning study prepared for the Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development with input from neighborhood residents, property and business owners, developers, elected officials, consultants and staff from public agencies. This brochure summarizes many of the recommendations and findings of this specialized study which focuses on the public and private actions and projects that can facilitate moving from the land use vision towards the successful implementation of this plan. This brochure is a tool to enable various stakeholders to quickly understand, champion, or participate in the evolving opportunities to implement the Station Area Plan. The complete report provides additional details about proposed infrastructure improvements and development opportunities, and the specific roles that various stakeholders can play in achieving the community goals.

The complete report is available on the City of Minneapolis Website as a "Related Document" to the 46th & Hiawatha Station Area Master Plan at: [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/planning/plans/cped\\_46th](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/planning/plans/cped_46th)



# What is the Community Plan and Land Use Vision for the 46th Street LRT Station Area?



Residents, property owners, and retailers frequently acknowledge that 46th and Hiawatha is an excellent location with convenient access to downtown Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and the airport. However, it is not yet a great place. Despite the presence of wonderful features like the LRT station, strong traditional urban neighborhoods, beautiful parks and natural areas, several well-designed transit-oriented housing developments, and an eclectic mix of retail shops; the LRT station area lacks a clear identity as a neighborhood center that integrates these features into a vibrant place.

Instead, the diverse and often conflicting attributes of the area such as the eclectic mix of land-uses, derelict railroad and utility corridor, irregular street grid, inhospitable highway corridor, and the aging condition of many commercial buildings and pedestrian facilities, still reflect the past of the station area more than the future that has been envisioned by the community.

One role of the 46th Street Station Area Master Plan adopted in 2001 was to identify the aging industrial and auto oriented commercial buildings closest to the station as a change area that would be transformed over time by improved transit access, economic trends, land use plans, zoning regulations, property owner business opportunities, developer interest, and public infrastructure investments into a higher density pedestrian and transit oriented neighborhood center.

Most of the areas surrounding the LRT station, including the strong single family neighborhoods and park and natural areas were identified as preservation areas that could benefit from proximity to the LRT station and the neighborhood center.

The goal of the TOD strategy is to steer growth into the change area and shape the character of new development and land uses to be consistent with the plan. The consensus land use vision for the 46th Street LRT station area is to establish a pedestrian-friendly and sustainable neighborhood center that is conveniently connected with the LRT station and provides new multifamily housing choices, retail services, and an improved physical environment. Three key concepts are at the center of the land use plan:

1. Improve pedestrian, bike and transit facilities and the connections between the LRT station and the surrounding neighborhood.
2. Create a complete neighborhood center that provides a wide-range of multifamily housing choices and meets many of the daily shopping and recreational needs of residents in the surrounding area.
3. Build a sustainable neighborhood with green technologies and ecological building designs, stormwater management and infrastructure and natural amenities

Renderings and concept plans included in this report illustrate the general features of this neighborhood center.





# What Is a Transit Oriented Development Strategy?

A transit oriented development strategy is an intentional approach to actively manage land use changes in a rapidly evolving transit station area in order to achieve the goals of a community plan and transit-supportive vision. Land Use plans are usually implemented in two different ways

1. Market-shaped actions by property owners, businesses, developers, residents, consumers and investors operating within the marketplace and the land-use regulatory framework.
2. Deliberate actions, programs and infrastructure investments approved by elected officials and implemented by government jurisdictions that are consistent with adopted plans and policies.

Public sector capital and housing and economic development programs play a key role in removing barriers to private investment and supporting additional public benefits from planned land-use changes. For property owners, developers and businesses this TOD strategy provides information and ideas that encourage them to participate in the implementation of the plan and to coordinate with other property owners and stakeholders.

The role of the 46th and Hiawatha TOD Strategy is to provide information and propose actions that can enhance existing neighborhood strengths and assets, mitigate or remove physical barriers to successful plan implementation, and coordinate and shape complimentary public and private projects that can build local competitive advantages to attract new investment that supports the station area vision for the future. The goal is to create over time physical improvements and market conditions that will create a successful and sustainable neighborhood center that is connected to transit.

## TOD strategy tools include the following:

- *Consulting with property owners, developers, policy-makers, and the community*
- *Developing preliminary conceptual designs of infrastructure*
- *Analyzing market potential*
- *Developing a strategy for improving market conditions*
- *Analyzing development feasibility and land costs*
- *Proposing development scenarios for major opportunity sites*
- *Testing traffic, fiscal, and market impacts of proposed development vision*
- *Preparing a 15-Year Action Plan*
- *Calculating preliminary cost estimates of infrastructure concepts*
- *Analyzing funding tools*
- *Developing partnerships*
- *Developing a phasing scenario for aligning development sites with infrastructure timing*
- *Analyzing barriers to private market implementation of station area plan*

# The 46th Street LRT Station Area Urban Design Concept

Urban design focuses attention on the characteristics of the urban environment – buildings, landscapes, street and utility corridors, and public spaces - that shape local neighborhood identity, the pedestrian experience, and the physical and environmental quality of an urban setting. While proximity to the LRT station and evolving real estate and demographic trends create the market potential for multifamily residential and retail development, these trends will be significantly strengthened if they are combined with an improved public setting to create a vibrant and memorable urban place.

