



To: Edina Transportation Commission

Agenda Item #: VI. C.

From: Mark K. Nolan, AICP, Transportation Planner

Action

Date: May 21, 2015

Discussion

Information

Subject: Southwest Light Rail Transit Access

Action Requested:

None.

Information / Background:

Please recall that the ETC's 2015 Annual Work Plan includes a new initiative to "study access to and from Southwest LRT stations in St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka and Eden Prairie." The Southwest LRT line will serve as an extension of the current Green Line and will run from downtown Minneapolis to Eden Prairie. While the line was scheduled to open in late 2019, recently it was discovered that poor soils and project delays will delay opening until 2020. Seventeen (17) stations are planned along the route. None of these stations are located in Edina; however, several stations are located in neighboring cities within one or two miles from Edina's municipal boundary. Based on a very preliminary analysis, staff believes that studying the access to and from the following stations would most benefit this current effort:

- **Beltline Station**, St. Louis Park (1.1-mile walk from city border)
- **Wooddale Station**, St. Louis Park (1.3-mile walk from city border)
- **Blake Road Station**, Hopkins (0.6-mile walk from city border)
- **Downtown Hopkins Station**, Hopkins (0.5 -mile walk from city border)
- **Opus Station**, Minnetonka (0.7 -mile walk from city border)
- **Golden Triangle Station**, Eden Prairie (0.8 -mile walk from city border)

For commissioners' information and discussion, attached is a map indicating the alignment of the Southwest LRT line and stations near the City of Edina borders. Additionally, station location maps are also included, as well as summary introduction pages for each of the six stations, taken from the Southwest Corridor Investment Framework.

It is anticipated that this discussion may be the first of several regarding this topic, and may indeed serve as an introduction to the issues regarding connections to Southwest LRT stations. Commissioners may choose to recommend next steps and to guide how this item is continued in future ETC meetings.

For further information, please visit the following websites:

- Southwest LRT Community Works – <http://www.swlrtcommunityworks.org/>
- Southwest Light Rail Transit (Metropolitan Council) – <http://metro council.org/Transportation/Projects/Current-Projects/Southwest-LRT.aspx>

Attachments:

Southwest LRT Alignment Map

Southwest LRT Station Location Maps

Introduction Pages for the above-listed stations, taken from the Southwest Corridor Investment Framework

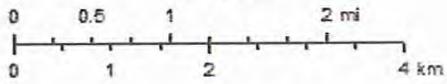


May 12, 2015

1:72,224

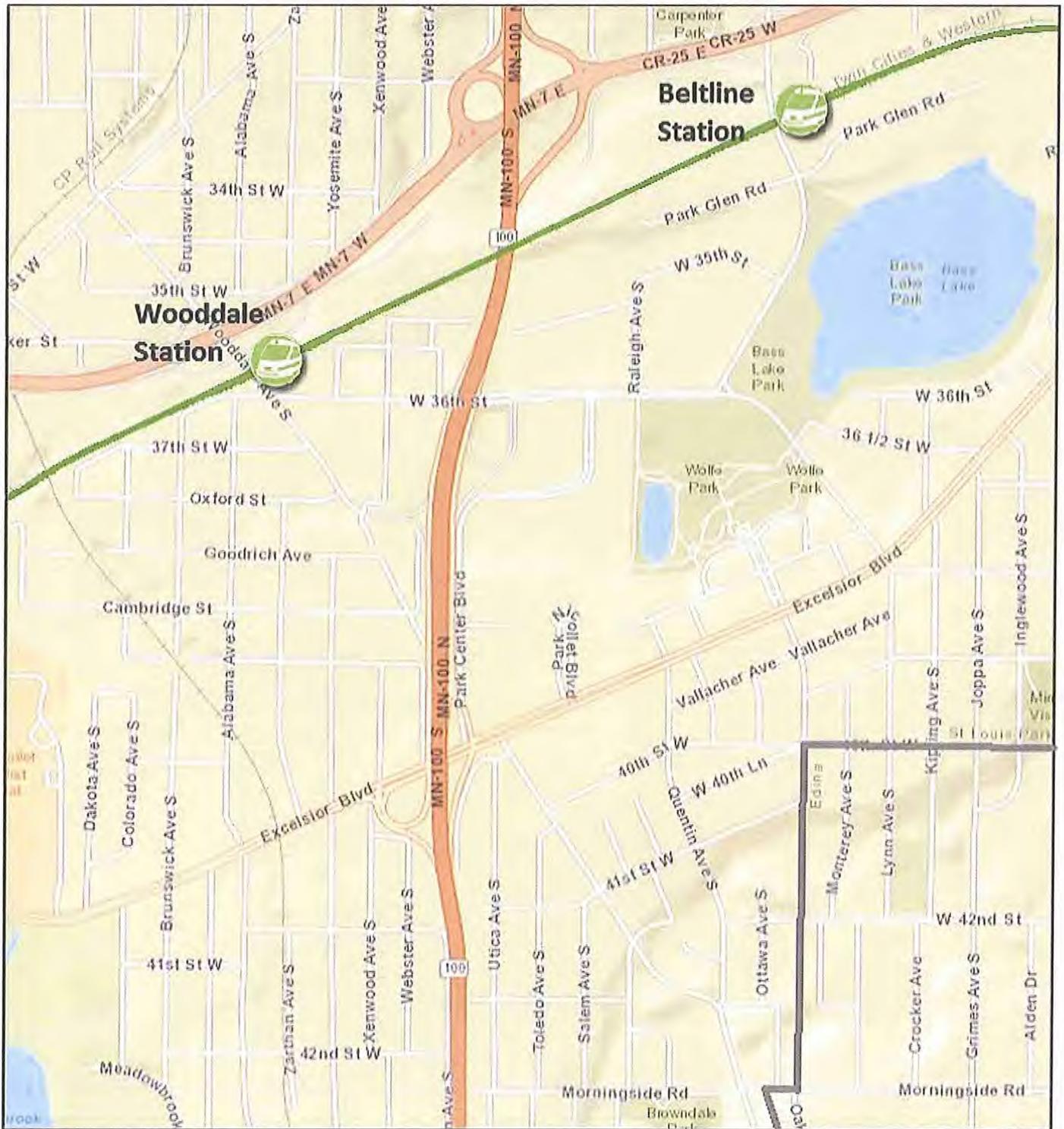


Stations



— SWLRT_Alignment_060414

Source: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), TomTom, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

