



Portland Gateway

**CONGRESS FOR THE NEW URBANISM
2020 LEGACY PROJECT**

**CITY OF RICHFIELD & CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
TSW & TOOLE DESIGN GROUP**

JUNE 2, 2021



Acknowledgments

CONGRESS FOR THE NEW URBANISM

+

GOVERNMENT & AGENCY PARTNERS

City of Richfield
City of Bloomington
MetroTransit
MnDOT

CONSULTANT TEAM

TSW
Toole Design Group

NOTE: This planning study is not comprehensive in scope like most planning studies. It was intended to be a week-long design exercise with public engagement, but the COVID-19 pandemic stalled the plan and caused Cities to re-evaluate how to move forward with recommendations. This was a largely pro-bono effort by TSW and Toole Design Group.

Bloomington ADA Notice

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01: EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT PURPOSE
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Project Purpose

CITY OF RICHFIELD + CITY OF BLOOMINGTON PARTNERSHIP

THE CNU LEGACY PROJECTS

“Each year, in conjunction with its annual Congress, CNU invites municipalities and neighborhood organizations within the Congress’s host region to apply for pro-bono technical assistance from leading urban design firms. Each expert-led Congress Legacy Project is aimed at empowering local leaders, advocates, and residents in underserved communities to implement New Urbanist principles that help people and businesses in their communities thrive. Through public engagement and collaboration, CNU’s Legacy Projects strive to demonstrate the power of great urban design beyond the boundaries of each selected community, and targeted communities experience both short-term progress and long-lasting momentum” (www.cnu.org).

A PARTNERSHIP FOR THE PORTLAND GATEWAY

The **Portland Gateway** area straddles Interstate 494 (I-494) and serves as a major point of entry to both Bloomington and Richfield, neighboring suburbs south of downtown Minneapolis. The two cities share a border along I-494 and abut the Minneapolis-Saint Paul (MSP) International Airport.

Both cities experienced significant growth between 1950 and 1970, characterized by auto-oriented strip development located along major arterial streets, including Portland Avenue.

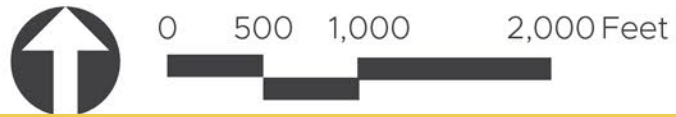
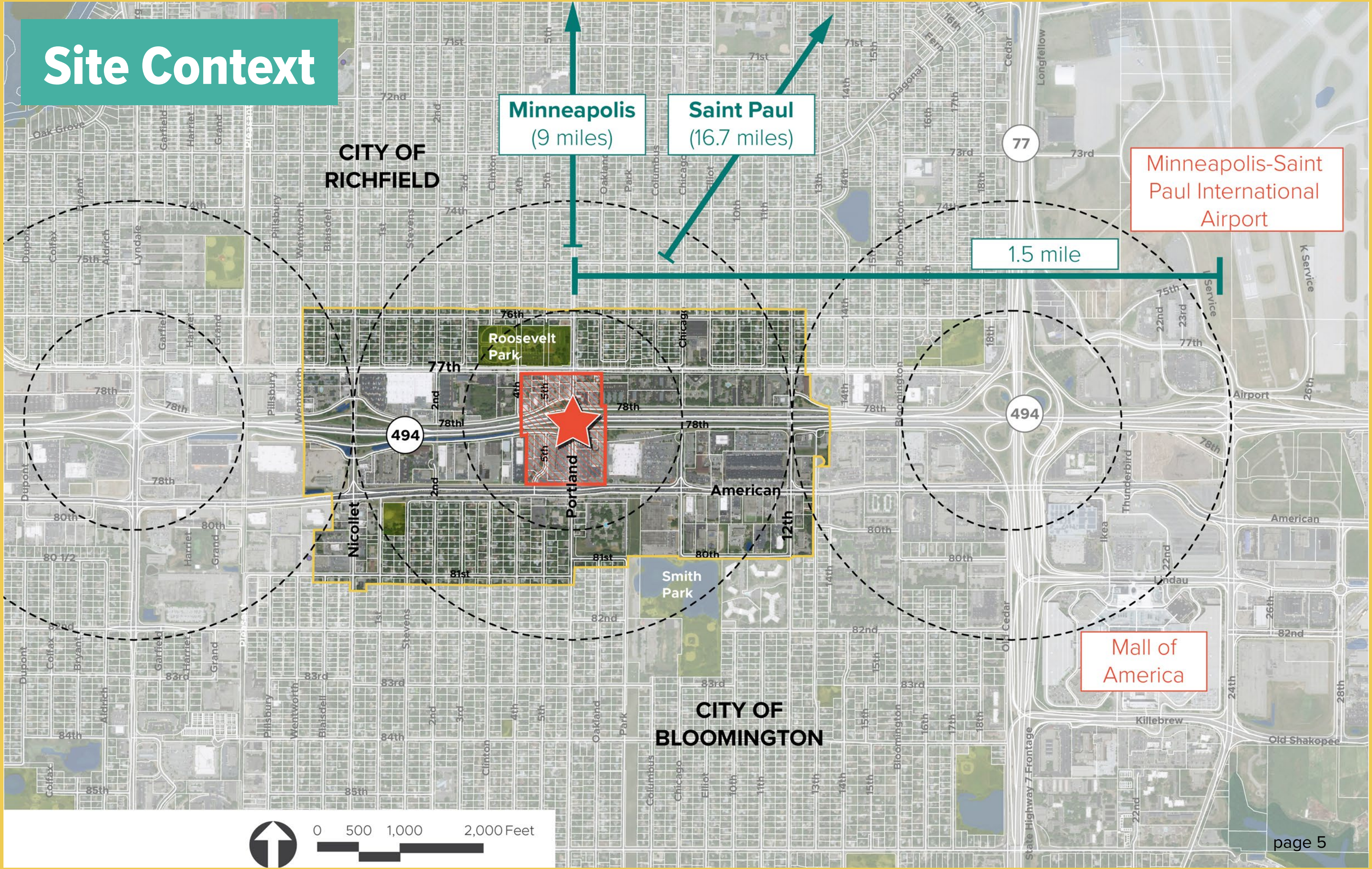
Now, the area is experiencing significant shifts, indicating a growing potential for redevelopment. MetroTransit has a planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route through the area, and MnDOT is evaluating access modification along I-494 that will result in significant changes to the Portland Avenue interchange.

The **2020 CNU Legacy Project** was pursued to leverage these changes in order to:

- Revitalize aging commercial centers and corridors to create attractive, vibrant places that better serve changing demographics and community needs.
- Transform the aging commercial area into an attractive gateway serving both cities and enhance connectivity between the businesses and neighborhoods on either side of I-494.
- Stimulate reinvestment in the area.
- Create a model for redevelopment in other suburban areas.



Site Context



Site Context

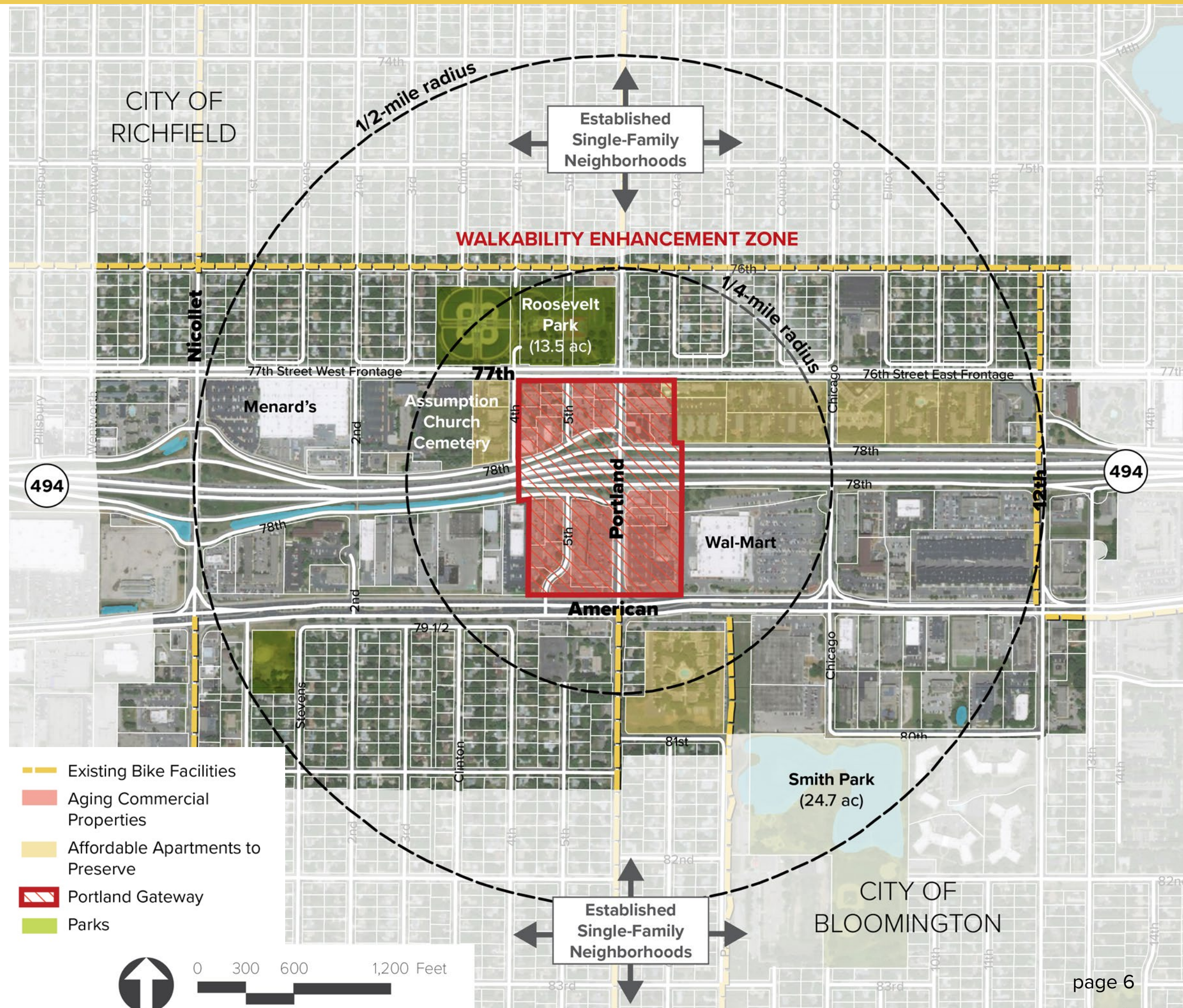
The **Portland Gateway** area straddles Interstate 494 and serves as a major entry point into Bloomington and Richfield. The below statements describe the general conditions of the study area.

- Developed in the 1950s and 60s
- Characterized by aging commercial buildings and strip centers, surface parking lots, and affordable rental housing
- Surrounded by established, single-family neighborhoods
- Commercial centers provide a variety of convenient retail, service, and food outlets
- Highly diverse and more economically challenged than other areas in Bloomington and Richfield

This effort works within two study areas.

The Walkability Enhancement Zone (1/2-mile radius from Portland Avenue and I-494) is evaluated for broader connectivity opportunities, design standards, and policy recommendations. Once the interchanges close, the areas around Nicollet and 12th Street could be redeveloped into quality mixed-use destinations.

The Portland Gateway is the area most affected by the interchange re-design. The original scope planned for concept designs, but timing made this infeasible.



Plan Review & Current Efforts

The analysis and recommendations of this study considered previous work conducted by the City of Richfield and City of Bloomington. Many previous plans were reviewed and analyzed for recommendations relevant to the Portland Gateway.

RICHFIELD 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Richfield is an “urban hometown” that reflects the characteristics of living in a close-knit community, while surrounded by the amenities and resources of a broader metropolitan area. The Comprehensive Plan’s overall goals are:

- Committing to equitable opportunities for all;
- Emphasizing sustainability as a measure to ensure the future economic, environmental, and social health of the community;
- Strengthening and enhancing the low-density residential areas of the community;
- Maintaining a diversity of housing types and price ranges;
- Committing to a balanced multimodal transportation system; and,
- Providing quality parks and recreation areas that are well-connected by trails.

Relevant Recommendations

- The Portland Gateway area should be a regional, commercial, and mixed-use node with high-density residential.
- Preserve naturally-occurring affordable housing and provide more affordable housing.
- Add key linkages to the trail network and on-street bike and pedestrian facilities.
- Use a complete streets policy and design streets for people.
- Improve parking, add soccer fields, and remove ice rinks and tennis courts at Roosevelt Park.

BLOOMINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (FORWARD 2040)

The Comprehensive Plan provides guidance by identifying future needs, guiding development and zoning decisions, setting priorities for public investments, and serving as a repository of information. The vision established in the plan states: “Bloomington is a community of choice. A place people seek out to live, work, conduct business, and recreate. We foster vibrant, safe, and accessible neighborhoods, amenities and destinations. We work together to ensure everyone feels welcomed and engaged in opportunities that foster community life and



Roosevelt Park in Richfield at Portland Avenue and 77th Street

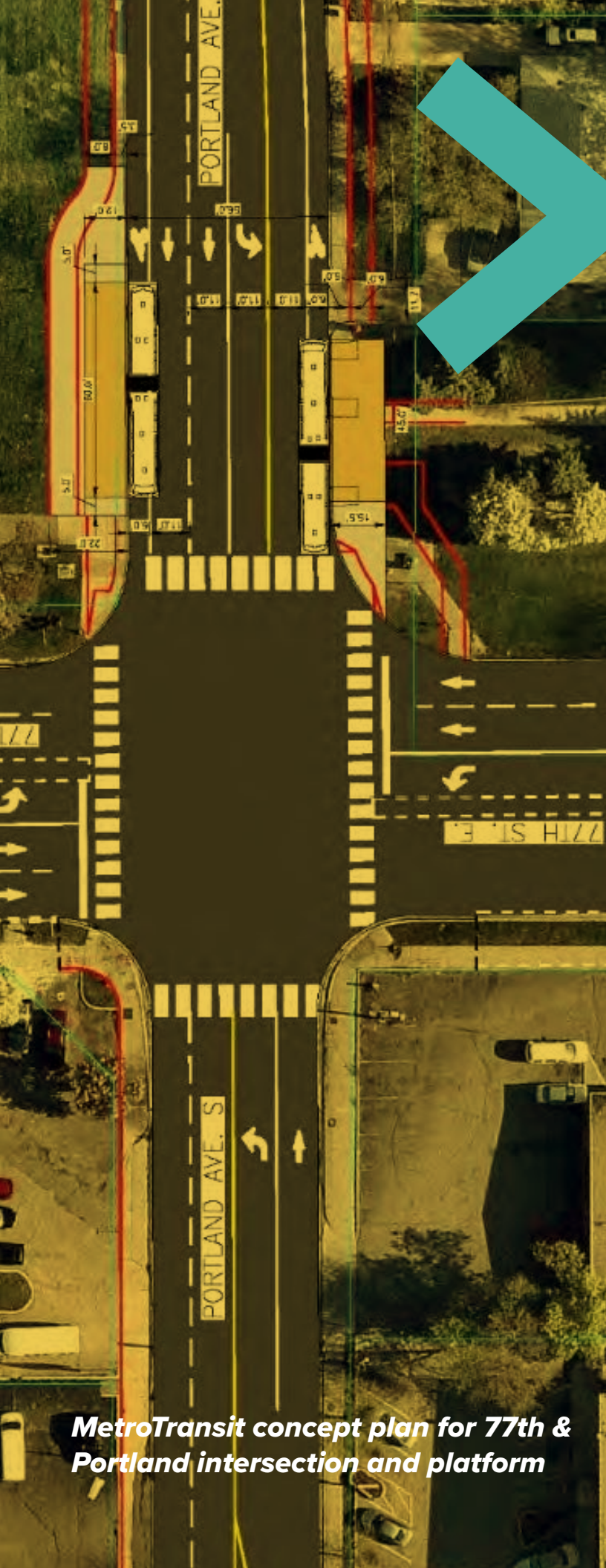
a sense of belonging.” The City’s values (summarized) are that Bloomington is:

- **Forward thinking** - intentional in managing change and shaping growth;
- **Connected** - aim to provide accessible and multimodal transportation network;
- **A community of neighborhoods** - promote neighborhood revitalization to strengthen community identity;
- **Inclusive, safe, and welcoming** - continues to be more diverse and celebrates the changes and opportunities they present;
- **Supportive of the wide-ranging business community** - values the broad array of businesses in the city;
- **A steward of natural and cultural assets** - preservation of natural, social, and economic resources;

- **Sustainable and resilient** - proactive management and renewal of natural, social, and economic resources; and,
- **Stable** - provide collaborative, progressive, and responsive leadership that works with the community.