The Urban Design Concept Plan for the 46th and Hiawatha station area illustrates and maps these core guiding features and opportunities within the station area. Creating a multi-modal, complete, and sustainable neighborhood center that is an asset for the surrounding neighborhood involves establishing a number of key “place-making” aspects and urban design features in the LRT station area.

Several examples of important urban design concepts that are presented in significant detail in the TOD strategy are:

## **Create Livable Complete Green Streets, including 46th Street, Minnehaha Avenue and even Hiawatha Avenue.**

Livable Green Streets are roadways that incorporate elements of nature and sustainable design. Green Streets “re-green” the neighborhood by incorporating street trees and landscaping and also “re-nature” the city by repairing and improving ecological systems, such as improving air quality, reducing the urban heat island and atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, increasing groundwater recharge, and improving habitat. Complete streets are context-sensitive streets that are designed to be safe for all users and all modes of transportation.

46th Street between Minnehaha Avenue and the LRT Station is also proposed to serve as a **Destination Main Street** that supports vibrant pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development in the core of the neighborhood center.





## The 46th Street LRT Station Area Urban Design Concept

### **Create a Greenway in the Railroad Corridor**

As the use and condition of the railroad tracks continues to decline south of 42nd Street, this unused segment of the railroad corridor creates significant derelict land and blight that can be improved into a green neighborhood amenity as segments are abandoned by the railroad. Proposed amenities such as shared-use pedestrian and bicycle paths, plantings, rain gardens, pocket parks, and linear district stormwater management facilities can connect to and through the station area from north to south, serving as a greenway amenity and a non-motorized circulation spine through the higher density residential core of the neighborhood center connecting to Minnehaha Park, while still providing an improved utility corridor.

### **Establish a mixed-use shopping area near the intersection of 46th Street and Snelling Avenues**

Promote high-quality multi-family housing and mixed use development in the change area located near the LRT station to create a vibrant and attractive neighborhood center. Establish a concentrated Main Street shopping district along 46th Street east Hiawatha Avenue and attract a grocery store to anchor the retail district and attract a diverse range of housing types. Encourage revitalization of vacant or underutilized storefronts at neighborhood commercial nodes near the station.

### **Redevelop the Town Square and Park View Site**

Extending Snelling Avenue south of 46th Street and establishing a connected local street grid can create property access to several very desirable mixed-use and housing development parcels in the quadrant of the station area located southeast of the LRT station, between 46th Street and Minnehaha Park.

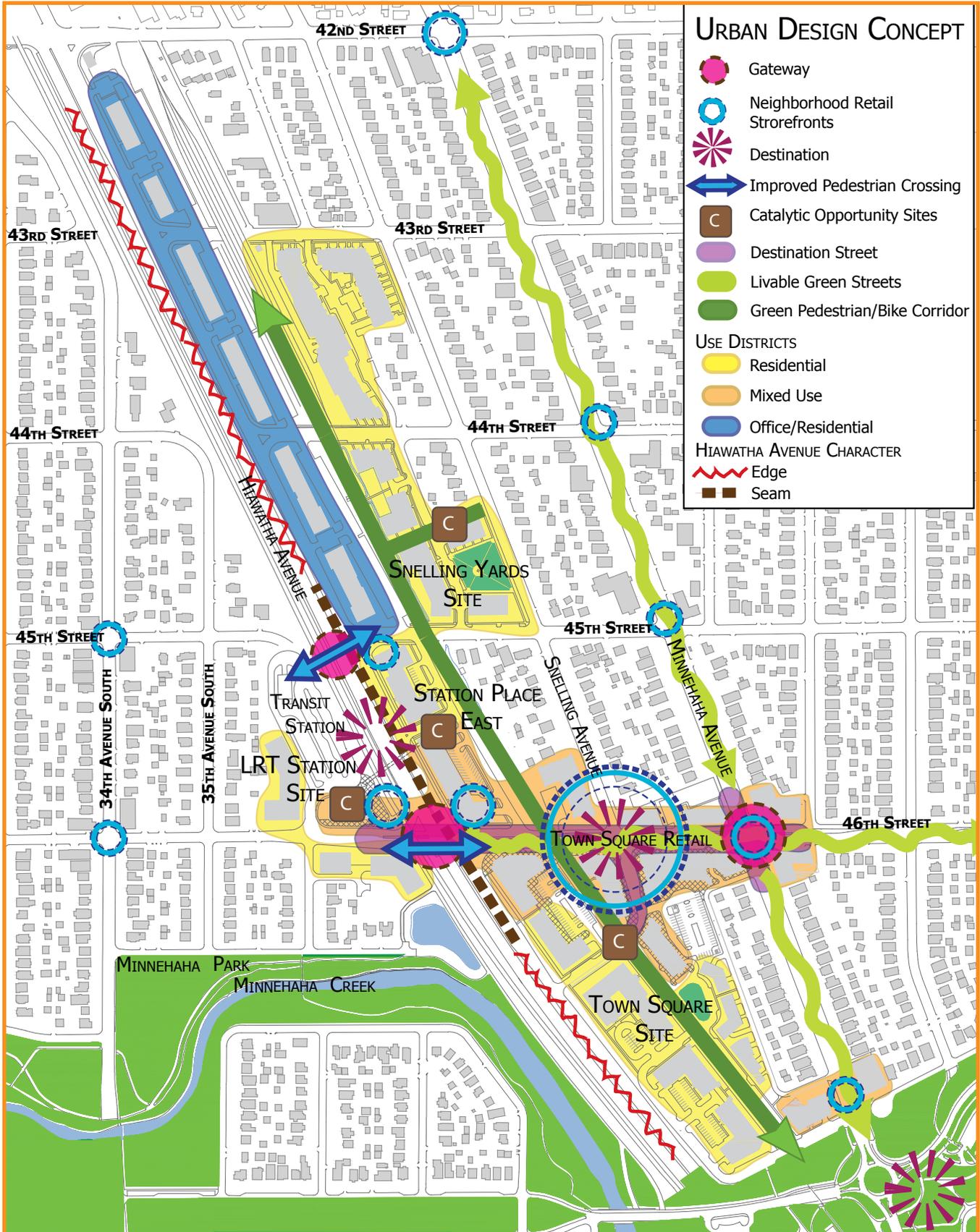
### **Create Gateway features at the key entry points to the LRT Station area**

