Chapter 6
Mobility: Getting Around Town

Vision for the Mobility System

Vision 3.0 included a recommendation on mobility to "Develop Future-focused Transit and Mobility." A Strategic Priority was developed from the recommendation which states, "St. Louis Park is committed to providing a variety of options for people to make their way around the city comfortably, safely and reliably" and includes the following:

- Continuing to expand the network of sidewalks, trails and bike facilities.
- Researching and implementing multiple and affordable mobility solutions for all.

» Fostering smart growth and transit-oriented housing development.
» Increasing pedestrian safety through crosswalk improvements and increased park and trail lighting.
» Expanding the number of north-south and east-west transit options.

The city's mobility system is made up of sidewalks, trails, and streets, which are there to provide safe and convenient travel for all. The right of way within the city is an important component of the mobility system and must be used efficiently to provide the multimodal infrastructure needed to provide for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit service and motor vehicles.

Each mobility option is tied to the other: pedestrian facilities are often connected to bicycle facilities; transit stations and stops are connected to pedestrian/bicycle routes; and all mobility options often use the street right-of-way. The city's goal is to provide a multimodal mobility system with many options – walking, bikes, transit, car- and ride-sharing that are readily available to everyone throughout the community. A mobility system that offers a variety of choices creates a vibrant, safe and efficient system for all people and all modes.

For the future, the city is focused on advancing community mobility by prioritizing walking first, followed by bicycling and transit use, and then motor vehicle use. Using this hierarchy when planning for transportation improvements will put the city in a good position for future mobility and continued growth.

Transforming how people move within the city will be one of the biggest challenges for St. Louis Park. Increasing walking and biking to destinations will have the biggest impact on reducing vehicle miles traveled. However, there will still be people who need and want to drive. The city is focused on providing the infrastructure needed to meet its commitment to climate action; this will be accomplished by implementing a number of improvements to help reduce carbon emissions and thus the impact on the environment, including but not limited to:

» Constructing additional pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to reduce vehicle use
» Providing electric vehicle charging stations at public and private facilities to facilitate use of this alternative
» Constructing roundabouts to minimize vehicle idling

Mobility System Goals and Strategies

1. Plan, design, build, and operate the city's mobility system in a way that prioritizes walking first, followed by bicycling and transit use, and then motor vehicle use

Strategies

A. Incorporate an approach that is based on surrounding land use context when planning and designing transportation projects.

B. Continue to explore and evaluate flexible and innovative designs and seek guidance from established best practices, to achieve desired outcomes.

C. Use the Capital Improvement Program as a tool to improve the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks.

D. Design mobility infrastructure to support land use goals for compact, accessible, walkable neighborhoods.

E. Promote and support adaptation of the mobility network to take advantage of improved technologies and mobility modes.

F. Encourage compact, dense development and connected multimodal infrastructure to facilitate "car-lite" living.

G. Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian mobility projects with connectivity between residential neighborhoods, schools, employment, businesses, and bus and SWLRT transit.

2. Ensure the quality and function of the transportation system contributes to the equitable outcomes for all people.

Strategies

A. Prioritize mobility needs of underserved populations.

B. Promote public awareness of the range of travel choices and the beneficial impacts travel choices have on household finances, personal quality of life, society, and the environment.

C. Improve pedestrian, bicycle, and transit way-finding.

3. Eliminate fatalities and serious injuries that are a result of crashes on city streets

Strategies

A. Prioritize safety investments in line with the modal hierarchy; established in the for pedestrians first, bicyclists and transit riders second, and for people driving in vehicles third.

B. Protect pedestrians and bicyclists through design decisions that strive to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries.

C. Use enforcement, design decisions, and operational norms to reflect an acute awareness for protecting all users of the mobility systems.

D. Create a crash analysis plan and prioritize network improvements that will help to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries at intersections and on city streets that have proven to be unsafe.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility

Where We Have Been

Trails, sidewalks and bikeways make important connections within the city and to neighboring cities' systems. These trails, sidewalks and bikeways connect residents to key community destinations. City trails are predominantly within parks and open spaces while regional trails traverse the entire community. Some local trails run along streets, however many do not have continuous bicycle connections. Often trails connect with sidewalks to help form the citywide pedestrian network.

In 1999, St. Louis Park created the Trails and Sidewalks Master Plan, which identified existing and potential activity nodes, transit stops, regional links, and natural resource destinations. It also identified physical impediments and hazards, and set priorities for building and improving crossings, sidewalks, trails and bikeways. From that effort, a number of improvements were made to the system.

Almost a decade later, in 2008, the St. Louis Park City Council adopted the Active Living: Sidewalk and Trails Plan. This plan established a vision for the city's future pedestrian and bicycle networks. This plan built upon the recommendations of the Vision St. Louis Park Action Teams and the 1999 Sidewalks and Trails Plan. The planning process included a thorough public review and analysis process that included an eight-member citizen advisory committee, a community workshop, a community open house, and input from the Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission. The plan identified places in the community where pedestrian and bicycle access is most important to its citizens. The process revealed gaps in St. Louis Park's pedestrian and bicycle networks, and made recommendations for areas where the City should concentrate its efforts.

The Connect the Park capital improvement plan grew out of the Active Living, Sidewalks & Trails Plan emphasizing the need for community sidewalks every 1/4 mile and bikeways every 1/2 mile as well as way-finding and "user-friendly" amenities. This ten-year initiative will add 32 miles of bikeways, 10 miles of sidewalk, 3 miles of trails, and 2 bridges throughout the community. The city council approved Connect the Park plan in 2013, and implementation began in 2015.

The city is also fortunate to host the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail and the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail. These trails connect St. Louis Park to the entire metro area network of regional trails. The two regional trails are operated by Three Rivers Parks District. These off-street bicycle and pedestrian paths were converted from unused rail rights-of-way. The North Cedar Lake Regional Trail lies to the north, while the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail lies to the south, paralleling TH 7 and the planned SWLRT right-of-way.

Many improvements have been made to the pedestrian and bicycle network during the past 10 years that have drastically improved safety and access throughout the city:

- The "Active Living, Sidewalks & Trails Plan" was created in 2008 to document current and proposed routes and programming.
- The "Connect the Park" capital Improvement plan calls for approximately 23 million dollars of investment between 2013 and 2023. Over 14 miles (14.2) of bikeways have been constructed, nearly 8.6 miles of sidewalk have been installed, and 2.15 miles of trails have been built.
- St. Louis Park was designated as a Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community in 2016 from the League of American Bicyclists.

Where We Are Today - Pedestrian Mobility

While not every resident uses a car, bicycle, or bus to access destinations, nearly every resident does utilize pedestrian infrastructure – even if only using a sidewalk to move from a parked car to a home or business. A high-quality pedestrian network provides essential connections for those who might otherwise not be able to access destinations, including children, older adults, low-income individuals, and people with disabilities; these people rely on the pedestrian infrastructure to gain access to their destinations.

The city's pedestrian network can improve the health and quality of life of residents by encouraging walking as an enjoyable mode choice. Greater rates of walking are associated with a reduced risk of obesity, diabetes, and other diseases, improved air quality, greater public safety, and even improved mental health and feeling of well-being and relaxation.

Effective pedestrian networks can boost economic development efforts, and encourage and support more sustainable modes of development that are less reliant upon the car.

Existing Pedestrian Facilities

Sidewalk Network

Residents benefit from access to sidewalks for access local schools, workplaces, and entertainment. Certain activity centers such as "The Shops at West End" and "Excelsior & Grand" have high-quality sidewalks networks to facilitate walking to and throughout the area. See Figure 6-1 for existing sidewalks and gaps identified to date.

Pedestrian safety and comfort are impacted not just by the presence or absence of sidewalks, but also by how close the sidewalk is to the street. Providing a buffer, through a narrow strip of land, between the sidewalk and the street increases safety and comfort for the pedestrian. The importance of an adequate buffer zone is amplified along streets with high-traffic volumes, high speeds, and/or constrained rights-of-way. Street trees can be planted in the buffer to provide shade and enhance the pedestrian experience.

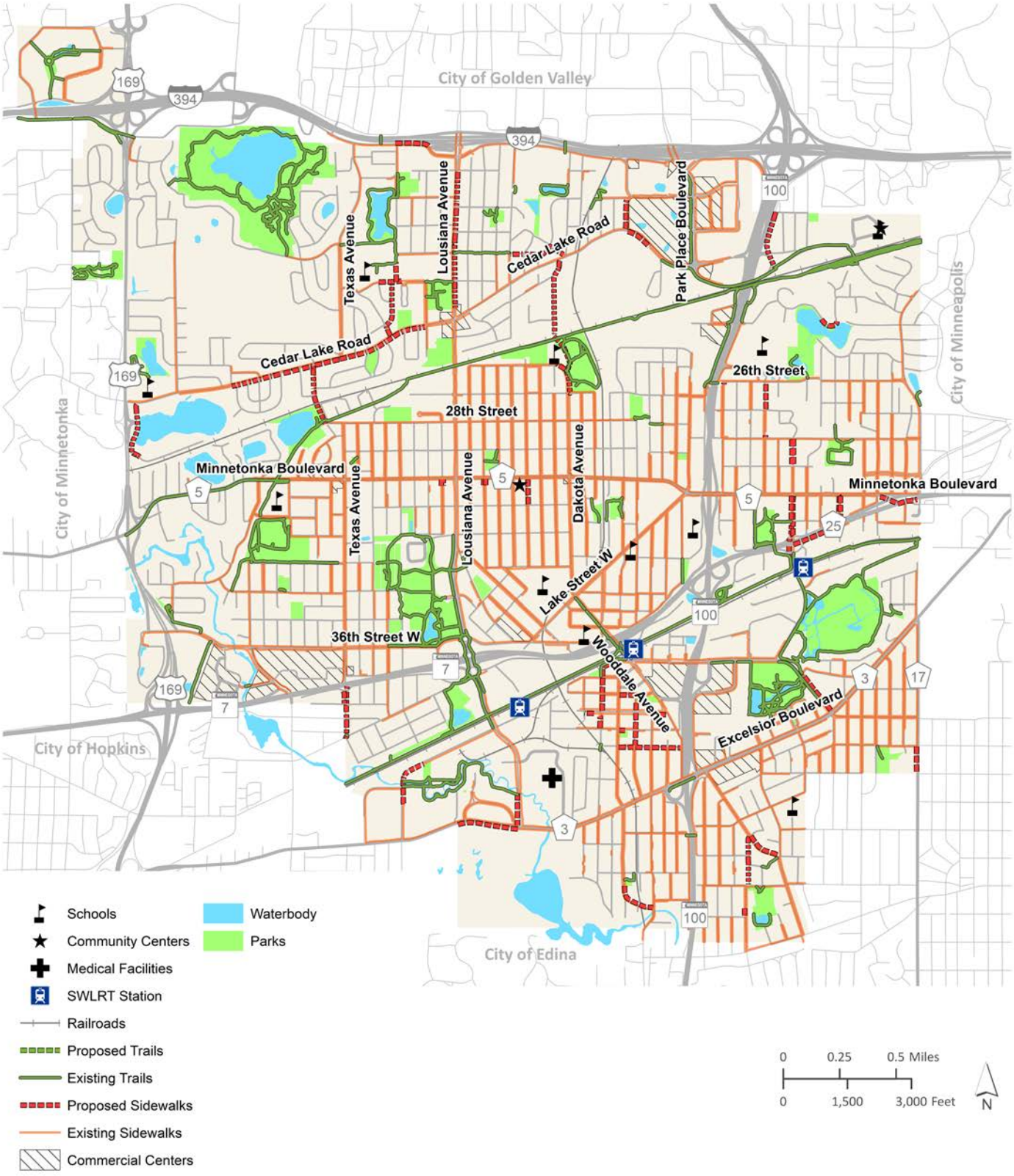
Bicycles are allowed on the sidewalks in the city but are usually only used by less confident bikers or on high speed/volume roadways.

Trail Network

Trails are popular for walking because people are separated from cars along the route and at intersections. Two regional trails are in St. Louis Park: the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail and the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail. The Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail is located in the same corridor as the planned Southwest Light Rail (SWLRT) and the Bass Lake Spur railroad lines. These trails are valuable pieces of the city's mobility system and are heavily used by pedestrians and bicyclists as they connect across the community. These trails also offer direct access to the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes trail system, downtown Minneapolis to the east and Hopkins, Minnetonka and Eden Prairie to the west.

Currently, the street crossings of the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail are a combination of at-grade and grade-separated crossings. There are plans to separate the trail at Beltline Boulevard and Wooddale Avenue with the SWLRT project.

Figure 6-1. Existing Sidewalk Network in St. Louis Park



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by Toole Design Group, 2018

Street Network

A continuous grid street network is ideal for pedestrian use because it maximizes the number of destinations available within a short walking distance, and allows pedestrians to take varied routes.

Many areas of the city are generally characterized by a tight grid street network. This grid pattern allows pedestrians to access destinations using straightforward routes absent other barriers such as highways and railroads. In the city's more outlying areas to the northeast, and northwest the street network has a looping pattern that often makes it more difficult for pedestrians to access nearby destinations. Some defined cut-through paths have been created; however, the suburban street network in the northern neighborhoods can lengthen pedestrian trips decreasing the efficiency of walking to destinations.

Land Use Environment

Land use and development patterns dramatically influence the pedestrian environment. Active storefronts lining streets, narrower roadways, wider sidewalks, and more boulevard trees contribute to the comfort for pedestrians quick, safe, and enjoyably walk to access goods, services, and entertainment.

The city has made great strides in both retrofitting older developments and being proactive about land use designs in new developments to improve community livability. Improved designs have buildings built close to the street, parking lots placed further away from street, new sidewalk connections, narrower streets, and wider sidewalks to create a more walkable, bikeable land use environment.

Pedestrian Network Challenges

The pedestrian network in St. Louis Park has significantly improved over the last decade, however barriers to walking still remain. The primary barriers are the highways and railroads.

Highways

St. Louis Park contains many separated highways that allow for high vehicular mobility and effective access to the metro region, but also are barriers to connecting neighborhoods – specifically breaking up the pedestrian network. The most prominent examples of vehicular routes that impede pedestrian movement are listed and described below:

TH 7/CSAH 25

This large and (partially) grade-separated highway runs east/west across the southern portion of the city. There are seven crossing points for pedestrians over approximately 3.5 miles.

TH 100

Trunk Highway 100 (TH 100) runs north-south through the eastern portion of the city. Unlike TH 7/ CSAH 25, this route functions as a metropolitan freeway and runs through the entire city. This highway's right-of-way interrupts the city's pedestrian grid, but does have eight ways pedestrians can cross it over 3.3 miles

Railroads

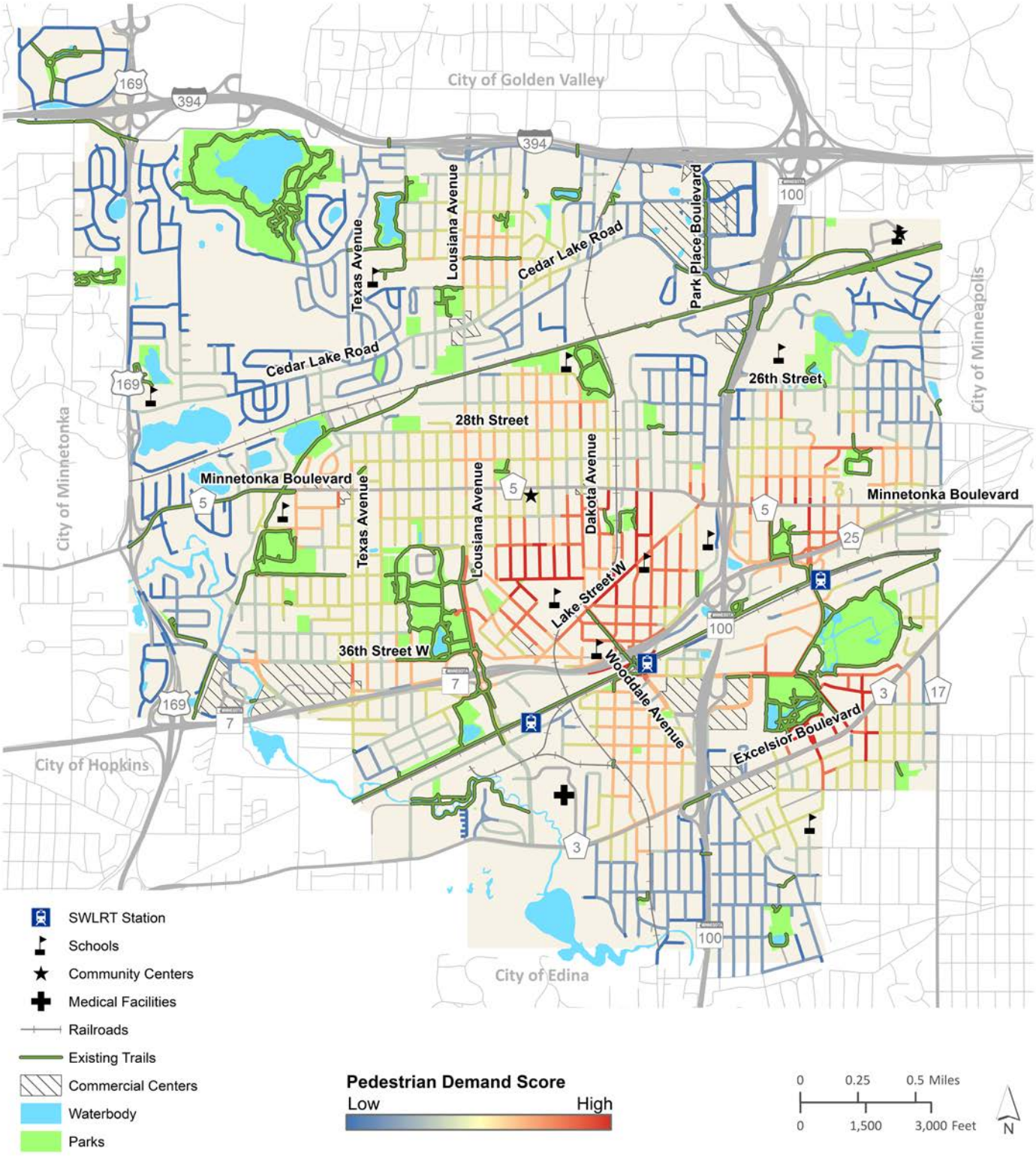
Three rail lines bisect the city and create a barrier for pedestrians, particularly for children, the disabled, and elderly individuals. The historic rail corridors in the city also mean the street network is disconnected.

Pedestrian Improvement Plans

As a result of the Active Living: Sidewalks and Trails Plan, the city created the Connect the Park capital improvement plan to be implemented through 2023 (Figure 6-1). As of 2018, 8.6 miles of sidewalk and 2.1 miles of trails have been installed. Connect the Park aims to improve the walking experience and increase walking in the city.

While designing the Connect the Park sidewalk segments, some additional sidewalk gaps were identified. These gaps were seen as barriers for residents to get from their homes to the new community sidewalks being constructed. To eliminate these gaps, the city has expanded the scope of the Connect the Park to include neighborhood sidewalk connections along adjacent street blocks, infilling missing neighborhood sidewalks to connect to the new community sidewalks.

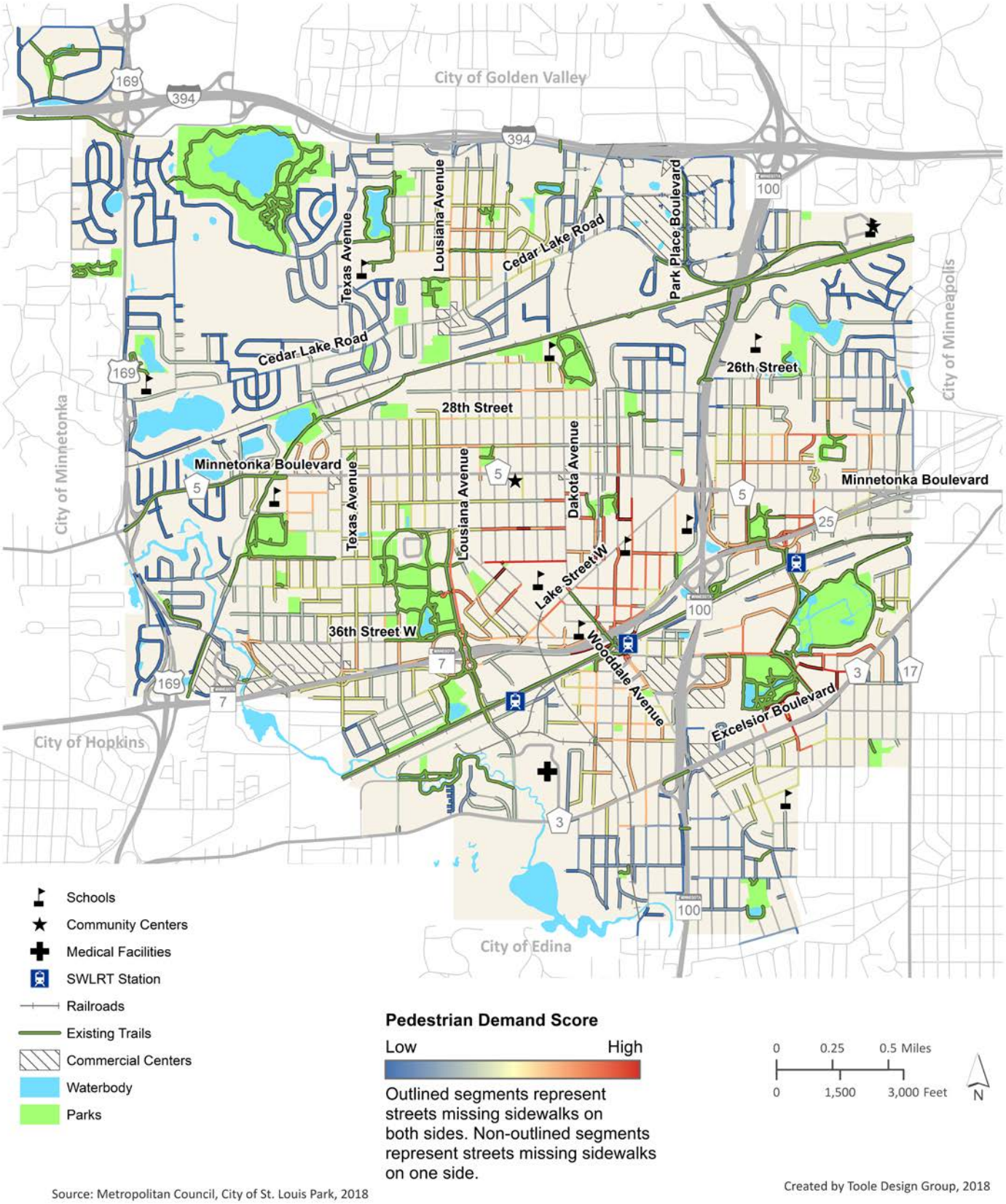
Figure 6-2. Pedestrian Demand Scores by Street Segment



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by Toole Design Group, 2018

Figure 6-3. Current Pedestrian Network Gaps with Existing Pedestrian Demand



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

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Another current initiative is the draft Living Streets Policy. The intent of this policy is to establish a commitment to building a complete and integrated public right-of-way that has a positive impact on the livability and resiliency of neighborhoods throughout the city. This policy encourages the construction of new sidewalks throughout the city. To achieve this, the city reviews the continuity of existing neighborhood sidewalks adjacent to any street segment being rehabilitated. If there is a gap in the neighborhood sidewalk system adjacent to a street being rehabilitated, the city will propose new sidewalk construction to fill in the gap. Also included in the gap identification are neighborhood sidewalk connections between community sidewalks and high density housing areas.