Relevant Recommendations

- Redevelop older neighborhood commercial areas. In particular, Portland Avenue and American Boulevard is identified as a high priority neighborhood commercial node to redevelop.
- Focus mixed-use development in key areas.
- Encourage transit-supportive development in station areas.
- Foster housing choices and affordability.
- Meet the needs of the changing residential population.
- Fill gaps in the trail and sidewalk network.



MetroTransit concept plan for 77th & Portland intersection and platform

METROTRANSIT D-LINE

MetroTransit created a plan for the D-Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route, which will run through the heart of the Portland Gateway. Stations are placed about 0.5 mile apart along the route. Within the study area, the D-Line will make the following accommodations:

- **Two stations** at 77th and Portland Avenue and American Boulevard and Portland Avenue
- Platform designs that use existing curb lines
- Coordination with Hennepin County and City of Richfield focused on the interaction between the BRT and bike facilities
- Buses at the 77th Street and Portland Avenue platform will work the same way as current bus service, temporarily stopping in the bike lanes
- A planned American Boulevard BRT route will also utilize the station at Portland and American
- A potential mid-block crossing is planned for the American Boulevard station

MNDOT INTERCHANGE PROJECT (2019 - PRESENT)

MnDOT is working on access consolidation plans along I-494, affecting the Portland Gateway study area because of the three interchanges within a mile of each other: Nicollet, Portland, and 12th.

- MnDOT anticipates closing Nicollet Avenue and 12th Street interchanges.
- MnDOT started with multiple concept plan alternatives for the Portland Avenue interchange upgrades and has identified a preferred tight diamond design.
- The agency is in the middle of environmental review.

I-494 INTERCHANGE MARKET IMPACT EVALUATION (2019)

The City of Richfield hired a consultant to conduct a market impact evaluation for the MnDOT I-494 interchange access consolidation. The study's overall outcomes are:

- The reconfiguration will strengthen the marketplace for commercial destinations.
- The extension of 77th Street to 24th Avenue is an important contribution because it provides alternative access and east-west connectivity.
- Trips originating in approximately 85 counties travel to or through the I-494 corridor each day (18% of trips originate 100+ miles away).
- The area is a significant regional destination, and retail at 77th and Portland is not primarily dependent on accessibility for short-distance trips.
- Travelers depend on north/south streets of Lyndale, Nicollet, Portland to reach commercial nodes.
- Multi-family growth can be anticipated because of constricted apartment

supply, rent growth, and market interest in alternatives to single-family homes (this is consistent with the Richfield Comprehensive Plan).

- There is significant land capacity for additional development in the future, especially if I-494 right-of-way is removed.

RICHFIELD PEDESTRIAN PLAN (2018)

The City of Richfield Pedestrian Plan indicated that a significant amount of pedestrians use the Portland Gateway study area, and boardings at bus stops are high in this area, particularly at 77th Street and Portland Avenue. Roosevelt Park and the businesses along Portland Avenue are the sources of demand.

Goals

- **Make design for pedestrians the first priority when planning roadways and streets;**
- **Coordinate multimodal transportation networks and land use decisions to improve characteristics of the built environment that impact walking;**
- **Make public realm improvements a standard, rather than an option, in high activity locations.**

Plan Review & Current Efforts: RICHFIELD GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Principles established to evaluate infrastructure improvements and redevelopments in order to reach the City's long-term vision.



MULTIMODAL DESIGN

Multimodal design of public rights-of-way will be consistent with the City's Complete Streets policy and will utilize innovative and non-traditional design standards in a way that is equitable for all modes/users, inter-modal activities, and is respectful of the surrounding community.

support how neighborhood residents travel to and from destinations such as schools, parks/open space, shops, and businesses.



LOCAL ECONOMY

Community improvements and reinvestment will reinforce and support all businesses in the local economy and provide a safe and more convenient way to access and connect for neighbors, residents, pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.



COMMUNITY CHARACTER & IDENTITY

The design and implementation of community facilities and improvements will recognize the community character of single-family residential scale and pattern and will also respond to local features, such as natural resources, public art, aesthetics, and gateways.



HEALTHY & ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

Elements will be incorporated into planning and design efforts to encourage comfortable corridors and places to walk and bike to, safe and well-landscaped routes that inter-connect the community, and promote healthy and active lifestyles.



CONNECTIVITY & THE PUBLIC REALM

The street and public right-of-way network will be used to connect various public realm amenities so that a range of inter-modal activities (walking, biking, driving, etc.)



DESIGN FOR PEOPLE

Design for people will address universal accessibility as well as comfort, safety, and convenience for all users.



SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

New improvements, growth, and development will utilize sustainable solutions that are adaptable, flexible, built to last, and that consider implications of long-term maintenance to ensure the future economic, environmental, and social health of the community.



UNIQUE LOCATION

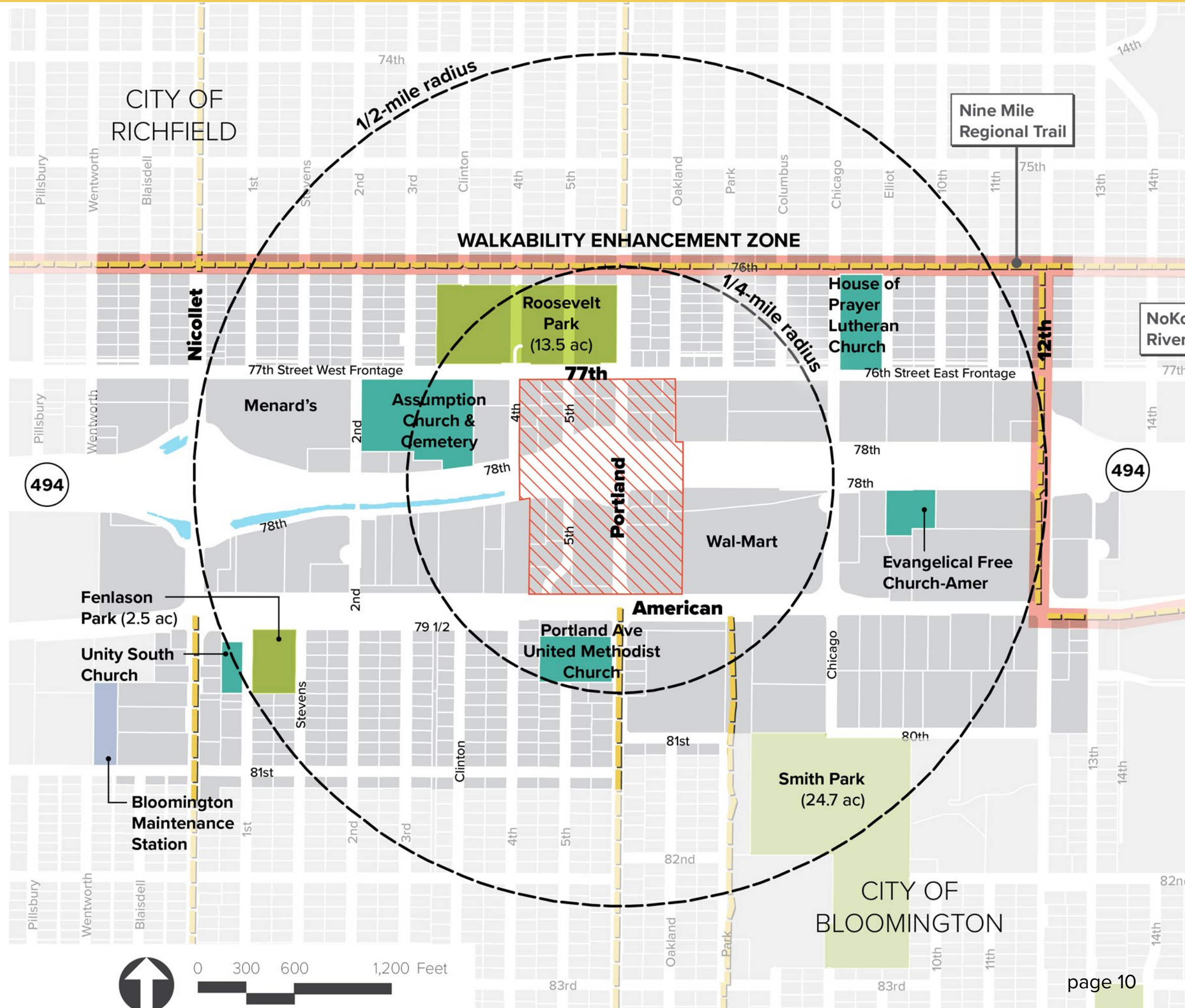
Community and transportation improvements will support a well-designed and functional regional system which complements local land uses, and capitalizes on Richfield's unique location through enhanced access to the regional multimodal transportation system to improve livability and convenience.

Resources

The **Portland Gateway** area has few publicly-owned community resources, but there are some parks and places of worship:

- Five (5) places of worship.
- 3 parks within the 1/2-mile radius, making up 40.7 acres of land.
- City of Bloomington Maintenance Station.
- Existing on-street or off-street bike facilities that connect the Portland Gateway to residential areas, but that do not connect destinations **within** the study area.
- Nine-Mile Regional Trail connection along 76th Street and 12th Avenue.

- Existing Bike Facilities & Local Connections
- Regional Trails
- Portland Gateway
- Parks
- Government Facilities
- Places of Worship



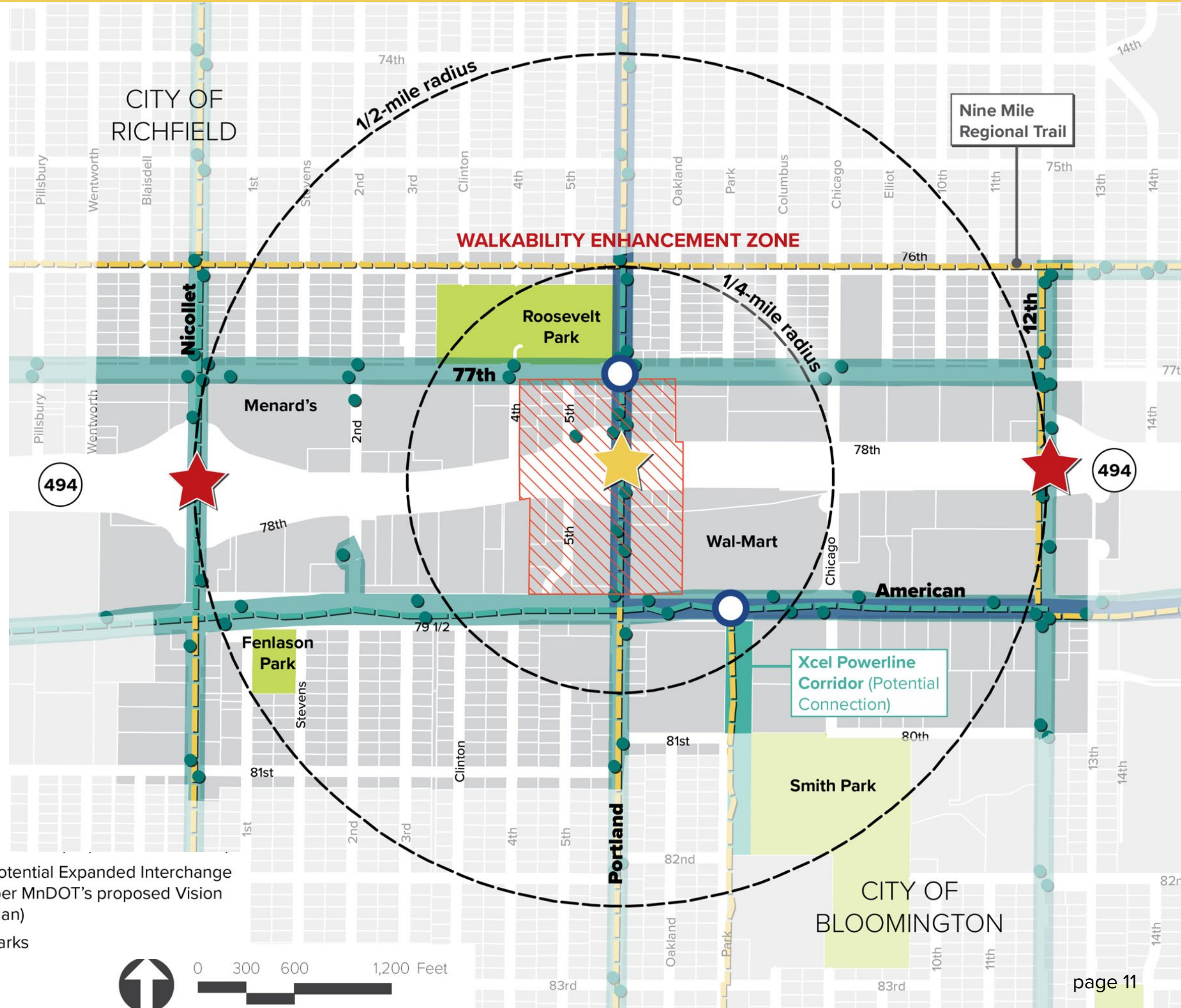
Connectivity

The **Portland Gateway** area is surrounded by well-connected, established single-family neighborhoods. Connectivity breaks down for all modes of transportation within the study area due to the I-494 corridor cutting the street grid and the increased turns and congestion at the interchanges. The map shows existing and proposed (from previous City and other agency plans) transportation facilities:

- MetroTransit's proposed D-Line BRT Route along American Boulevard and Portland Avenue with two stations.
- Proposed bike facilities on Nicollet Avenue, Portland Avenue, and American Boulevard.
- MnDOT's proposed interchange closures at Nicollet and 12th Avenues and expansion at Portland Avenue.
- Nine-Mile Regional Trail connection along 77th Street and 12th Avenue.

- Proposed Bike Facilities (from previous plans)
- Existing Bike Facilities
- Proposed D Line Route (MetroTransit BRT)
- Current Bus Routes
- Existing Bus Stops
- Proposed D Line Station (MetroTransit BRT)
- ▨ Portland Gateway
- ★ Potential Closed Interchange (per MnDOT's proposed Vision Plan)

- ★ Potential Expanded Interchange (per MnDOT's proposed Vision Plan)
- Parks



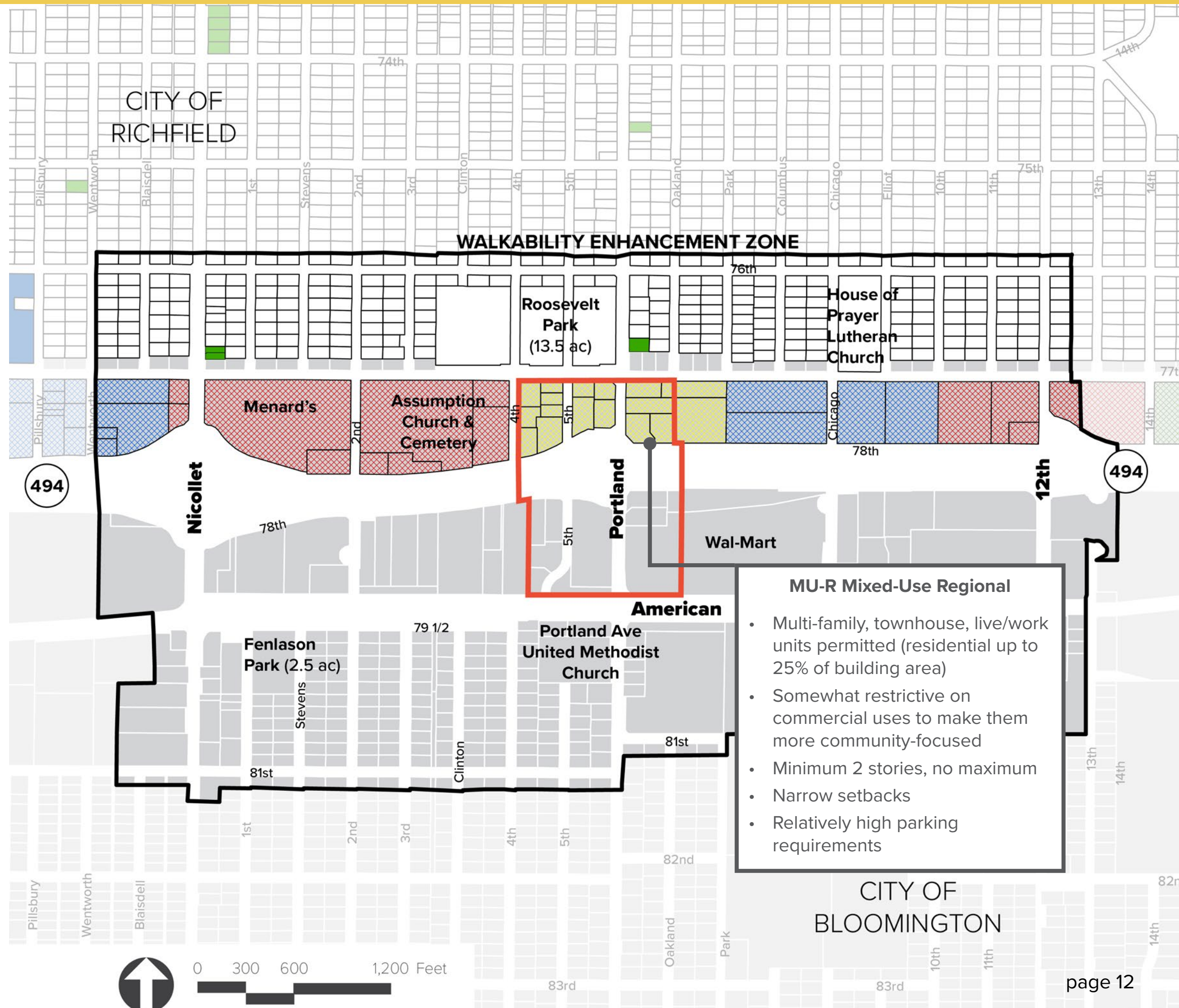
Zoning

Richfield

Within the **Walkability Enhancement Zone**, Richfield's current zoning allows the types of mixed-use development desired.