Public plazas, landscaping, distinctive architecture, and public art can reinforce the local identity and character of the station area and create gathering spaces that attract new pedestrian oriented development.

### **Improve the pedestrian environment throughout the station area**

Design and construct better pedestrian connections between the LRT station and the surrounding neighborhood, paying special attention to highway crossings near the LRT station and areas where new housing development is occurring. Incorporate additional pedestrian lighting, crosswalks, and boulevard trees to improve pedestrian safety and comfort.

### **Reduce the number and amount of surface parking lots, paved areas, or derelict land near the LRT Station**



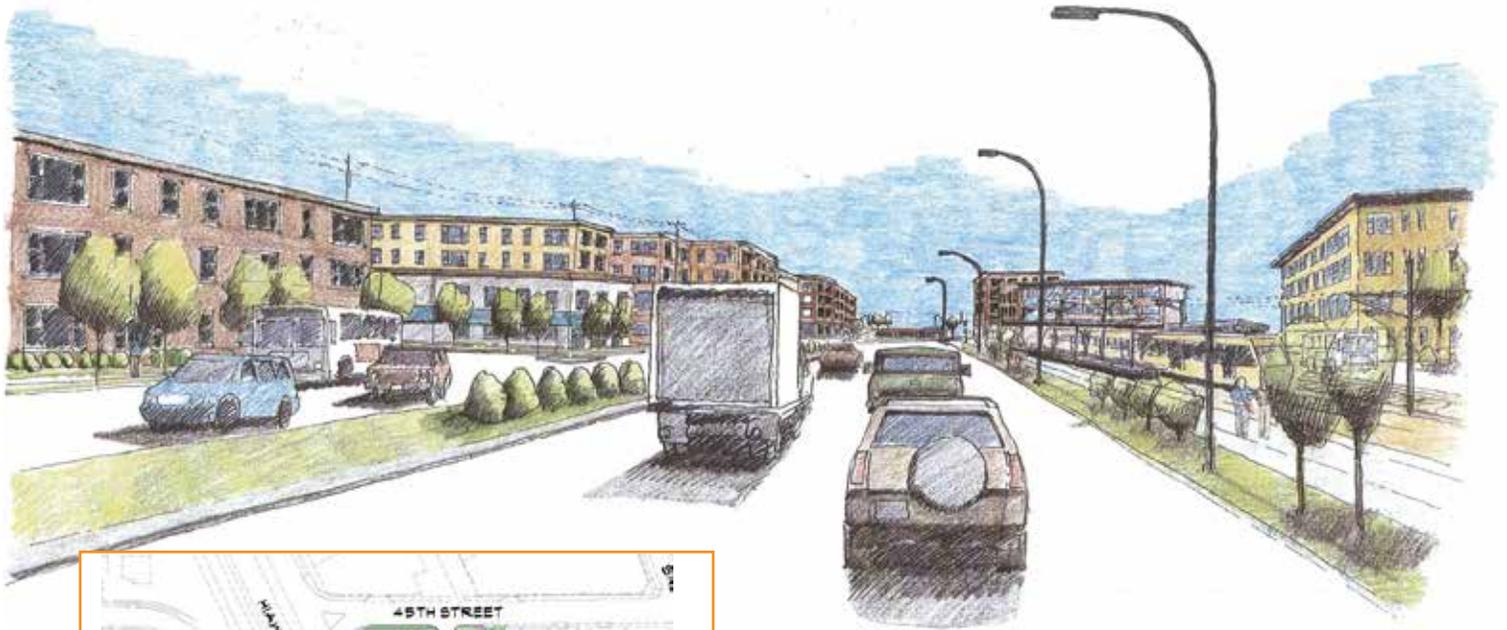
# What are the Catalytic Development Sites and Infrastructure Projects near the LRT Station?