Where We Are Headed - Planning for Pedestrians

The Active Living Sidewalk and Trails planning process revealed gaps in the pedestrian network. Through the Connect the Park implementation plan, priority was given to close the gaps in the community sidewalk network. By 2023, there will be citywide grid system of community sidewalks spaced approximately every 1/4-mile. However, gaps in the in neighborhood sidewalk network will still remain. For planning purposes, a sidewalk gap is any street where there is not an existing sidewalk for the entire block. To assist with future planning efforts to fill in the gaps in the neighborhood sidewalk network the city will employ a GIS based tool to analyze walking demand.

Walking Demand Analysis

The existing sidewalk map shows which streets have sidewalks and identifies general areas that have high access to local sidewalks and those that do not. Sidewalk access does not tell the whole story, nor should it alone guide future investment decisions. The intent is to focus on planning and constructing sidewalks in areas that will support pedestrian demand. A pedestrian demand model was developed to account for where pedestrians are expected or desire to use sidewalks. Figure 6-2 shows pedestrian demand.

In general pedestrian demand is highest in areas where there are:

- Smaller residential home lots
- Higher density residential
- Commercial nodes
- Mixed use developments
- A tight street grid
- Schools, Parks, and transit.

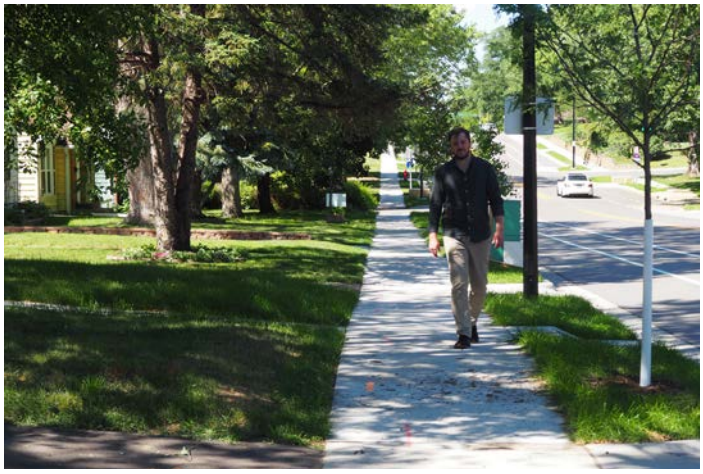
While areas with low demand indicate a lower potential for walking trips, it does not mean the residents in this area lack the desire to make more walking trips.

Figure 6-3 shows the pedestrian demand—broken down by street segment—on segments lacking sidewalks. Street segments with sidewalks are colored grey. The non-grey segments are missing sidewalks on one or both sides of the street. This shows areas of the city where future investments would benefit the greatest number of users.

Reaching Destinations as a Pedestrian

St. Louis Park is focusing on increasing the number of destinations that individuals can reach without a car. The key to this is having a continuous network of sidewalks leading from the places where people live to where they want to go.

The city will soon have LRT access. Residents can use its stations to access south Minneapolis and downtown on one side, and the suburban jobs centers in Hopkins, Minnetonka and Eden Prairie at the other. Efforts are being made to create connections so people can walk from a mile around the stations, making it more convenient and comfortable to walk or bike to the LRT station. More broadly, a focus on denser development near stations will offer an option for individuals to live “car-light,” or car-free.



Pedestrian Mobility Goals and Strategies

1. Provide for the needs of pedestrians by removing barriers.

Strategies

A. Continue to implement initiatives that construct and maintain a continuous network of sidewalks such as Connect the Park.

B. Continue to build infrastructure for pedestrian transportation in conjunction with development projects.

C. Employ traffic management measures where appropriate to enhance safe pedestrian mobility.

D. Install intersection improvements where appropriate to increase pedestrian safety.

E. Continue to work with St. Louis Park schools to identify and promote pedestrian routes to students and parents.

F. Provide safe and accessible routes for individuals in the community, with a special focus on the most vulnerable users such as children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

G. Improve connections to existing regional trails to link local pedestrian networks to the region.

2. Create a pedestrian network that connects people to their destinations.

Strategies

A. Prioritize mobility projects with connectivity between residential neighborhoods, schools, employment, businesses, and bus and SWLRT transit.

B. Continue to identify gaps in the pedestrian network and fill gaps where appropriate.

C. Continue the city's maintenance activities to ensure the safe and comfortable use of the pedestrian infrastructure.

D. Require pedestrian connections in all new subdivisions and on new streets.

E. Improve way-finding to direct pedestrians to local destinations.

F. Create a citywide grid of community sidewalks at distances of approximately a ¼ mile.

3. Create livable space through pedestrian-scale design of the right-of-way and public spaces.

Strategies

A. Establish unique and cohesive street character for city streets, emphasizing safe and comfortable pedestrian connections and other amenities for the use and enjoyment of pedestrians.

B. Enhance the appearance of the city's streets through applying design principles that create an active environment and enhance the corridor's appearance such as Living Streets design principles.

Where We Are Today - Bicycle Mobility

Bicycle infrastructure is broadly utilized in St. Louis Park. A high-quality bicycle network provides essential mobility connections and can improve the health and quality of life of residents by encouraging biking as an enjoyable mode choice. Effective bicycle networks can boost economic development efforts, improve air quality and encourage and support more sustainable modes of development which are less reliant upon the car.

In many ways the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail and the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail are the backbone of the city's biking facilities.

Existing Bicycle Facilities

Bikeways

The term "bikeways" describes routes with certain treatments or dedicated space that call attention to bicycles. These are intended to encourage bicycle travel. Bikeway design can range from a cycle track, buffered bicycle lane, bicycle land and shared use road markings ("sharrow"). Generally, on high volume roads, bikeways that offer bicyclists more separation from the traffic are more comfortable for users. Therefore, a cycle track- a protected bicycle lane that is separated from the road using curb, a green boulevard or any other barrier is the highest level in this hierarchy, followed by buffered bike lanes, bike lanes, and then shared-use markings. This hierarchy is context sensitive, as the characteristics of the street and the expected users influence the bikeway design.

Shared Use Trails

Shared use trails are generally constructed for use of both pedestrians and bicycles. The city has many shared use trails in parks and along the street network. These trails create circulation within a park and provide valuable non-motorized links to the wider community through connections to the street network. There are several parks throughout the city such as Bass Lake Preserve, Oak Hill Park, Aquila Park, and Pennsylvania Park that contain internal trails connecting to the street and bicycle network. Some of these park trails also connect to the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail and the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail.

There are also shared use trails along the street network that connect to sidewalks and parks to enhance the network.

Bicycle Network Challenges

While the bicycle network in the city has significantly improved over the last decade, many challenges to biking remain. Such barriers in the network are subdivided using the following categories: arterial streets, limited north-south bike connections, intersections, regional trail street crossings, railroads, and highways-related barriers. By 2023, the Connect the Park initiative will install 32 miles of bikeways, at ½ mile spacing, connecting all corners of the city, removing many of the barriers.

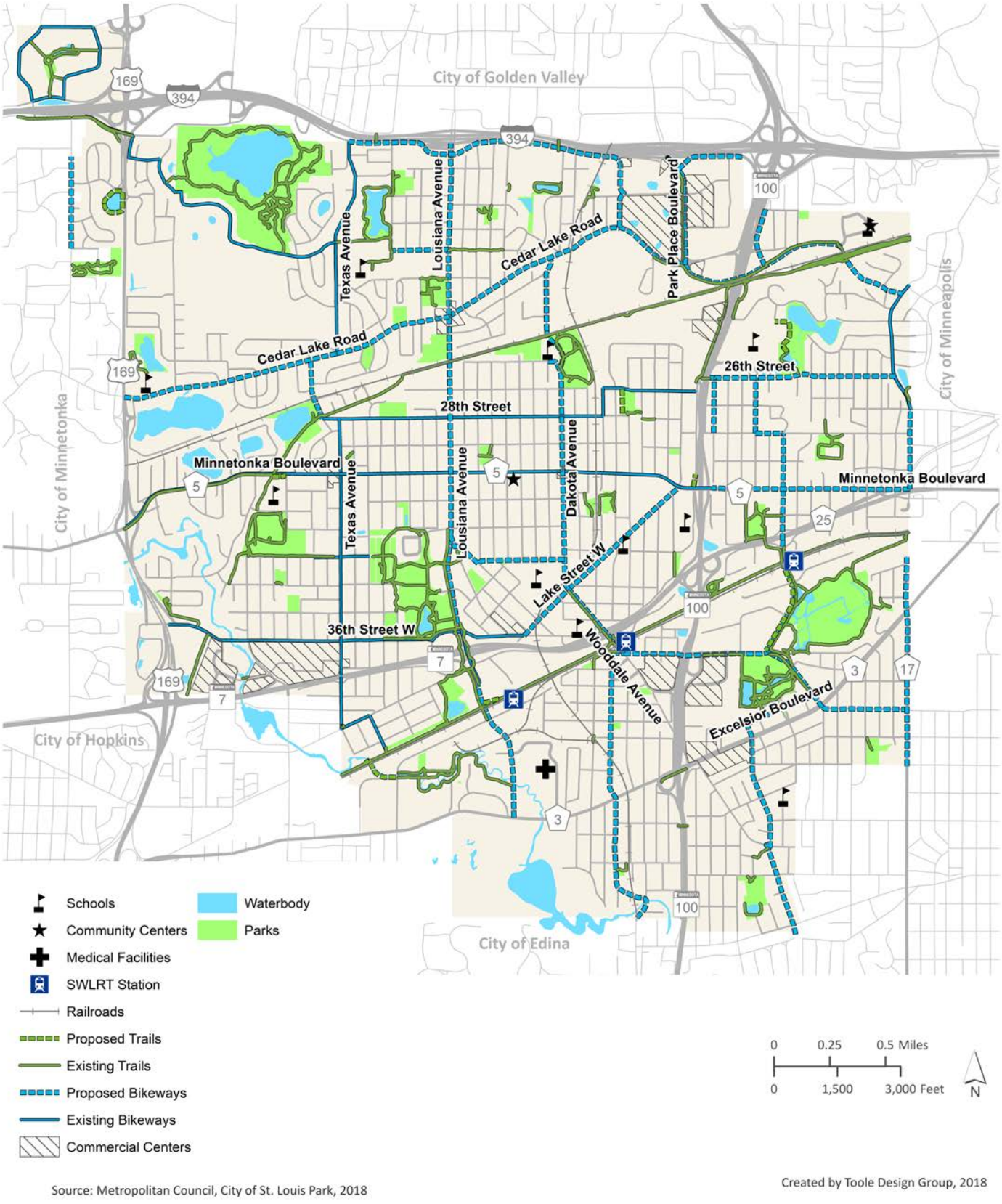
Arterial Streets

Most arterial and connectors in St. Louis Park could be classified as being "high-stress" routes for bicyclists. "High-stress" means cyclists are not as comfortable riding on these routes as they would be on facilities with lower vehicular speeds, less traffic, and greater separation from vehicles. On arterial streets bicycle facilities should be developed with a lens on providing protection for the user. Traffic speeds, lane width, and number of lanes are important factors to consider when building a facility that will encourage longer bicycling trips. Providing adequate infrastructure along these major corridors will remove significant barriers to bicycling in the city, as these streets are important routes cyclists can use to access the regional trails.

Limited North-South Bike Connections

St. Louis Park is fortunate to have the two regional trails that run east-west through the city: the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail and the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail. These provide a "low-stress" connection, meaning a user feels more comfortable on the route. Bicyclists are limited by a lack of bicycle connections on adjacent north-south streets.

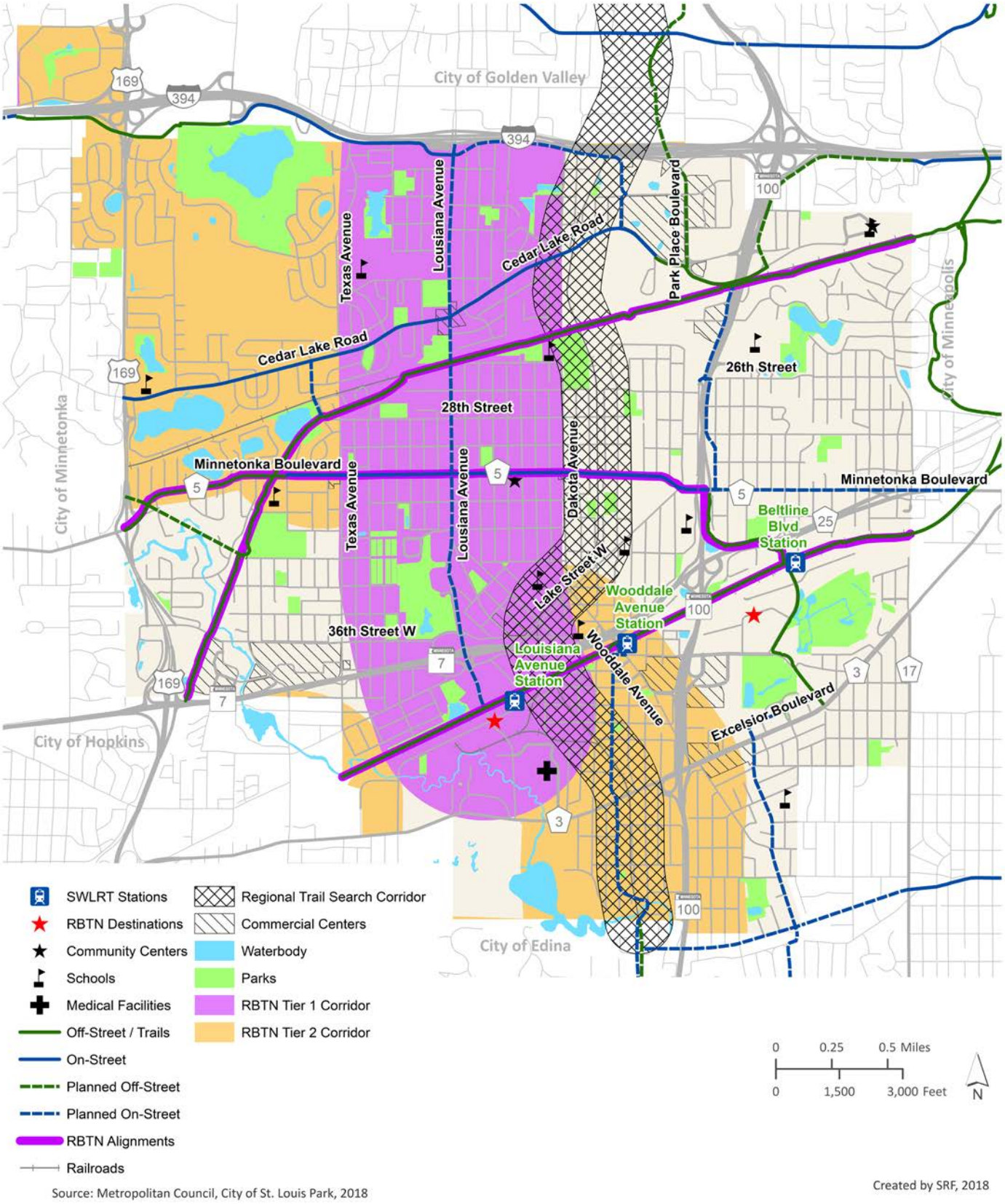
Figure 6-4. Bicycle Infrastructure in St. Louis Park



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by Toole Design Group, 2018

Figure 6-5. RBTN System



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

The search corridor for a north-south route is shown to be in the area of the MN&S north-south rail line (Figure 6-5). This rail line is in active use and the existing corridor right-of-way is not wide enough to also have a trail. Three Rivers Park District conducted a feasibility study in this corridor and it shows that there is not an easy route adjacent to the rail line. However, the search area remains in the Metropolitan Council's Regional Parks Plan and is desired by the community in the long term. This route could connect the North Cedar Lake Trail and the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail and dramatically improve the bicycle connectivity in the community.

Intersections

The bicycle network passes through many intersections throughout the city. Because most bicycle-related crashes occur at intersections, it is important to maintain aspects of the bikeway through this vulnerable and potentially confusing space. Relatively modest treatments can improve bicyclist's safety. Treatments being installed include brightly painted intersection crossing treatments and dotted lines delineating the bicycle route leading to the intersection.

Regional Trail Street Crossings

The Cedar Lake LRT street crossings at Wooddale Avenue and Beltline Boulevard are currently at-grade, meaning bikers have to cross traffic at street level rather than be above or below the streets. There are plans to separate the regional trail from the streets ("grade-separate") at these locations as a part of the SWLRT construction. At Wooddale Avenue an underpass is planned under the roadway; at Beltline Boulevard, a bridge will go over the street, continue over the rail lines, and move the trail to the south side of the corridor. The city has made some improvements to these at-grade crossings with varying mitigation measures, including turning the trail at the intersections, placing additional stop signs on the trail, adding refuge islands for trail users, and informational videos posted on the city's website and on social media.

Railroads

The bicycle network is not continuous in many places because of freight railroad lines. There are plans to bridge the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail over the CP freight rail corridor at the Beltline SWLRT station with the construction of the light rail line. The city also has plans to construct a trail bridge over the Burlington Northern Santa Fe near Dakota and Edgewood Avenues.

Highways

St. Louis Park contains many separated highways that allow for high vehicular mobility and effective access to the metro region, but also are barriers to connecting neighborhoods – specifically breaking up the bicycle network. The most prominent examples of vehicular routes that impede bicycle movement are listed and described below:

TH 7/CSAH 25

This large and (partially) grade-separated highway runs east/west across the southern portion of the city. There are ten crossing points for bicyclists over approximately 3.5 miles.

TH 100

Trunk Highway 100 (TH 100) runs north-south through the eastern portion of the city. Unlike TH 7/CSAH 25, this route functions as a metropolitan freeway and runs through the entire city. This highway's right-of-way interrupts the city's bicycle grid by funneling east west trips onto nine crossings over 3.3 miles. Only eight of the crossings have approaches that make it possible for users to utilize them without carrying their bicycles.

Bicycling Improvement Plans

As a result of the Active Living: Sidewalks and Trails Plan, the city created the Connect the Park capital improvement plan to be implemented by 2023. This initiative aimed to improve the bicycling experience in St. Louis Park by installing 32 miles of bikeways throughout the city. As of 2018, 14.2 miles of bikeways have been installed in the city. Figure 6-4 shows the specific corridors where improvements have been made and are planned.

Where We Are Headed – Planning for Bicycles

Regional Bicycle Transportation Network

The Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) was developed by the Metropolitan Council in partnership with cities and counties. It serves as a framework of designated regional corridors and alignments, defining critical bicycle transportation links to help municipalities guide their bikeway planning and development. Key regional destinations, such as metropolitan job centers, regional job centers, sub regional job centers, large high schools, colleges/universities, regional parks, major sports destinations, are identified based on the Regional Bicycle System Study to demonstrate potential key connections. In St. Louis Park the key destinations are identified as TH 7/Louisiana Avenue and TH 100/36th Avenue/Excelsior Boulevard area sub regional job centers.

The two regional trails North Cedar Lake Regional Trail and Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail that traverse St. Louis Park are valuable components of the Twin Cities' bicycling system. They provide connections to the vast network of regional trails throughout the metro area.

The RBTN is subdivided into two tiers for regional planning and investment prioritization:

Tier 1 – Priority Regional Bicycle Transportation Corridors and Alignments. These corridors and alignments have been determined to provide the best transportation connectivity to regional facilities and developed areas. Tier 1 Corridors and Alignments are given the highest priority for transportation funding.

The Tier 1 Corridors and Alignments in St. Louis Park run both east-west and north-south. East-west Tier 1 connections include the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail that runs south of Cedar Lake Road, Minnetonka Boulevard which connects across TH 100, and the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail. A north-south Tier 1 priority corridor runs along Louisiana Ave connecting Olson Memorial Highway south to Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail.

Tier 2- Regional Bicycle Transportation Network Corridors and Alignments. These corridors and alignments are the second highest priority for funding. They provide connections to regional facilities in neighboring cities and serve to connect priority regional bicycle transportation corridors and alignments.

The Tier 2 Corridors and Alignments run through the city in all directions. Tier 2 Alignments in the northern portion of the city along Texas Avenue and Franklin Avenue connects to the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail. A Tier 2 corridor connects Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail down to 66th Street in Edina, which is identified as a Tier 2 Alignment.