- Multiple "Mixed-Use" (MU) designations that include the current shopping centers and apartment communities.
- Single-Family (R) residential makes up the northern part of the study area.
- Sites in the Portland Gateway are "MU-R Mixed-Use Regional," which:
 - Supports destination-oriented commercial and office at a high intensity of development.
 - Supports vertical mixed-use with residential encouraged.

- Portland Gateway
- R Single Family
- MR-1 Two-Family
- MR-2 Multi-Family
- MR-3 High-Density Multi-Family
- PMR Planned Multi-Family
- C-2 General Commercial
- PMU Planned Mixed-Use
- MU-N Mixed-Use Neighborhood
- MU-C Mixed-Use Community
- MU-R Mixed-Use Regional
- Hennepin County Parcels



MU-R Mixed-Use Regional

- Multi-family, townhouse, live/work units permitted (residential up to 25% of building area)
- Somewhat restrictive on commercial uses to make them more community-focused
- Minimum 2 stories, no maximum
- Narrow setbacks
- Relatively high parking requirements

Zoning

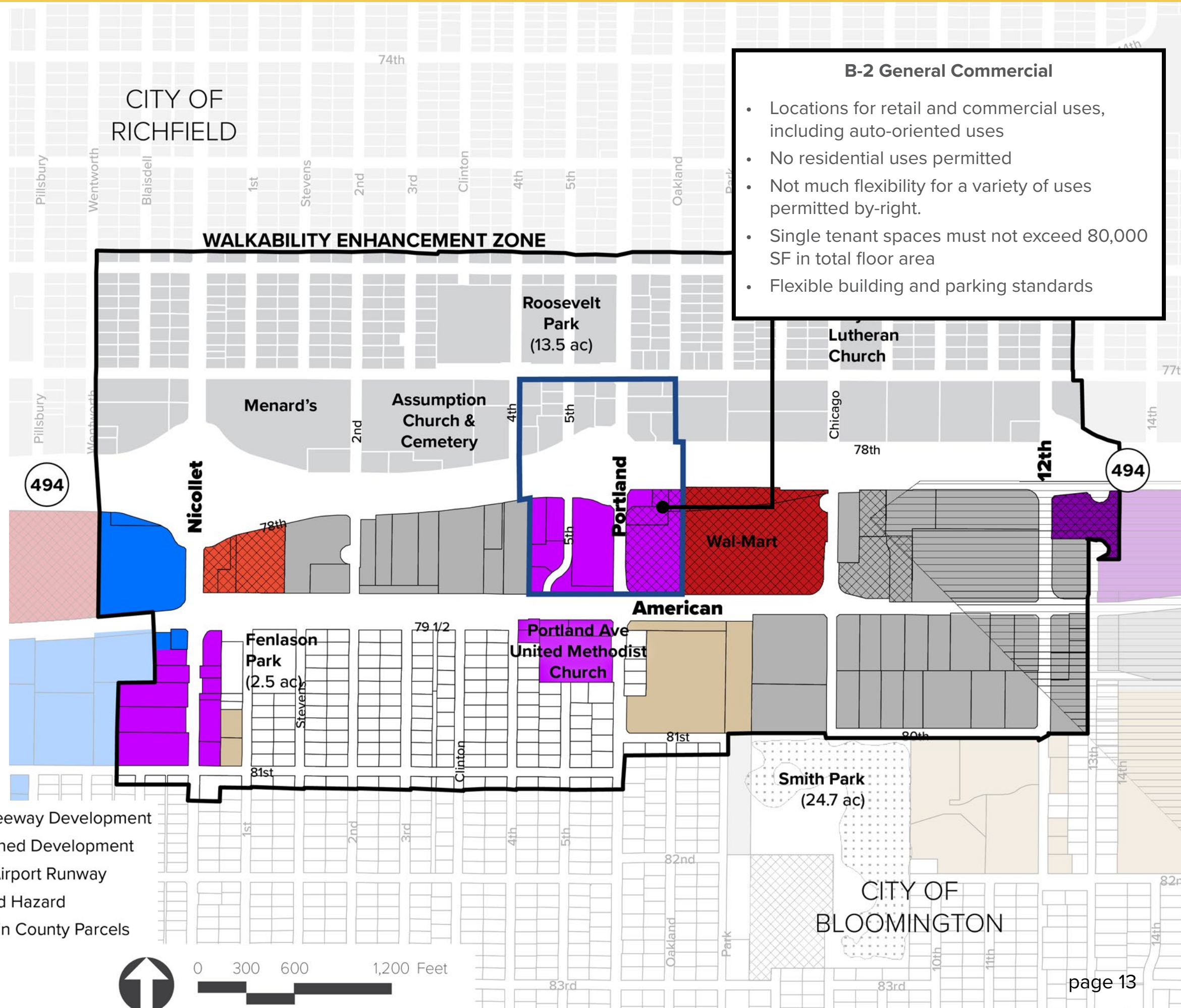
Bloomington

Within the **Walkability Enhancement Zone**, Bloomington's current zoning does not allow the types of mixed-use development desired for this area.

- Sites in the Portland Gateway are "**B-2 General Commercial**," which does not allow residential uses (see description in the box to the right).
- Multiple properties are zoned with "**Freeway**" designations, which include aging shopping centers and some industrial land uses.
- Areas near freeway corridors and interchanges for medium- to large-scale development.
- **FD-2** Freeway Development comprises the majority of the land.

- Portland Gateway
- R-1 Single Family
- R-4 Multiple-Family Residential
- B-2 General Commercial
- C-2 Freeway Commercial
- C-4 Freeway Office
- CR-1 Regional Commercial
- I-3 General Industry

- FD-2 Freeway Development
- PD Planned Development
- AR-22 Airport Runway
- FH Flood Hazard
- Hennepin County Parcels



B-2 General Commercial

- Locations for retail and commercial uses, including auto-oriented uses
- No residential uses permitted
- Not much flexibility for a variety of uses permitted by-right.
- Single tenant spaces must not exceed 80,000 SF in total floor area
- Flexible building and parking standards





Change

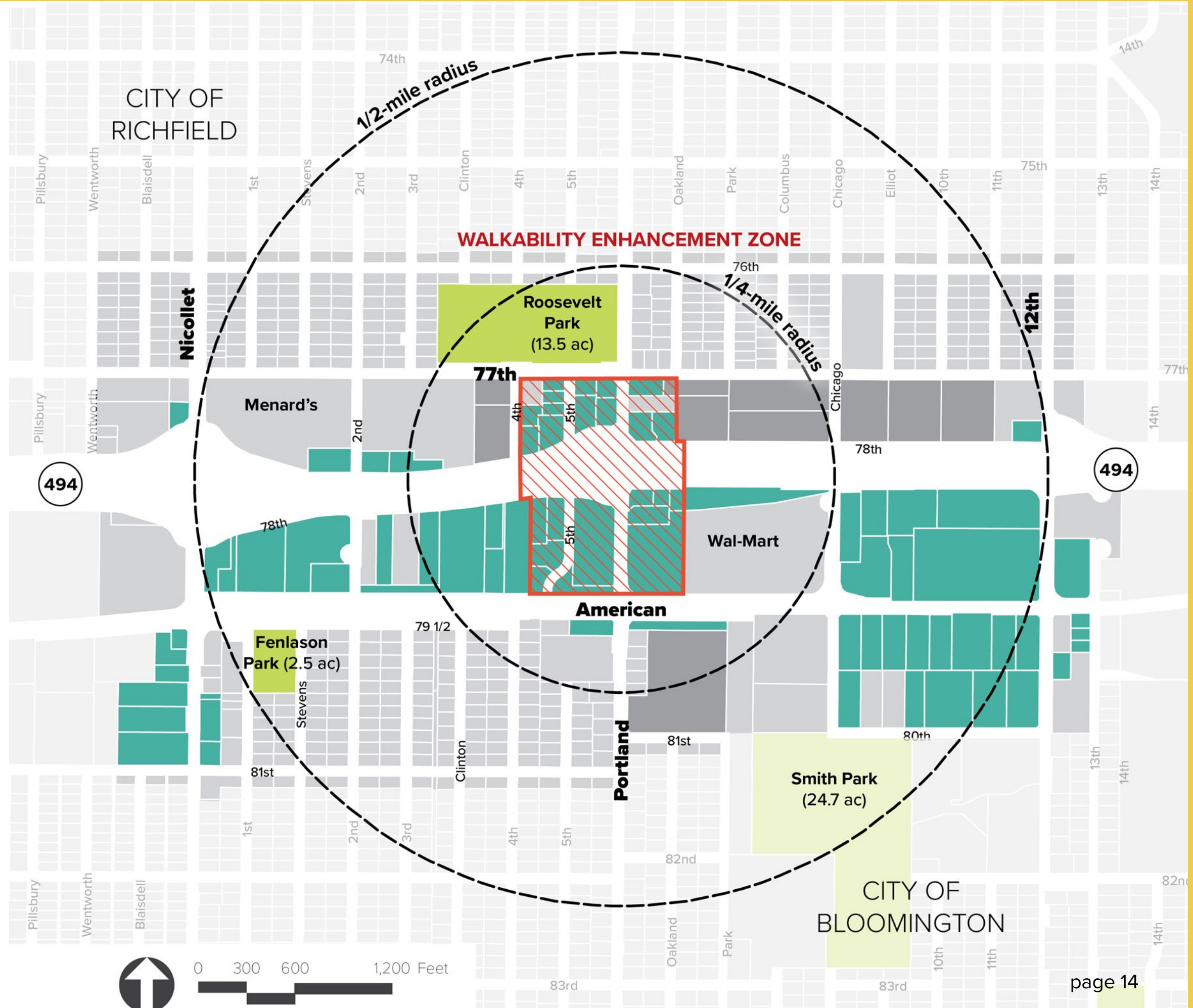
The **Walkability Enhancement Zone** has many properties that could be susceptible to change in the future. This does not mean that development will occur, or that the properties will change during a certain timeline. The parcels noted as susceptible to change have:

- Land values that exceed the improvement (building) value
- Auto-oriented uses or site layouts that do not support the desired walkable, mixed-use center

The **Portland Gateway** is comprised of aging commercial centers that could be re-imagined as mixed-use developments. Existing businesses could be integrated in these new developments. However, the I-494 interchange re-design and construction could affect the feasibility of redeveloping these sites.

Parks, nearby affordable apartments, and single-family residential properties are not marked as susceptible to change because of the importance of parks to communities and the desire to preserve affordable housing units.

-  **Parcels Susceptible to Change**
(Land Value > Building Value and / or underutilized land)
-  Affordable Apartments to Preserve
-  Portland Gateway
-  Parks





02: OUTREACH SUMMARY

PRE-PROJECT MEETING
STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS
PUBLIC MEETING
ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

OUTREACH PROCESS

Research,
Needs
Assessment, &
Analysis

MnDOT
Alternatives
Analysis

Re-engage the
Public

Final Report
Document

COVID-19 Pandemic Halts Process

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Early 2020

Study area & site
analysis

Meetings with Cities,
MnDOT, and others

Mid-Late 2020

Review MnDOT
alternatives for I-494
interchange

Meet with MnDOT
and City Engineering
departments

Early 2021

Re-set the process
Stakeholder interviews
Online activities
Virtual Public Meeting

March - May 2021

Write and revise
Design Standards &
Action Items
Create final report
document

Pre-Project Team Meeting

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON, CITY OF RICHFIELD, & THE TSW TEAM MEET FOR THE FIRST TIME

TSW and Toole Design Group met with the Cities of Bloomington and Richfield, MnDOT, and MetroTransit and conducted a site tour during a quick, one-day visit on December 12, 2019.

OUTCOMES FOR TSW & TOOLE

- Meet City staff responsible for managing the CNU Legacy Project study and implementing recommendations
- Review MnDOT's proposed improvements for the Portland Avenue, Nicollet Avenue, and 12th Avenue interchanges with MnDOT staff

- Review MetroTransit's proposed D-Line BRT route along American Boulevard and Portland Avenue with MetroTransit staff
- Gain a better understanding of the study area through a site drive
- Discuss preliminary possibilities for what the Portland Gateway could become
- Strategize for the March 2020 Charrette and establish the schedule
- Develop a public engagement and marketing strategy

....and then the pandemic hit.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a major delay in the planning efforts. Eventually, the Cities decided to re-start the process and change the format and final products. The charrette was changed to a virtual public meeting and online engagement activities that were open for four weeks in March 2021.