Several future development sites within the station area have been identified as potential catalysts for implementing the station area plan and strengthening the local market for additional new investments and transit oriented development. Four sites were selected for much more detailed study. In some cases the catalyst sites were selected because of their large size and prominent visibility, close proximity to the LRT station or Minnehaha Park, public ownership, or their ability to anchor new development in different subdistricts around the station area. These sites include the LRT station block (recently developed by Oaks Properties); the vacant City-owned former Snelling Yards Public Works site; the properties fronting on Hiawatha Avenue between 45th and 46th Street that are located across the highway from the LRT Station; and the large Town Square site, which is located in the southeasterly quadrant of the station area, between Minnehaha Park and the LRT Station.

More extensive analysis of the development potential of each of these sites, including their potential development programs, primary design criteria, conceptual site plans, infrastructure requirements, market timing and phasing scenarios are included in the complete TOD strategy report.

In a similar manner, projects were identified and preliminary design concepts were prepared for several of the major infrastructure projects proposed in the station area plans.





**Station Place** is the name given to the subdistrict within the LRT Station Area that is located closest to the LRT Station on both sides of Hiawatha Avenue. At the heart of the Station Place district is the 46th and Hiawatha LRT station. The opening of the signature Oaks Station Place project in 2013 has created a neighborhood landmark that includes housing and retail space, as well as a gateway plaza, public art, and improved pedestrian connections to the adjacent LRT station.

Station Place development plays an important role in establishing a neighborhood district that incorporates the LRT station as a central destination and integrates development on both

the east and west sides of Hiawatha Avenue. The Station Place district consists of the LRT station site, the property facing the station along the east side of Hiawatha between 45th and 46th streets, and the MnDOT retention pond site on the south side of 46th Street across from the station. The district is characterized by immediate proximity to the station as well as a vibrant mix of automobile, bus, train, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic. The west side of the district also benefits from easy access to existing bike paths, Minnehaha Creek, and, further to the south, Longfellow Gardens. In the future, new multi-story buildings located on both sides of Hiawatha Avenue will announce to transit and vehicular passengers their arrival at an active urban district and pedestrian zone. These buildings and active land uses will visually and functionally knit together the two sides of the highway into a neighborhood center.