Bicycling Connectivity Analysis

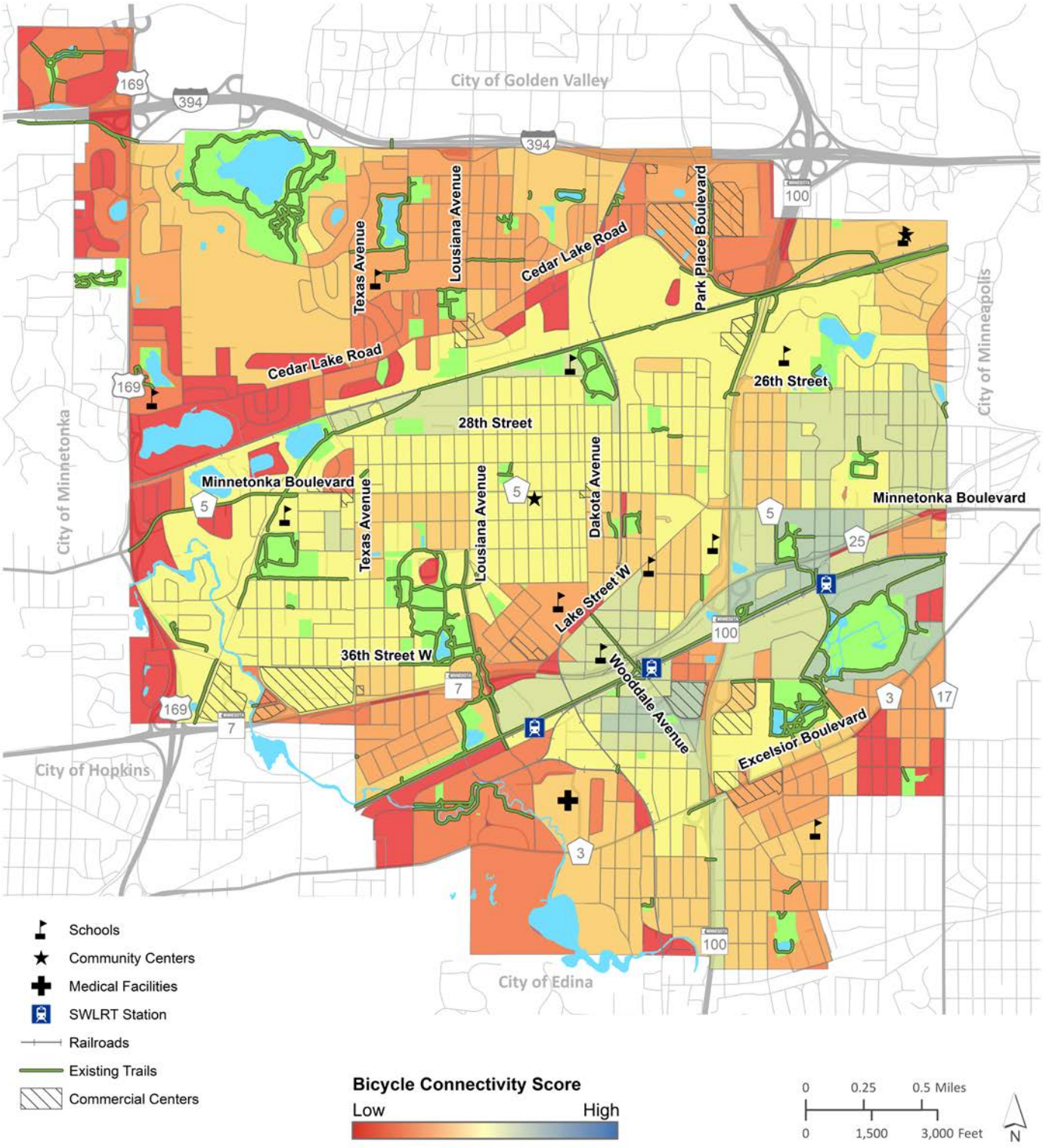
To assist with future planning efforts for the city's bicycle network, a GIS based tool was developed to measure bicycle connectivity.

Figure 6-6 shows where bicycling connectivity scores differ throughout the city. The areas with the highest connectivity scores are located immediately south of TH 7 and the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail and west of TH 100. This area enjoys access to high-quality cycling facilities, close access to commercial destinations to the east and northwest, and a relatively low-stress internal street grid. It is an employment center and is adjacent to the planned stations on the SWLRT. Consequently, trips by bicycle in this area are most competitive with cars when compared to any other area in the city.

Other highly connected neighborhoods in the city are between TH 7 and Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail. The northern part of the city has high bicycle connectivity scores, largely because of the North Cedar Lake Trail, and the connections it provides to parks.

There remain other areas with low overall connectivity scores: the residential areas in the far-northwest part of the city; the commercial areas in the far-northeast part of the city; and the western and southwestern reaches of the city. In these areas, trips by car are dramatically faster than by bicycle, a result of either a poor low-stress bicycling connectivity score, a lack of bicycle trip generators, or a combination of both. For example, in the far-northwestern portion of the city, the traffic stress scores are generally low. However, because of the suburban street grid, the surrounding arterial bicycle routes are difficult to quickly access. A trip by bicycle is less competitive time wise when compared with a car because the access route is less direct. Additionally, in these more outlying areas, there are fewer trip generators.

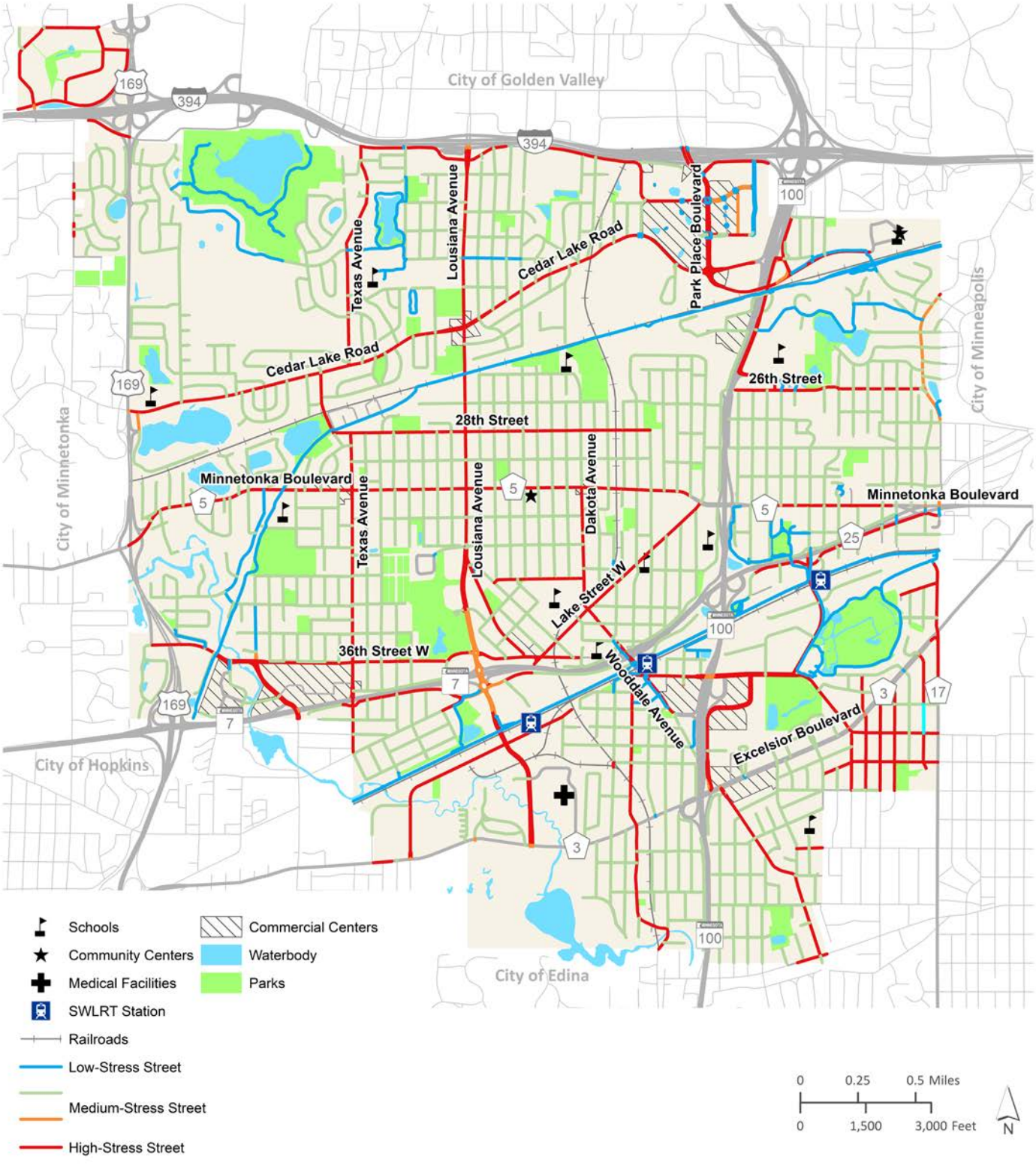
Figure 6-6. Overall Bicycle Connectivity Scores by Census Block



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by Toole Design Group, 2018

Figure 6-7. Level of Traffic Stress for Bikers along the St. Louis Park Network



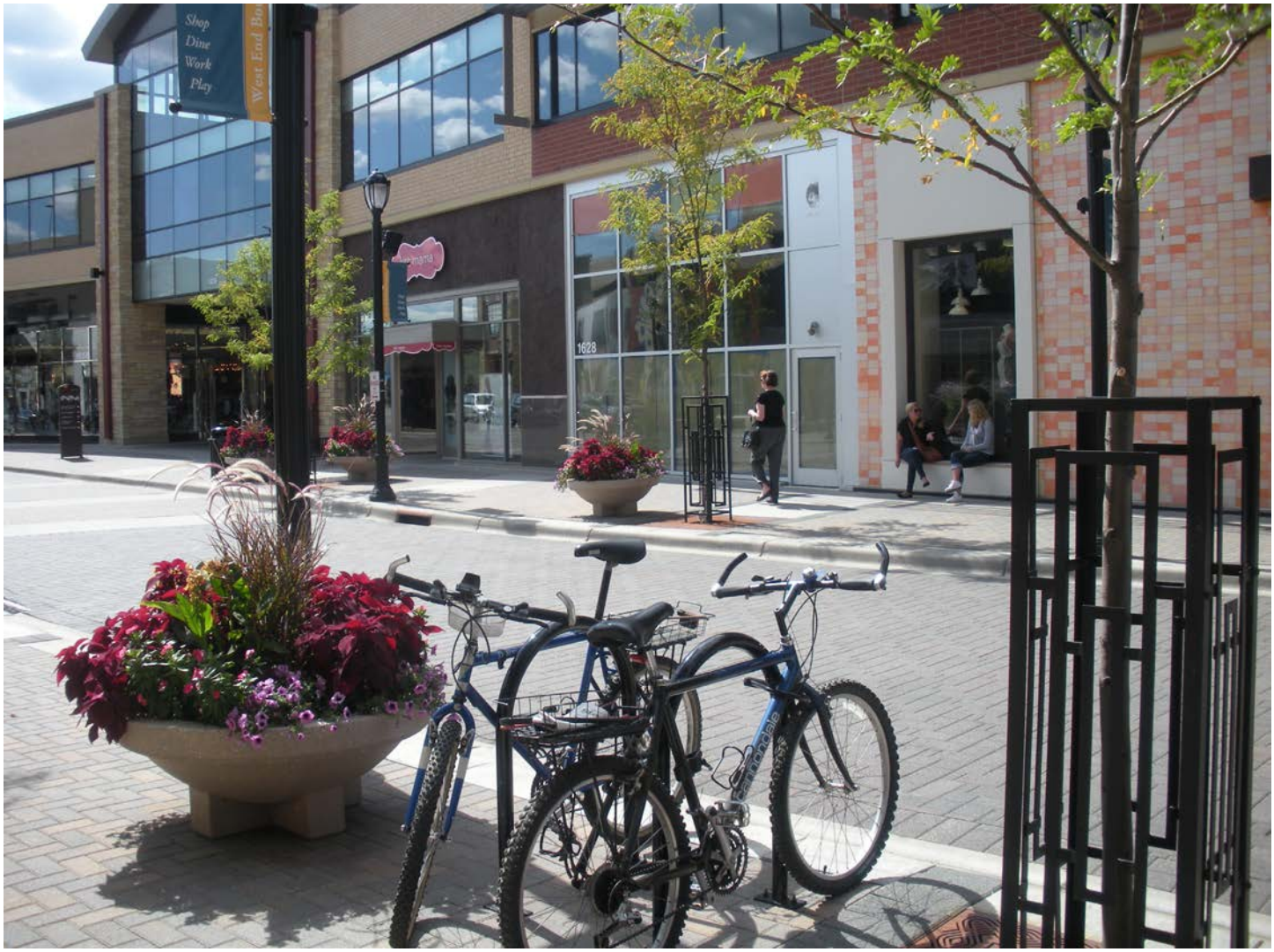
Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by Toole Design Group, 2018

Reaching Destinations as a Bicyclist

St. Louis Park has improved its bicycle network in recent years, with connections to the regional trail system and installing bicycle lanes. Further improvements are being implemented through the Connect the Park program (See Figure 6-4). By 2023, the city will have a comprehensive bicycle system that covers most portions of the city.

Other changes are currently underway or approaching in the next five to ten years: bike share is being discussed. A new type of bike share, dockless bike share, where bicycles can be left and picked up at any location has proved popular in many cities.



Bicycle Mobility Goals and Strategies

1. Provide for the needs of bicyclists, removing barriers to active transportation.

Strategies

A. Continue to implement initiatives that construct and maintain a continuous network of bikeways such as Connect the Park.

B. Implement emerging best practices in bikeway design.

C. Address infrastructure connections for bicycling in conjunction with new development projects.

D. Install intersection improvements where appropriate to increase bicyclists' safety.

2. Ensure that all residents and businesses have access to a well-connected bike network that is easy to navigate and use.

Strategies

A. Install way finding along trails and main bicycle routes to direct bicyclists to destinations.

B. Support the safety of year-round biking by partnering with Three Rivers Park District to facilitate the removal of snow on the regional trails in St. Louis Park.

C. Prioritize bicycling needs of underserved populations.

D. Focus on improving bicycle infrastructure near planned LRT stations.

3. Continue to look for more opportunities to expand the network and encourage more people to use the bicycle system.

Strategies

A. Continue to work with St. Louis Park schools to identify and promote bike routes to students and parents.

B. Consider expanding zoning regulations that promote bicycling, such as the provision of secured storage lockers, and changing and shower facilities.

C. Invest in bike-share systems near planned LRT stations. Such systems are a cost-effective way to expand the reach of the transit amenity into more outlying areas.

Transit Mobility

Where We Have Been

Streetcar

In 1889, the first horse drawn street car in Minneapolis was converted to electric trolley operation, which made possible the dispersal of the middle class away from the urban core of Minneapolis. In 1892 the Minneapolis Land & Investment Company built the Lake Street Trolley, an electric street car line, between the Minneapolis boundary at Lake Street and France Avenue to Lake Street just north of what is now Highway 7. The Lake Street Trolley operated between 1892 and 1938. Early residential development occurred along the Lake Street streetcar line and also along the 44th Street line, just south of St. Louis Park.

The street car had several long range impacts:

- Early residential and commercial development occurred along the tracks, forming permanent land use patterns.
- Easy access to Minneapolis meant that many residents depended upon jobs and shopping in Minneapolis, delaying the development of a strong employment base and negating the need for a strong commercial center or downtown.

The streetcar line was sold in 1905 to Minneapolis St. Paul Suburban Railway, a firm founded by Thomas Lowry. Operation continued until the streetcar line was dismantled in 1938, just one year after the completion of the highway interchange at Highway 7 and Highway 100.

Bus Transit

In the early 1920s, street car ridership began a gradual decline due to the increase in automobiles. Around the time of World War I, independently run bus lines began to pop up. The Minneapolis and St. Paul Suburban Railway Company (also known as Twin City Lines) acquired all the independent bus lines. By the mid 1930s the Village Council contracted with the Minneapolis and St. Paul Suburban Railway for bus service to replace the street car service within the city. Riders found buses appealing because of their more flexible routes and more comfortable rides. In 1973, St. Louis Park became the first Minneapolis suburb to have its own minibus system with nineteen buses traveling between 44th Street and Highway 12. Principal stops included libraries, schools, the recreation center, the St. Louis Park Medical Center (now Park Nicollet), Methodist Hospital, Westwood Shopping Center, Shoppers' City, and the Miracle Mile Shopping Center.

The Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) was established in 1967 by the state legislature, and acquired the Twin City Lines bus system in 1970. It was moved to the Metropolitan Council in 1994 and is now known as Metro Transit.

In the past 10 years a number of efforts have been completed to increase access and coordination to the bus system through and within St. Louis Park:

- The city collaborated with Metro Transit to expand bus routes to most efficiently serve the greatest number of residents.
- Improvements to accessibility to bus stations have been made through the pedestrian and bicycle network.
- The city has increased efforts to promote transit use and maintain safe transit stops.

Southwest Light Rail

In 1980, the Metropolitan Council began studying light rail transit (LRT) in the metro area, including a Southwest corridor. The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) had purchased a former rail corridor for LRT and in 1987, the Legislature directed HCRRA to develop a plan for implementing an LRT it. The study considered ridership potential, cost, and public benefit. The Southwest corridor was chosen for further study and preliminary design for an LRT line.

The corridor from downtown Minneapolis to St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie was selected by all cities and Hennepin County as the route for the Southwest transitway. It was included in the region's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) making the project eligible for funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Three SWLRT stations are planned in St. Louis Park at Beltline Boulevard, Wooddale Avenue, and Louisiana Avenue.

St. Louis Park staff and elected officials have actively participated throughout the planning and design of the SWLRT project. The project has further been shaped by meaningful input from St. Louis Park residents. The city has also taken an active role in station area planning for transit-oriented development and improved access in and around the SWLRT stations. The city is contributing to the overall project and is participating in funding a number of access the improvements.

During the design process, there was a proposal to reroute the freight rail from the Bass Lake Spur corridor and Kenilworth corridor to the MN&S corridor. After extensive study, it was found to be physically difficult, excessively expensive, and ultimately deemed impractical; the decision was made to collocate the freight rail, regional trail and SWLRT in the Bass Lake Spur and Kenilworth corridors.

After significant deliberation, city coordination, design, redesign, and public process, St. Louis Park and other corridor cities granted "municipal consent" to the project in 2014, a major milestone required by state law. SWLRT design and engineering was completed in 2017, and the project is expected to start construction in 2019 and open in 2023. The project will be funded by a mixed of federal, county, state and local sources, with federal funds making up approximately 46 percent of the total cost of the project.

Southwest Community Works

In 2010 the Southwest Community Works program was established by Hennepin County to

> *"enhance the public benefits of transit investments 'beyond the rails' that will support economic development, the creation of accessible jobs and housing, more efficient uses of land, and the creation of healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods served by public transit."*

Community Works teamed with Southwest Corridor cities and other agencies to work together on a number of SWLRT planning issues, including two rounds of station area plans. The first iteration of station area plans was completed in 2009. In 2014, the Southwest Corridor Investment Framework (TSAAP) was created for each station area to outline future infrastructure improvements needed to make the station areas work well. This plan has been used to establish the city's priorities through its annual capital improvements planning process. The Community Works partners also studied a number of other items including economic competitiveness and job growth, housing choices, bike planning, and a number of other critical components along the SWLRT route and broader station areas.

Where We Are Today

Existing Bus Service and Facilities

St. Louis Park is served by local, limited-stop, and express bus service to downtown Minneapolis, shown in Figure 6-8. All regular-route service in St. Louis Park is operated by Metro Transit, a division of the Metropolitan Council and the region's primary provider of transit service. Metro Transit bus service in St. Louis Park operates primarily on four streets in St. Louis Park: Cedar Lake Road, Minnetonka Boulevard, Excelsior Boulevard, and Louisiana Avenue.

In 2017 Metro Transit improved bus service in St. Louis Park on Louisiana Avenue by adding a trip earlier in the morning and later in the afternoon to accommodate workers at Methodist Hospital. Service was also improved on Cedar Lake Road and in the West End, with faster travel times and more service.

Bus Transit Center and Park-and-Ride Lots

As shown below in Table 6-1, there are four park-and-ride lots in St. Louis Park. Apart from the Westwood Lutheran Church Park-and-Ride, all facilities are publicly owned and are within Minnesota Department of Transportation rights-of-way. There are two parking facilities near transit stops that are not maintained by Metro Transit as park-and-ride locations; these are found along Louisiana Avenue at Minnetonka Boulevard and W 27th Street. People may park their vehicles at these areas for free and catch routes 17, 667, and 604. Use of the TH 7 and Texas Avenue Park-and-Ride facilities was very low in 2017. This under-utilization may represent an opportunity to use this land more productively.

Metro Mobility

Metro Mobility is para-transit service that is public transportation for certified riders who are unable to use the regular fixed-route bus due to a disability or health condition. In the Twin Cities region, the Metropolitan Council oversees all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit services; Metro Mobility, in turn, contracts with ADA paratransit service providers, who provide customers with door-to-door transportation.

Transit Link

Public dial-a-ride service is provided by the Metropolitan Council through Transit Link. Unlike Metro Mobility, Transit Link service is open to the public and operates in lower-density areas where regular-route transit service is not available. It is intended to augment the regular-route network and is only available for trips that cannot be accomplished on regular routes alone. Transit Link trips may connect passengers at major transfer points to complete their trip on the regular-route network.

Table 6-1. Bus Transit Center and Park-and-Ride Lots in St. Louis Park

FACILITY	LOCATION	ROUTES SERVED	SPACES	2017 USAGE/ AVAILABLE*
Louisiana Avenue Transit Center	1300 Louisiana Avenue	9, 604, 643, 645, 652, 663, 672, 705, 756	330 surface spaces	286 / 44
I-394 & Park Place Park-and-Ride	1500 Park Place Boulevard	9, 645	55 surface spaces	65 /-10
Westwood Lutheran Church	9001 Cedar Lake Road	9, 643, 663	40 surface spaces	14 / 26
Hwy 7 & Texas Avenue	3701 Texas Avenue S.	17,667, 668	10 surface spaces	2 / 8

Source: Metro Transit 2017 Annual Regional Park-and-Ride System Report

Table 6-2. St. Louis Park Transit Market Areas

MARKET AREA	PROPENSITY TO USE TRANSIT	SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS	TYPICAL TRANSIT SERVICE	PRESENCE IN ST. LOUIS PARK
II: Traditional street grid with high to moderately high population and employment densities	Approximately half the ridership potential of Market Area I	Frequency: 15-60 min Span: morning to night, seven days a week Access: one mile between routes	Similar network structure to Market Area I with reduced level of service as demand warrants. Limited stop services are appropriate to connect major destinations.	All the city except the area north of Cedar Lake Road and west of Louisiana Avenue
III: Moderate density with a less transitional street grid	Approximately half the ridership potential of Market Area II	Frequency: 30-60 min Span: peak times, occasional weekends Access: varies on development patterns	Primary emphasis is on commuter express bus service. Suburban local routes providing basic coverage. Public dial-a-ride complements fixed route in some cases	The area north of Cedar Lake Road and west of Louisiana Avenue

Source: 2040 Transportation Policy Plan Appendix G: Transit Design Guidelines. Metropolitan Council 2015

Transit Market Areas

The Metropolitan Council defines Transit Market Areas by the demographic and urban design factors that are associated with successful transit service, such as population and employment density, intersection density, and automobile availability. This is a tool that Metro Transit uses to guide transit planning decisions and help ensure that the types and levels of transit service provided match the expected demand in a given area.