Stakeholder Interviews

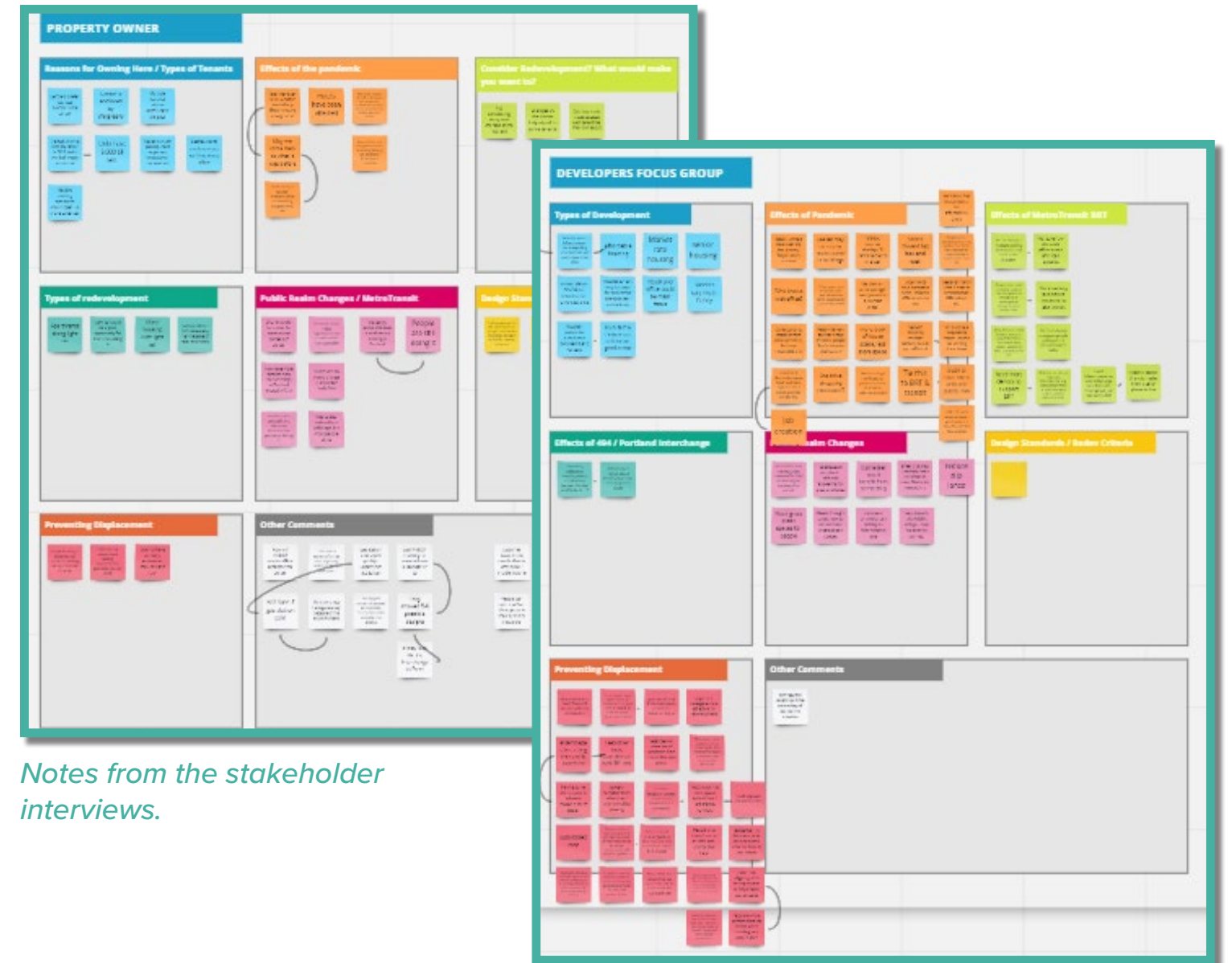
VIRTUAL FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

TSW and the Cities of Bloomington and Richfield met with stakeholders via video conference meetings during February 2021 before the Public Meeting. The stakeholder interviews and focus groups included business owners, property owners, developers of mixed-use developments, and agencies that are currently coordinating on multiple projects in the area. Questions were related to how the pandemic has affected business in the study area, which public realm improvements are most important to consider, how the MetroTransit and MnDOT projects could affect Portland Avenue and the surrounding neighborhoods, the best ways to address displacement of existing businesses and residents.

market and affordable housing is necessary to retain residents. The MetroTransit D-Line project was largely seen as a benefit to the area because of the redevelopment it could catalyze and number of residents who may use the system. Finally, while most stakeholders expressed a need for aesthetic and design improvements in the area, they also mentioned that too many standards and design requirements can become costly and / or discourage investment. They suggested that the cities find a balance or assist business owners, property owners, or developers to reduce the cost burden.

OUTCOMES

As noted in the box to the right, walkability and bikeability are key to connecting Richfield and Bloomington over I-494, particularly as MnDOT's project at Portland Avenue is designed and eventually constructed. The current streetscapes in the area do not provide safe or pleasant walking conditions. Most of the interviews noted that the shift in retail toward online shopping has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and certain types may no longer be valid. However, housing is still a strong



Notes from the stakeholder interviews.

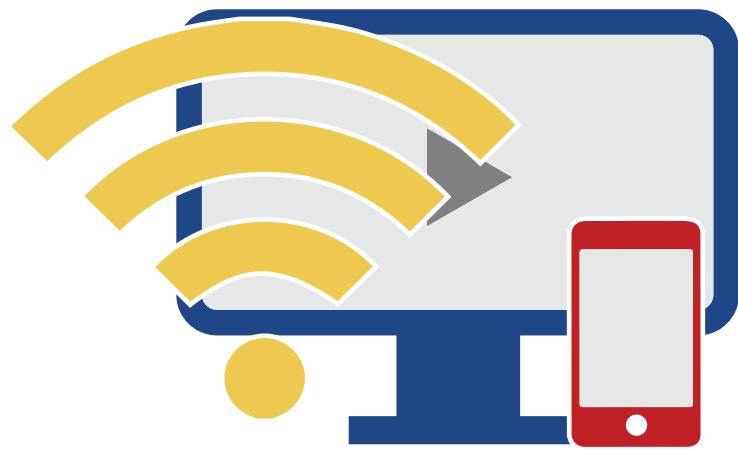
COMMON THEMES:

- Public realm is important to consider
- **Walkability and bikeability** are key to connecting Bloomington and Richfield
- MetroTransit D-Line is a big opportunity for the area
- Housing may be more successful and necessary to add than retail
- Pandemic has affected retail space significantly
- Some public realm improvements add cost burden to property owners and developers

Public Meeting

VIRTUAL PUBLIC KICK-OFF MEETING

The Public Kick-off Meeting occurred on Wednesday, February 24, at 6:00 PM via video conference. The TSW Team presented analysis, feedback to-date, urban design inspiration, the goals of the project, and ideas for design standards. Approximately 65 people registered and 45 people attended the meeting. Polls were asked throughout the meeting for feedback on goals, urban design features, and ideas for design standards. After the meeting, the recording was posted on the project's online activities website and project page hosted on the City of Bloomington's website.



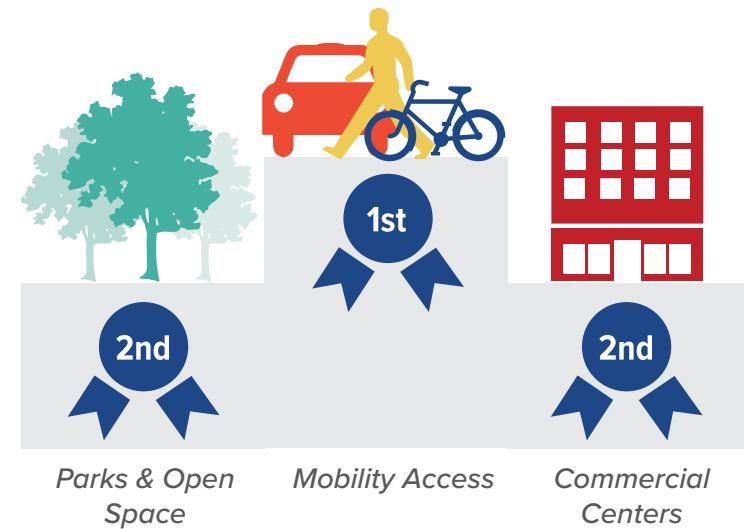
POLL RESULTS

The infographics on this page illustrate the major themes of the feedback received during the meeting. The most popular items to consider are business retention and safe, pleasant mobility access for all users.

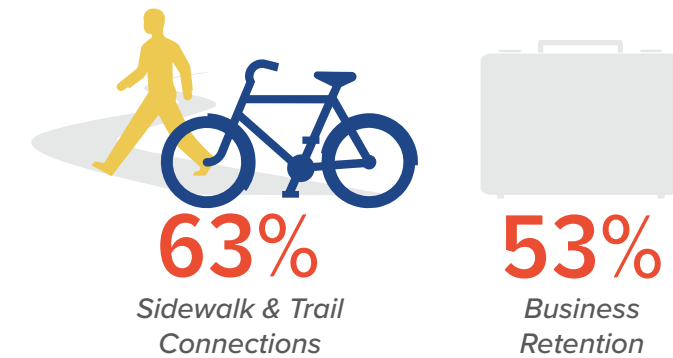
The four poll questions were:

1. Do you agree with what we've heard to date?
2. What are the most important goals to you (please limit your answers to 3 max)?
3. What are the most important topics to consider for redevelopment criteria (please limit your responses to 3 max)?
4. What are the most important items to include in general design standards?

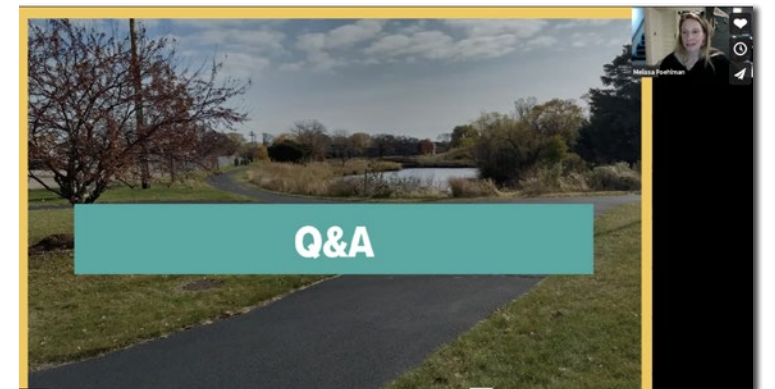
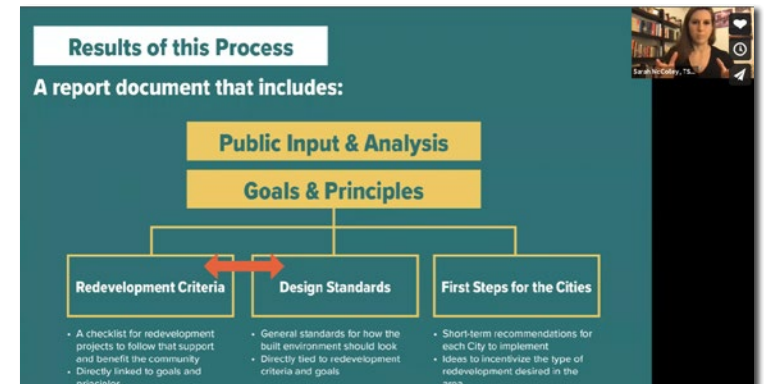
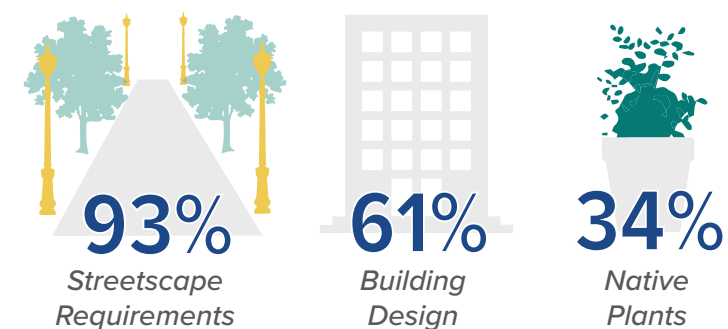
MOST IMPORTANT GOALS



MOST IMPORTANT REDEVELOPMENT CRITERIA



WHAT TO INCLUDE IN DESIGN STANDARDS



Screenshots from the Public Meeting hosted on February 24, 2021.

Online Engagement

SUMMARY

The online activities were available for four weeks (February 24 to March 24, 2021) after the public meeting. An interactive map allowed participants to comment directly on the map with their ideas; surveys were directed to property owners, business owners, and residents; and, a discussion forum asked about the draft goals and principles for the plan. 81 unique users visited the site, but 38 people participated in the activities.

INTERACTIVE MAP

Comments on the interactive map provided insights about specific locations and businesses participants would like to see preserved. Some of the comments are summarized to the right, based on the type of comment received.

★ PLACES TO PRESERVE

- The area needs to be upgraded, but Elsen's Garage needs to stay.

♥ PLACES THAT ARE LOVED

- Denny's Bakery.
- The dog park.

📣 PLACES THAT NEED TO CHANGE

- The strip and infrastructure needs improvement.
- The area needs to be more attractive but accessible.

💡 IDEAS & SUGGESTIONS

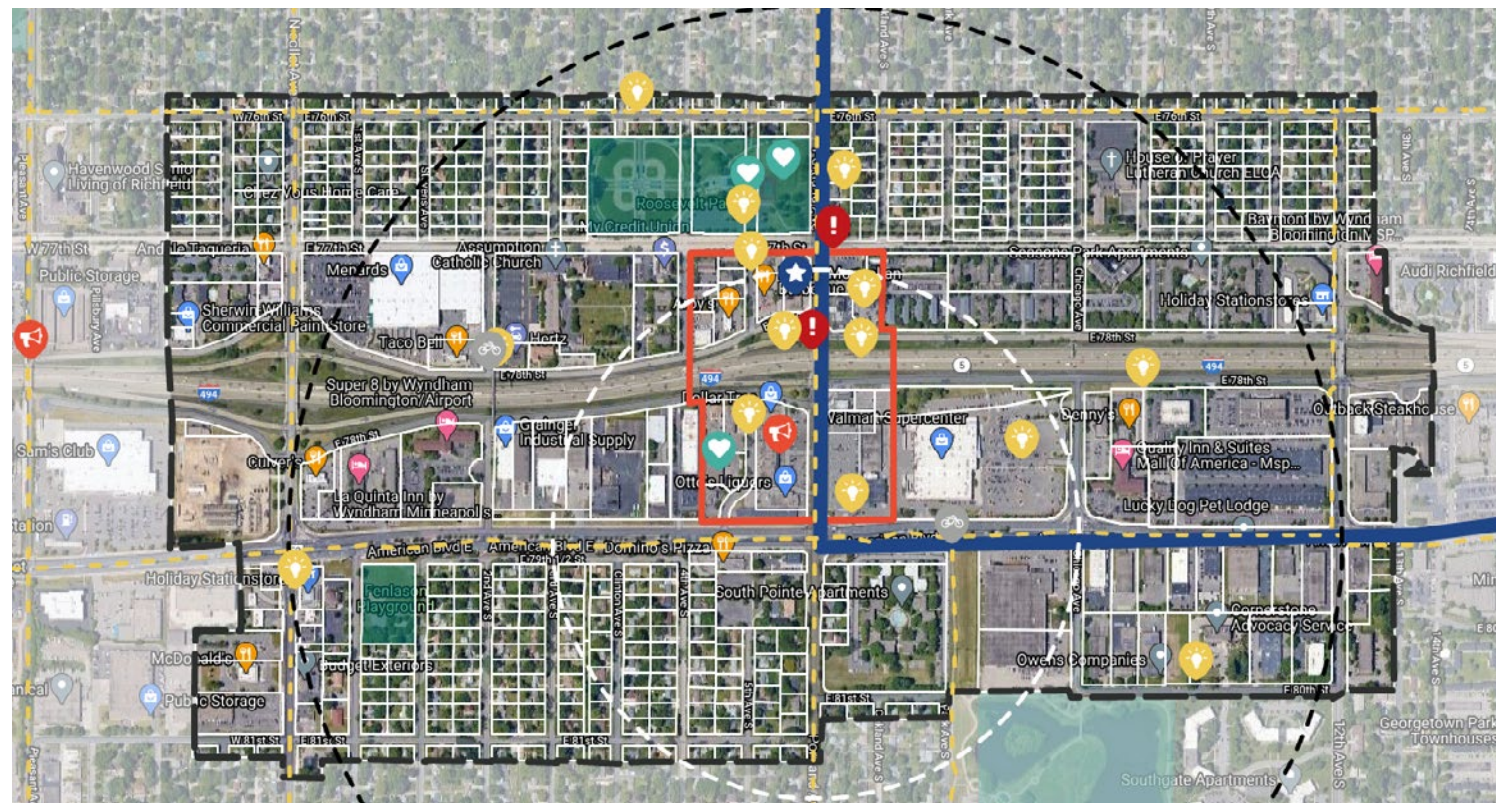
- Connect sidewalks for increased walkability.
- Add more housing facing the park.
- Pedestrian bridge.

! SAFETY CONCERNS

- Corner of E. 77th Street and Portland Avenue feels unsafe sometimes.
- I-494 project doesn't focus on bicycle or pedestrian needs enough.

🚲 POTENTIAL BIKE ROUTES

- A biking connection between Nine Mile Creek trail and other trails
- Separate bikes from vehicular traffic when possible.



Online Engagement

SURVEYS

The online forum included three separate surveys: a general one for all participants, one directed to area property owners, and one directed to area business owners. The property and business owner surveys received minimal responses (1-2 each). The general survey received 32 responses. More than one-third of respondents live inside or within walking distance of the study area.

Similar to the results of the public meeting, safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure came out as the highest priority. Participants noted that current conditions on the Portland and Nicollet bridges are not safe. In addition, many comments stressed the importance of helping local businesses.

Comments on the map and given in the free-response questions tied these concerns directly to the new interchange design at Portland Avenue and I-494, meaning that they were concerned the new design will worsen conditions for pedestrians. Many expressed that the best part of living in this area is the convenient access to many places, including the airport, interstate, and places they frequent.