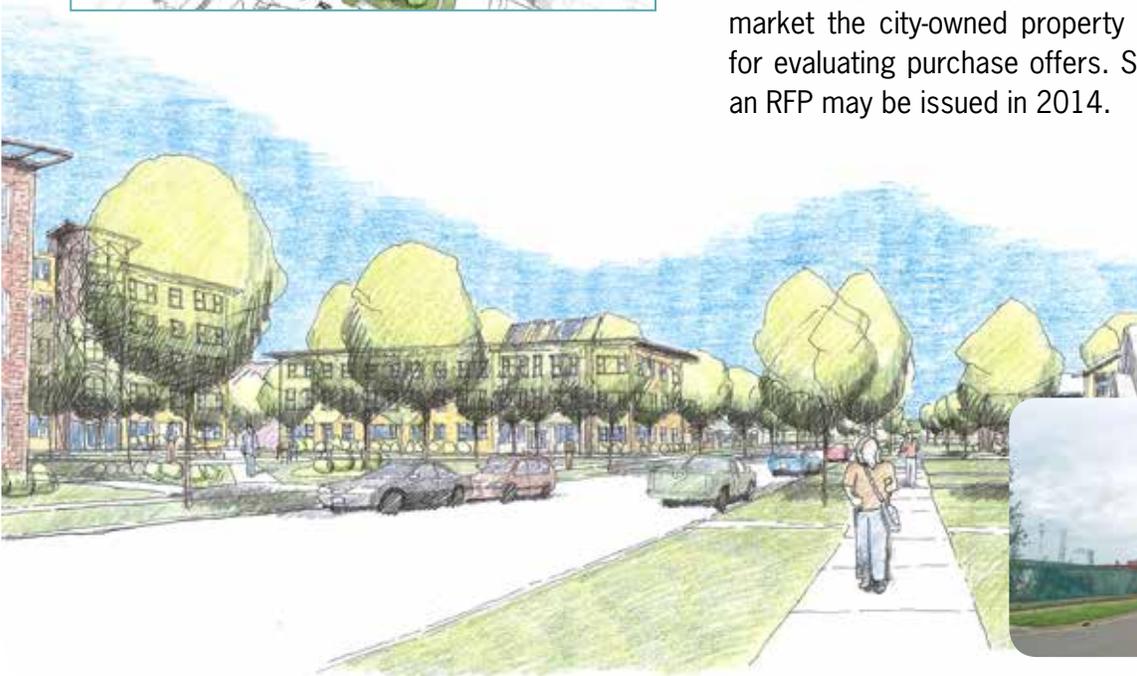


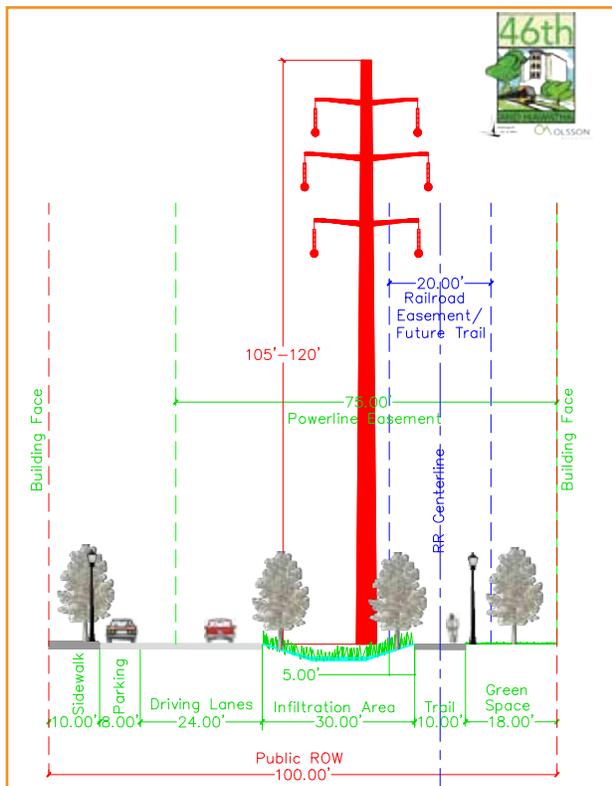
**Station View** is the name given to the subdistrict located northeast of the intersection of 46th Street and Hiawatha Avenue, primarily on the east side of the railroad tracks. The former Minneapolis Public Works Snelling Yards site is the major opportunity site in this quadrant of the station, and development there, along with the existing Hiawatha Flats development, reinforces the future need for an improved signalized pedestrian and bike crossing of Hiawatha at 45th Street at the north end of the LRT station.

The **Snelling Yards** opportunity site is a 3.3 acre site occupying most of the block bounded by railroad tracks to the west, 44th Street to the north, Snelling Avenue on the east, and 45th Street to the south. The parcel is similar to the Hiawatha Flats property located immediately to the north, and could easily support approximately 200 multifamily housing units, if developed at a similar density as other TOD projects in the station area. If development occurs at this scale it will strengthen the overall market for transit oriented development near the station. The preferred developed scenario from the TOD strategy planning process is illustrated below.



Since the Snelling Yards has been replaced by the recently constructed Hiawatha Public Works Facility, the property is no longer needed for City operations and will be offered for sale as a future TOD development site. A request for proposals process will be utilized to market the city-owned property and establish criteria for evaluating purchase offers. Staff now expects that an RFP may be issued in 2014.





## The Town Square and Park View

opportunity site is the largest and most significant future development site for establishing a significant mixed-use neighborhood center and Main Street retail concentration near the 46th Street LRT station. The contiguous development site includes eight private commercial properties, three city-owned properties, occupying more than 12 acres of land on part of the superblock bounded by Hiawatha Avenue on the west, 46th Street to the north, Minnehaha Avenue on the east, and Nawadaha Boulevard to the south.



For many reasons, redevelopment of this block is likely to occur in several phases, with redevelopment coordinated with new streets, streetscapes and greenway improvements. One role of the TOD strategy has been to develop a phasing model for redevelopment of this complex site, which will require property owners to coordinate the timing of their property sales and the redevelopment of the block when the market conditions and land prices are favorable. The phasing model is included along with other detailed planning analysis in the longer TOD Strategy report. The Town Square block is also bisected by an unutilized railroad track and an active high voltage powerline, which may be converted in the future into a greenway and multi-use trail connecting Minnehaha Park with the LRT station. Several design studies that were completed for this property estimated development potential at about 450 housing units, and 95,000 square feet of commercial space. The maps and diagrams included below are a small sample of the analysis included in the report, but they do illustrate the complexity and development potential of the site, and the importance of designing and coordinating new infrastructure, such as the Snelling Avenue extension, other local streets and the rail corridor greenway, along with the new development.

# The Growing Market for New Housing, Jobs, Retail Services and Walkable Neighborhoods Located Near Transit Stations

The demand for housing and commercial development near LRT Stations is growing. Since the LRT Blue Line opened, almost 400 new housing units have been constructed (as of early 2013) in four new high quality mixed-use or multifamily housing developments located within three blocks of the 46th Street LRT station, and more are coming. Many of the residents and customers at these buildings and shops are regular transit patrons. Significant additional development near the LRT station is expected to occur over the next several decades, creating a new neighborhood center around the station and extending east of Hiawatha Avenue along 46th Street.

Because of its proximity to the LRT station, regional accessibility to employment concentrations, established urban character, older commercial buildings that are available for repurposing or redevelopment, existing urban infrastructure and park amenities, the 46th Street LRT station area is a smart location for sustainable growth.

Here is what the recent market studies suggest about demand trends for new housing and retail in the 46th Street station area.