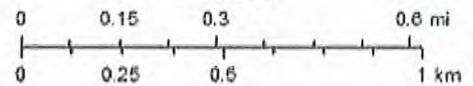


May 12, 2015



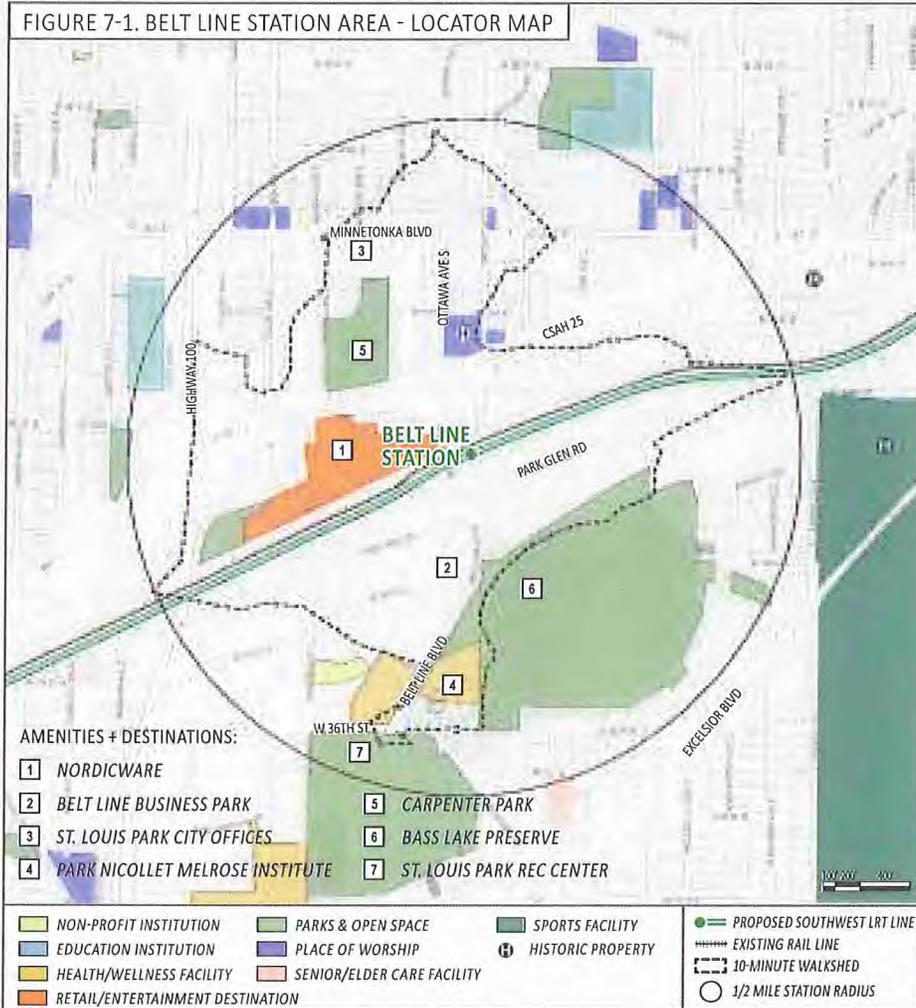
SWLRT_Alignment_060414

1:18,056



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), TomTom, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

FIGURE 7-1. BELT LINE STATION AREA - LOCATOR MAP



NOTE: 10-minute walkshed approximates the area accessible within a 10-minute walk from the station platform using only the existing sidewalk/trail network. See Glossary for walkshed assumptions and methodology.

Station Location

The Belt Line station is envisioned as one of the major hubs along the SW LRT line. It is located along Belt Line Boulevard, an important employment area and north-south connection in St. Louis Park. It is also located along the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail, an important multi-use regional trail, connecting commuters and recreational users to Minneapolis (east) and Hopkins (west). The area is comprised of a mix of land uses, including office, light industrial, residential, commercial/retail, multi-family housing, civic, recreational, parks and open space. Nearby destinations include the St. Louis Park Rec Center, City Hall, Excelsior & Grand, Nordic Ware campus, Park Nicollet Melrose Institute, Wolfe Park, and Bass Lake Preserve. Numerous businesses are located near the transit station and these are expected to generate transit ridership. This station is also expected to serve residents of local neighborhoods, including Wolfe Park, Triangle, and Minikahda Oaks.

BELT LINE STATION AREA TODAY:



Highway 25 access via Belt Line Blvd



Existing office south of LRT alignment



Existing housing



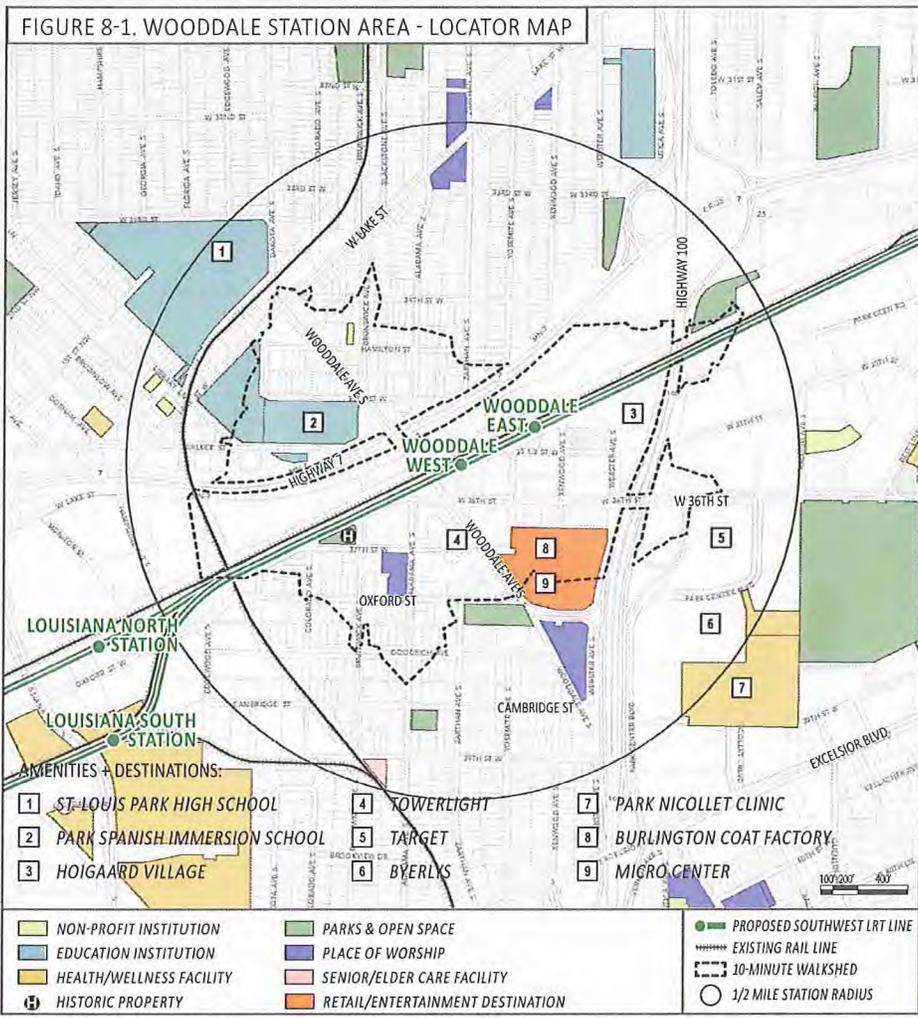
Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail



Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail / Belt Line Boulevard crossing



Existing industrial building (Nordic Ware)



NOTE: 10-minute walkshed approximates the area accessible within a 10-minute walk from the station platform using only the existing sidewalk/trail network. See Glossary for walkshed assumptions and methodology.

WOODDALE STATION AREA TODAY:



Existing condominiums/apartments



Existing rail and trail corridor



Adjacent highway access



Park Spanish Immersion School/Community Center



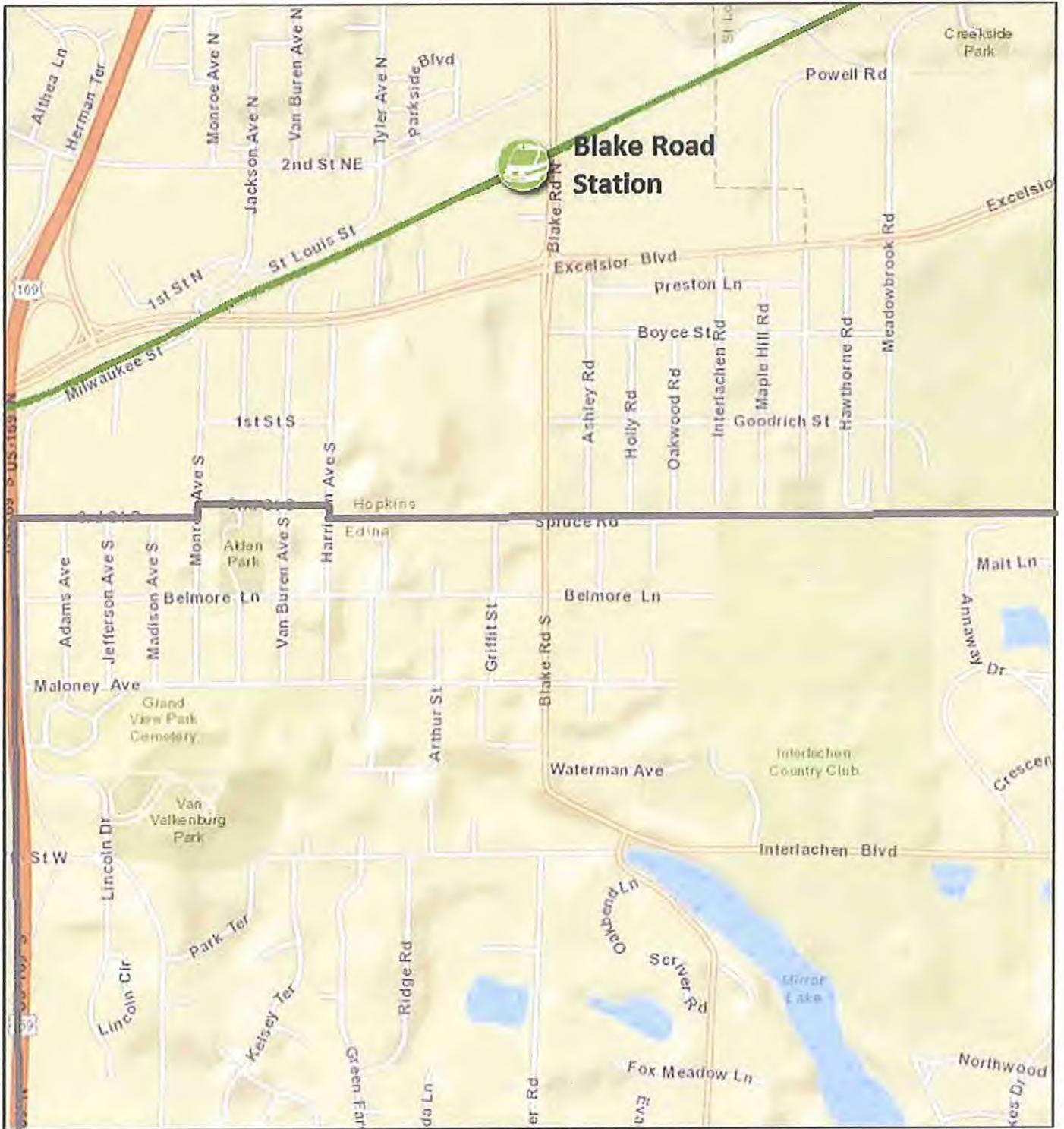
St. Louis Park High School

Station Location

Only one of the Wooddale station locations shown here (Wooddale West) is in the SW LRT anticipated base project scope. Wooddale East is an alternate concept location and is not in the anticipated base project scope. In both location alternatives, the station platform is located south of the existing freight rail corridor, between Wooddale and Xenwood Avenues. Both locations are in the Elmwood neighborhood between Highway 7 to the north and W. 36th Street to the south.