GOALS & PRINCIPLES FORUMS

The discussion forums for the goals and principles allowed participants to share their thoughts on the draft goals and principles presented at the public meeting. A few participants commented and agreed with the statements.

32
responses



- 2 live in the redevelopment zone
- 2 live within walking distance in Bloomington
- 6 live at least a mile away in Bloomington
- 9 live within walking distance in Richfield

WHAT KINDS OF USES ARE MOST DESIRED?



80%

Restaurants & Cafes



76%

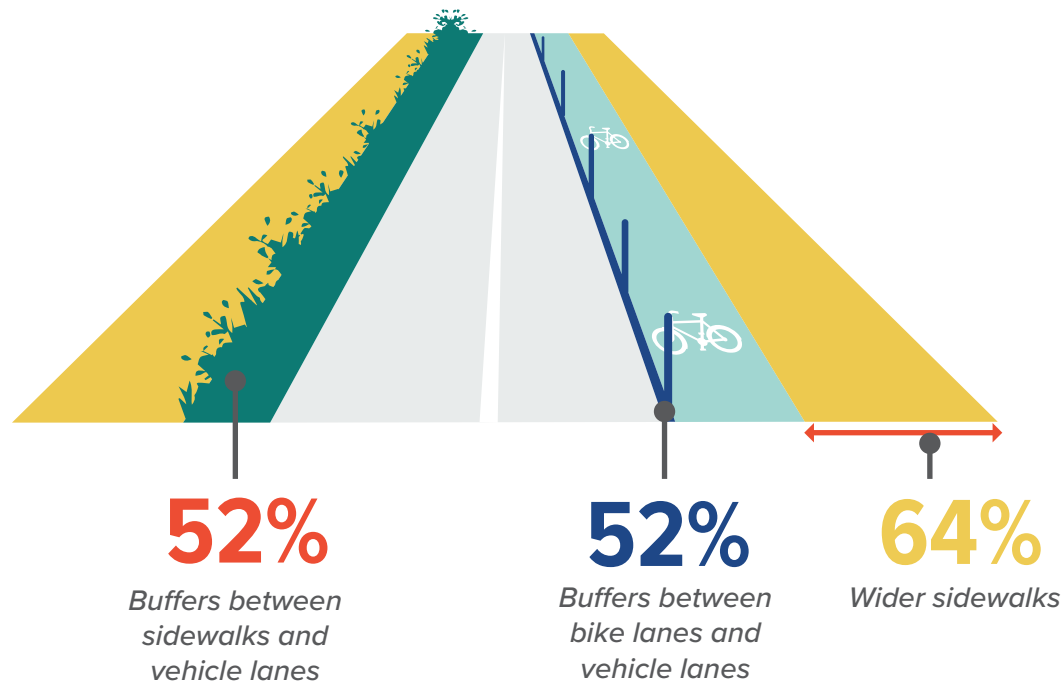
Retail Services



40%

Personal Services

WHAT WOULD MAKE THE AREA SAFER TO WALK AND BIKE?



WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ITEMS TO CONSIDER TO MEET THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS?

- 1** Providing pedestrian or bicycle crossings over I-494
- 2** Adding sidewalks, bike lanes, and better access to bus stops
- 3** Preserving and supporting existing businesses
- 4** Environmental sustainability
- 5** Attracting new local businesses

WHAT ELSE DID RESPONDENTS SHARE?

"Affordable housing" needs to actually be affordable.

Don't "redevelop" this area so small businesses can't afford to stay. Replace concrete with green space.

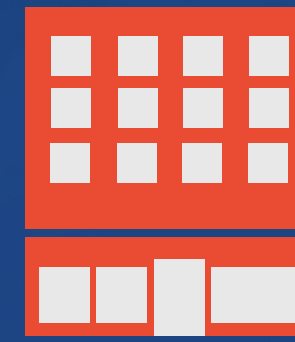
It's important to preserve existing businesses.



03: RECOMMENDATIONS

**GOALS AND PRINCIPLES
FRAMEWORK PLAN
DESIGN STANDARDS
ACTION ITEMS**

Goals & Principles



1 ► CREATE A MIXED-USE GATEWAY THAT ESTABLISHES A SENSE OF IDENTITY

- Provide housing, retail, and office uses to create a vibrant mixed-use node serving the neighborhoods
- Integrate placemaking elements to accentuate the function of the area as a gateway
- Develop zoning amendments to achieve the desired mixed-use redevelopment

2 ► PROVIDE REDEVELOPMENT CRITERIA FOR AGING COMMERCIAL STRIP CENTERS

- Enhance market viability of existing properties for redevelopment
- Minimize displacement of existing businesses
- Facilitate opportunities for redevelopment through potential parcel consolidation, public realm enhancements, and internal circulation

3 ► PRESERVE AND PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS

- Preserve existing affordable housing developments
- Preserve affordable single-family neighborhoods
- Recommend a variety of new housing options that meet multiple price points

4 ► IMPROVE MOBILITY ACCESS FOR ALL MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

- Establish a network of connected streets and movement corridors that link to adjacent neighborhoods and I-494
- Improve the safety, walkability, and aesthetics of intersections and streets for all users
- Simplify access along major streets through driveway consolidation, side-street access for commercial properties, and use of alleys for loading
- Achieve vehicle capacity requirements
- Consider MnDOT's Nicollet, 12th, and Portland interchange reconfigurations in all mobility recommendations on connecting streets
- Integrate existing bus stops and future transit stations along MetroTransit's planned D-Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route in streetscape designs

5 ► ENHANCE PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND THE PUBLIC REALM

- Improve access to parks in and near the study area: Smith Park and Roosevelt Park
- Recommend additional parks, plazas, and open spaces
- Identify new multi-use trail connections
- Design streetscapes that accommodate all users and appropriately integrate sustainable infrastructure

Recommendations

SUMMARY

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and on-going MnDOT planning and engineering initiative for Portland Avenue and I-494 (see appendix), the nature of the recommendations for this CNU Legacy Project changed. Originally, the plan was intended to provide conceptual designs for underutilized properties in the study area. However, with many unknown and changing variables, this project now provides general recommendations for additional design standards for the public realm, documentation of an alternative concept for the Portland Avenue / I-494 interchange, and action items each City can take to incentivize and encourage redevelopment when the time comes.

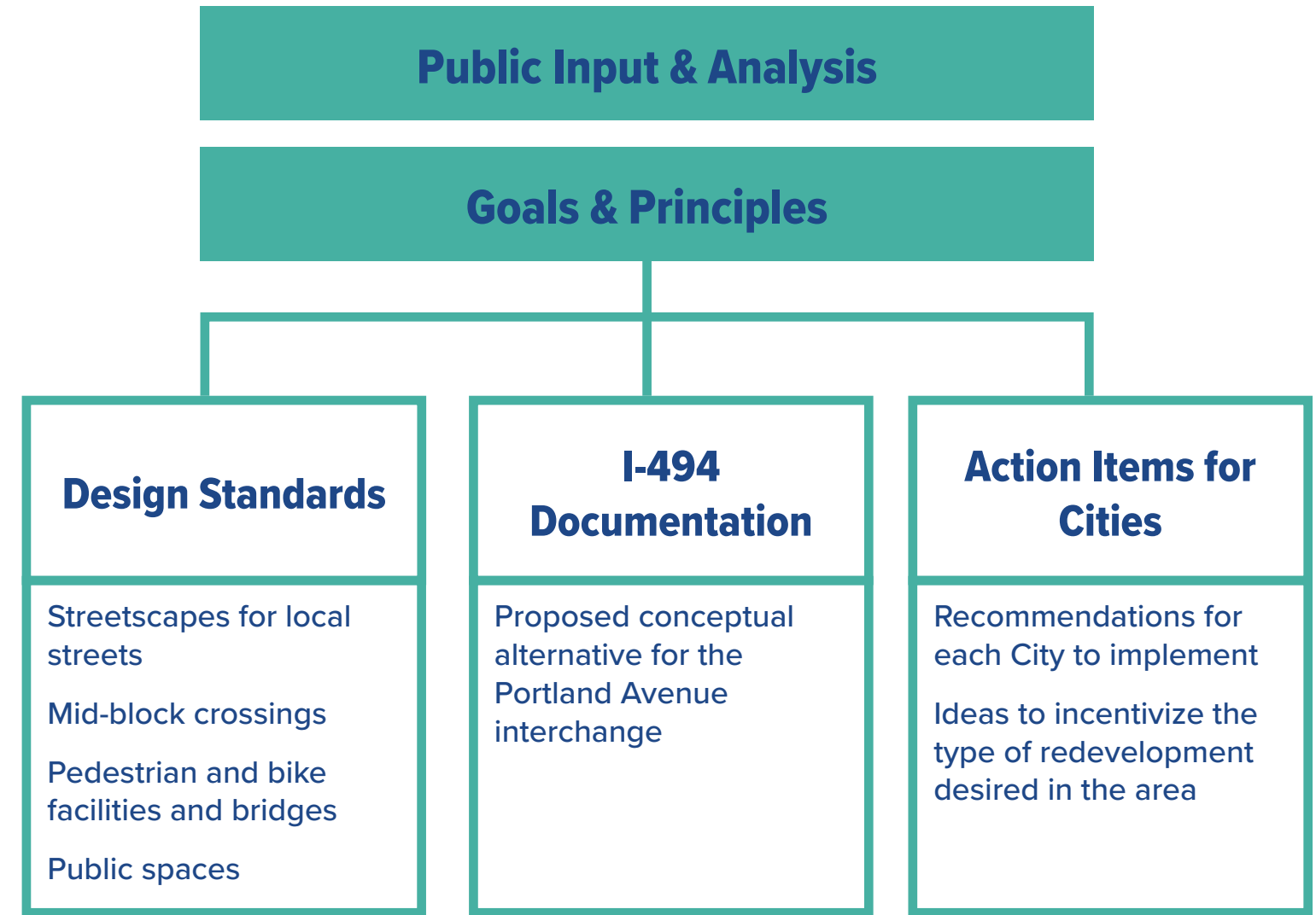
The City of Bloomington and City of Richfield codes encourage equitable redevelopment with affordable housing provisions and standards for public realm improvements when a significant site improvement is undertaken. Some policies listed in the Action Items may be in place in one or both of the cities, but they are included to emphasize the need for partnership and making full use of their available tools. The recommendations are intended to complement the Cities' previous efforts and document the planning team's efforts to propose an alternative conceptual design for the interchange,

which would make better use of the existing street network, reduce the width of Portland Avenue, and benefit the surrounding community. This concept is described in the appendix. The following paragraph defines what each type of recommendation entails.

DESIGN STANDARDS: Standards placed on the public realm or architecture to ensure quality redevelopment. They can include streetscape standards, general building design, and materials like street furniture and plants. Most of the ideas recommended will require additional study, public involvement, and / or the creation of a patternbook or design guidelines, should the Cities choose to include them.

Design Standards should be balanced with financial feasibility and benefits to the community. Too many standards can increase costs and technical difficulty, which delays or stops redevelopment. Inadequate standards can result in projects that do not benefit existing residents and businesses or achieve the vision.

I-494 DOCUMENTATION: Although MnDOT has preferred alternatives for the interchange design, the planning team met with MnDOT to show an additional conceptual design to consider in October and November 2020. The diagram is provided in this document's appendix with a description, list of benefits to the community,



and other ways the urban design can be improved.

ACTION ITEMS: Steps the Cities can take to ease the redevelopment process when the time comes and advance the plan's vision and goals. City policies and initiatives can offset financial impacts that may impede redevelopment, while encouraging equitable development and affordable housing.

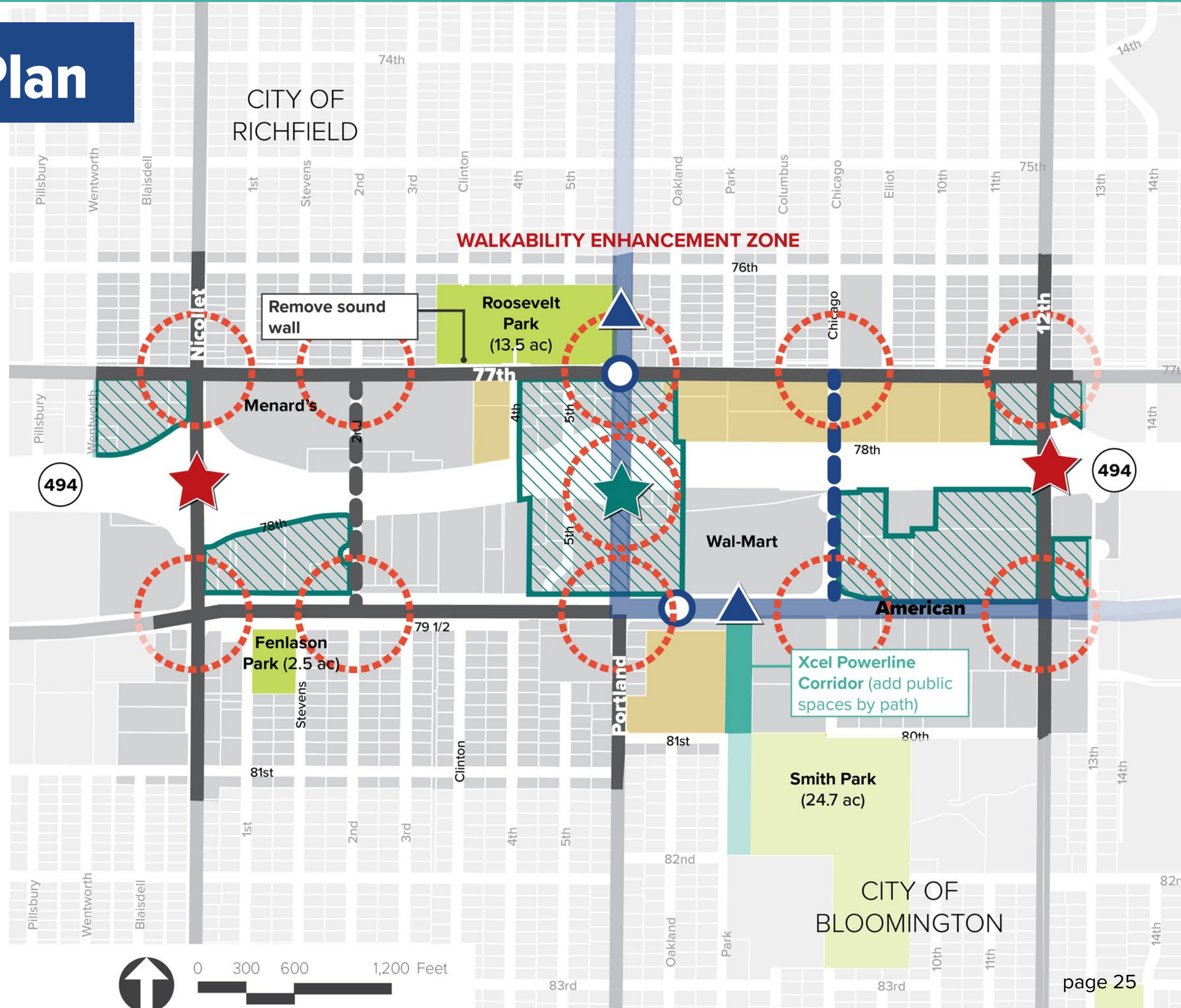
Action Items and Design Standards should

consider short-term / incremental changes and long-term visioning.

Framework Plan

The **Framework Plan** shows the overall recommendations meeting the goals and principles.

- Land at all affected interchanges could **redevelop and should be mixed-use, walkable centers**.
- Cities should preserve existing and help build more affordable housing.
- “Key Movement Corridors” show where pedestrians should be prioritized.
- Mid-block crossings and longer pedestrian crossing times are recommended at most intersections, particularly close to interchanges and at wide streets.