1. Market potential exists to add between 50 and 100 new multifamily housing units per year for the next 15-years in a wide variety of rental and ownership products
2. Proximity to Minnehaha Park and the LRT Station are significant inducements for multifamily housing development if combined with improved pedestrian connections, landscaping and natural amenities
3. Convenient access to a pedestrian friendly main street and neighborhood center retail concentration on 46th Street will be required to attract higher value housing choices near Minnehaha Park
4. Significant demographic, economic and lifestyle changes are increasing demand for urban multifamily housing in attractive walkable neighborhoods that are connected to transit
5. The 46th Street station area is located within a retail trade area that is underserved in both the total amount and mix of retail services relative to local demand
6. The 46th Street station area can support between 100,000 and 150,000 square feet of retail uses, including the established businesses.
7. The opportunity to establish a catalytic Main Street and mixed-use housing and retail neighborhood center exists at 46th street, and could include a small grocery store. However, this component of the station area plan is the most difficult to achieve.
8. Initial development will focus on housing and retail services, with the potential to add office employment in later stages of the station area build-out.



# A Strategic Approach to LRT Station Area Project Priorities, Design and Implementation

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Strategies were developed based upon the guiding principles established through community input. These strategies are intended to influence the design and quality of land uses, infrastructure and new development and to establish priorities for current and future projects. These TOD Strategies are meant to inform the actions by private and public investors, engineers, architects and development teams, and to guide the implementation of infrastructure, policy and development projects within the study area. These TOD strategies address the major components of the overall plan's physical vision. They can provide community touchstones and guidelines for evaluating and improving future development.

1. Encourage Sustainable Urbanism and Green Development Practices
2. Build Infrastructure for the Future of the LRT Station Area
3. The Transit Station should be a Neighborhood Center
4. Remove Barriers to the development of a Sustainable and Pedestrian Friendly TOD Environment
5. Enhance Multimodal Transportation Choices and Infrastructure in the Station Area
6. Support Community Partnerships to champion Implementation of TOD Plans
7. Require and Recognize High-Quality Design in Public and Private Projects
8. Expand Diverse Multifamily Housing Choices near the LRT Station
9. Manage Traffic Wisely and Promote Transit, Walking and Biking
10. Create Suitable Parcels for Neighborhood Center Development whenever Possible
11. Support and Expand Local Retail Opportunities



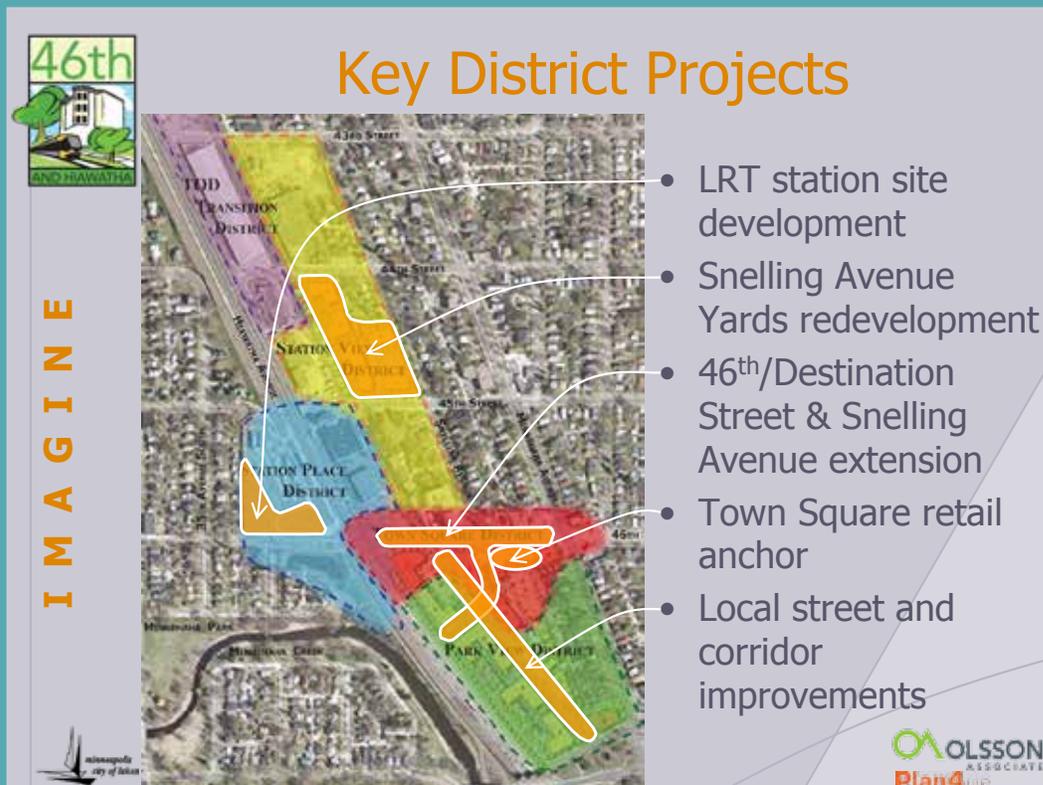
# Making it Real: Toward an Integrated Strategy for Physical Improvements and TOD Market Building