The station area features a mix of land uses, including residential, office, industrial, retail, and civic/institutional uses. Major destinations in the area include St. Louis Park High School, Park Spanish Immersion School, Target, Park Nicollet Clinic, Burlington Coat Factory, Micro Center, and Byerlys. The Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail runs adjacent to the proposed LRT corridor within the station area.

The area has seen a great deal of redevelopment activity in recent years, with new mixed-use and medium- to high-density residential buildings being developed near the proposed station locations, including Hoigaard Village and TowerLight, a senior rental community. Over 1,000 housing units have been developed in the station area in recent years. The station is anticipated to serve primarily the residents of the Sorenson and Elmwood neighborhoods.



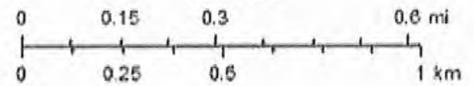
May 12, 2015

1:18,056

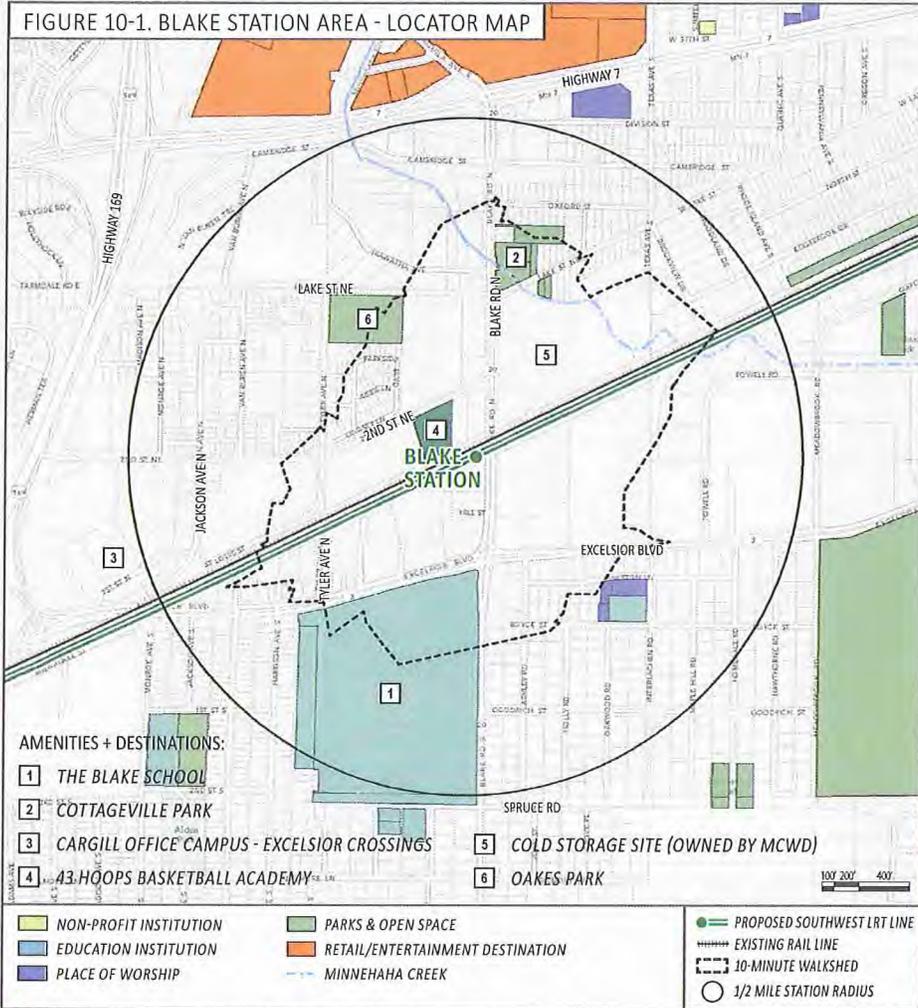


Stations

— SWLRT_Alignment_060414



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, Incorement P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), TomTom, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



NOTE: 10-minute walkshed approximates the area accessible within a 10-minute walk from the station platform using only the existing sidewalk/trail network. See Glossary for walkshed assumptions and methodology.

Station Location

The Blake station is located along Blake Road, just north of Excelsior Boulevard. The mix of land uses nearby includes retail/commercial, light industrial, office, residential, institutional, parks and open spaces. Local destinations in the station area include The Blake School, Excelsior Crossings office campus (Cargill), retail businesses along Excelsior Boulevard, Minnehaha Creek, and Cottageville Park. The Blake station is anticipated to serve these destinations as well as the residents in the Parkside, Presidents North and South, Minnehaha Oaks, Cottageville, and Interlachen neighborhoods, including many nearby apartment buildings.

The City has identified several potential development sites in the area, including a Hennepin County-owned property northwest of the station which houses 43 Hoops, a basketball training facility; and the existing Cold Storage site northeast of the station, recently purchased by the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. The City has also long-identified the potential for redevelopment along Excelsior Boulevard, near Blake Road.