As shown in Figure 6-8, the Westwood Hills area, north of Cedar Lake Road and west of Louisiana Avenue, is in Transit Market Area III. The rest of St. Louis Park is in Transit Market Area II. Table 6-2 describes the Transit Market Areas relevant to St. Louis Park.

Reaching Destinations Without a Car (Transit)

The key to creating an environment that allows people to reach their destination without a car using transit is to provide them access to transit with multiple mobility options – such as good pedestrian and bicycle connections. This would reduce the need to get in a car at all. If the pedestrian and bicycle mobility systems linking to the transit stations and bus stops are fully built out, inviting to the user, and well maintained, it becomes a convenient and easy way to get bus routes and the LRT and becomes easier not use a car.

Metro Transit bus service in St. Louis Park operates primarily on Cedar Lake Road, Minnetonka Boulevard, Excelsior Boulevard, and Louisiana Avenue.

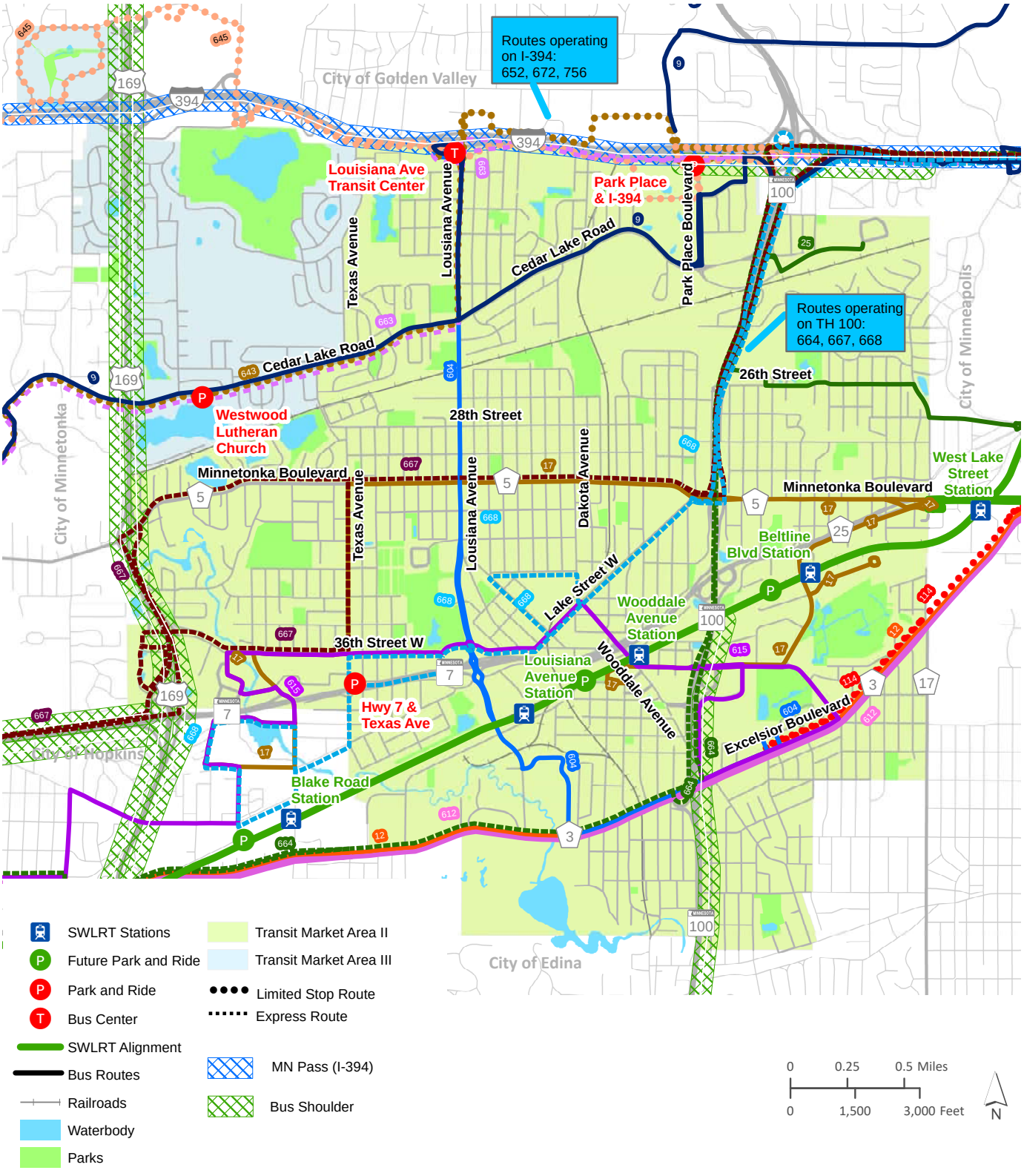
Cedar Lake Road

Land use at the eastern end of Cedar Lake Road is predominantly commercial, office, and industrial, and then transitions into single-family residential use for most the corridor, generating lower demand for transit. There is a sidewalks on the north side of the street; however, to promote walkability for transit users, it is desirable to have sidewalks on both sides of the street While no bicycle facilities exist today in this corridor, Connect the Park calls for implementation of bike facilities along the entire length of Cedar Lake Road by 2023.

Minnetonka Boulevard

The primary land use along the corridor is single-family residential with some medium-density residential and commercial uses clustered at each end, generating moderate demand for transit along the boulevard itself. Land use on neighboring streets is almost entirely single-family residential, and many connecting streets lack sidewalks, which reduces pedestrian connectivity to Minnetonka Boulevard and its corresponding transit service. Parking lots adjacent to the street, frequent curb cuts, and lack of separation between the sidewalk and the street decrease pedestrian comfort. There is an on-street bike lane on Minnetonka Boulevard west of the intersection with West Lake Street.

Figure 6-8. Bus Routes, Facilities, and Market Areas



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Excelsior Boulevard

Land uses immediately adjacent to Excelsior Boulevard include commercial, mixed use, and medium- to high-density residential uses, contributing to a pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive environment in some sections. Sidewalks are present along both sides of the street and there is adequate pedestrian infrastructure on neighboring streets, enabling residents of adjacent residential neighborhoods to access transit service on Excelsior Boulevard. The "Excelsior & Grand" development is particularly well-suited to pedestrian activity and transit service. There are no bicycle facilities present or planned along Excelsior Boulevard.

Louisiana Avenue

Land use along the northern part of Louisiana Avenue is predominantly single-family residential, though some areas have small commercial, civic, or medium-density residential uses. In the southern portion of the corridor, there is a mix of medium-density residential, office, and business park uses. Single-family homes generate a small amount of transit demand, while other uses in the corridor generate more demand, particularly around peak business hours. Many adjacent streets lack pedestrian infrastructure, curb cuts, and separation between the sidewalk and the street further detracting from the pedestrian environment.

While there are ample bus stops, they lack seating, shelters, ADA pads, and other amenities that would encourage use and make them more desirable. The city's Connect the Park plan indicates bicycle lanes are planned for implementation along the entirety of Louisiana Avenue, along with completion of a few sidewalk gaps north of Cedar Lake Road and immediately north of Excelsior Boulevard by 2023.

Wayzata Boulevard

Land uses immediately adjacent to Wayzata Boulevard include commercial, mixed use, office, and single family to high density residential uses, contributing to a pedestrian friendly and transit-supportive environment in some sections. Sidewalks are present along at least one side of the street and there is adequate pedestrian infrastructure on neighboring streets, enabling residents of adjacent residential neighborhoods to access transit service on Wayzata Boulevard. The developments around the West End are particularly well-suited to pedestrian activity and transit service. There are no bicycle facilities present, but are planned along Wayzata Boulevard.

36th Street

Land uses immediately adjacent to 36th Street include commercial, mixed use, and single family to medium- to high density residential uses, contributing to a pedestrian friendly and transit-supportive environment in some sections. Sidewalks are present along both sides of the street and there is adequate pedestrian infrastructure on neighboring streets, enabling residents of adjacent residential neighborhoods to access transit service on 36th Street. There are no bicycle facilities present, but are planned along 36th Street.

Bus Network Gaps

The east-west bus network covers St. Louis Park well. With local routes on Cedar Lake Road, Minnetonka Boulevard, and Excelsior Boulevard, it is accessible to much of the city and provides connections to destinations in Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Wayzata, as well as Uptown and downtown Minneapolis. Louisiana Avenue is the only north-south bus connection operating in the city. Service on this route is limited with respect to service frequency; hours of operation were recently expanded. This is the only north-south bus route that operates the full length of the city east of TH 100.

METRO System

The Metropolitan Council owns and operates the METRO system, a network of transitways including light-rail and bus-rapid transit routes that serve the Twin Cities metropolitan area (Figure 6-10). Three METRO lines are currently in operation: the Blue Line, the Red Line, and the Green Line.

The Metropolitan Council 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) includes planned transitways with identified routes and modes of transit; in St. Louis Park it includes SWLRT (Green Line Extension). The TPP also identifies several additional transitways, including highway bus rapid transit (BRT) on TH 169 that would serve St. Louis Park. The TH 169 Mobility Study was recently completed and recommended highway BRT on TH 169 and on TH 55 between Shakopee and downtown Minneapolis.

The TPP also identifies arterial BRT on Lake Street in Minneapolis. While this transitway would be adjacent to St. Louis Park, its terminus would likely be at the bus turnaround/layover at Lake Street and France Avenue, at St. Louis Park's border with Minneapolis. This proximity provides additional transit connection opportunities to city residents.

Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT)

SWLRT (the METRO Green Line Extension, Figure 6-9) will extend the Green Line from Minneapolis into and through St. Louis Park with stations at three locations: Beltline Boulevard, Wooddale Avenue and Louisiana Avenue. It will be located in the Bass Lake Spur rail and Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail corridor that runs south of and roughly parallel to TH 7.

Station Areas

Over the past 10 years the city has completed detailed station area plans, and is working on infrastructure enhancements to local streets, sidewalks, and trails to increase access to and around the station areas. Interest in developing land around the LRT stations is on the rise, and significant efforts are being made between the city and Metro Transit to coordinate and construct public and private infrastructure improvements, including new transit-oriented developments. Station area construction is anticipated to begin in 2019 and passenger service is expected in 2023.

Figure 6-9. Southwest LRT (METRO Green Line Extension)

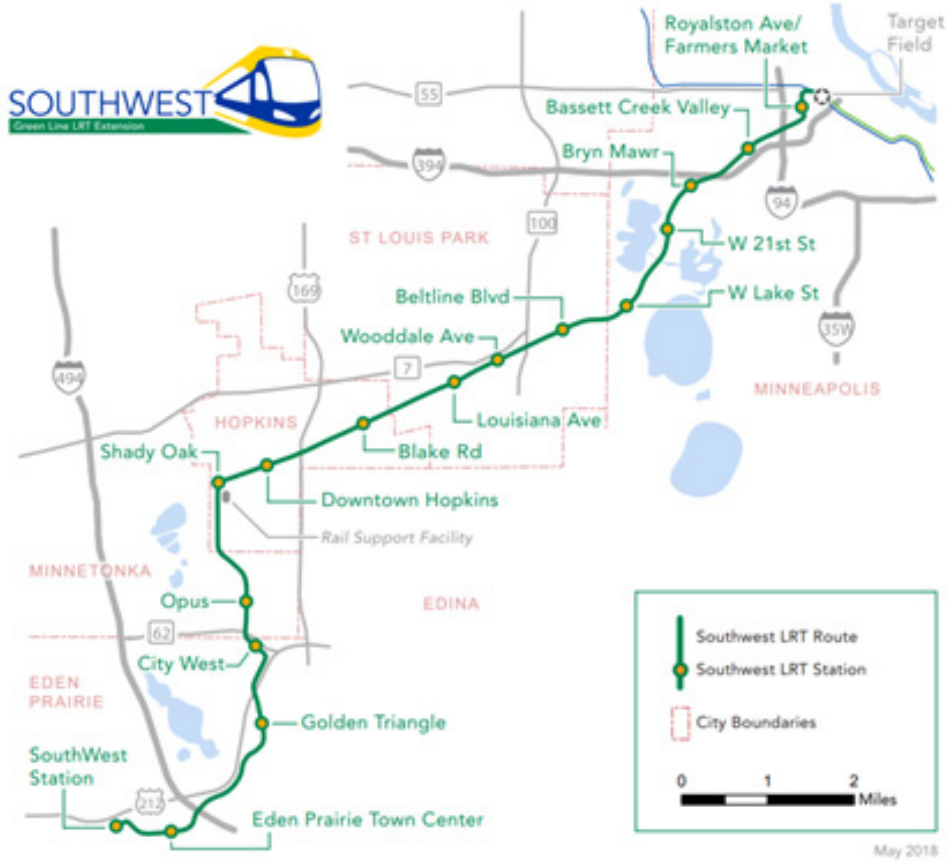
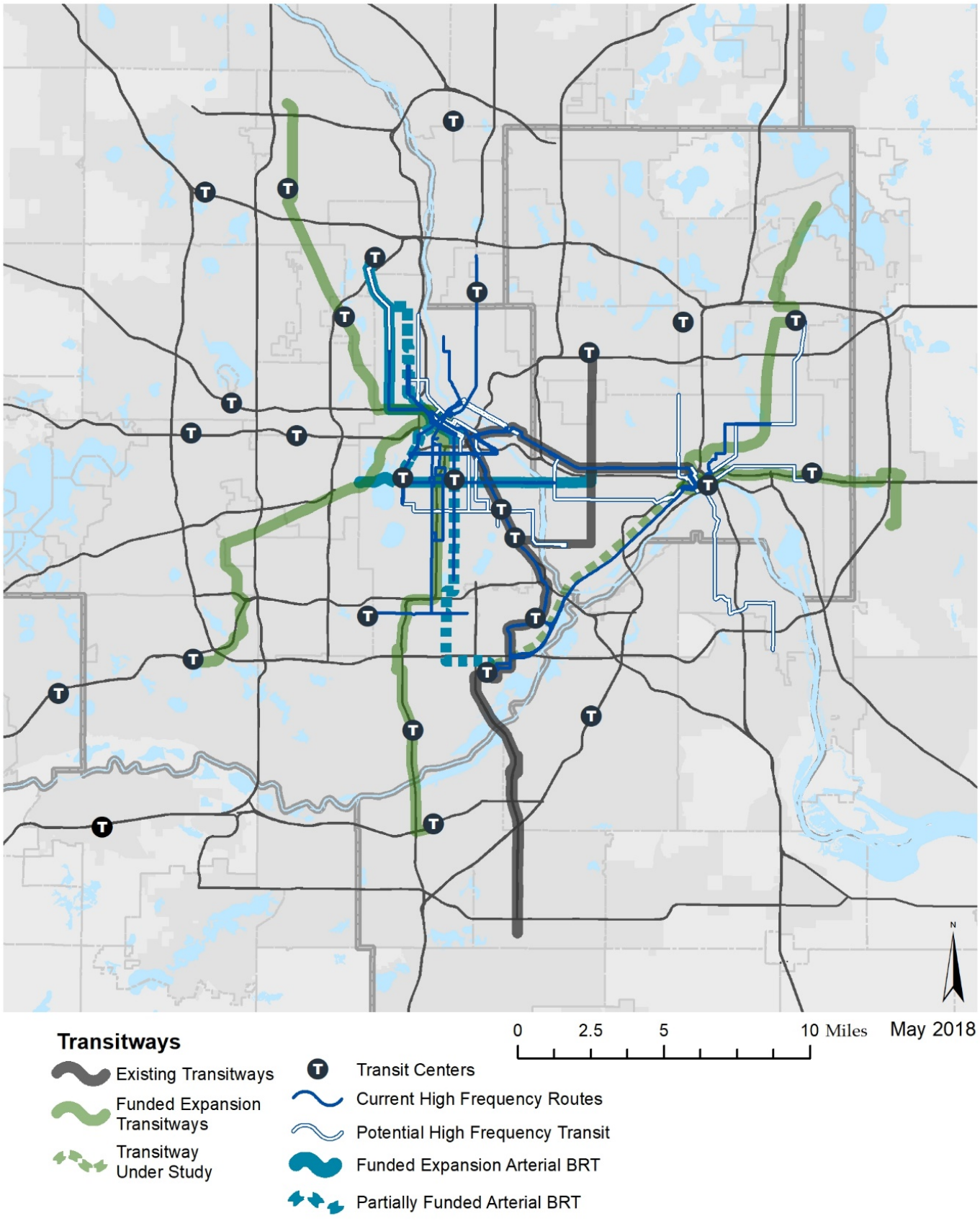


Figure 6-10. Metro Area Existing and Potential High Frequency Routes



Source: Metropolitan Council TPP

Where We Are Headed – Planning for Transit Mobility

Bus Transit

The city continually works with Metro Transit on providing bus transit service to the community, making suggestions and requests as demand changes. With SWLRT, service changes are expected to provide connecting bus service to the light rail line. Additional study and analysis for local bus routes is expected as the light rail line gets closer to opening day.

Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT)

Major streets, sidewalk, trail, and access infrastructure upgrades are planned around the station areas as part of the LRT project including a regional trail bridge near the Beltline Boulevard Station, and a regional trail underpass under Wooddale Avenue.

SWLRT represents a major improvement to transit service in St. Louis Park as it is scheduled to operate 22 hours a day, seven days a week. For most of the day from 6:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., LRT will operate every 10 minutes. Metro Transit anticipates extending bus transit operations to better serve the SWLRT station areas.

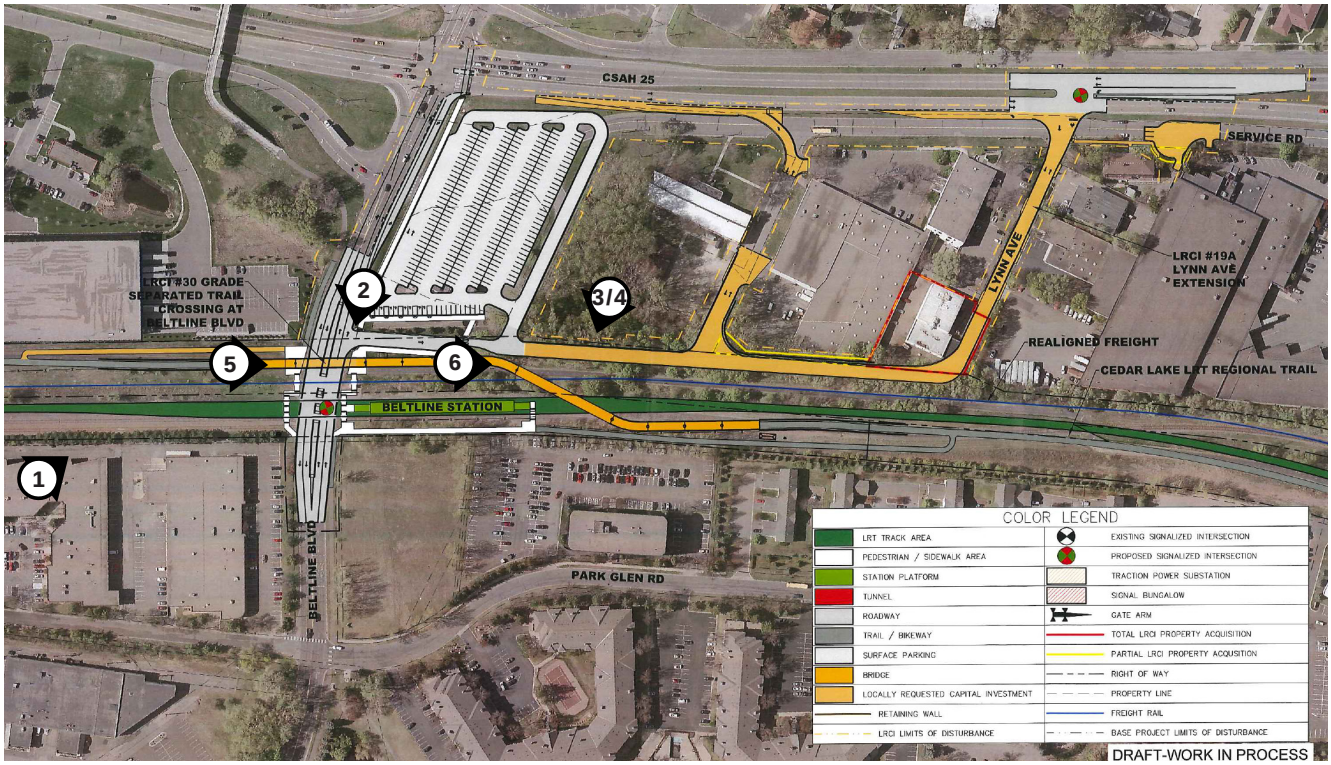
The city will continue to coordinate public and private infrastructure improvements and transit-oriented development in the station areas with the SWLRT project. Planning for bikes, parking and other neighborhood impacts near transit stations will continue during the coming years. The city is proactively planning for additional transit-oriented development around LRT stations, and has identified potential road and pedestrian connections (Figure 6-25) as redevelopment occurs. Shared use facilities including bike share and car share will also be pursued.

Over the coming months and years, it is expected SWLRT final approvals will take place and construction is expected begin in 2019, with opening day in 2023.

Beltline Boulevard Station

The Beltline Boulevard Station is located at the intersection of Beltline Boulevard and CSAH 25, a business, employment and residential area. The station area will include a park-and-ride lot, passenger drop-off areas, and a bus stop. A new trail bridge for the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail will be built over the LRT and freight rail tracks and Beltline Boulevard to provide for safer and more efficient trail crossings and to place the regional trail on the south side of the freight and light rail to connect with the Midtown Greenway and the Kenilworth Corridor trail.

Figure 6-11. Beltline Station SWLRT Plan



Additional street connections and improvements at Lynn Avenue and CSAH 25 will also be constructed as part of the LRT project.

While the plans show a surface park and ride lot on the southeast corner of Beltline Boulevard and CSAH 25, the city has worked with Metro Transit on an agreement to build a parking ramp on a portion of the site and utilize the visible corner for development.

CSAH 25

The city and county are working together on redesigning CSAH 25 to create a more urban roadway. A concept plan is being developed to take advantage of the wide right-of-way and to improve the roadway with more green space and additional sidewalks and trails. Additional engineering and a feasibility study need to be completed.

Wooddale Avenue Station

The Wooddale Avenue Station is located on Wooddale Avenue just south of Hwy 7, with the platform on the east side of Wooddale. An underpass for the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail will be constructed under Wooddale Avenue. To improve circulation, sight lines and bicycle and pedestrian routes in the area, the Wooddale Avenue Bridge has been widened over Hwy 7. Signals will be installed at the Hwy 7 ramps as part of the SWLRT improvements. The station does not include a park and ride lot.