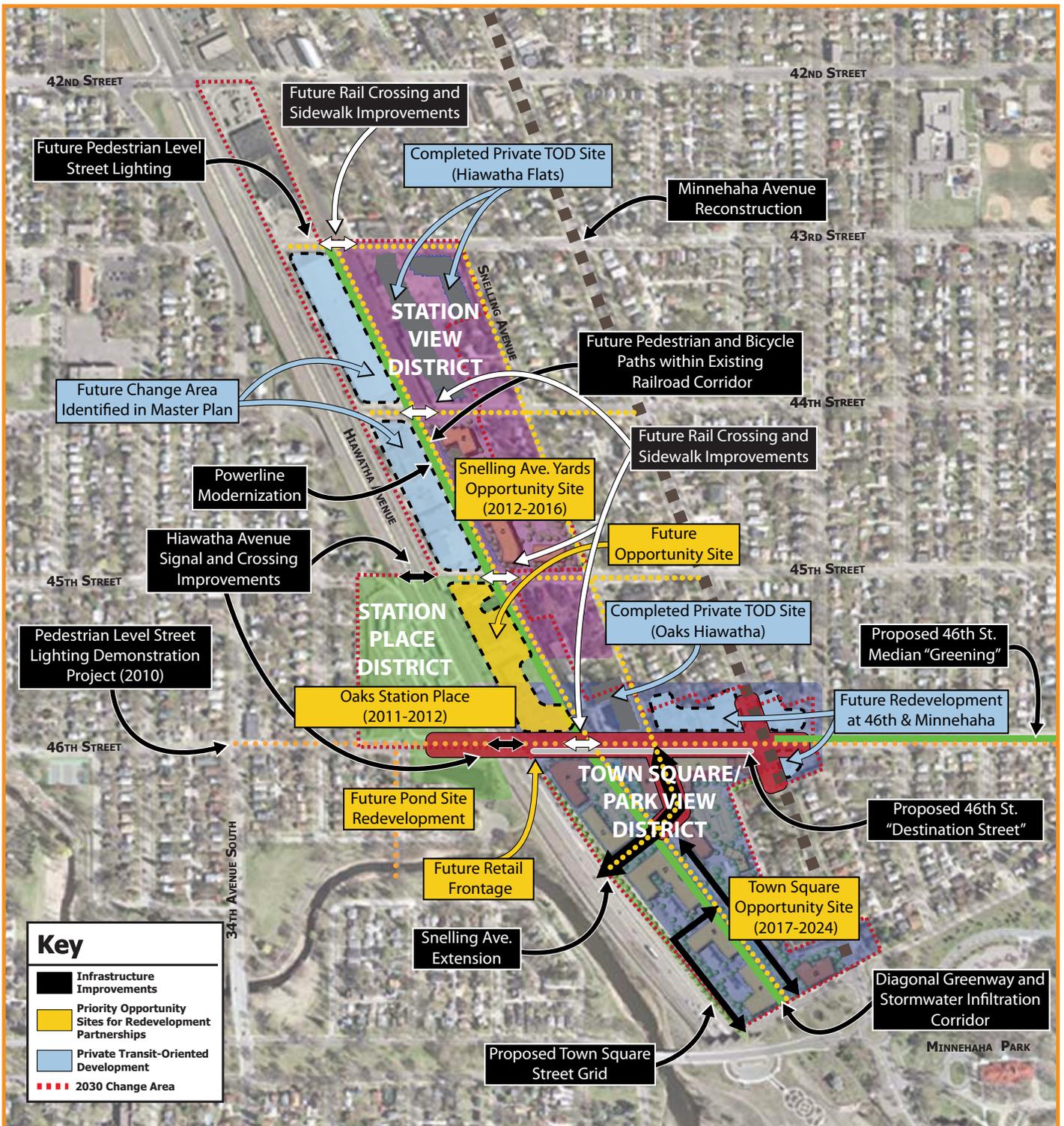
The implementation plan identifies policies, infrastructure projects, and development activities that will support high-quality transit-oriented redevelopment within the designated land-use change area around the 46th Street LRT station. The TOD Strategy provides a flexible and strategic 15-year action plan that can be coordinated with local stakeholders and implemented as opportunities arise to support and realize the vision adopted in the 46th and Hiawatha Station Area Master Plan.

It is not primarily what we analyze and imagine, but what we invest in and build, that will determine the success of city land-use plans and the enduring quality of our neighborhoods.