Key Movement Corridors

- █ Proposed Streetscape Improvements
- Proposed Pedestrian Bridge Improvement
- Proposed Pedestrian Bridge
- █ Proposed D Line Route (MetroTransit BRT)
- Proposed D Line Station (MetroTransit BRT)
- █ Potential Redevelopment Locations
- ▲ Proposed Mid-Block Crossings
- Longer Crossing Times for Pedestrians
- ★ Proposed Expanded Interchange (MnDOT)
- ★ Proposed Closed Interchange (MnDOT)
- █ Parks
- █ Affordable Rental Housing to Preserve

Balancing Standards & Feasibility

***Too many standards can increase costs and difficulty, which delays development.**



***Inadequate standards can result in development or projects that do not benefit existing residents and businesses**

City policies and initiatives can offset financial impacts that may impede redevelopment

Some examples include:

Proactively re-zone to compatible zoning districts that allow the desired types of development and uses

Assemble land as it becomes available to create parcels large enough for redevelopment

Help existing businesses and attract new ones

Fund public realm improvements

Action Items to Consider



★ TOP 6 PRIORITY INITIATIVE

IMPLEMENTATION

The Cities of Bloomington and Richfield may each have many of these policies, codes, or programs in place or in progress. However, this report describes all the ideas to ensure that they are documented and to provide the Cities the flexibility to partner on the initiatives. Many of the topics described would require additional study of both Cities' codes, state law, and existing

partnerships. Because of this, the project descriptions include links to resources for reference. Municipalities in the Twin Cities region have many valuable policies and institutions that could be adapted to accomplish the goals, particularly related to preserving and building affordable housing. The City of Richfield and City of Bloomington should continue their strong partnerships with other agencies, such as

MetroTransit, Hennepin County, the Housing and Redevelopment Authorities (HRAs), land trusts, and others to make sure the vision for a walkable and equitable gateway is realized.

Immediate-term projects are the Top 6 Priority Initiatives for the Cities to start. Many of the other projects could be conducted concurrently, but these six focus on re-

zoning and implementing design standards, working with MnDOT to compensate the community, helping local businesses who may be at risk of displacement, and starting partnerships with other agencies to prepare for future redevelopment. Short-term projects could occur in the next 5 years, and long-term visioning projects could begin now or beyond the 5-year short-term project threshold.

#	Criteria	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Project Description
CNU Legacy Project Goal 1: Mixed-Use Gateway Node				
CNU Legacy Project Goal 2: Redevelopment Alternatives				
★ 1-2a.	Proactively rezone to compatible zoning districts that allow the desired types of development and uses.	City of Bloomington	Immediate	Within the entire Walkability Enhancement Zone , Bloomington should evaluate the appropriateness of proactively rezoning select properties to B-4 to foster residential mixed use redevelopment. Given MnDOT's proposal to close freeway access and redesign Nicollet and 12th, those areas may be suitable for higher density residential uses, particularly when supported by the private market.
1-2b.	Explore funding opportunities with County and State sources.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Long-term vision	Research the potential for designating this area as a Transit Improvement Area (TIA), if the program still exists, because of the upcoming MetroTransit D-Line project construction, which could make the area eligible for more funding. This could be accomplished similar to the Penn American District project in Bloomington, which was a partnership between many agencies, including the Bloomington HRA. The Cities should also look into additional funding sources and partnerships.
1-2c.	Identify priority acquisition areas and assemble land as it becomes available to create parcels large enough for redevelopment.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington; Richfield and Bloomington HRAs	Short-term; long-term version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Richfield HRA and Bloomington HRA to determine which parcels in the Walkability Enhancement Zone should remain affordable housing, and which should be designated for mixed-use development with affordable commercial space and residential units. As the properties become available, the HRA in each city could purchase the land. When parcels in each city are near each other (i.e. separated by the interstate), the HRAs should coordinate to make redevelopment one project.

Action Items to Consider



★ TOP 6 PRIORITY INITIATIVE

#	Criteria	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Project Description
CNU Legacy Project Goal 1: Mixed-Use Gateway Node				
CNU Legacy Project Goal 2: Redevelopment Alternatives				
1-2d.	Remove barriers for small businesses and entrepreneurs.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow co-working as a use by-right, if not already in both Cities' codes for the commercial or mixed-use districts in the Walkability Enhancement Zone. Allow manufacturing / production on-site with a retail frontage. In future business surveys, add questions about what kind of barriers they experienced when opening or making site improvements (see 1.2k).
★ 1-2e.	Help preserve and advocate for existing local businesses.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington; MnDOT	Immediate; Short-term; long-term vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help displaced local businesses and business owners identify markets similar to the one they are vacating in order to relocate. Ensures MnDOT compensates business owners for relocation expenses, marketing expenses, and the first few months of new leases. Provide reduced permitting and licensing fees for new locations, if any. Partner with business support organizations, the Bloomington HRA, Economic Development Authorities, Chambers of Commerce, and / or others to fund relocation assistance and / or compensation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issuing bonds Tax credits for new locations Grants Land swaps
1-2f.	Consider expanding Richfield's Displaced Business Grant Program to include businesses that must relocate due to MnDOT and other transportation projects.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term	The City of Richfield program could be expanded, which could allow the City to provide assistance or advocate for businesses that are affected by large transportation projects. The City of Bloomington could evaluate and adapt Richfield's program for their use.
1-2g.	Educate business owners on the HUD Relocation Assistance to Displaced Businesses, Nonprofit Organizations, and Farms.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term	Ensure that they remain eligible for compensation from the MnDOT project if the project is receiving federal funding. Document: https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/1043CPD.PDF

Action Items to Consider



TOP 6 PRIORITY INITIATIVE

#	Criteria	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Project Description
CNU Goal 1: Mixed-Use Gateway Node				
CNU Goal 2: Redevelopment Alternatives				
1-2h.	Encourage developers to preserve local businesses and include them in new development.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term; long-term visioning	As large redevelopment projects occur, work with developers to temporarily relocate and accommodate existing businesses in new buildings.
1-2i.	Consider creating a community coalition that can negotiate Community Benefits Agreements with developers that require the provision of living wage construction and permanent jobs in redevelopment projects.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington; neighborhood advocates	Short-term; long-term visioning	Consider creating a community coalition that can negotiate Community Benefits Agreements when redevelopment projects are introduced in the Walkability Enhancement Zone that requires the provision of living wage jobs in redevelopment projects for the construction work and future businesses in the developments. These agreements can also include other community aspirations, and they allow the Cities the ability to enforce what the community wants. Review Minnesota state law to understand the authority to do so. Living Wage Policy Resources: Partnership for Working Families CBAs in Practice Atlanta BeltLine
1-2j.	Evaluate public realm improvements and design standards.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term	Evaluate the current standards against best practices and the burden imposed on business and property owners (see 1-2k). Revise as necessary.
1-2k.	Regularly conduct business surveys	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term; on- going	In future business surveys, add questions about barriers to opening and the financial burden imposed by public realm improvements required with renovation and significant site improvements. Add other relevant questions as concerns arise.
CNU Goal: 3 Affordable Housing				
3a.	Encourage developers to exceed the minimum requirements in each city's code or policies.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term; long-term visioning	The Bloomington Opportunity Housing Ordinance has requirements and Richfield's Inclusionary Housing Policy has guidelines for inclusionary housing. To advance the goals of these ordinances and policies, the Cities could put additional conditions on individual redevelopment projects. These could be part of a Community Benefits Agreement (Project 1-2i) negotiated with developers.

Action Items to Consider




★ TOP 6 PRIORITY INITIATIVE

#	Criteria	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Project Description
CNU Goal: 3 Affordable Housing				
★ 3b.	Establish partnerships for land acquisition and affordable housing / commercial development	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington; HRAs; land trusts	Immediate	Start conversations with the HRAs and land trusts to proactively ensure redevelopment benefits the community. Pair this with Project 1-2c.
3c.	Identify tools to help current residents remain in their homes and preserve naturally-occurring affordable housing (NOAH) - multi-family and single-family units	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington; HRAs; land trusts	Short-term to implement tools; long-term visioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve existing NOAH units and promote renovations. • Allow property owners and developers to better use the site if buildings and the number of affordable units are preserved. For example, new buildings could be constructed on open spaces or underutilized parking lots. This will also help if renovations are occurring and residents prefer to live on-site while their units are renovated. • Explore creative tax mechanisms to preserve NOAH, such as freezing single-family property taxes at the rate when property was purchased and tying this to an owner-occupancy requirement. Verify the legality of these mechanisms in Minnesota and evaluate potential negative trade-offs. Example Resource: Enterprise Community Partners study for Atlanta • Partner with the NOAH Impact Fund and connect developers to the program when redevelopment projects arise.
3d.	Explore potential to use “First Right of Refusal” tool to preserve NOAH	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term	<p>This tool would include placing deed restrictions on all existing affordable multi-family housing properties that require the owner to notify the City when a property is for sale to give the City the first right of refusal to buy the property. If this agreement is reached, the City could re-sell the units to an affordable housing organization like a land trust, HRAs, or the housing authority.</p> <p><i>NOTE: The Cities will need to research state law to determine the legality of this tool.)</i></p>
3e.	Create an equity scorecard for redevelopment projects	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term	Use and adapt the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability’s Equitable Development Principles and Scorecard . This scorecard includes metrics for housing affordability.
3f.	Require a variety of unit types in redevelopment projects	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term	Unit types should accommodate different household sizes, lifestyles, and home occupations. Home occupations may be more important to consider due to the COVID-19 pandemic causing many workers to work from home, thus changing lifestyle habits and preferences.

Action Items to Consider



 **TOP 6 PRIORITY INITIATIVE**

#	Criteria	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Project Description
CNU Goal: 3 Affordable Housing				
3g.	Consider modifying adjacent single-family zoning districts for an increase in density around transit.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Long-term visioning	Nearby single-family zoning district standards could be modified to allow other unit types, such as duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes, which would allow incremental redevelopment with more affordable, “missing middle” housing types. This process should be conducted with a separate public engagement process and educational components about zoning history.
3h.	Coordinate with a third-party to build and manage ADUs when individual property owners would like to build one but cannot afford the upfront cost.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington; private / third-party firm	Long-term visioning	The third-party would finance the construction, collect the tenants’ rent, and pay the owners rent for use of their backyards. There may not be any such businesses in Minnesota at the time of this report, but the following resources are examples in other parts of the country: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Dwelling in Los Angeles, CA • Chroma in Portland, OR • Dweller in Portland, OR
3i.	Review the ADUs guidebook for policy-makers from the Family Housing Fund to determine which code changes need to be made in all single-family residential districts to incentivize building ADUs.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term	Code changes, such as a reduction in parking requirements, unit size flexibility, or conditional approval, could help property owners feel more inclined to build an ADU. The Cities may need to investigate methods to reduce the cost burden of adding utilities. Resource: Family Housing Fund ADUs guidebook for policy-makers
CNU Goal 4: Mobility				
 4a.	Coordinate with MnDOT during detailed design about changes in travel patterns and priority for pedestrians and cyclists.	City of Richfield, City of Bloomington, Hennepin County, MnDOT	Immediate	MnDOT should consider re-running their model because of the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The models were completed before the pandemic; there is a need to evaluate potential permanent changes in travel patterns and volumes as a result of changed work and commuting behaviors. • The City of Richfield’s 77th Street extension should relieve local traffic. • Walkability and pedestrian / bicyclist access and safety: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current bridge design requires that pedestrians and cyclists cross many lanes of traffic to reach their destinations and the future MetroTransit stations. • MetroTransit D-line stations were not adequately considered in multiple design alternatives.

Action Items to Consider



★ TOP 6 PRIORITY INITIATIVE

#	Criteria	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Project Description
CNU Goal 4: Mobility				
★ 4b.	Coordinate with MnDOT to require specific community compensation for the Portland Avenue interchange project.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington; MnDOT; MetroTransit	Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that MnDOT secures funding for MetroTransit's permanent stations, if they need to be re-designed and re-located from MetroTransit's original plans. Ensure that MnDOT provides quality, usable public space, buffered and wide sidewalks, and buffered bike lanes on the new Portland Avenue bridge, and on Nicollet and 12th Streets.
4c.	Designate and preserve key movement corridors for pedestrians and cyclists, as shown on the Framework Plan on page 25.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington; MetroTransit; MnDOT	Short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In redevelopment projects, continue to enforce existing code requirements regarding private sidewalk connections to public sidewalks and transit stations, curb cut consolidation, etc. Ensure future public or private sector projects do not remove any of the key movement corridors. Add the public infrastructure necessary to make existing facilities safer and more comfortable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-block crossing at American Boulevard that connects the trail at the Xcel Power Utility easement to the MetroTransit D-line Station Mid-block crossing on Portland Avenue that connects to Roosevelt Park Upgrade the 2nd Avenue pedestrian bridge (see Design Standards on page 41) Build a pedestrian bridge at Chicago Avenue (see Design Standards on page 41). MnDOT's plan currently includes an upgrade to this bridge. Allow extra crossing time at intersections and mid-block crossings (see Project 4f.)
4d.	Create an equity scorecard for transportation and mobility improvements.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term	Use and adapt the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability's Equitable Development Principles and Scorecard: Transportation Edition . The scorecard could be combined with project 3e or a separate effort.
4e.	Identify and secure funding for priority public realm improvements.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Long-term visioning	<p>Streets, parks, sidewalks, light individual transportation (LIT) facilities, lighting, street furniture, and street trees as part of redevelopment projects or as a proactive measure to incentivize private investment. Potential funding sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TIF district Grants Minnesota Parks and Trails Fund Capital Improvements Budget

Action Items to Consider



★ TOP 6 PRIORITY INITIATIVE

#	Criteria	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Project Description
CNU Goal 4: Mobility				
4f.	Increase signal crossing time for pedestrians and cyclists of all abilities to cross wide intersections.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington; MnDOT	Short-term	This is particularly important at all crossings at the Portland Avenue interchange when reconstructed. Other intersections are noted on the Framework Plan on page 25. (see the Design Standards on pages 38 to 39 for crossing times).
★ 4g.	Create design standards for local streets and mid-block crossings.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Immediate	Adapt and follow the design standards on pages 36 to 41.
CNU Goal 5: Parks, Open Space, Public Realm				
5a.	Ensure MnDOT configures and / or combines the parcels they acquire in a manner that supports public use of remnant land areas.	MnDOT; City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term	Depending on how the Portland Avenue interchange is designed, the public space could be configured as thoughtfully-design and landscaped public spaces that can be used or expanded if other nearby parcels redevelop. See the design standards for public spaces on pages 42 to 43.
5b.	Evaluate existing landscape materials and design standards.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term	This evaluation may require amendments to the existing standards or creating new, special design guidelines, which would apply citywide.
5c.	Evaluate and update local codes to ensure that well designed open space is provided.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term	Consider their relationship to surrounding buildings and future redevelopment. Use the Design Standards on pages 42 to 43 as a general guideline or starting point to create new guidelines.
5d.	Remove the sound wall at Roosevelt Park	City of Richfield	Short-term	Remove the wall and consider adding trees and landscaping elements that could help with sound attenuation, but also welcome nearby residents to walk or bike to the park.

Action Items to Consider



★ TOP 6 PRIORITY INITIATIVE

#	Criteria	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Project Description
CNU Goal 5: Parks, Open Space, Public Realm				
5e.	<p>Expand the trail on the Xcel utility corridor to 12 feet wide minimum.</p> <p>Design and add small public spaces along the trail in the Xcel utility corridor.</p>	City of Bloomington; Xcel Energy	Short-term; long-term visioning	<p>Any additional trail widths or public spaces must adhere to the standards required by Xcel. Landscaping and public spaces will make this connection feel like an extension of Smith Park to the south, and could become a pleasant walking alternative for users of the MetroTransit D-line Station when constructed.</p> <p>Xcel Requirements.</p>
5f.	Encourage developers of large redevelopment projects to design stormwater management in ways that can serve multiple purposes and as usable space.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington; private developers	Long-term visioning	Typical detention and retention ponds should be discouraged when possible. Stormwater parks can help alleviate stormwater runoff and serve the community. Stormwater planters can also be located along streets or within sidewalks. When innovative methods are used, provide signage describing them for community education.
5g.	Encourage MnDOT to design stormwater facilities to function as a public amenity or park.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington; MnDOT	Short-term	Typical detention and retention ponds should be discouraged when possible. Stormwater parks can help alleviate stormwater runoff and serve the community. When innovative methods are used, provide signage describing them for community education. If properties around the Portland Avenue interchange can not be feasibly redeveloped, they should be used as open spaces, parks, or innovative stormwater facilities that can serve redevelopment that may occur east or west of the interchange.
5h.	Consider code modifications to remove or reduce barriers to conducting markets and festivals.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term	Current codes have limits on frequency. Each City could consider removing or reducing the limits.
5i.	Explore opportunities to build open spaces that include community gardens and / or urban agriculture.	City of Richfield; City of Bloomington	Short-term; long-term visioning	In private development projects, this recommendation could be used in combination with or instead of Project 5f.