A development has been approved for a high density, mixed-use, mixed-income, transit-oriented development located both north and south of the LRT station, on the east side of Wooddale Avenue. The development includes 200 affordable housing units, and will provide opportunities for residents to live "car-free." A private bike share and car share system will be located at the Wooddale Avenue Station as part of the development.

Figure 6-12. Wooddale Station SWLRT Plan

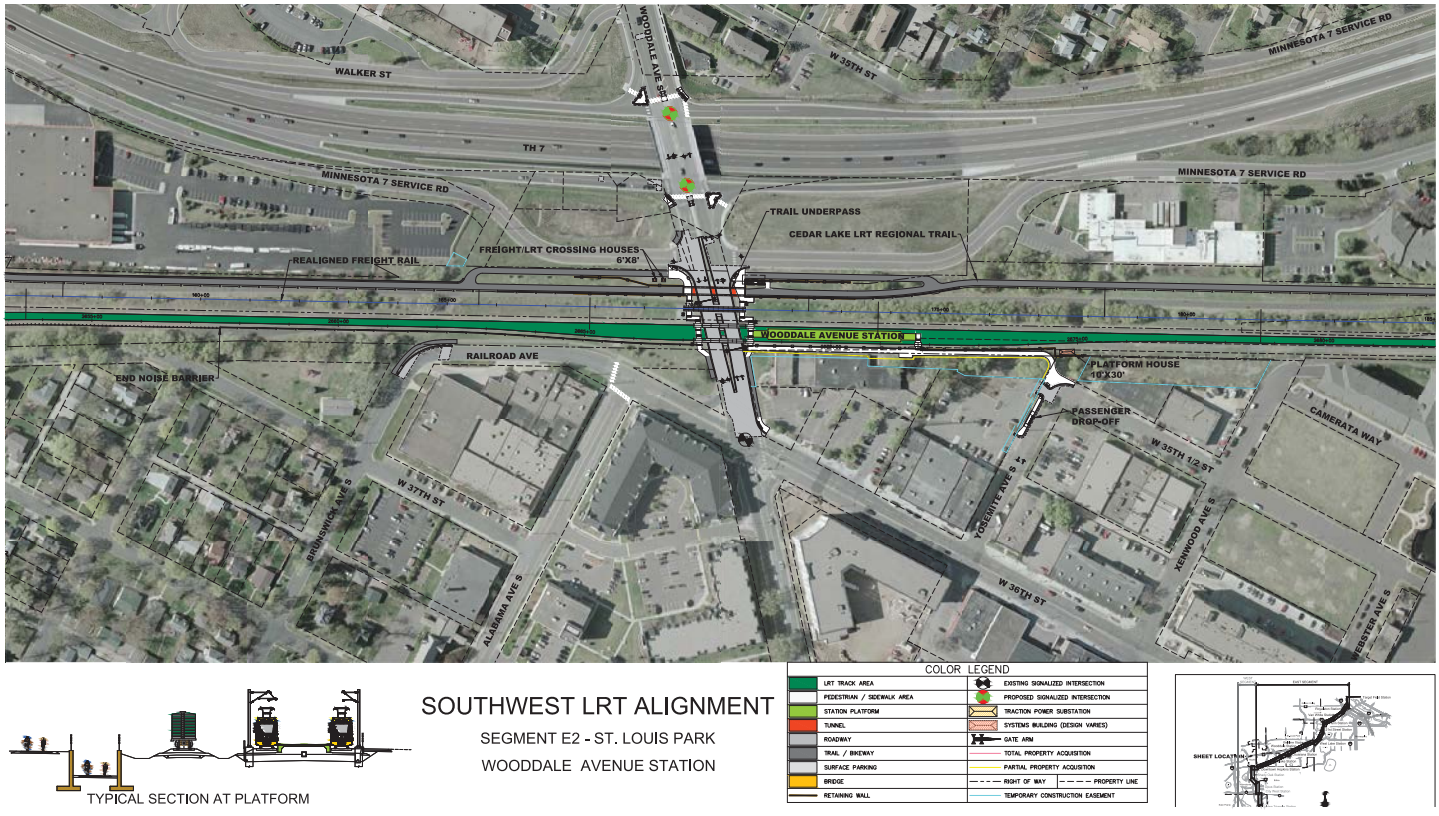
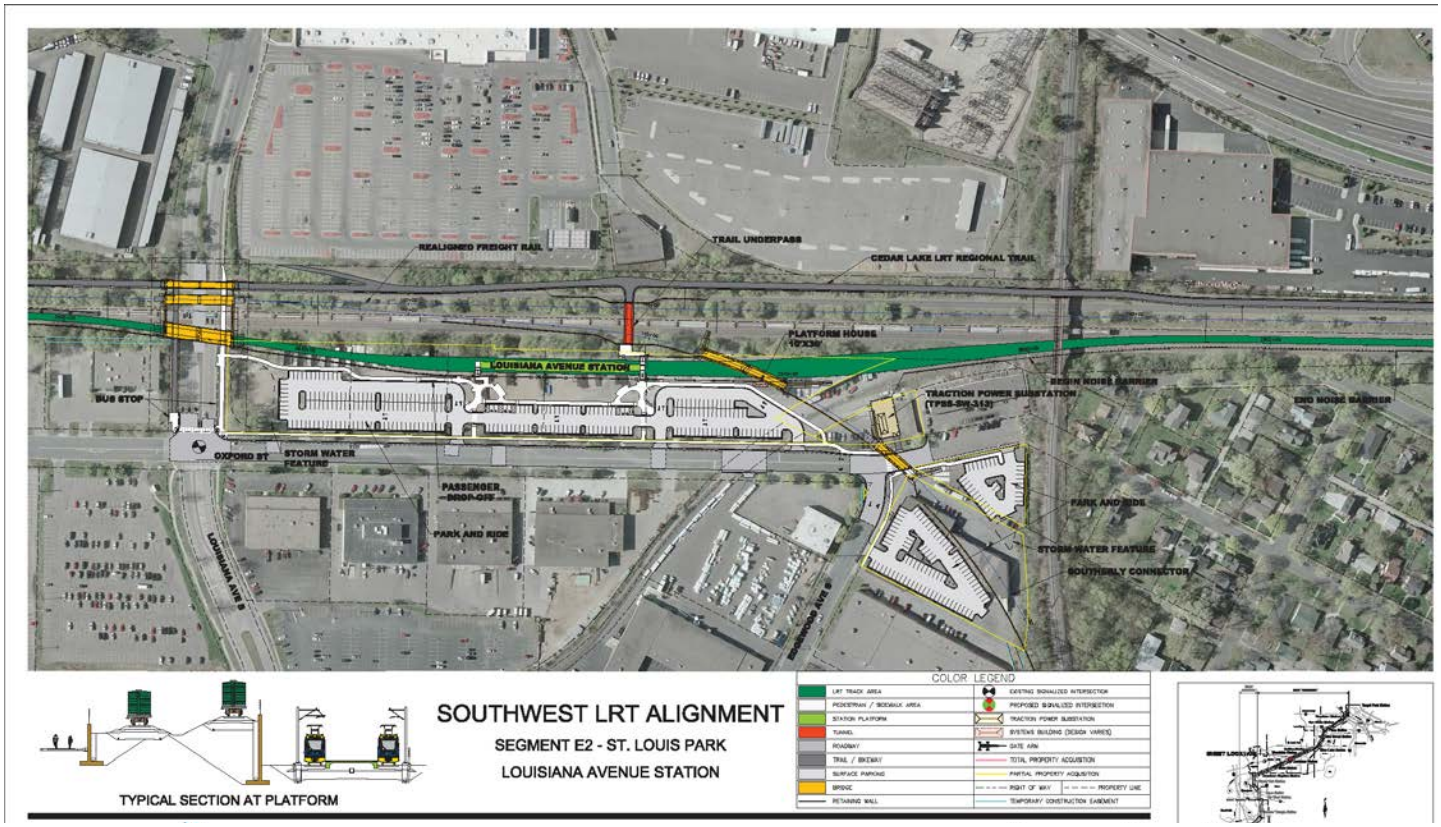


Figure 6-13. Perspective Via Development Plan at 36th Street and Wooddale Avenue

Figure 6-14. Louisiana Station SWLRT Plan



Louisiana Avenue Station

The Louisiana Avenue Station is located northeast of Louisiana Avenue and Oxford Street, just north of Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital, St. Louis Park's largest employer. The station area includes park-and-ride lots along Oxford Street with a passenger drop-off and space for private shuttle services. Bus connections will be available on Louisiana Avenue, and a new elevated freight rail connection to the MNS line will be constructed to east and south of the station. The LRT line will cross Louisiana on a bridge and slopes towards Oxford Street and the station platform.

A new north-south pedestrian tunnel underneath the freight rail will connect the regional trail to the LRT station. The existing freight rail switching movements will be removed as part of SWLRT project, and the southern wye will remain.

Table 6-3. Station Area Plans

STATION	STUDIES
Beltline	» Southwest Transitway Station Area Plans, 2009 » Beltline Area Framework and Design Guidelines, 2012 » Southwest Corridor Investment Framework (Transitional Station Area Action Plans), 2013 » Beltline Circulation Planning, 2013
Wooddale	» Elmwood Area Land Use, Transit and Transportation Study, 2003 » Southwest Transitway Station Area Plans, 2009 » Southwest Corridor Investment Framework (Transitional Station Area Action Plans), 2013
Louisiana	» Southwest Transitway Station Area Plans, 2009 » Southwest Corridor Investment Framework (Transitional Station Area Action Plans), 2013 » Louisiana Station Area Framework + Design Guidelines, 2014

Figure 6-15. Louisiana Trail Underpass

Transit Mobility Goals and Strategies

1. Ensure that the bus transit and SWLRT network to be accessible to residents and businesses, connecting people to important local and region-wide destinations

Strategies

A. Continue to partner in and prioritize the SWLRT to promote its construction and operation as soon as possible.

B. Work with Metro Transit to continually adjust and improve transit service in St. Louis Park.

C. Support transit networks that promote easy access to jobs, services, churches, schools, and grocery stores.

D. Provide comfortable, safe, and accessible transit stops for pedestrians along transit lines that include benches, bike parking, and shelters where feasible.

E. Integrate transit through buses, light rail, bike routes, sidewalks and trails throughout St. Louis Park.

F. Construct a walkable and connected mobility network near the SWLRT station areas, including smaller block sizes and pedestrian and bicycle connections.

G. Support regional transit projects to create a connected metro-wide network, including those that connect to SWLRT such as the Lake Street BRT, the Midtown Greenway Streetcar, and the Blue Line extension.

2. Continuously explore, research, and support ways to expand the transit network and maximize service to the community

Strategies

A. Support transit oriented development so people can live and/or work in transit served areas and not be auto-dependent. Use travel demand management strategies to encourage more transit usage in new developments.

B. Support efforts focused on reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips, using incentives that encourage the use of public transportation such as Metropass and ridesharing opportunities to increase transit use.

Vehicular Mobility

Where We Have Been

One of the first highways to be constructed in St. Louis Park was TH 100, originally constructed as "Lilac Way" in the late 1920s and early 1930s. It was later reconstructed and modeled after the German Autobahn system to function as a beltline highway encircling the metropolitan area. The city is also served by several other regional highways including TH 7 (constructed in the 1930s), TH 169, and I-394. The evolution of the highway system has resulted in the dominance of automobiles and trucks as the favored transportation option for people and goods alike. St. Louis Park's position in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area provides it with excellent access to the regional highway system, historically making St. Louis Park a great central location for businesses and residents to locate.

The city's streets are characterized by a combined grid and curvilinear pattern, laid upon a major pattern of several arterial routes. These arterials radiate in an east/west direction from the city of Minneapolis connecting to western suburbs, with an additional two north/south arterials (TH 100 and TH 169). Louisiana Avenue is another major route that traverses through the majority of the community north-south. Studying various other north/south connections has been a priority for the city.

The local system allows excellent access to the regional street system. The highways that provide automobile connections also create challenges to getting from one side of the city to the other. The same is true for railroads throughout St. Louis Park. This has historically resulted in the following:

- Channeling of all north/south automobile traffic onto a limited number of roads – TH 169, Texas Avenue, Louisiana Avenue, and TH 100.
- Segmentation and isolation of various neighborhoods
- Reduced pedestrian accessibility and difficult pedestrian crossings on various streets and highways.
- Lack of local routes that connect all parts of the community together especially north/south connections.

In the past 10 years a number of roadway improvements have been implemented that improved circulation and congestion through and within St. Louis Park:

- A new bridge was installed on Wooddale Avenue over TH 7 that grade-separated the two roadways, and improved local circulation and congestion.
- TH 100 was expanded with additional capacity, which reduced cut through traffic onto local streets. Bridge improvements were made over TH 100 to help east-west circulation and freight movement.
- The TH 7/Louisiana Avenue intersection was redesigned and is grade-separated interchange. This busy intersection was reconfigured with three round-a-bouts on Louisiana, which has helped improve local circulation and congestion.
- TH 169 was improved south of the city limits, which improved congestion and mobility along this major route during peak periods.

Where We Are Today

Existing Street Facilities

The city has excellent access to the regional transportation street system with routes Interstate 394 (I-394), TH 7, TH 100, and TH 169 and several county roads – Excelsior Boulevard (CR 3), Minnetonka Boulevard (CR 5), France Avenue (CR 17), and CR 25 – in the city. Street mobility addresses jurisdictional alignment, the functional classification system, future traffic volumes, potential congestion issues and the impact that has on mobility, future street system issues and potential enhancements relative to street type.

Jurisdictional Classification

Jurisdiction over the city's street system is shared among three levels of government: Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Hennepin County, and St. Louis Park. MnDOT maintains the Interstate and Trunk Highway (TH) systems. Hennepin County maintains the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) and County Road (CR) systems, and the remaining local streets are the responsibility of the city including Municipal State Aid (MSA) streets. Some streets are private streets maintained by property owners. Often the municipal boundaries separating St. Louis Park from neighboring cities result in shared responsibility over a road. Coordinating with neighboring cities is essential in maintaining and improving these streets. Figure 6-17 displays the existing street network along with its existing and proposed jurisdictional classification within St. Louis Park.

Occasionally, because of development, changes in traffic patterns, or the construction of new roads, a road's jurisdictional classification should be adjusted to reflect the current role of that facility. The city does not envision any significant jurisdictional transfers within St. Louis Park during the current planning horizon (2018-2040).

Functional Classification

Functional classification defines both the function and the role of a street within the hierarchy of an overall (regional) street system. This system is used to create a network that collects and distributes vehicular traffic from neighborhoods and ultimately to the State or Interstate Highway System. Functional classification works to manage street access, vehicular mobility, and alignment of routes (Figure 6-16). Functional classification also seeks to align destinations and future land use with the street's vehicular purpose.

The existing functional classification of streets in the city is shown in Figure 6-18. Within the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, the Metropolitan Council has established detailed criteria for street functional classifications, which are summarized in Table 6-4.

Figure 6-16. Street Access/Vehicular Mobility Relationship

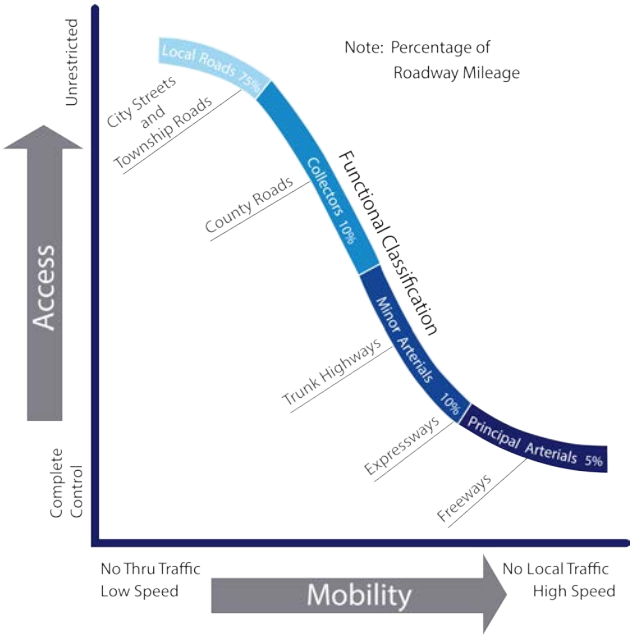


Figure 6-17. Jurisdictional Classification

Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Figure 6-18. Functional Classification

Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Table 6-4. Street Functional Classifications

CRITERIA	PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL	MINOR ARTERIAL	COLLECTOR	LOCAL STREET
Place Connections	Connect regional job concentrations and freight terminals within the urban service area.	Provide supplementary connections between regional job concentrations, local centers, and freight terminals within the urban service area.	Connect neighborhoods and centers within the urban service area.	Connect blocks and land parcels within neighborhoods and within commercial or industrial developments.
Spacing	Urban communities: 2 – 3 miles Suburban communities: Spacing should vary in relation to development density of land uses served, 2 – 6 miles	Regional job concentrations: 1/4 – 3/4 mile Urban communities: 1/2 – 1 mile Suburban communities: 1 – 2 miles	Job concentrations: 1/8 – 1/2 mile Urban Communities: 1/4 – 3/4 mile Suburban Communities: 1/2 – 1 mile	As needed to access land uses
System Connections	To Interstate freeways, other principal arterials, and selected A-minor arterials. Connections between principal arterials should be of a design type that does not require vehicles to stop. Intersections should be limited to 1-2 miles.	To most interstates, principal arterials, other minor arterials, collectors and some local streets	To minor arterials, other collectors, and local streets.	To a few minor arterials. To collectors and other local streets.
Trip-Making Service	Trips greater than 8 miles with at least 5 continuous miles on principal arterials. Express and highway bus rapid transit trips	Medium-to-short tips (2-6 miles depending on development density) at moderate speeds. Longer trips accessing the principal arterial network. Local, limited-stop, and arterial bus rapid transit trips.	Short trips (1-4 miles depending on development density) at low-to-moderate speeds.	Short trips (under 2 miles) at low speeds, including bicycle and pedestrian trips. Longer trips accessing the collector and arterial network.
Mobility vs. Land Access	Emphasis is on mobility for longer trips rather than direct land access. Little or no direct land access within the urbanized area.	Emphasis on mobility for longer trips rather than on direct land access. Direct land access limited to concentrated activity- regional job concentrations, local centers, freight terminals, and neighborhoods.	Equal emphasis on mobility and land access. Direct land access predominantly to development concentrations.	Emphasis on land access, not on mobility. Direct land access predominantly to residential land uses.
System Mileage	5-10%	10-15%	5-15%	60-75%
Percent of Vehicle Miles Traveled	15-35%	15-25%	10-25%	10-25%
Intersections	Grade separated desirable where appropriate. At a minimum, high-capacity controlled at-grade intersections	Traffic signals, roundabouts, and cross-street stops	Four-way stops and some traffic signals	As required
Parking	None	Restricted as necessary	Restricted as necessary	Permitted as necessary

CRITERIA	PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL	MINOR ARTERIAL	COLLECTOR	LOCAL STREET
Large Trucks	No restrictions	Candidates for local truck network, large trucks restricted as necessary	May be candidates for local truck network, large trucks restricted as necessary	Permitted as necessary
Management Tools	Ramp metering, preferential treatment for transit, access control, median barriers, traffic signal progression, staging reconstruction, intersection spacing	Traffic signal progression and spacing, land access management/control, preferential treatment for transit	Number of lanes, traffic signal timing, land access management	Intersection control, cul-de-sacs, diverters
Typical Average Daily Traffic Volumes	15,000-100,000+	5,000-30,000+	1,000-15,000+	Less than 1,000
Posted Speed Limit	40-65 mph	30-45 mph	30-40 mph	Maximum 30 mph
Right-of-Way	100-300 feet	60-150 feet	60-100 feet	50-80 feet
Transit Accommodations	Transit advantages that provide priority access and reliable movement for transit in peak periods where possible and needed	Transit advantages for reliable movement where needed.	Regular-route buses, transit advantages for reliable movement, where needed	Normally used as bus routes only in nonresidential areas
Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations	On facilities that cross or are parallel to the principal arterial, with greater emphasis along transit routes and in activity centers. Crossings should be spaced to allow for adequate crossing opportunities.	On facilities that cross or are parallel to the minor arterial, with greater emphasis along transit routes and in activity centers. Crossings should be spaced to allow for adequate crossing opportunities.	On, along, or crossing the collector with higher emphasis along transit routes and in activity centers. Crossings should be spaced for adequate crossing opportunities.	On, along, or crossing the local road

Principal Arterials

Principal arterials are part of the metropolitan highway system and provide high-speed vehicular mobility between the Twin Cities and important locations outside of the metropolitan area. They are intended to connect the two central cities to each other and with other regional business concentrations in the metropolitan area. These streets, which are typically spaced three- to six-miles apart, are generally constructed as limited access freeways in the urban areas but may be constructed as multiple-lane divided highways.

In St. Louis Park, there are four principal arterials: I-394, TH 7, TH 100, and TH 169. Within St. Louis Park, these facilities are envisioned to continue functioning as principal arterials for the planned future.

Minor Arterials

Minor arterials emphasize vehicular mobility over land access, serving to connect cities with adjacent communities and the metropolitan highway system. Major business concentrations and other important traffic generators are usually located on minor arterial streets. In urbanized areas, ½ to two-mile spacing of minor arterials is considered appropriate, depending upon development density.

A well-planned and adequately designed system of principal and A-minor arterials will allow the city's overall street system to function the way it is intended and will discourage through traffic from using residential streets. Volumes on principal and minor arterial streets are expected to be higher than on collector or local streets. Providing street capacity for these higher volumes will keep volumes on other city streets lower.

"Other arterials" provide a citywide function, serving medium to long distance trips. The city is served by seven A-minor arterials and one "other arterial" (see Figure 6-18).

Collectors

Collectors, as the term implies, collect and distribute vehicular traffic from neighborhoods and commercial areas and provide a critical link between local streets, which are designed for property access, and minor arterials, which are designed for higher vehicular mobility. Collector streets have an equal emphasis on land access and vehicular mobility. The city has the greatest responsibility for the collector streets. Principal and minor arterials tend to be under the jurisdiction of either MnDOT or Hennepin County.

Local Streets

Local streets provide access to adjacent properties and neighborhoods. Local streets are generally low speed and designed for access to the properties along the street. All the streets in the city that are not included under the previous functional classifications above fall under the local street designation.