BLAKE STATION AREA TODAY:



Existing high intensity office



43 Hoops/County-owned development site



Existing low-intensity retail



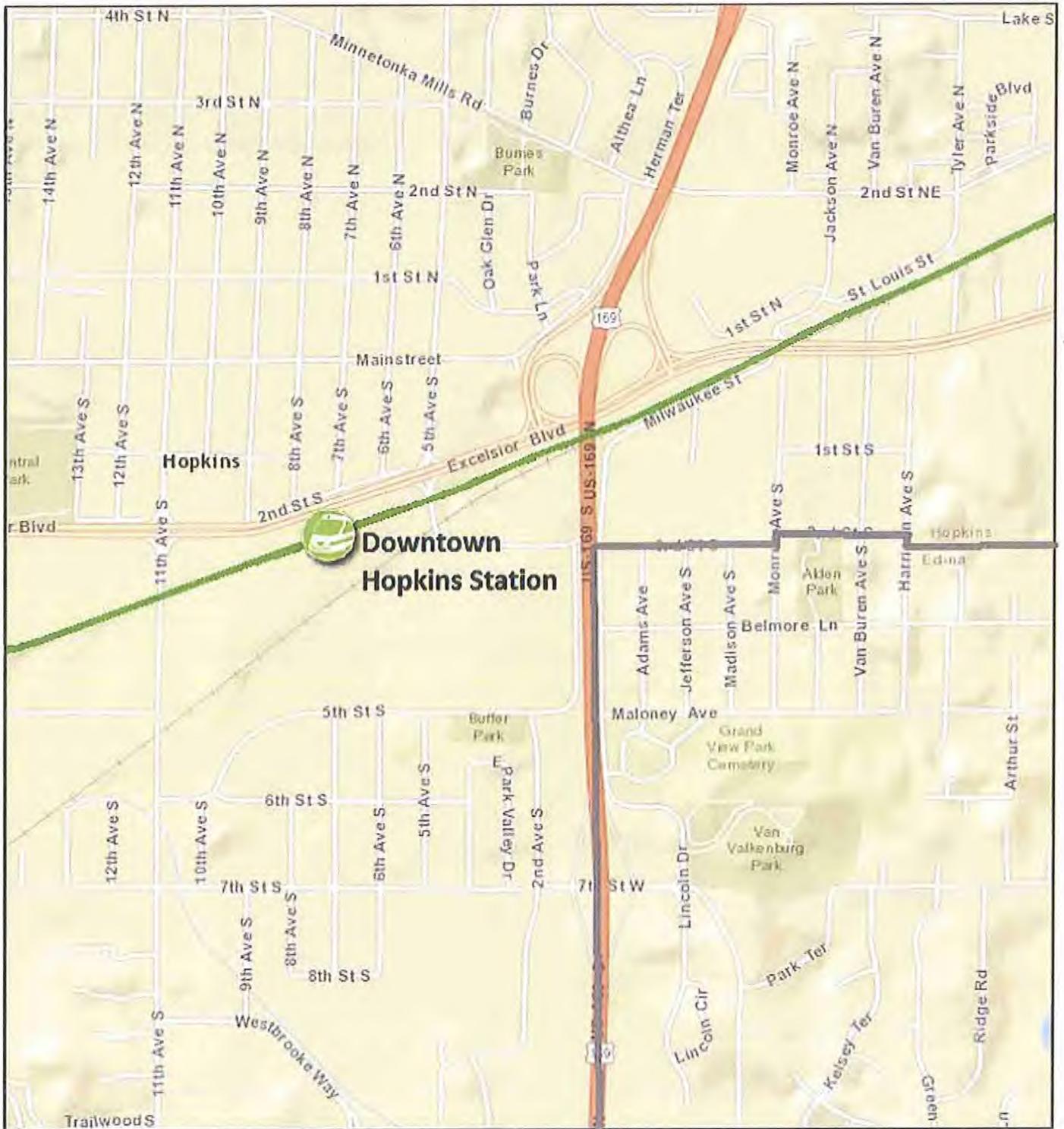
Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail



Rail and trail corridor



Blake Road



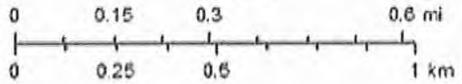
May 12, 2015

1:18,056



Stations

— SWLRT_Alignment_060414

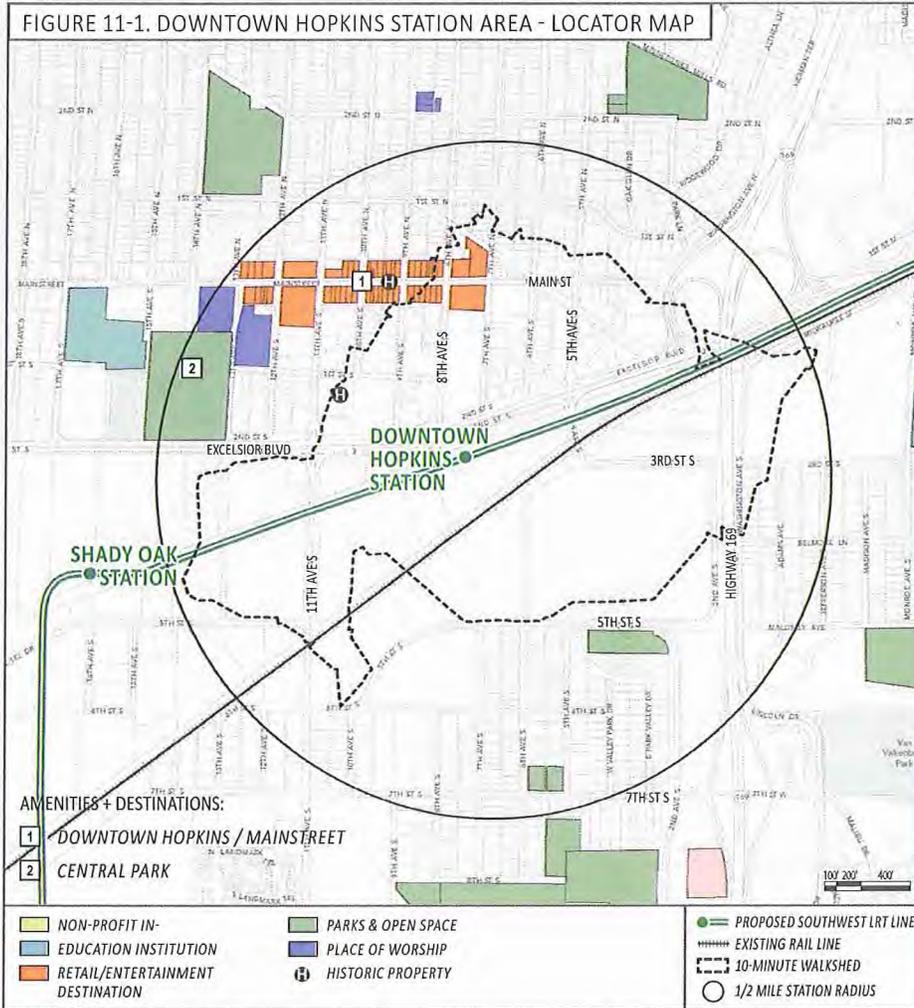


Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, Inoremart P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), TomTom, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Station Location