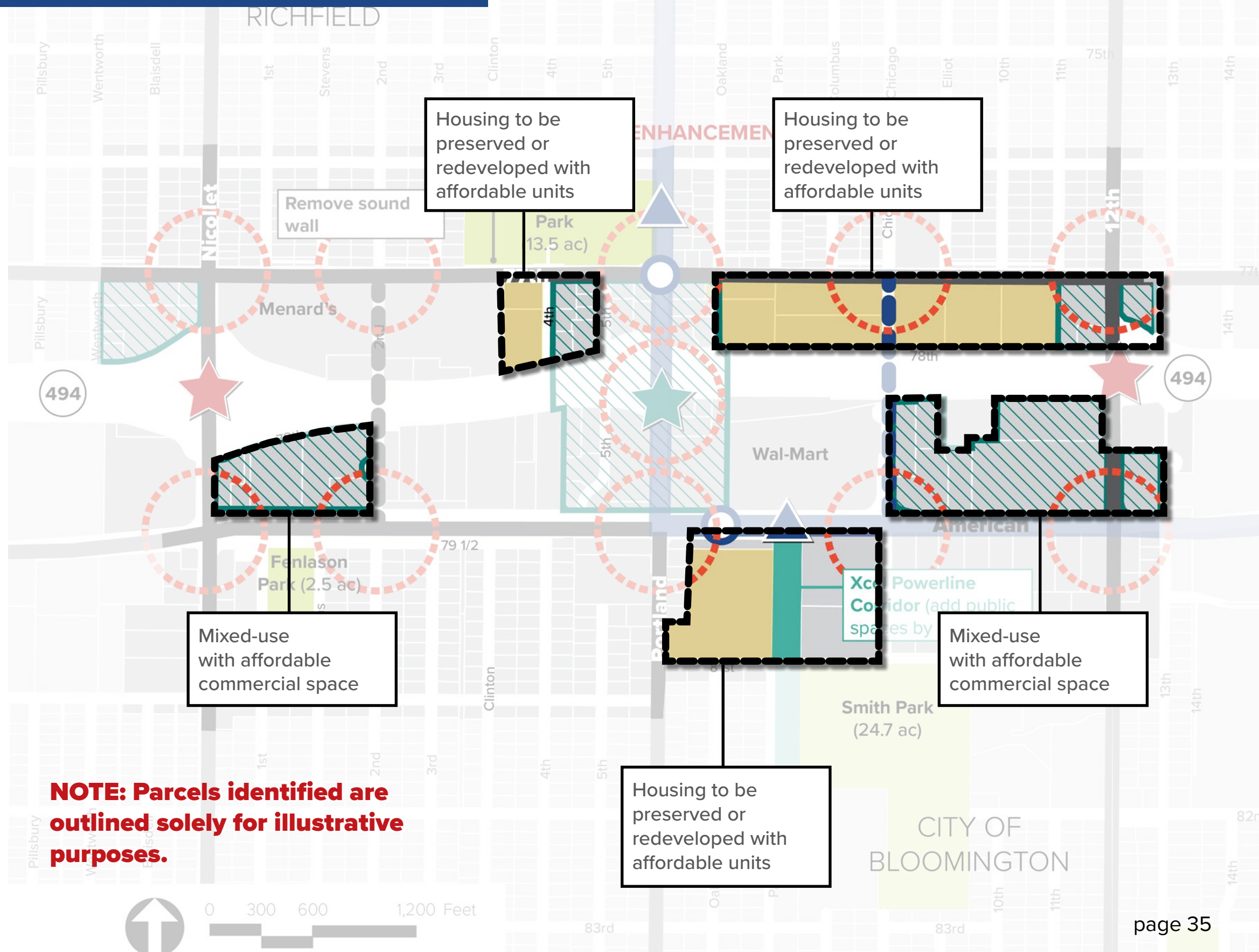
Land Assemblage Examples

The **City of Bloomington and City of Richfield** should partner with each other and the local HRAs and land trusts to assemble land around all of the interchanges **as it becomes available** (see project 1-2c). The land could be sold to land trusts or non-profit partners to create permanently affordable housing or commercial space. Thoughtful land acquisition would ensure:

- Land redevelops according to community preferences;
- Naturally-occurring affordable housing (NOAH), multi-family and single-family units, is preserved;
- Commercial space remains affordable;
- Existing businesses can remain when possible.

Assemblage should prioritize parcels meeting some or most of these criteria:

- Parcels connected to or between land already in City or HRA control;
- Parcels near Nicollet and 12th Avenues;
- Parcels in close proximity to existing affordable housing in anticipation of expansion or densification of housing or mixed-use development;
- Parcels next to BRT stops, new or existing public spaces (i.e. green spaces created by MnDOT with the interchange reconstruction), and major intersections.



NOTE: Parcels identified are outlined solely for illustrative purposes.

Design Standards

URBAN DESIGN

As noted in the public input and analysis sections, the Portland Gateway area is home to aging commercial centers and wide street corridors. Adding to the conditions, Bloomington and Richfield are disconnected and the street grid breaks down by the I-494 corridor. Though the Cities have many code requirements that could be applied to private redevelopment projects to create the mixed-use environment desired throughout the Walkability Enhancement Zone, it will be imperative for the success of these projects and the community to ensure the public realm is safe and well-designed. These Design Standards provide the Cities with additional ideas about outdoor space design and considerations for walking and biking facilities. The images to the right show how one community in the Atlanta region improved their public realm, including streets and parks, to enhance mixed-use redevelopment in the last 10 years (2011 to present day).

Important items to consider when designing and retrofitting the public realm include:

- A connected street grid or network that accommodates pedestrians and cyclists to reduce trip lengths (the Framework Plan shows key movement corridors);
- Welcoming parks and public spaces that provide comfortable and usable spaces;
- Mid-block crossings that reduce trip lengths;

STREETSCAPE, INTERSECTION, & MID-BLOCK CROSSING DESIGN STANDARDS

Streetscape standards for the study area are provided for the local street network and any new streets constructed in the area. These include sidewalk widths, vehicle lane widths, bike facility widths (if applicable), and buffer widths. These apply to all streets within the Walkability Enhancement Zone.

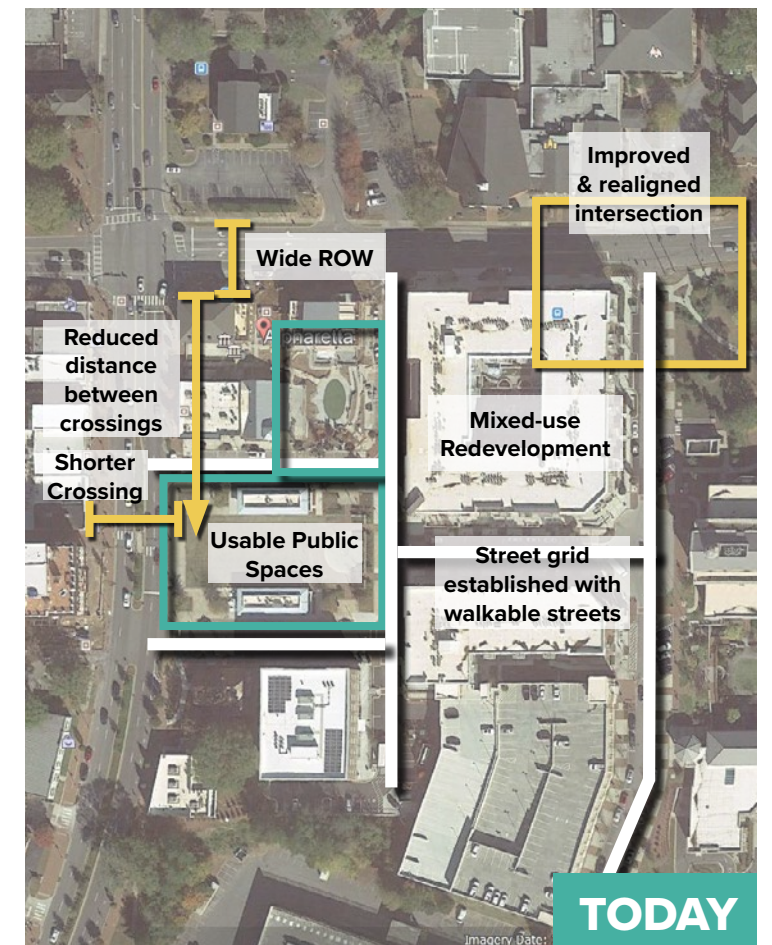
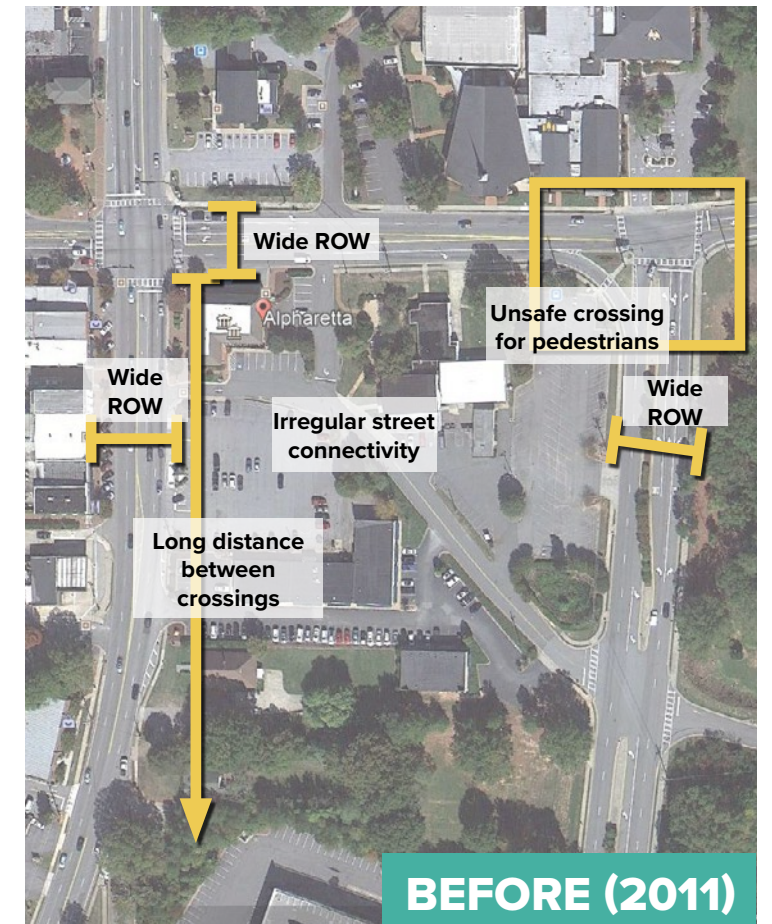
PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN STANDARDS

Design standards often go into zoning codes as requirements, or into a patternbook or design guidelines. Most of these items will require additional study to ensure that the design guidelines meet the needs of the community and reflect the desired character for future redevelopment.

Public space design standards for this project focus on open spaces that are one-acre or less in size, given the smaller parcel sizes and lower potential for large redevelopment projects. They focus on creating high-quality, usable spaces based on best-practice design principles and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). They should be applied to public spaces or stormwater management facilities created by MnDOT and to parks in large redevelopment projects that occur on multiple assembled parcels.

PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE DESIGN STANDARDS

Particularly with the upcoming Portland Avenue interchange project, pedestrian bridges will become important connections for residents of both communities. Pedestrian bridges should be designed to be pleasant places to cross, and access to them needs to be ADA-compliant to ensure all users can use the bridges safely to avoid unsafe intersections with wide crossings.



Design Standards - Streetscapes

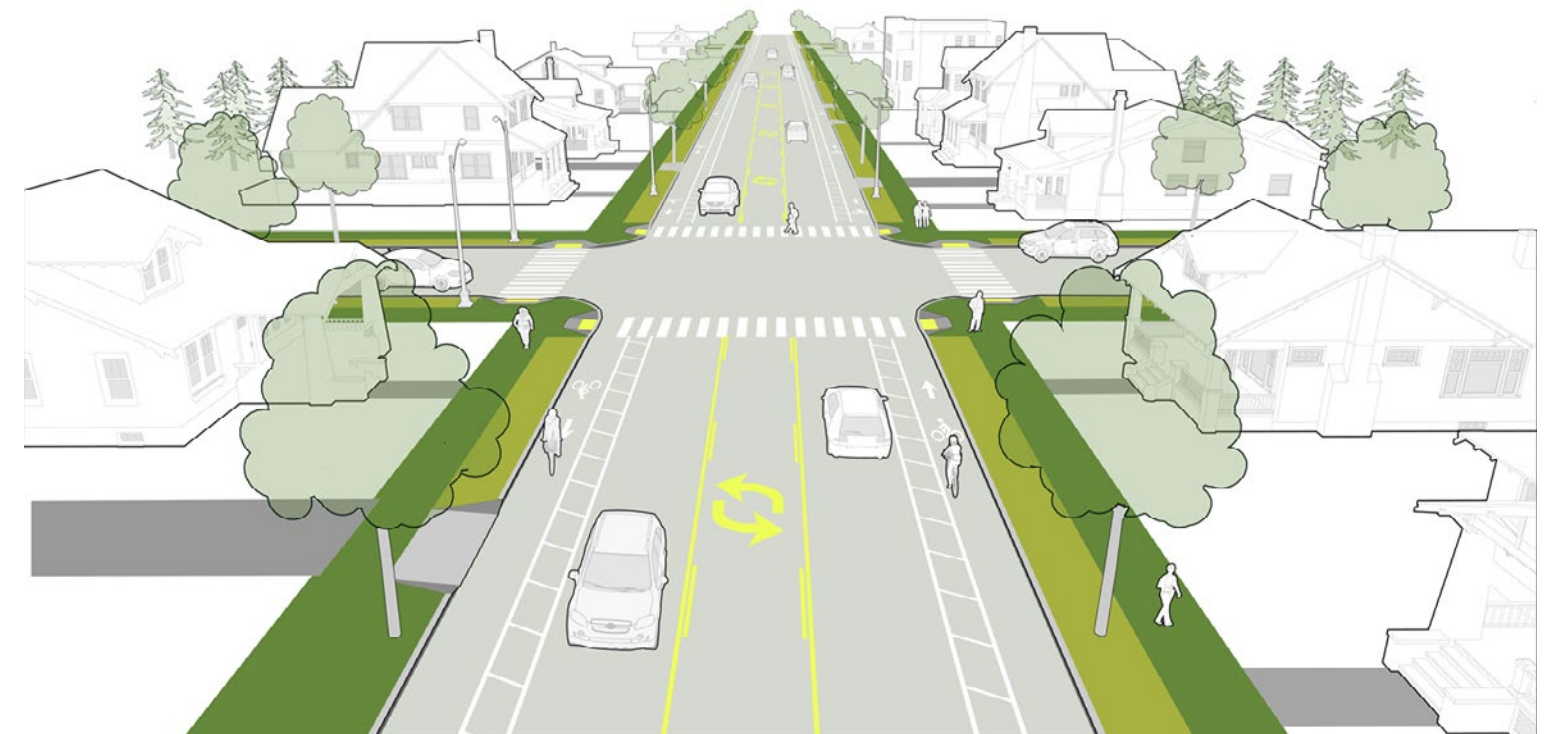
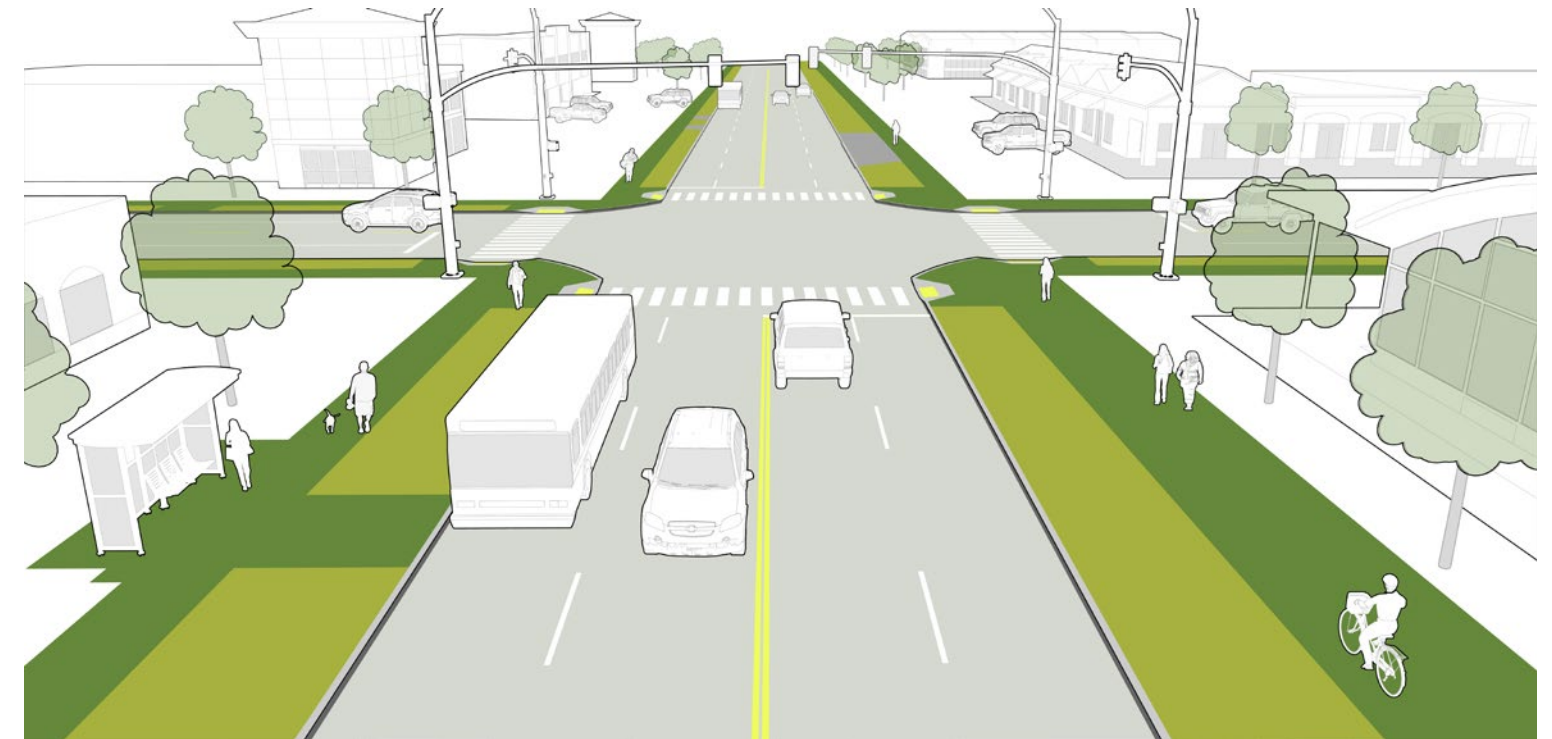
- Streetscapes in the Walkability Enhancement Zone should accommodate all users safely and comfortably
- Narrow vehicle lanes to establish safe speeds
- Wide sidewalks with buffers and bike facilities where possible