Proposed Functional Classification System

The functional classification system for streets in the city was reviewed to ensure appropriate network connectivity is maintained and for consistency with the functional classification criteria established by the Metropolitan Council. Based on this review, there is one recommended functional classification change to the minor arterial system (no principal arterial change recommendations). It is recommended that Louisiana Avenue be reclassified as an A-minor arterial – reliever. While this street is already classified as an "other arterial" it more accurately functions as a reliever route for TH 100 and TH 169.

In addition, there are changes proposed/planned to the collector/local functional classifications. The changes are based on the Federal Highway Administration's Functional Classification Manual criteria, Metropolitan Council guidance and several other factors, including: estimated trip length, trip type, connections to activity centers, spacing, continuity, mobility, accessibility, and speed.

Given these criteria, the following streets are recommended for reclassification from local streets to major collectors:

- 16th Street West
- Beltline Boulevard
- Park Center Boulevard
- Wooddale Avenue South

Figure 6-18 also shows the proposed functional classification system along with the existing system.

Street Analysis

Programmed and Planned Street Improvements

Figure 6-19 identifies programmed (and planned) street improvements from the City of St. Louis Park's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Hennepin County's CIP and MnDOT's Transportation System Plan (TSP). Programmed street improvements (Table 6-5) have advanced through the capital improvement programming process with funds committed to the improvement in a designated year. Planned street projects (Table 6-6) have been formally studied and/or included in a transportation plan, but typically do not yet have funding commitments.

Many of the programmed and planned improvements identified have multimodal mobility components as a part of the overall street improvement (i.e., adjacent sidewalks, on-street trail/bicycle accommodations, intersection pedestrian crossing improvements, signal timing updates, etc.).

Coordination with Other Jurisdictions

The city will continue to coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions (e.g., Minneapolis, Edina, Golden Valley, Minnetonka, Plymouth and Hopkins) as well as Hennepin County and MnDOT when planning future improvements. This on-going coordination will result in financial and time savings through economies of scale; such coordination may reduce construction impacts to residents and businesses.

Congestion on the Regional Highway System

MnDOT defines freeway congestion as traffic flowing at speeds less than or equal to 45 miles per hour (mph). According to MnDOT's 2015 Metropolitan Freeway System Congestion Report, portions of all highways in St. Louis Park are reported to have reoccurring congestion during both peak travel periods. In the morning peak period, all segments of southbound TH 169, as well as segments near the TH 100 and TH 7 interchange, exhibits congestion for two to three hours. Northbound TH 100 also experiences congestion lasting longer than three hours. There is also congestion both eastbound and westbound along I-394 for one to two hours in the a.m. peak period. In the afternoon peak period, TH 169 experiences over three hours of congestion on all segments traversing St. Louis Park.

Congestion on the regional system often negatively affects the local street system within St. Louis Park due to travel diversion. This applies pressure to the local system and causes conflicts with other mobility travel options.

Access Management

Access review is a major aspect of the city's project review process. The review focuses on maintaining the safety and capacity of the city's streets and understanding potential impacts to other modes of travel along these streets, while providing adequate land access.

Access management involves balancing the access and mobility functions of streets. Access refers to providing street access to properties and is needed at both ends of a trip. Mobility is the ability to get from one place to another. Most streets serve both functions to some degree based on their functional classification. The street's functional classification has a direct and corresponding relationship to mobility and access.

Table 6-5. Programmed Street Improvements

ROAD	EXTENTS	PROJECT	TIMEFRAME	JURISDICTION(S)
Wooddale Avenue / TH 7	Bridge	Bridge Improvements	2018	City
TH 7	TH 169 to Louisiana Avenue	Resurfacing Improvement Project	2018	MnDOT
Louisiana Avenue	Louisiana Circle to Excelsior Boulevard	Road/Bridge Reconstruction	2019	City
CSAH 5 (Minnetonka Boulevard)	TH 100 to France Avenue	Reconstruction (capacity)	2023	County
Louisiana Avenue	Oxford Street to Louisiana Circle	Road/Bridge Reconstruction	2024	City

Figure 6-19. Programmed and Planned Street Improvements

Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Table 6-6. Planned Street Improvements

ROAD	EXTENTS	PROJECT	TIMEFRAME	JURISDICTION(S)
CSAH 5 (Minnetonka Boulevard)	TH 169 to Louisiana Avenue	Reconstruction (capacity)	2019	County
CSAH 5 (Minnetonka Boulevard)	Louisiana Avenue to TH 100	Reconstruction (capacity)	2020	County
CSAH 3 (Excelsior Boulevard)	Meadowbrook Road to Louisiana Avenue	Reconstruction	2020	County
CSAH 3 (Excelsior Boulevard)	CSAH 20 to Meadowbrook Road	Reconstruction (capacity)	2021	County

Table 6-7. Planning-Level Street Capacities by Facility Type

FACILITY TYPE	PLANNING LEVEL DAILY CAPACITY RANGES (AADT)	UNDER CAPACITY			APPROACHING CAPACITY		OVER CAPACITY
		LOS A	B	C	D	E	F
		0.2	0.4	0.6	0.85	1.0	>1.0
Two-lane undivided urban	8,000 – 10,000	2,000	4,000	6,000	8,500	10,000	> 10,000
Two-lane divided urban (Three-lane)	14,000 – 17,000	3,400	6,800	10,200	14,450	17,000	> 17,000
Four-lane undivided urban	18,000 – 22,000	4,400	8,800	13,200	18,700	22,000	> 22,000
Four-lane divided urban (Five-lane)	28,000 – 32,000	6,400	12,800	19,200	27,200	32,000	> 32,000
Four-lane freeway	60,000 – 80,000	16,000	32,000	48,000	68,000	80,000	> 80,000
Six-lane freeway	90,000 – 120,000	24,000	48,000	72,000	102,000	120,000	> 120,000

The city will continue to support MnDOT's and Hennepin County's Access Management guidelines on the Principal and Minor Arterial street network in the city through the aforementioned measures.

Living Streets Policy

The city has a draft Living Streets Policy that establishes their commitment to building a complete and integrated public right-of-way that has a positive impact on the livability of neighborhoods throughout the city. The Living Streets Policy is consistent with – and builds on – guidance that St. Louis Park has already established in its Comprehensive Plan, Active Living Sidewalk and Trails Plan, Complete Streets Policy, and many other adopted policies.

The policy is actionable and being implemented while under review by the City Council. It sets the tone for mobility within the community. It is a good example of performance based planning and design with metrics in place to measure success of its implementation (i.e., sidewalks/bikeways/trails installed).

Where We Are Headed – Planning for Vehicle Mobility

2040 Vehicular Travel Demand

The pattern and intensity of vehicular travel is directly related to the distribution and amount of households, population and employment within a community, neighboring communities and the broader region. This section includes an overview of the existing land use patterns in St. Louis Park.

Land use, vehicular travel patterns, transportation mode choice, population and employment change over time may affect the efficiency and adequacy of the street mobility network. This section outlines expected changes in the city's households, population and employment, which is the basis for estimating future vehicular travel demand within the city.

Socioeconomic Data

Existing and estimated population, households, and employment levels are shown in Table 6-8. The Metropolitan Council prepared estimates for the overall regional growth in terms of households, population, and employment for the years 2020, 2030, and 2040, allocating what they felt was an appropriate portion to each municipality.

Transportation Analysis Zones

Using the Land Use Guide Plan and development objectives as guidance, and with the assistance of the Metropolitan Council, the city estimated existing and future population, and number of employment and households for sub-areas of the city called Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs). This information was required to complete the traffic forecasting procedures used to estimate future traffic volumes. Estimates for populations, households and employment within each TAZ are shown in Table 6-9 and Figure 6-23.

Table 6-8. Summary of St. Louis Park's Projected Socioeconomic Data

YEAR	POPULATION	HOUSEHOLDS	EMPLOYMENT
2010	45,250	21,743	40,485
2020	49,600	23,600	43,400
2030	52,350	25,220	45,300
2040	54,520	26,230	46,850

2040 Traffic Forecasts

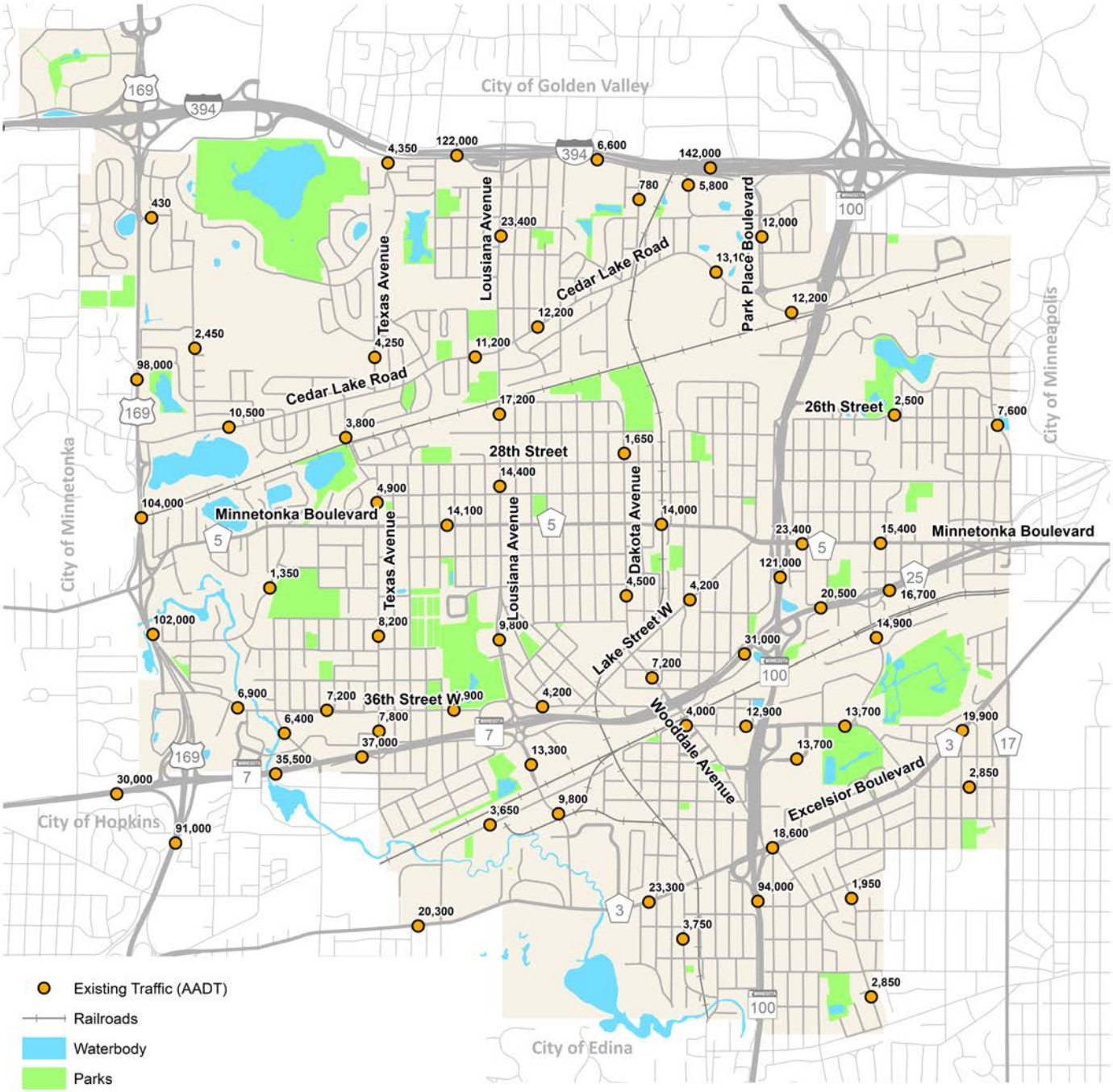
Forecasts for the City of St. Louis Park were prepared based upon the socioeconomic distribution identified for the year 2040. These forecasts are an analytical tool used to determine the "adequacy" of the road system to handle future development and subsequent vehicular traffic. In addition to the programmed street projects identified earlier, the traffic forecast model considers future planned improvements that are in the Metropolitan Council's TPP for regional highways outside the city. The future forecasted average daily vehicular traffic volumes are shown in Figure 6-24.

Safety Considerations

As the mobility system is reviewed and planned, a central concern is safety. This is relevant to safety of all users of the system – pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. MnDOT has identified a short-term safety goal of 300 or fewer fatalities and 850 or fewer serious injuries by 2020, with the long-term vision of zero traffic fatalities (Towards Zero Deaths). St. Louis Park wants to continue with their efforts to further this safety mentality by extending systemic safety planning from city systems, to county systems, to the state level.

To do so, the city envisions a safety plan that seeks to address priority emphasis areas that represent key risk factors or types of crashes contributing to severe crashes. The safety plan development process will include careful review of the City of St. Louis Park's specific crash data, the city's traffic safety best practices, and historical perspectives on mobility system user behavior (including pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicle drivers). The Minnesota Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) and the Metro Region Towards Zero Death (TZD) study identify enforcement areas to focus efforts and behavioral investments: user inattentiveness, unbelted drivers, impaired drivers, and speeding. This is a good place to start in St. Louis Park as well. In addition, the city will consider safe interactions with trains at all crossing locations such as sidewalk, trail, and at-grade roadway crossings.

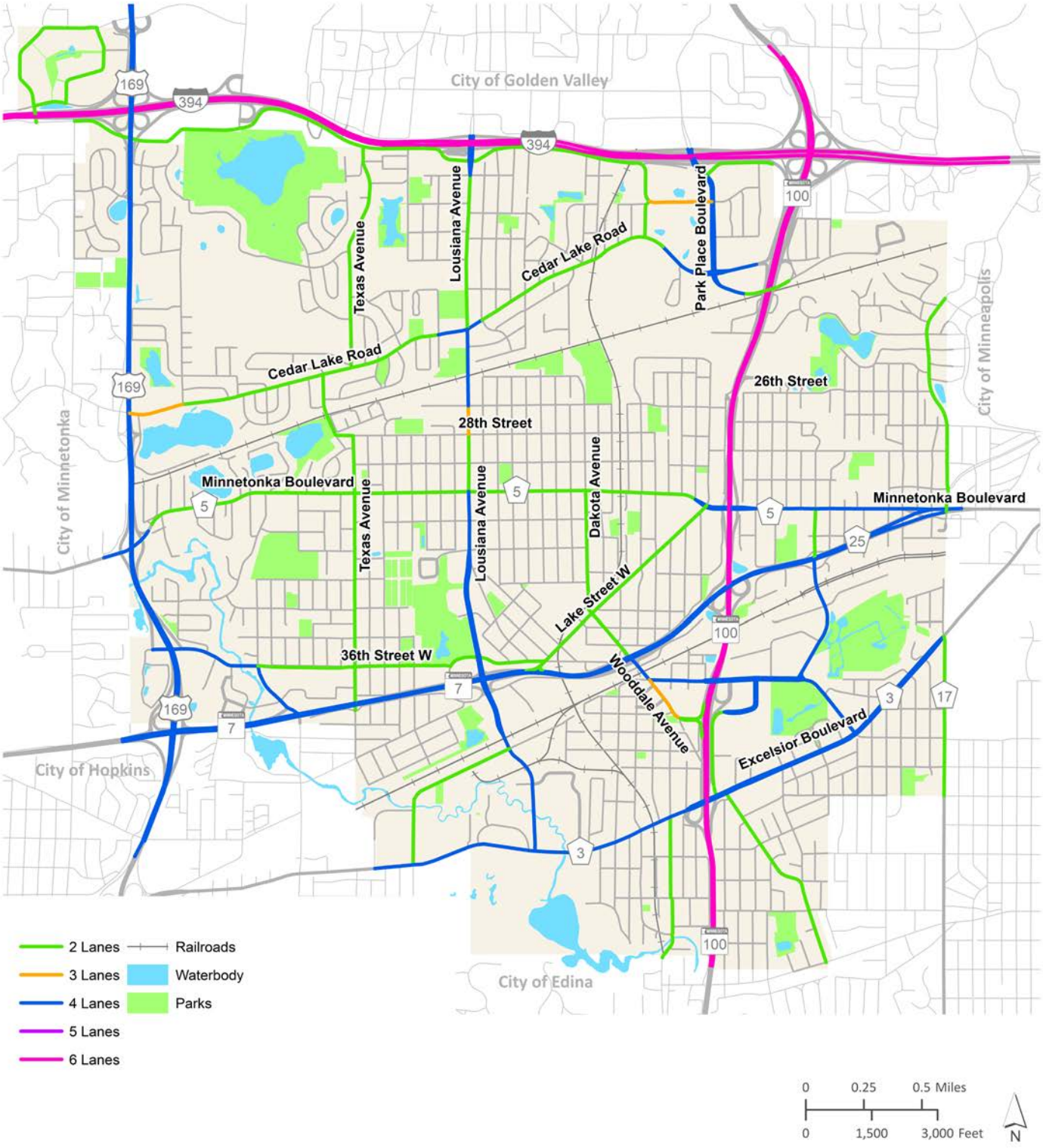
Figure 6-20. Existing Traffic Volumes



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

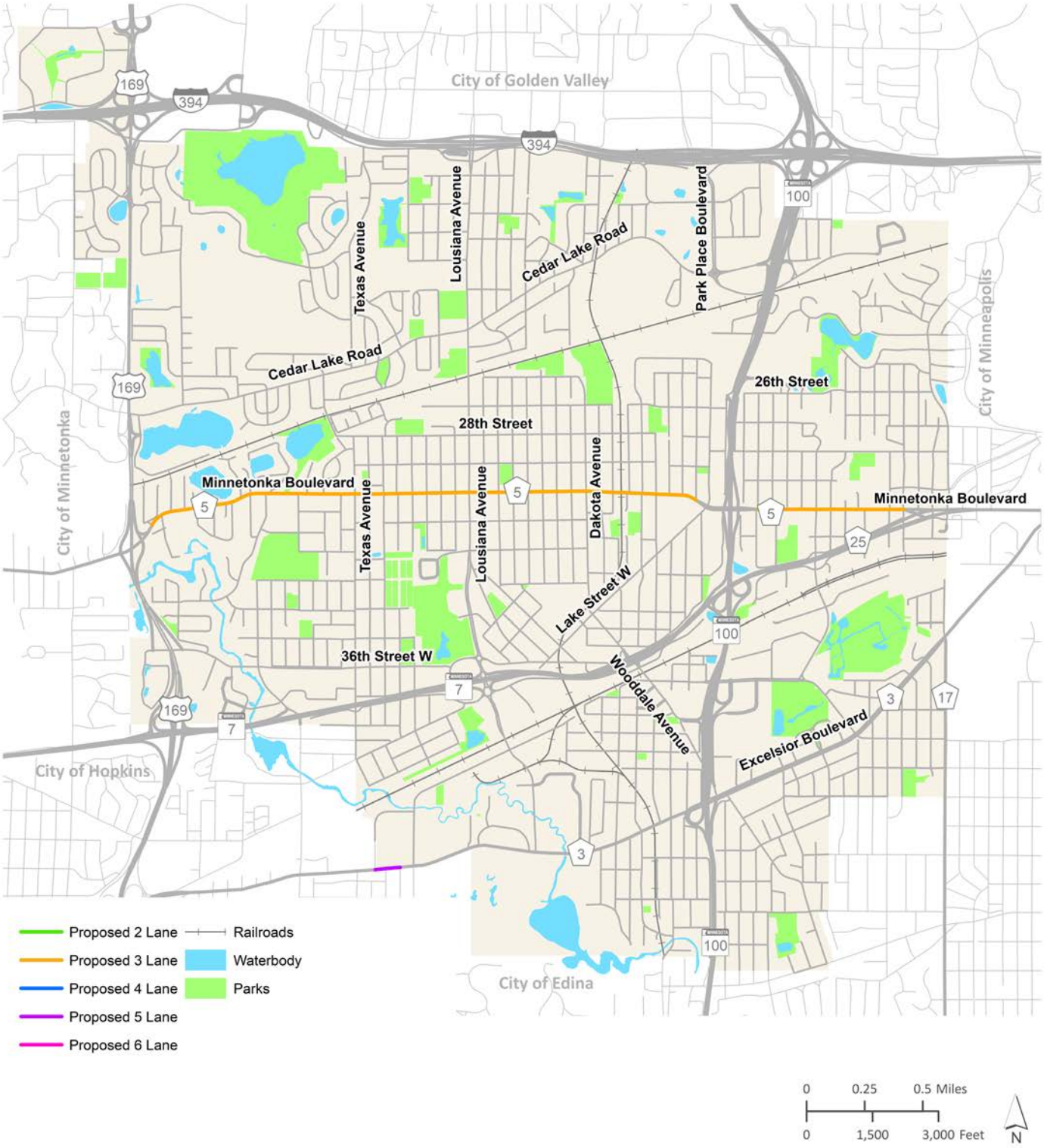
Figure 6-21. Existing Number of Lanes



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Figure 6-22. Year 2040 Number of Lanes