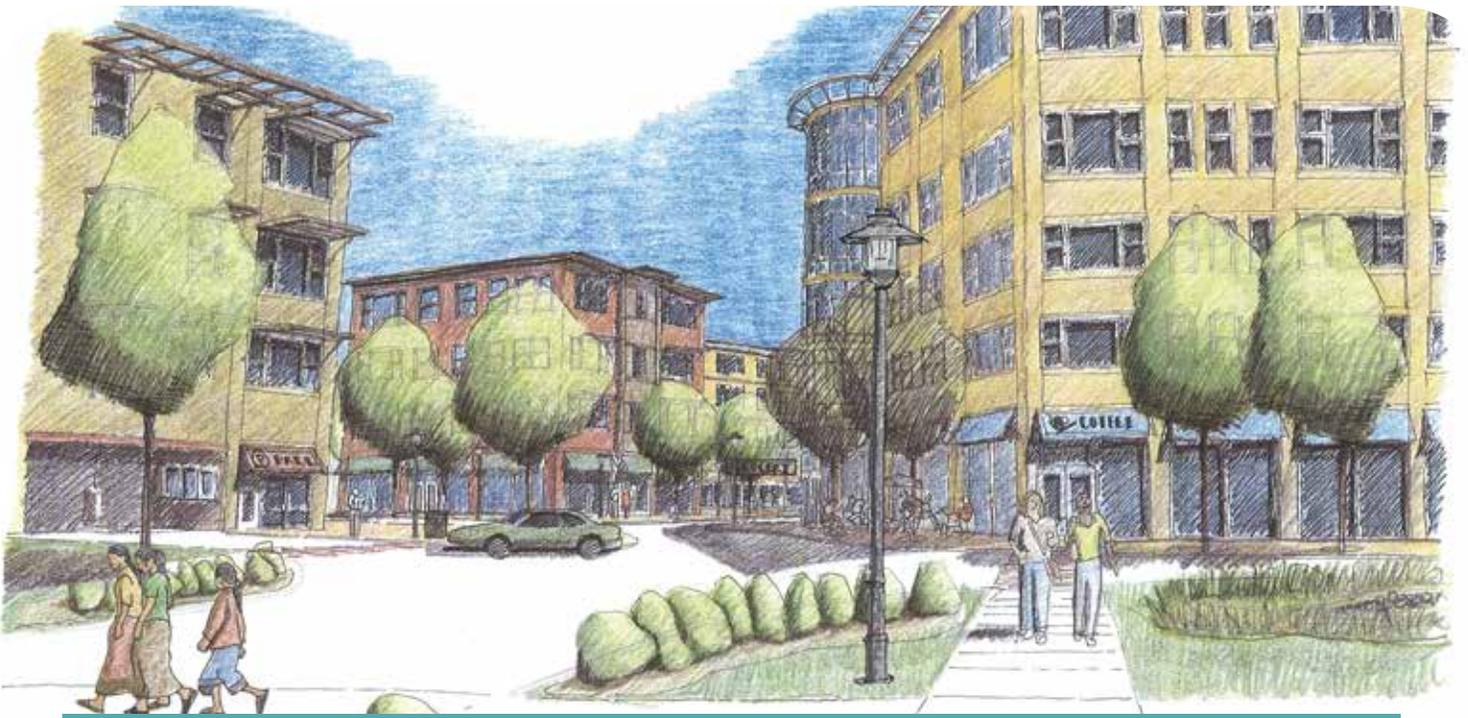
The map of Strategic Infrastructure and Development Projects illustrates how the proposed infrastructure investments and redevelopment of catalytic development sites can work together over time to create a walkable and sustainable neighborhood center that is connected to the LRT Station and serves as an asset for the surrounding community. The dates included on this map are merely planning estimates that are intended to illustrate a feasible phasing scenario for market development and infrastructure investments in this area.

Ultimately, the goal of this planning tool is to strengthen an already healthy and vibrant neighborhood as it evolves. By better accommodating local demographic changes and population growth; increasing life cycle housing choices; providing a complete mix of local retail services; connecting local destinations and amenities; and promoting sustainable transportation options like walking, biking, and transit; a great location can become an even greater place.





## STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS



## It Takes Partnerships to Build a Walkable and Sustainable Neighborhood Center and Transit Village

The complete 46th and Hiawatha Transit Oriented Development Strategy is posted as a “Related Document” to the 46th & Hiawatha Station Area Master Plan on the website of the Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development at:

[http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/planning/plans/cped\\_46th](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/planning/plans/cped_46th)

A limited number of CD copies of the complete planning study, containing significant additional technical information, maps and graphics, market analysis, and preliminary conceptual design studies for infrastructure projects and development sites, are also available to community groups, local property and business owners, interested developers, and other stakeholders while available.

Release of this report, originally planned for completion in 2009, was significantly delayed by the loss of key project staff and consultant changes, impacts of the recession, and the importance of shaping and incorporating new data and policy findings from several major City and County planning studies completed during the past four years: The Access Minneapolis Transportation Plan, The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth, and the Hennepin County Strategic Investment Framework. However, the draft report has been a living document and action plan, with its policy recommendations, infrastructure concepts, development scenarios, and project list used to shape and prioritize a number of public and private projects underway or completed around the 46th Street LRT station during recent years.

The Minnehaha-Hiawatha Community Works Partnership is the principal public and community partnership that brings together Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis and other stakeholders to implement many of the ideas found in this study. Most projects that are proposed for implementation in the 46th & Hiawatha TOD strategy are also included in the Minnehaha-Hiawatha Community Works Project's Strategic Investment Framework. New opportunities for community and property owner engagement and participation, additional resources and reports, and updates on significant proposed and implemented projects can be accessed at the Hennepin County website for the Community Works Partnership at:

<http://minnehaha-hiawatha.com/>