The Downtown Hopkins station is located along Excelsior Boulevard at 8th Ave, approximately 2 blocks south of Mainstreet. The land uses near the station are varied, including a mix of residential, retail, commercial, civic, and light industrial uses.

It's proximity to Downtown Hopkins offers a tremendous opportunity to support downtown businesses and residents. This is a highly visible site with access directly onto Excelsior Boulevard, an important east-west arterial in Hopkins. It also benefits from its adjacency to a number of regional multi-use trails, which suggests the Downtown Hopkins station has the opportunity to become a regional multi-modal hub. Access and connection challenges exist to the south of the station due to land uses, large block sizes, and a lack of roadway network. The Downtown Hopkins station is anticipated to serve Downtown Hopkins, 8th Avenue, Peaceful Valley and Park Valley neighborhoods, many apartment developments, as well as local businesses in the area.



NOTE: 10-minute walkshed approximates the area accessible within a 10-minute walk from the station platform using only the existing sidewalk/trail network. See Glossary for walkshed assumptions and methodology.

DOWNTOWN HOPKINS STATION AREA TODAY:



Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail



8th Avenue/ARtery connection to downtown



Hopkins historic commercial district



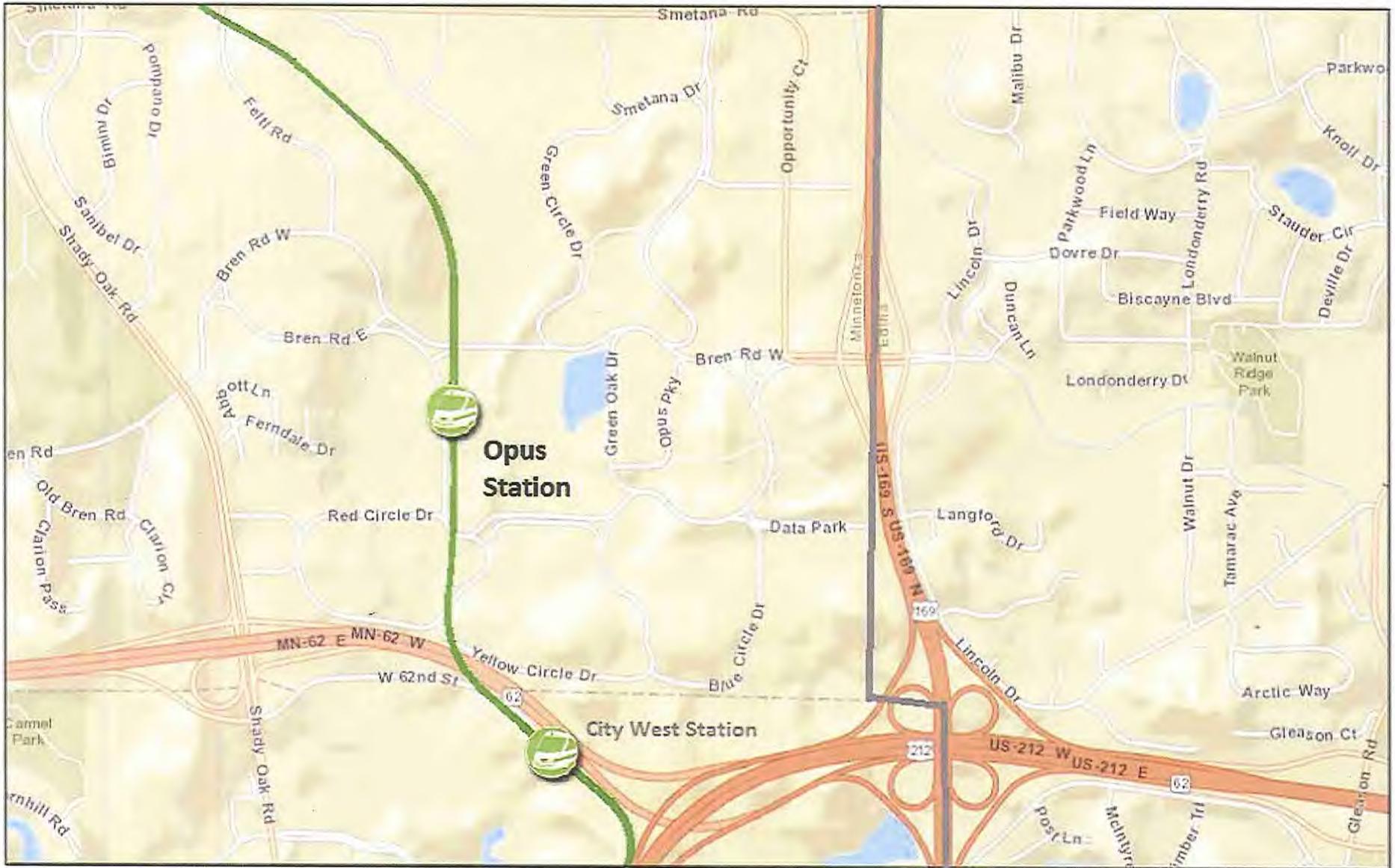
Picnic shelter adjacent to Cedar Lake Trail