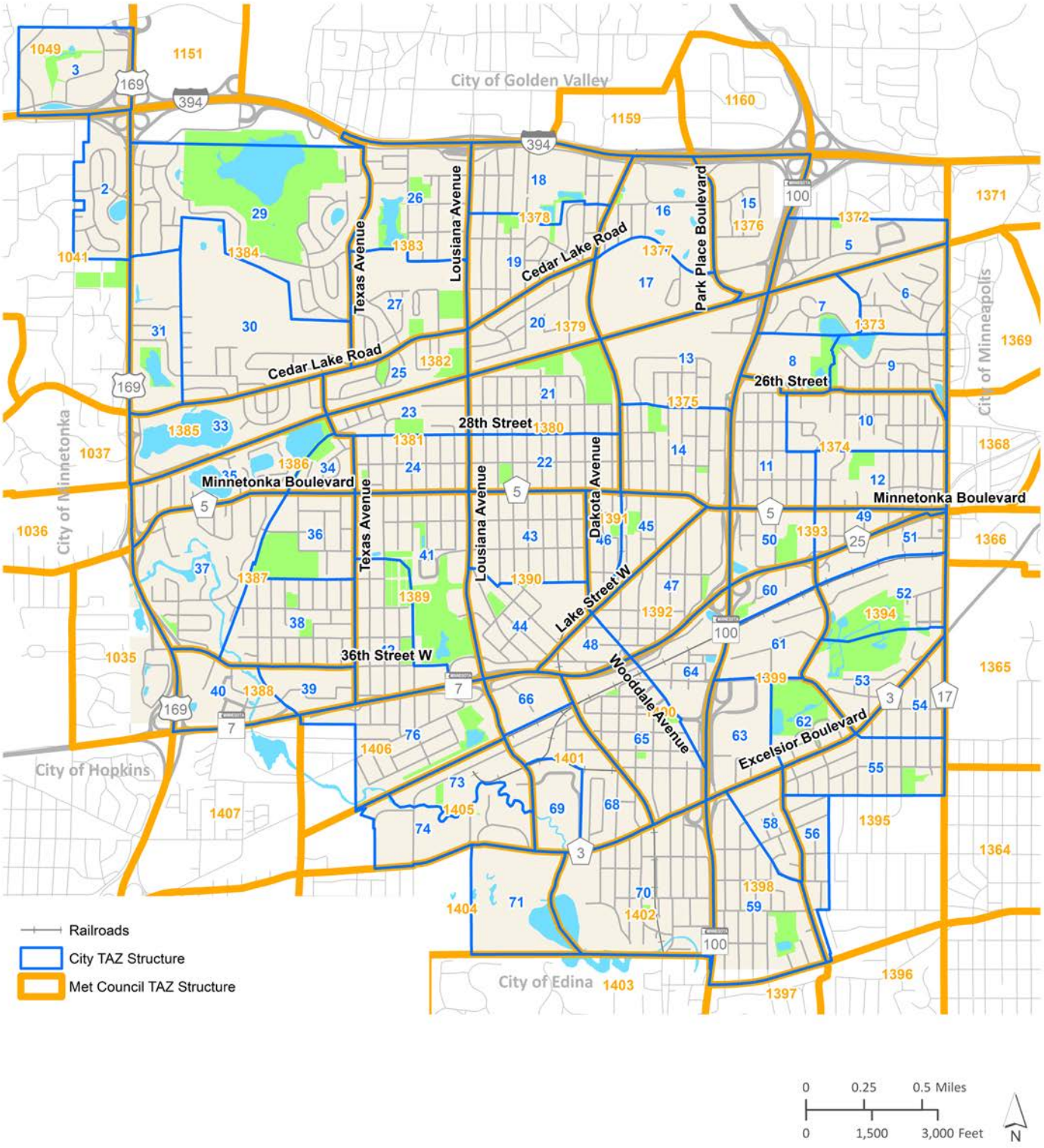
Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Table 6-9. TAZ Estimates

City TAZ	Met Council TAZ	2014					2020					2030					2040				
		Population	Households	Retail Employment	Non-Retail Employment	Total Employment	Population	Households	Retail Employment	Non-Retail Employment	Total Employment	Population	Households	Retail Employment	Non-Retail Employment	Total Employment	Population	Households	Retail Employment	Non-Retail Employment	Total Employment
1	1035	200	104	4	23	27	200	104	4	23	27	198	104	3	19	22	198	104	2	16	18
2	1041	329	144	5	218	223	329	144	9	236	245	326	144	14	232	246	326	144	18	227	245
3	1049	677	382	105	1,295	1,400	677	382	97	1,431	1,528	670	382	69	1,448	1,517	670	382	43	1,458	1,501
5	1372	535	288	8	160	168	535	288	7	177	184	530	288	4	181	185	530	288	2	183	185
6	1373	288	119	4	66	70	317	131	4	79	83	356	147	3	91	94	387	160	2	102	104
7	1373	196	83	4	50	54	210	89	4	60	64	236	100	3	66	69	250	106	2	72	74
8	1373	179	76	4	48	52	193	82	4	56	60	214	91	3	61	64	224	95	2	66	68
9	1373	268	111	4	62	66	295	122	4	75	79	338	140	3	86	89	355	147	2	96	98
10	1374	981	421	7	102	109	981	421	8	110	118	971	421	8	106	114	971	421	9	103	112
11	1374	921	396	7	97	104	921	396	8	104	112	912	396	8	101	109	912	396	9	98	107
12	1374	801	345	6	87	93	801	345	7	93	100	793	345	7	90	97	793	345	8	86	94
13	1375	1,433	642	81	122	203	1,433	642	83	177	260	1,419	642	75	245	320	1,419	642	68	307	375
14	1375	1,167	524	66	103	169	1,167	524	69	147	216	1,155	524	62	201	263	1,155	524	56	251	307
15	1376	249	126	1,274	4,698	5,972	514	260	1,378	5,484	6,862	988	500	1,347	6,005	7,352	1,223	619	1,306	6,467	7,773
16	1377	408	269	609	1,313	1,922	408	269	656	1,497	2,153	404	269	637	1,586	2,223	404	269	617	1,663	2,280
17	1377	389	257	582	1,253	1,835	389	257	626	1,429	2,055	385	257	608	1,514	2,122	385	257	588	1,587	2,175
18	1378	1,139	540	27	658	685	1,158	549	30	718	748	1,190	564	31	713	744	1,211	574	32	705	737
19	1378	1,170	555	28	676	704	1,191	565	31	738	769	1,223	580	31	732	763	1,246	591	32	724	756
20	1379	462	205	56	894	950	464	206	56	972	1,028	464	206	49	957	1,006	464	206	42	940	982
21	1380	1,303	568	25	55	80	1,303	568	25	64	89	1,290	568	22	68	90	1,290	568	19	72	91
22	1380	982	429	20	47	67	982	429	20	52	72	972	429	17	54	71	972	429	15	56	71
23	1381	722	310	15	366	381	722	310	21	408	429	715	310	28	418	446	715	310	34	425	459
24	1381	859	368	17	433	450	859	368	24	482	506	850	368	32	494	526	850	368	40	504	544
25	1382	513	247	17	44	61	513	247	17	53	70	508	247	15	61	76	508	247	12	69	81
26	1383	1,120	562	20	220	240	1,120	562	21	242	263	1,109	562	19	244	263	1,109	562	18	245	263
27	1383	974	490	18	194	212	974	490	19	213	232	964	490	17	214	231	964	490	16	214	230
29	1384	1,032	406	153	399	552	1,032	406	173	434	607	1,022	406	182	429	611	1,022	406	189	422	611
30	1384	701	278	105	277	382	701	278	119	301	420	694	278	124	296	420	694	278	129	290	419
31	1384	297	122	47	128	175	297	122	52	137	189	294	122	54	132	186	294	122	55	127	182
33	1385	444	180	4	26	30	444	180	4	27	31	440	180	3	23	26	440	180	2	19	21
34	1386	186	83	11	33	44	195	87	10	35	45	206	92	7	32	39	208	93	4	30	34
35	1386	587	248	26	63	89	639	270	24	71	95	710	300	17	75	92	753	318	10	78	88
36	1387	827	364	21	138	159	827	364	20	149	169	819	364	14	143	157	819	364	9	138	147
37	1387	1,629	724	38	255	293	1,629	724	35	276	311	1,613	724	25	270	295	1,613	724	16	264	280
38	1387	1,135	498	28	183	211	1,135	498	26	197	223	1,124	498	18	192	210	1,124	498	11	186	197
39	1388	242	134	316	431	747	246	136	343	471	814	251	139	337	468	805	251	139	330	464	794
40	1388	441	240	578	777	1,355	456	248	627	852	1,479	478	260	617	850	1,467	492	268	605	846	1,451
41	1389	1,760	834	13	81	94	1,760	834	12	85	97	1,742	834	10	78	88	1,760	834	8	71	79
42	1389	1,061	499	9	57	66	1,061	499	9	59	68	1,050	499	7	53	60	1,050	499	6	47	53
43	1390	935	424	13	488	501	935	424	25	560	585	926	424	41	597	638	926	424	56	630	686
44	1390	814	370	12	427	439	814	370	22	489	511	806	370	36	521	557	806	370	49	549	598
45	1391	464	213	39	114	153	464	213	36	132	168	459	213	25	143	168	459	213	14	153	167
46	1391	311	145	28	83	111	311	145	25	94	119	308	145	17	100	117	308	145	10	105	115
47	1392	888	426	43	221	264	888	426	46	251	297	879	426	43	263	306	879	426	41	274	315
48	1392	258	127	16	77	93	258	127	16	85	101	255	127	14	85	99	255	127	13	85	98
49	1393	537	341	17	274	291	559	355	17	293	310	559	355	15	282	297	578	367	13	270	283
50	1393	900	568	26	447	473	933	589	26	480	506	949	599	24	464	488	1,016	641	21	448	469
51	1394	450	262	32	230	262	572	333	33	282	315	690	402	33	330	363	814	474	28	373	401
52	1394	919	529	60	451	511	1,225	655	64	560	624	1,679	898	60	663	723	1,988	1,063	56	756	812
53	1394	840	484	56	414	470	1,138	599	59	513	572	1,512	796	55	606	661	1,851	974	52	691	743
54	1395	466	183	25	76	101	466	183	25	100	125	461	183	21	125	146	461	183	18	149	167
55	1395	831	322	41	121	162	831	322	44	164	208	823	322	36	214	250	823	322	31	260	291
56	1395	403	159	22	68	90	403	159	22	88	110	399	159	19	110	129	399	159	16	130	146
58	1398	423	172	59	82	141	423	172	55	94	149	419	172	41	101	142	419	172	27	108	135
59	1398	1,414	562	187	229	416	1,414	562	176	274	450	1,400	562	130	310	440	1,400	562	87	343	430
60	1399	259	184	201	411	612	266	189	214	494	708	274	195	203	560	763	277	197	193	620	813
61	1399	534	376	414	837	1,251	554	390	442	1,011	1,453	568	400	422	1,154	1,576	587	413	402	1,284	1,686
62	1399	406	286	315	639	954	429	296	335	769	1,104	441	311	320	877	1,197	449	316	304	974	1,278
63	1399	558	393	433	875	1,308	579	408	462	1,055	1,517	612	431	441	1,206	1,647	749	451	415	1,342	1,757
64	1400	761	402	71	249	320	833	440	114	295	409	944	500	171	329	500	1,052	526	223	359	582
65	1400	1,300	682	118	413	531	1,391	730	192	492	684	1,525	800	290	554	844	1,732	866	381	609	990
66	1401	95	45	81	1,398	1,479	95	45	111	1,500	1,611	844	465	68	1,628	1,696	1,014	575	50	1,670	1,720
68	1401	214	94	181	3,274	3,455	234	103	277	3,516	3,793	264	116	399	3,397	3,796	287	126	511	3,267	3,778
69	1401	114	53	96	1,682	1,778	114	53	134	1,805	1,939	113	53	180	1,741	1,921	113	53	221	1,675	1,896
70	1402	1,198	549	87	198	285	1,198	549	77	230	307	1,186	549	48	251	299	1,186	549	22	269	291
71	1404	274	99	6	78	84	274	99	6	81	87	271	99	5	75	80	271	99	4	69	73
73	1405	568	248	51	425	476	568	248	50	482	532	562	248	39	505	544	562	248	30	525	555
74	1405	875	380	77	648	725	875	380	74	735	809	866	380	59	774	833	866	380	45	807	852
76	1406	1,318	571	20	269	289	1,477	640	29	368	397	1,731	750	40	482	522	1,944	842	51	586	637
Total		47,933	22,818	7,190	31327	38517	49,600	23,600	7,894	35,506	43,400	52,350	25,220	7,825	37,475	45,300	54,520	26,230	7,752	39,098	46,850

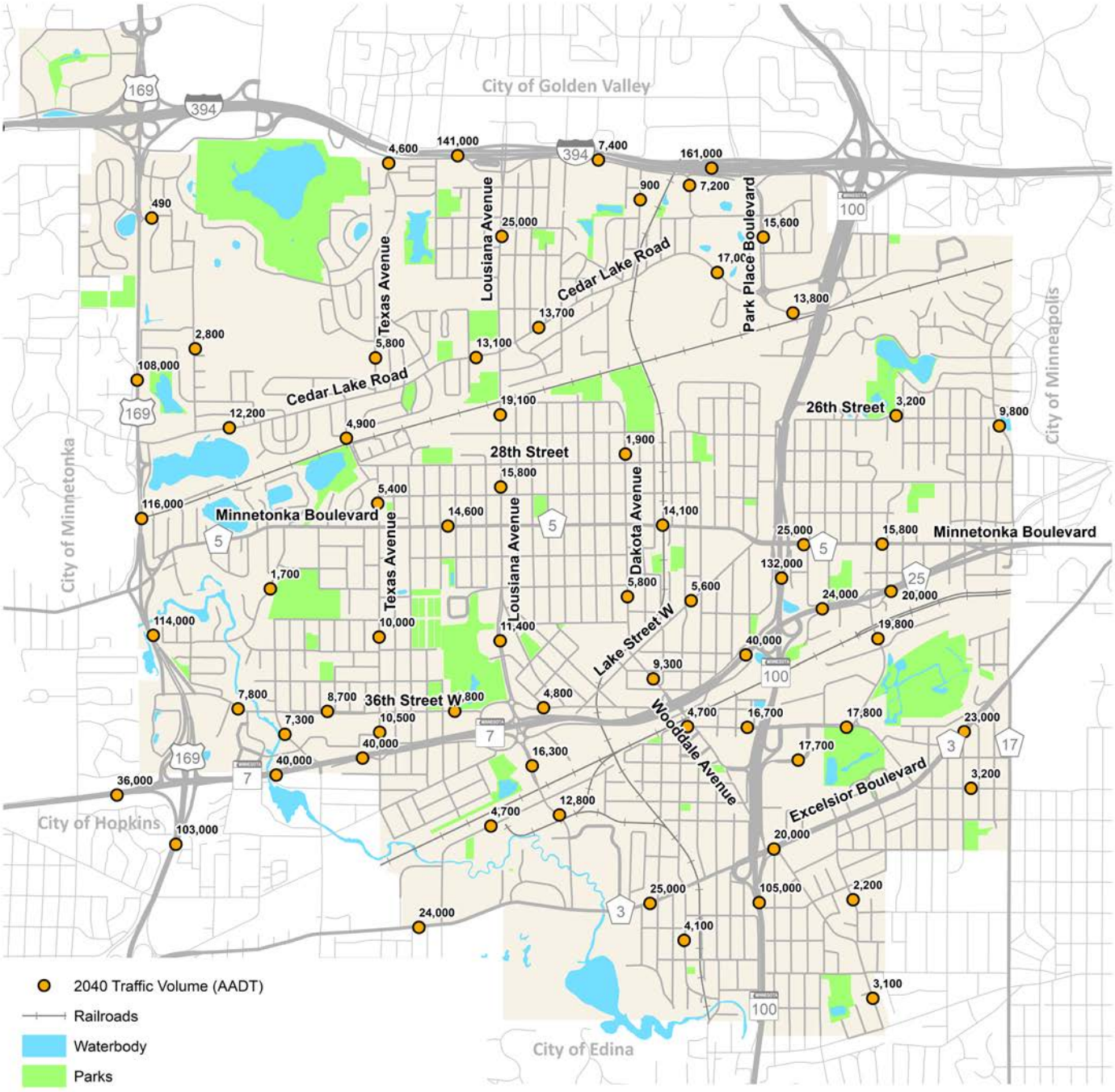
Figure 6-23. Transportation Analysis Zones Map



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Figure 6-24. Forecast 2040 Traffic Volumes



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Proposed Street Connections

There are several new street connections that can enhance circulation and connectivity around the LRT station areas and commercial centers. The goal is to integrate community travel routes within station areas and commercial centers in order to improve overall multimodal safety, access and circulation around and through the centers. Many of the potential connections were envisioned as part of the proposed Form-Based District zoning which is currently under review by the city. These new street connections are not currently funded, nor have they been designed. Therefore, their exact location is yet to be determined; the intent is to reserve the possibility of future connections in these areas. In addition to streets, alleyway improvements are also captured with the proposed Form-Based District zoning. Figure 6-25 presents these desired/conceptual connections.

Right-of-Way Preservation

Right-of-Way (ROW) is a valuable public asset that needs to be managed to balance the street's intended function and the public good. The city maintains a set of ROW guidelines organized by number of lanes for the street. The ROW values in this guidance account for space to accommodate sidewalks and trails, plus other multimodal mobility needs of the corridor. When new streets or connections are needed or desired, the city will need to consider ROW preservation strategies to make sure that these streets or multimodal infrastructure improvements can be accommodated. These strategies include:

- Advanced, direct purchase
- Zoning and subdivision dedication
- Official mapping

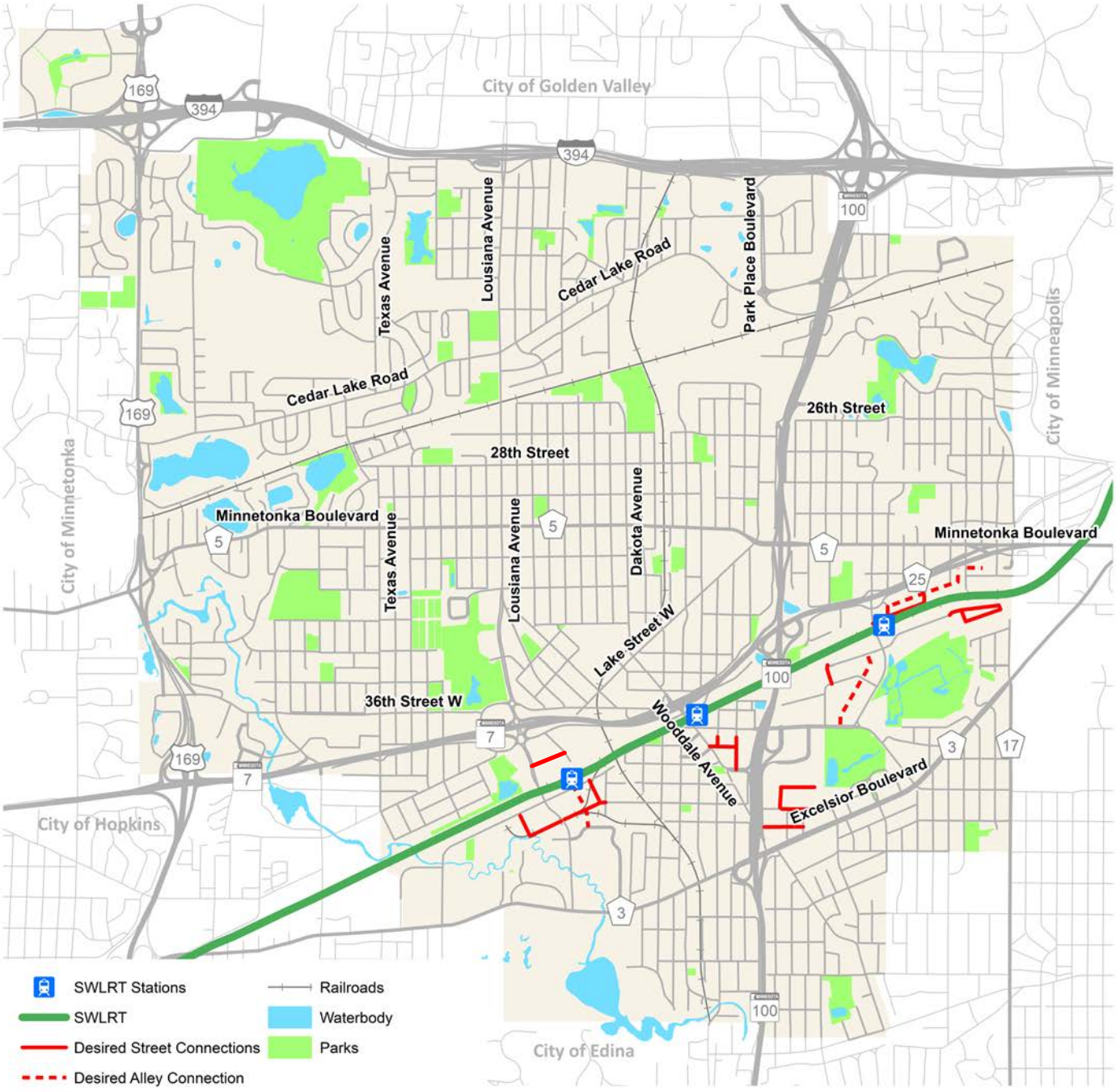
St. Louis Park may need to reconstruct, widen (or reduce) street widths, and construct new street segments to meet future connectivity demands due to its current and anticipated growth. These potential or desirable improvements will require the city to keep the existing ROW they have or acquire additional ROW. The city will coordinate with MnDOT and Hennepin County for ROW acquisition along county or state routes, where applicable.

Land Use Based Street Types

To accommodate growth and travel demands, St. Louis Park will need to make more efficient use of current street space in the future. In short, this means moving more people and encouraging travel by foot and bicycle where possible. Like most cities, St. Louis Park has historically designed and managed streets for personal vehicle circulation and access to parking areas. The proposed street types contained herein are not intended to replace the city's functional classifications, yet rather set priorities for movement of people, not just vehicles, and ensure that pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users are all provided safe and convenient access to and circulation opportunities throughout the city.

The street types can be used to organize and integrate modes within the built mobility right-of-way. While terminology and recommendations vary slightly from other efforts to date within the city, the overall premise is consistent throughout – to enhance streets by re-prioritizing pedestrian, bicyclist, and transit user needs to create a vibrant, safe, and memorable place for all people using all modes. The classifications represent six types that highlight the predominant design characteristics or mobility modes of the street. They are vision statements of what the street type is and is not; there is flexibility in how this is implemented once moved forward in the community.

Figure 6-25. Desired Conceptual Street Connections



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Multimodal Streets

Multimodal streets are intended to accommodate a variety of modes. In concert with the city's goals, these streets are meant to prioritize the walking environment first, followed by bicycling and transit use, and then motor vehicle use. Generally characterized by no modal priority, multimodal street design will vary by context and can be in either neighborhoods or commercial districts.

Main Streets

Main streets are characterized by (generally) commercial uses, fewer building setbacks, slow traffic, and wide sidewalks. All these treatments ensure that walking is the most important mode in this environment. While Main Streets were the dominant commercial environments through the early years of the 20th Century, suburbanization and the rise of malls lessened their influence. However, they have persisted and in many communities, are seeing a comeback, as people take advantage of their walkable nature. Vegetation is an important component of Main Streets to enhance community aesthetics and pedestrian comfort. Plantings, such as street trees and ornamental flowers and grasses should be in select areas and protected to avoid damage by pedestrians and bicyclists. Intersections should have high-visibility crosswalks that may also incorporate decorative features.

Transit-Priority Streets

Transit-priority streets are streets that prioritize efficient transit operations and have pedestrian- and transit-friendly design elements. The transit-priority street designation is an aspirational one, meant to provide direction for improvements to the overall character of the street as they relate to street infrastructure and development patterns. Street infrastructure improvements should be focused on the sidewalk network and pedestrian realm (lighting, ADA compliance, street trees, etc.). Bicycles should also be considered as part of the overall character of the street.

Pedestrian-Only Streets

Pedestrian-only streets are often curb less and designed as flexible open spaces mainly for pedestrian use. They have design features that cater primarily to people on foot, but also bicycles moving at a walking speed, often for delivery access purposes. Bollards or planters as well as pavement markings and colorings can show where pedestrian-only streets begin and end, as well as how patrons can move about the space freely. It is understood that this street type requires special approval by city staff.

Neighborhood Streets

These serve primarily residential neighborhoods, parks, shops, and schools. They should be inviting to walk and bike as well as for play and leisure. They are streets with low traffic volumes and low speeds. Sidewalks and boulevards should be provided where possible.

Vehicular Streets

Vehicular Streets accommodate higher volumes of vehicles while also having the potential to provide pedestrians or bicyclists infrastructure. These are urban thoroughfares that connect the city to its adjacent communities and beyond, moving automobiles, freight, and commuter traffic through the region. They typically have more through lanes and wider rights-of-way, while also accommodating large volumes of traffic during peak hours. However, they must provide safe intersections for pedestrians and bicyclists, when necessary. This is especially important, as streets with higher volumes of traffic and wider crossings are more difficult to cross for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Figure 6-26 identifies potential street types within St. Louis Park described and discussed above. Note that not all street types discussed here are represented on the figure; however, they are still relevant for future consideration if/when the situation presents itself.

Figure 6-26. Recommended Street Types

Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Planning for the Future

Throughout the city's comprehensive planning effort, the city is considering how to address current mobility needs, while setting the stage for future growth. Items that the city has identified for consideration going forward:

- Travel Demand Management
- Connected and Autonomous Vehicles
- Electric Vehicles

Travel Demand Management

Research has shown that Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies are a useful technique in helping alleviate parking demands and increased traffic. The following TDM strategies are applied to help reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles traveling and parking in a certain area.

Bicycle Amenities

Actively promoting bicycling as an alternative means of travel to and from a destination can be achieved through the provision of bicycle storage facilities, bicycle parking, and installing bikeways. In addition, developments can provide shower facilities for their patrons/employees/etc. to help encourage use of bicycles for transportation.

Car Sharing Provisions

Car sharing programs provide mobility options to a cross section of residents who would not otherwise have access to a vehicle. These programs encourage the efficient use of a single vehicle among multiple users, while reducing the amount of parking needed. Zoning language can encourage or require new developments to include provisions for car sharing programs.

Shared Mobility

Shared mobility includes bike sharing, car sharing, and ride sourcing services provided by companies such as Uber and Lyft. Predictions indicate that by creating a robust network of shared mobility options, these new modes will help reduce car ownership and increase use of public transit.

Travel Demand Management Plans (TDMP)

A TDMP outlines measures to mitigate parking demand as part of the development process, which can result in innovative solutions that are tailored to the specific needs of the development. These types of plans may require specific strategies for reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips and promoting alternative modes of transportation.

Connected and Autonomous Vehicles

The potential for significant vehicle technology shifts, including connected vehicles (CV) and autonomous vehicles (AV), in the coming decades will influence how the city plans for the future of mobility infrastructure.

Fully autonomous vehicles are still in the advanced testing stages, but partially automated technology and low-speed cars are starting to emerge. Autonomous and connected vehicles will likely require changes to parking requirements, street design, right-of-way needs, development demand, signage and signalization, building siting and design, and access management over the next 40-50 years.

Researchers have concluded that AVs and CVs will reshape future road rights-of-way. Avs are likely to be smaller than existing passenger vehicles, permitting narrower lanes, likely not requiring medians, and will allow travel much closer to one another. By accommodating the same or more vehicular volume in less space, newly available street width can be reapportioned to other mobility network users.[1]

The redevelopment of parking lots has the potential to transform existing commercial centers allowing for buildings to more regularly front streets rather than parking lots. Accommodations for pick-up and drop-off locations and off-site parking reservoirs will need to be considered.

The city must also be prepared to incorporate and accommodate communication between vehicles and infrastructure such as traffic signals (V2I). The city should stay in close coordination with MnDOT and Hennepin County regarding potential for research projects in the coming years regarding this technology.

A very important area for the city to be focused is how AVs will interact with pedestrians and bicyclists. Research suggests that a safer environment will be possible, especially if AVs are programmed to stop and yield to pedestrians and bicyclists.

St. Louis Park should monitor autonomous vehicle technology adoption, as well as other technological innovations that will have an impact on mobility trends and infrastructure, and consider system changes when they make sense for the community.

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1 APA Minnesota. Planning for the Autonomous Vehicle Revolution. 2016. https://www.planning.org/blog/blogpost/ 9105024/

Electric Vehicles

As electric vehicles (EV) become more affordable, it is predicted they will become almost a third of new-car sales by 2030. [2]

St. Louis Park has developed a Climate Action Plan with its goal set to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040. The city would like to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles by installing chargers in public parking lots. This will include parking lots associated with city-owned buildings, city parks, and school buildings. The charging stations will be highly visible, educational, and incorporate branding the city develops as part of its climate action efforts. In addition, the city is committed to working with private businesses to offer charging stations for EVs. This could be accomplished through encouragement and city development standards that require EV parking spaces with new developments. The city will also work with electric vehicle partnerships to advance usage (for example, Drive Electric Minnesota) and support electrification of Metro Transit Buses.

Vehicular Mobility Goals and Strategies

1. Provide well-designed and well-maintained city streets that balance the needs users, residents, businesses, and property owners.

Strategies

A. Identify traffic management measures in conjunction with upgrades to the mobility system.

B. Support local street, pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections across freeways

C. Maintain the roadway network in a safe and fiscally responsible manner.

D. Support and participate in the improvements of Hennepin County road segments.

E. Support implementation of Hennepin County's Complete Streets Policy to retrofit County arterial streets within St. Louis Park.

F. Create a safe and attractive street environment through grass boulevards and street tree plantings to buffer pedestrians from the road.

2. Work to ensure roadways efficiently connect residents, employees, and visitors to local and regional destinations.

Strategies

A. Monitor updates to the roadway functional classification system within St. Louis Park to maintain a balanced hierarchy of streets for distributing traffic from neighborhoods to the regional mobility systems.

B. Consider existing gaps in the roadway network when approving development projects and conducting area-wide planning.

C. Prioritize mobility policies that promote accessibility to jobs, services, and amenities via the roadway network; whether it is via walking, biking, transit, or vehicle.

D. Promote and support the use of Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies to achieve more efficient use of the existing community mobility network and reduce congestion problems.

E. Support options for improving north-south roadway connectivity when feasible.

2 *The Electric-Car Boom Is So Real Even Oil Companies Say It's Coming, Bloomberg, April 2017, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-04-25/electric-car-boom-seen-triggering-peak-oil-demand-in-2030s*

F. Consider increasing capacity on roadways only when necessary to improve connectivity of the roadway network, improve isolated connections to regional roadways, or where other measures are impractical.

G. Coordination with State and County officials to monitor and maintain the more regional components of the street mobility system in a state of good repair and minimizing congestion through strategic capacity improvements.

3. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated as a result of the roadway network.

Strategies

A. Consider design strategies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including those that reduce vehicle miles travels, idling, and increase renewable energy use.

B. Continue to implement traffic control devices that manage congestion, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

C. Expand regulations that provide for electric vehicle charging ports in new developments and public right-of-way.

D. Encourage the use of alternate fuel vehicles.

Improved Technologies and Mobility Modes Goals and Strategies

1. Position St. Louis Park to benefit from upcoming changes to vehicle ownership models while supporting a shared use mobility network.

Strategies

A. Plan for a shared vehicle fleet and its impact on the built form, including vehicles and bike share.

B. Establish parking guidelines and requirements that reflect changing vehicle ownership models, both on-street and off-street.

C. Provide for carpools, vanpools, and shared mobility vehicles in city-owned parking facilities and encourage private parking facility owners to do the same.

D. Evaluate demographics to ensure shared mobility benefits are equitable

E. Utilize available data and resources to support the city's ongoing transportation planning work, focused on equity and access for all.

2. Support the development and deployment of new transportation technologies that positions St. Louis Park to benefit from these advancements.

Strategies

A. Regulate automated vehicles in St. Louis Park while ensuring equitable access to them.

B. Plan for impacts of automated and connected vehicles such as the potential need to regulate parking, design infrastructure with connected capabilities, or make other adjustments to infrastructure design practices and standards.

C. Encourage and support electric vehicles by prioritizing associated public and private infrastructure.

D. Develop policy that addresses the implications of parking, or lack thereof, in a fully automated future, such as the potential for roving empty vehicles.

Rail and Truck Freight

Where We Have Been

In 1873, just four years after the first transcontinental railroad was completed, there were two railroads that passed through what is now St. Louis Park. These two railroads connected flour mills in Minneapolis with millions of acres of grain fields to the west. By 1898, three railroads served St. Louis Park's burgeoning industrial sector. A fourth north-south line was added to connect to the Luce Line in Golden Valley. Three of these four lines are still active; the fourth was purchased, intended for future light rail transit (LRT) use.

St. Louis Park's history is innately linked to the railroad. Early industry relied upon rail spurs to link to the wider regional and national rail network. Railroads also provided primary passenger transportation before the rise of mass automobile ownership. As the highway system developed, trucks became the primary carrier of freight and cars the primary carrier of passengers, diminishing the need for railroad services. The corridors became barriers, restricting access to pedestrians, bicycles and motor vehicles.

In the past 10 years a number of freight improvements have been implemented through/within St. Louis Park:

- Many rail crossings have been upgraded to include gate arms, warning bells and lights, and two were closed to vehicle traffic.
- Substantial investment on the major interstate and highways system has improved truck freight.

Where We Are Today – Rail and Truck Freight

Truck Freight

Truck freight transportation and the movement of commercial and industrial goods plays a key role in the economy and transportation system of St. Louis Park. To ensure that businesses can efficiently transport goods into and out of the city, it is crucial that the local network accommodate these needs.

All industrial areas in the City of St. Louis Park are located with adequate access to the metropolitan highway system (Figure 6-27). The Interstate and Minnesota Trunk Highway systems are all built to ten-ton axle loading standards and are part of either the National Truck Network or the Minnesota Twin Trailer Network, allowing extra capacity and flexibility for commercial trucking. This major highway coverage reduces the impact of truck traffic on local roadways and minimizes the potential for disruption of neighborhoods.

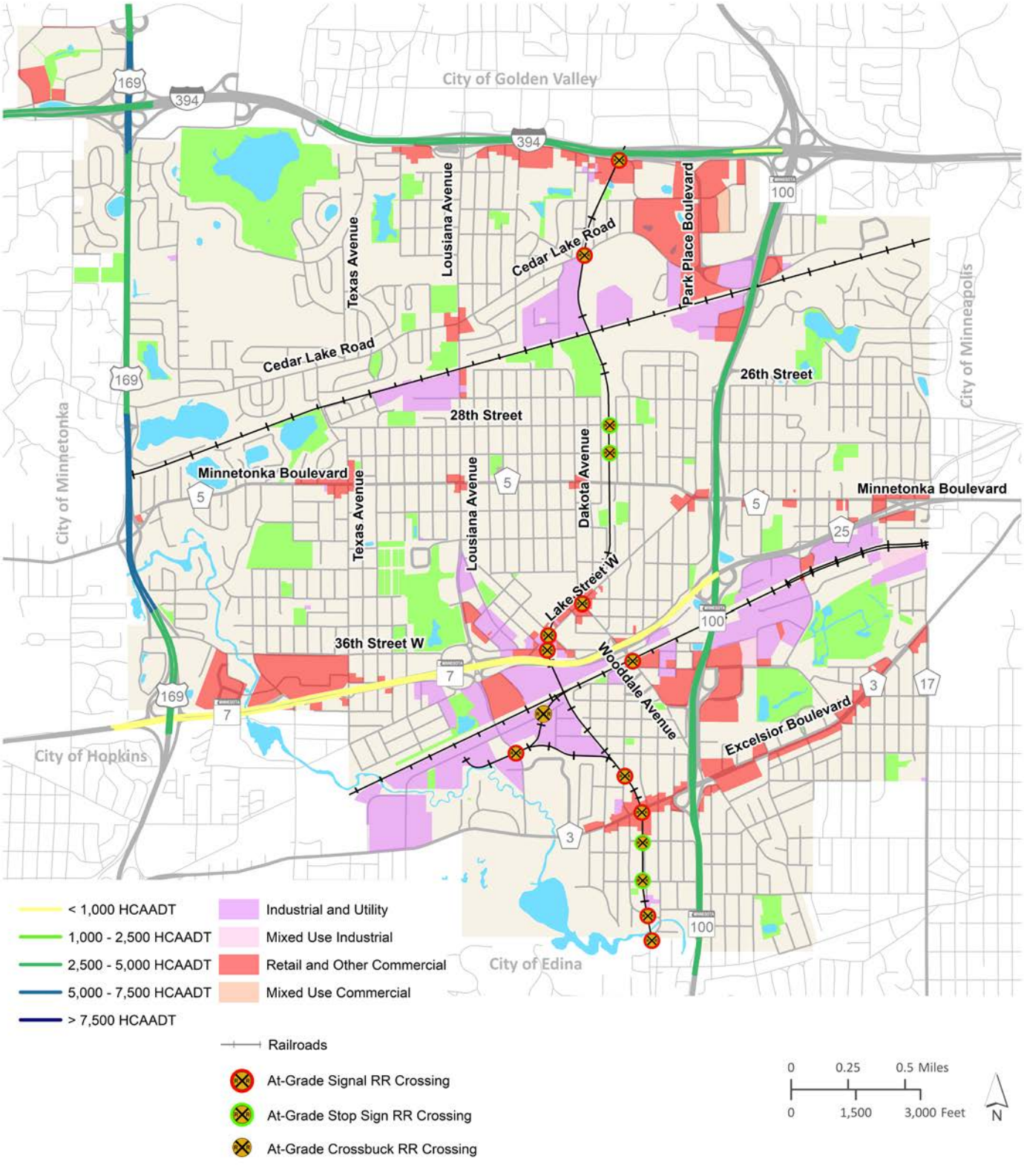
The City of St. Louis Park has developed in a manner that efficiently and effectively accommodates for heavy commercial vehicle activity. Existing freight uses are in proximity to and have good access to regional roads. This minimizes the impact to the rest of community. Further, there are no planned land use changes that would significantly impact or require changes to the freight roadway network. Truck traffic on the major highways that pass-through St. Louis Park (I-394, TH 169, TH 100) is quite high. Truck traffic on TH 7 is heavy but not as high as the other major facilities. Heavy commercial annual average daily traffic (HCAADT) volumes are presented in Figure 6-27.

Rail Freight

St. Louis Park has three active rail lines in the city:

- Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway – operates northeast- southwest through town south of and approximately parallel to Cedar Lake Road
- Canadian Pacific (CP) Railway operates two lines in town:
  - Bass Lake Spur that runs east- west through town south of and parallel to TH 7, used by Twin Cities & Western Railroad Company (TC&W)
  - Minneapolis, Northfield and Southern (MN&S) Railway Spur that runs north- south through town west of and parallel to TH 100

Figure 6-27. Freight System



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway (BNSF)

The BNSF Railway traverses the entire width of St. Louis Park from the southwest to the northeast with the alignment located approximately parallel to Cedar Lake Road. This single-track route was formerly a double track and was constructed between 1879 and 1881. Today this line utilizes a seamless track which has significantly reduced the noise levels in this corridor. The line abuts residential development along much of the right-of-way and travels at relatively high speeds. There is no vehicle at-grade access across the BNSF corridor. The adjacent North Cedar Lake Regional Trail runs parallel to the rail line south of the tracks for most of the line's 3.6 miles through St. Louis Park.

CP Rail Bass Lake Spur

The CP Bass Lake Spur line was constructed in 1910. It passes through the entire city in a southwest to northeast direction. It is located south of and parallel to TH 7 and contains a double track and numerous railcar storage sidings along the route. This corridor is also utilized by Twin Cities & Western railroad (TC&W), which carries product from western Minnesota and South Dakota. The length of the mainline track, measured from city limit to city limit, is approximately 2.8 miles.

The CP Rail Bass Lake Spur has limited vehicle access across it. At-grade crossings occur at Beltline Boulevard and Wooddale Avenue and grade-separated crossings occur at Louisiana Avenue and TH 100.

The Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail is located in this corridor. SWLRT will be collocated within this rail corridor as well.

CP Rail MN & S Spur

This railroad traverses the city north/south on a relatively narrow corridor west of and parallel to TH 100 at approximately Dakota Avenue. This route differs substantially from other railroads within the city in that it is not a major regional route. It was originally designed as an inter-urban electric route, although it never operated electric trains. In 1920, it was converted to a freight carrying line and functioned primarily as a by-pass or transfer railroad. It was used as a carrier by firms wishing to avoid the congestion and possible delay in the metropolitan core. Currently, both CP Railway and TC&W operate over this track. Along the MN&S, speeds are regulated to 15 mph or less and the right-of-way has residential development throughout most of its length in the city. There are numerous local street crossings along the MN&S.

Freight Rail Safety

Key freight rail issues for the city are safety with the products being transported, noise and vibration, and sidewalk, trail and street crossings. One product transported is ethanol, and it is volatile and flammable. City emergency plans take into account the possibility of freight rail accidents and spills. Noise and vibration are important in considering surrounding land uses and activities. Safe interactions with trains at all rail crossings are important as well. Proper use of signage and warning devices is critical to ensuring the highest level of protection for the community.

The location and number of rail lines in the city create a barrier to pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle mobility. The city is taking opportunities to increase access across railroad right of ways including at Beltline Boulevard and Wooddale Avenue where the regional trail will be separated, and over the BNSF near Peter Hobart School. In addition, when rehabilitation of at-grade crossings, existing bridges, and underpasses is needed, the city will look to enhance the crossings of the rail line.

Where We Are Headed – Planning for Freight

CP Rail Interchange Track (Switching Wye)

The CP Railway also operates an interchange track or switching wye between the two CP Rail segments. The track is used both by CP Railway and TC&W to switch trains from the CP Rail Bass Lake Spur and the CP Rail MN&S Spur, because they are at different elevations where they intersect. .

This wye interchange will be reconfigured as part of the SWLRT. The north leg of the switching wye will be removed to accommodate the LRT track and the north or south bound CP Rail Bass Lake Spur trains will merge on to the CP Rail MN&S line a new bridge and track just north of the Cambridge Street railroad bridge. The south leg of the switching wye will remain to allow access to the one remaining freight rail user in St. Louis Park, located west of Louisiana Avenue and north of Minnehaha Creek. The long range goal is to remove the switching wye altogether, and improve pedestrian traffic between Methodist Hospital and the Louisiana Avenue SWLRT station.

Freight Mobility Goals and Strategies

1. Minimize impacts of railroad operations in St. Louis Park.

Strategies

A. Invest in safety and crossing improvements along active railroad corridors, with particular attention to where SWLRT, trails and at-grade crossings occur.

B. Grade separate trails and roadways near rail lines where possible.

C. Work to eliminate blocking and switching operations and remove the switching wye in St. Louis Park.

D. Address noise and vibration impacts by working with agencies and railroads to implement such measures as improving the tracts, adding buffers, and using other effective measures.

Aviation

Where We Have Been

There are no airports or heliports in St. Louis Park, nor are any planned. The only regular landing of aircraft is by helicopters at a helistop serving Methodist Hospital.

Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport (MSP) is the region's major airport. Built in 1920, it is located seven miles to the southeast of St. Louis Park, and very accessible by freeway. Aircraft noise has been the source of occasional complaints by city residents. St. Louis Park is represented on the MSP Noise Oversight Committee (NOC) established by the Metropolitan Airports Commission in 2002.

Several smaller airports are also nearby: Flying Cloud Airport (built in 1941) is located eight miles to the southwest in Eden Prairie; and Crystal Airport (built in 1946) is located six miles to the north in the City of Crystal.

In the past 10 years a couple of aviation related items have occurred:

- Maintained presence on the Noise Oversight Committee.
- Maintained procedures for ensuring compliance of all buildings to FAA regulations.

Where We Are Today – Aviation

The proximity to the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport (MSP) exposes St. Louis Park to air traffic noise. The map of the MSP Airport Noise Policy Area (adopted in 1996) shows the entire city to be outside of the one mile aircraft buffer line demarcated by the Metropolitan Council, and it is well beyond the updated 2007 60-DNL noise exposure contour line within which federal funds are available to mitigate noise in residences. However, the map also illustrates that the city is located directly under the glide and take-off paths of the southeast runways. The frequency of overhead aircraft flights, and the resulting noise, has caused concern on the part of some city residents. Interactive maps of arrival and departure aircraft flight tracks along with other information on noise issues are available on the Metropolitan Airports Commission Noise Program Website, www.MACnoise.com.

The Methodist Hospital helistop, located on the roof of the west side of the hospital building, is used for the transportation of patients. It is registered with the FAA, and is licensed, inspected and approved by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Office of Aeronautics, in accordance with Chapter 8800 of the Minnesota Rules. Prescribed take-off and landing paths are in use which minimizes noise impacts on the surrounding residential areas.

Although there are currently no heliports in the City of St. Louis Park, the city's zoning ordinance makes provision for them in areas zoned for Office Use. The zoning ordinance sets limits on their hours of operations, take-off and landing flight paths, and proximity to residential areas.

Where We Are Headed – Aviation Planning

MSP Airport and the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) continue to work closely with cities and neighborhoods impacted by aircraft noise. St. Louis Park is represented on the MSP Noise Oversight Committee (NOC) established by the Metropolitan Airports Commission in 2002. The purpose of this committee is to bring industry and community representatives together to discuss noise issues at MSP, and ultimately, to bring policy recommendations to the MAC.

Aviation Mobility Goals and Strategies

1. Ensure the compliance of all city buildings subject to FAA regulations concerning rooftop lighting and coloration.

Strategies

A. Protect navigational aids within St. Louis Park from physical encroachment and electronic interference.

B. Encourage the use of noise mitigation measures in new construction, particularly in known noise complaint areas.

C. Maintain procedures for ensuring compliance of all buildings subject to FAA regulations concerning rooftop lighting and coloration. Maintain procedures for informing the FAA and MN Department of Transportation of any proposals for structures over 200 feet high.

D. Maintain representation on the Noise Oversight Committee of the Metropolitan Airports Commission.

2. Improve access to MSP airport for St. Louis Park residents and businesses through design and implementation of the city's and region's transportation plans.

Strategies

A. Continue to partner and urge implementation of the Green Line Extension/SWLRT to provide transit access to the airport.

B. Support the Midtown Greenway Streetcar to connect to the Blue Line for airport access