Mainstreet/Downtown Hopkins



Mainstreet/Downtown Hopkins



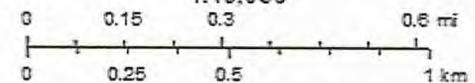
May 12, 2015



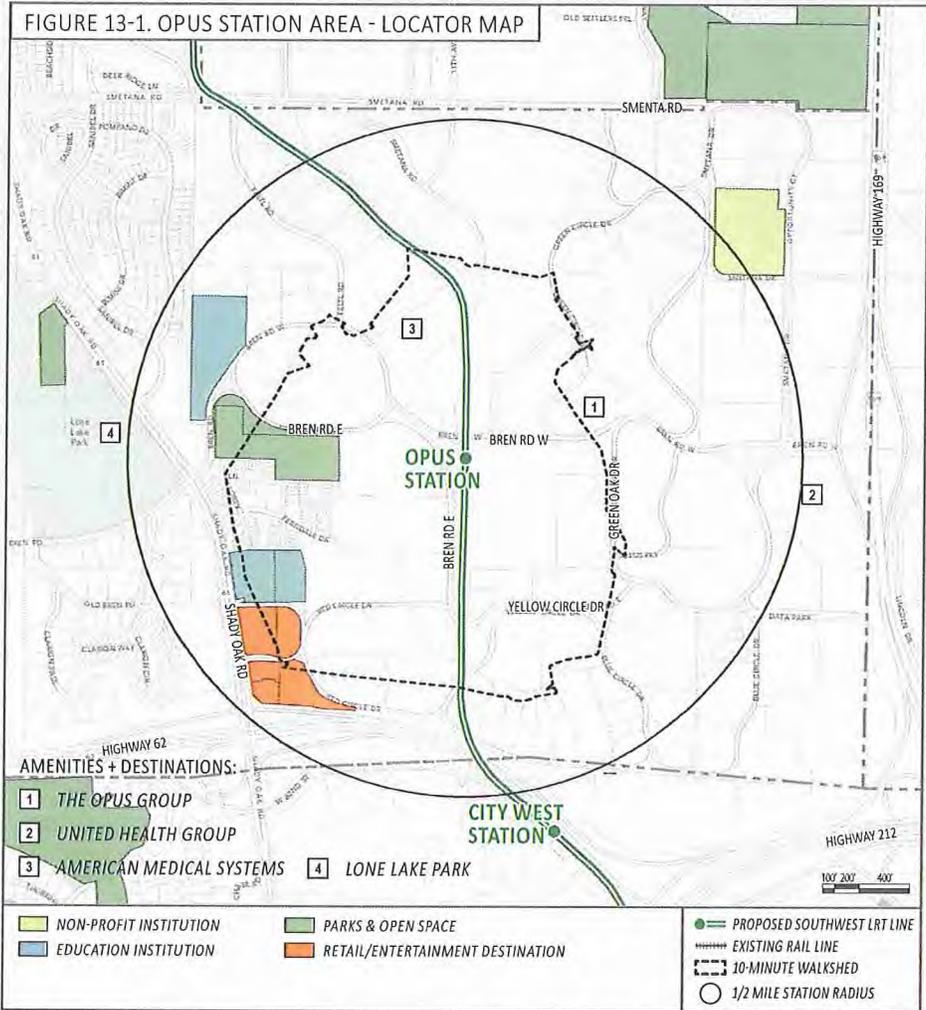
Stations

— SWLRT_Alignment_060414

1:18,056



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, Incentiv P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand).



NOTE: 10-minute walkshed approximates the area accessible within a 10-minute walk from the station platform using only the existing sidewalk/trail network. See Glossary for walkshed assumptions and methodology.

OPUS STATION AREA TODAY:



West entrance on Shady Oak Road



Existing office



Local wetland

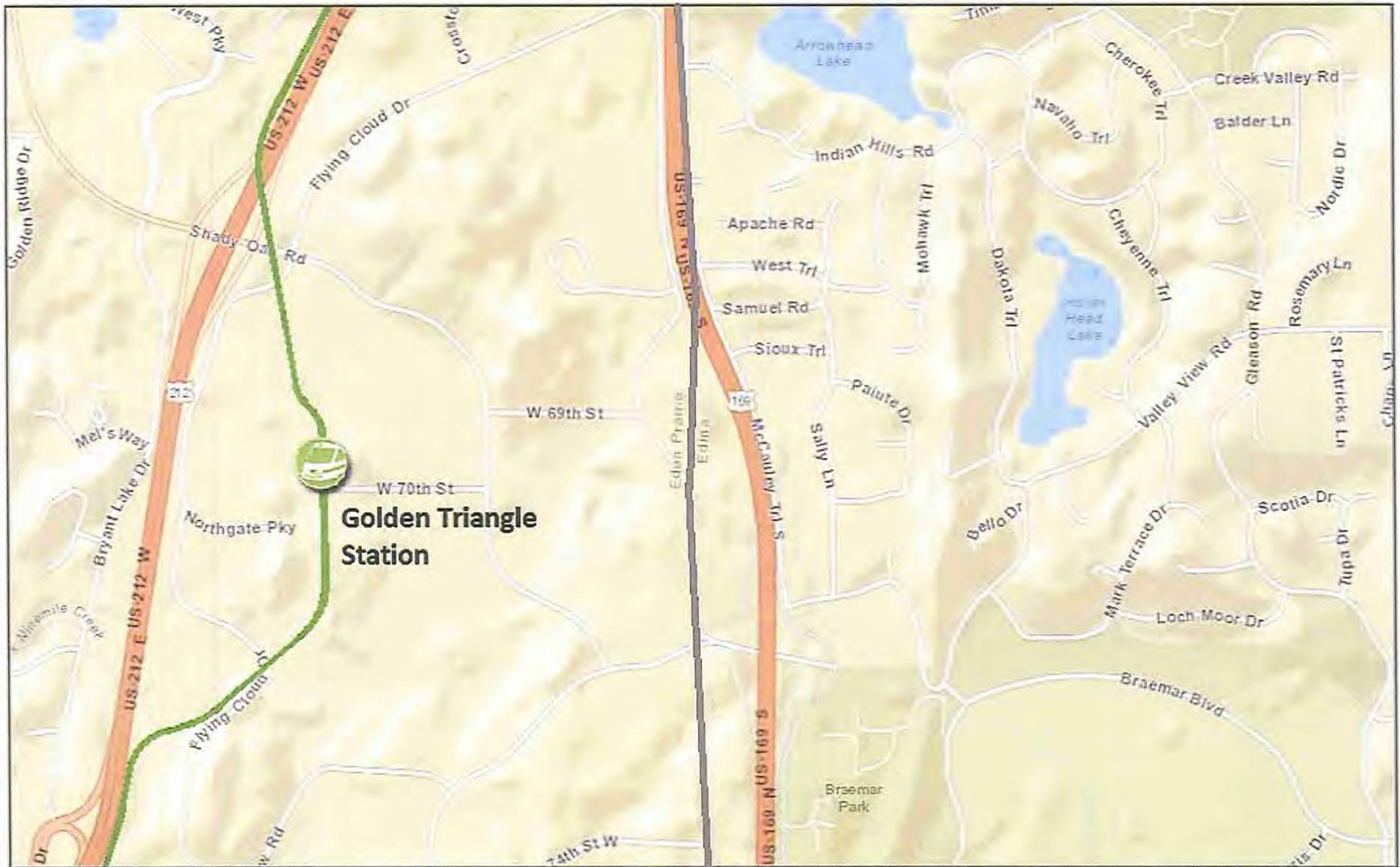


Existing trail underpass

Station Location

The Opus station is located in the center of the Opus Business Park, a major employment center with a mix of light industrial, office, housing, hotel accommodations, retail, and restaurants in the station area.

The area is characterized by its campus-like setting, circuitous one-way road network, and off-street trail system. The Opus station is anticipated to serve local businesses and residents in the area. This station has strong potential to be a transit stop for reverse commuters.

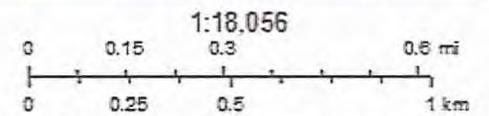


May 12, 2015



Stations

— SWLRT_Alignment_060414

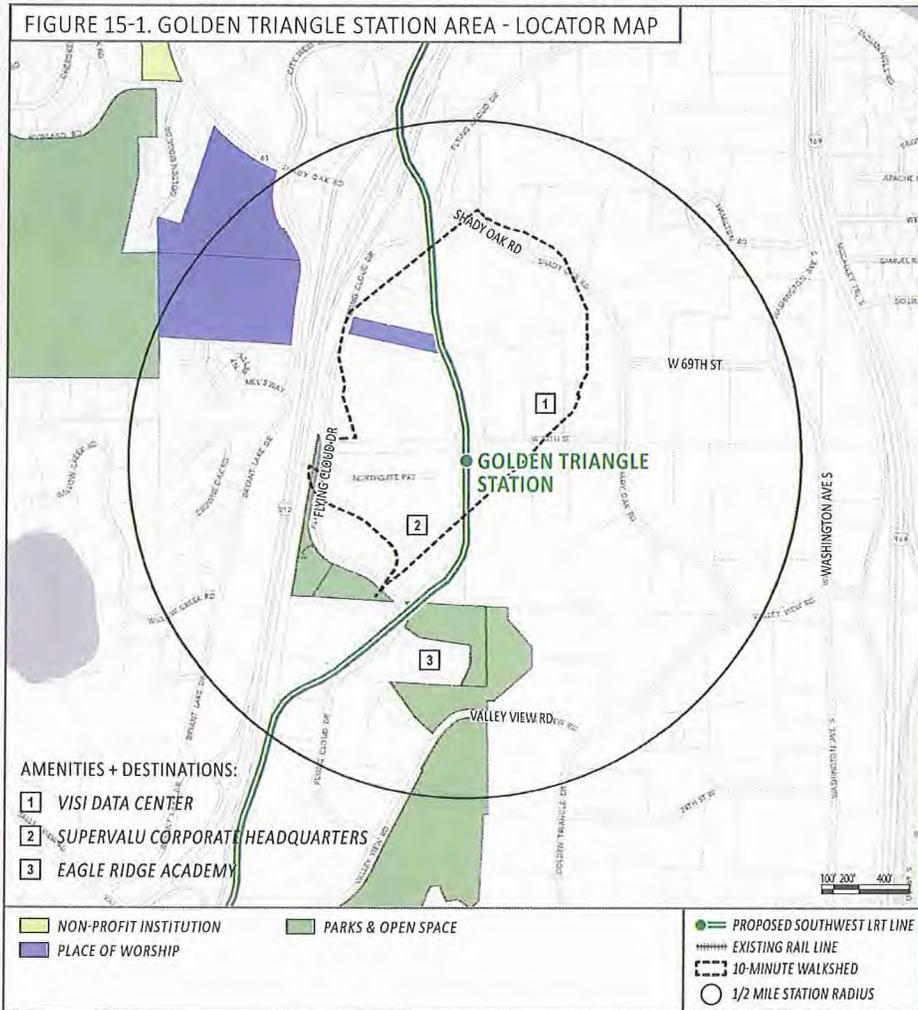


Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Imagery, Incentiv P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand).

Station Location

The Golden Triangle station is located in the heart of the Golden Triangle Business Center, which is bounded by Highway 212 on the west, Shady Oak Road on the north and east, and Valley View Road along the south.

The area is a major employment center, employing over 20,000 people. The majority of the business center consists of low-rise office and light industrial buildings. Large block sizes, few roads, and few sidewalks make pedestrian and bicycle circulation challenging. The proposed station platform is located in an area where access and visibility are a challenge, however, the redevelopment potential in this area offers opportunities for enhanced access and greater density.



NOTE: 10-minute walkshed approximates the area accessible within a 10-minute walk from the station platform using only the existing sidewalk/trail network. See Glossary for walkshed assumptions and methodology.

GOLDEN TRIANGLE STATION AREA TODAY:



SuperValu offices



Typical existing office development



Local wetland



Existing office use and parking



Typical existing office development