RECOMMENDED LANE WIDTHS

Street Type	Minimum Width	Preferred Width	Maximum Width
Commercial Collector / Arterial	10 feet	11 feet	12 feet
Neighborhood Street	10 feet	10 feet	11 feet

SIDEWALK WIDTHS AND BUFFERS

Street Type	Sidewalk	Buffer
Commercial Collector / Arterial	6 - 12 feet	6 - 10 feet
Neighborhood Street	5 - 6 feet minimum	6 - 8 feet

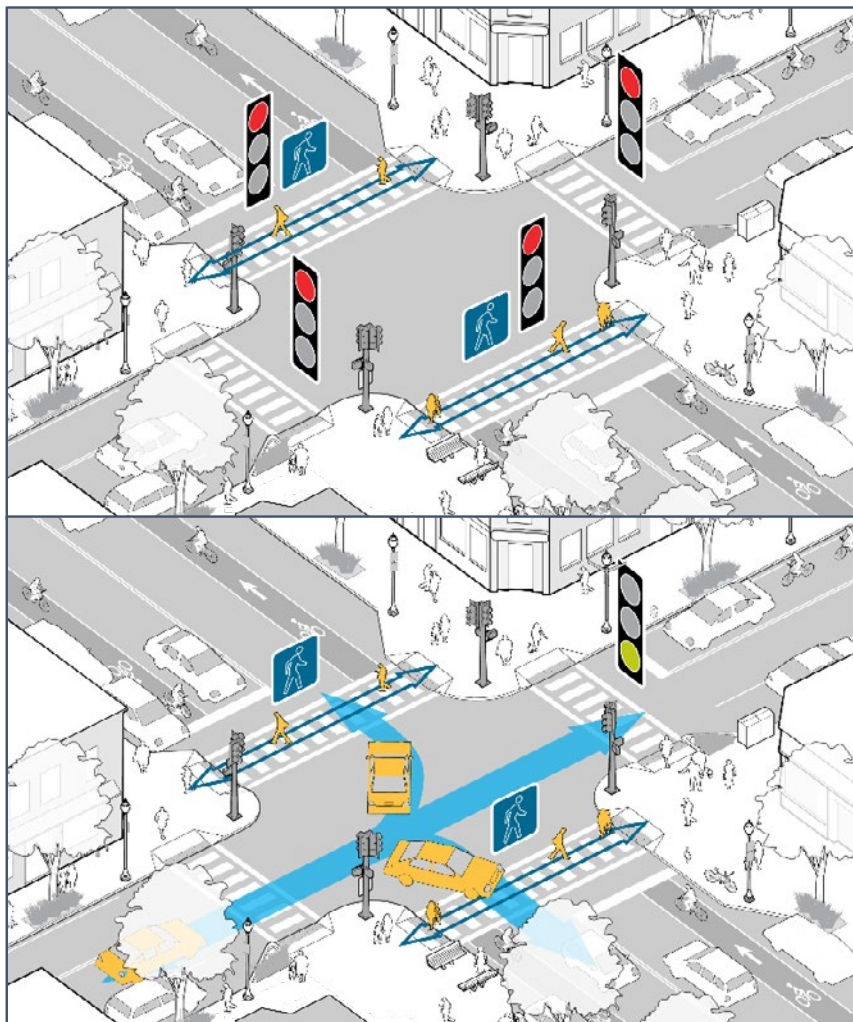


Note: Richfield & Bloomington may have some similar standards in place
page 37

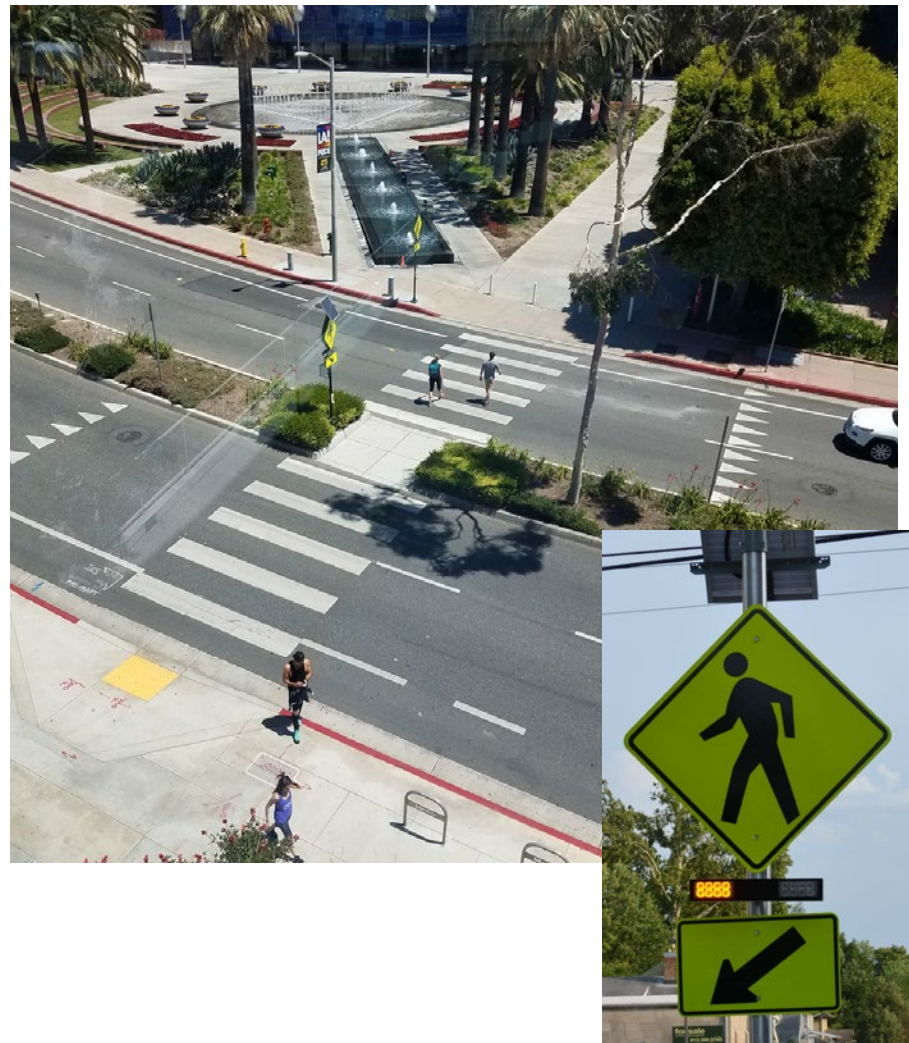
Design Standards - Intersections

- Integrate best practices in intersection and mid-block crossings to facilitate pedestrian and bicyclist movement throughout the Walkability Enhancement Zone (see the next page for more details) .

Signalized Intersection Enhancement: Leading Pedestrian Interval



Mid-block Enhancement: Refuge Island/Yield Lines/RRFB



Mid-block Enhancement: Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon



Design Standards - Intersections

LEADING PEDESTRIAN INTERVALS

Source for text below: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/lead_ped_int/

“A leading pedestrian interval (LPI) gives pedestrians the opportunity to enter an intersection 3-7 seconds before vehicles are given a green indication. With this head start, pedestrians can better establish their presence in the crosswalk before vehicles have priority to turn left. LPIs provide the following benefits:

- Increased visibility of crossing pedestrians.
- Reduced conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.
- Increased likelihood of motorists yielding to pedestrians.
- Enhanced safety for pedestrians who may be slower to start into the intersection.

FHWA’s Handbook for Designing Roadways for the Aging Population recommends the use of the LPI at intersections with high turning vehicle volumes. Transportation agencies should refer to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for guidance on LPI timing, and ensure that pedestrian signals are accessible to all users. Costs for implementing LPIs are very low, when only signal timing alteration is required.

This makes it an easy and inexpensive countermeasure that can be incorporated into pedestrian safety action plans or policies and can become routine agency practice.

LPIs have resulted in a 13% reduction in pedestrian-vehicle crashes at intersections.”

Source: Goughnour, E., Carter, D., Lyon, C., Persaud, B., Lan, B., Chun, P., Signor, K. (2018). *Safety Evaluation of Protected Left Turn Phasing and Leading Pedestrian Intervals on Pedestrian Safety*, Federal Highway Administration, Report No. FHWA-HRT-18-044. Washington, D.C.

Revised March 2020

CROSSWALK TIMING

Timing on crosswalks needs to accommodate users of different ages and abilities. Intersections in this study area should use 3 to 3.5 feet per second to establish the timing for crosswalks to make the area more pedestrian friendly. The Manual on Unified Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) guidelines state:

- “[...] Except as provided in Paragraph 8, the pedestrian clearance time should be sufficient to allow a pedestrian crossing in the crosswalk who left the curb or shoulder at the end of the WALKING PERSON (symbolizing WALK) signal indication to travel at a walking speed of 3.5 feet per second to at least the far side of the traveled way or to a median of sufficient width for pedestrians to wait.”

- “10 Where pedestrians who walk slower than 3.5 feet per second, or pedestrians who use wheelchairs, routinely use the crosswalk, a walking speed of less than 3.5 feet per second should be considered in determining the pedestrian clearance time.”

There are some exceptions which allow the crossing time to be decreased to a crossing

time of 4 feet per second. These are situations where an extended pushbutton press function has been installed to provide slower pedestrians an opportunity to request and receive a longer pedestrian clearance time.



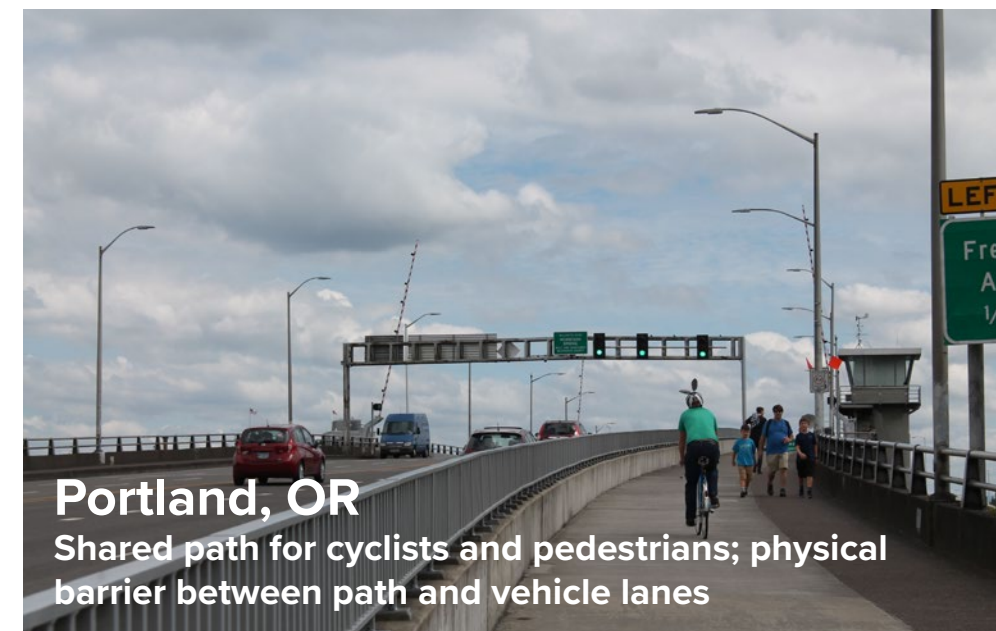
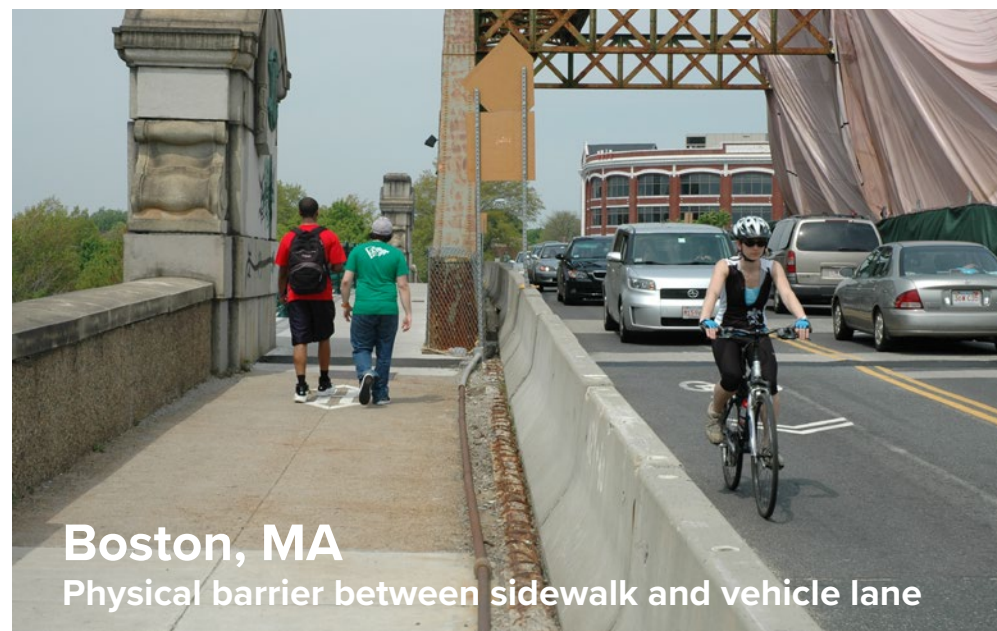
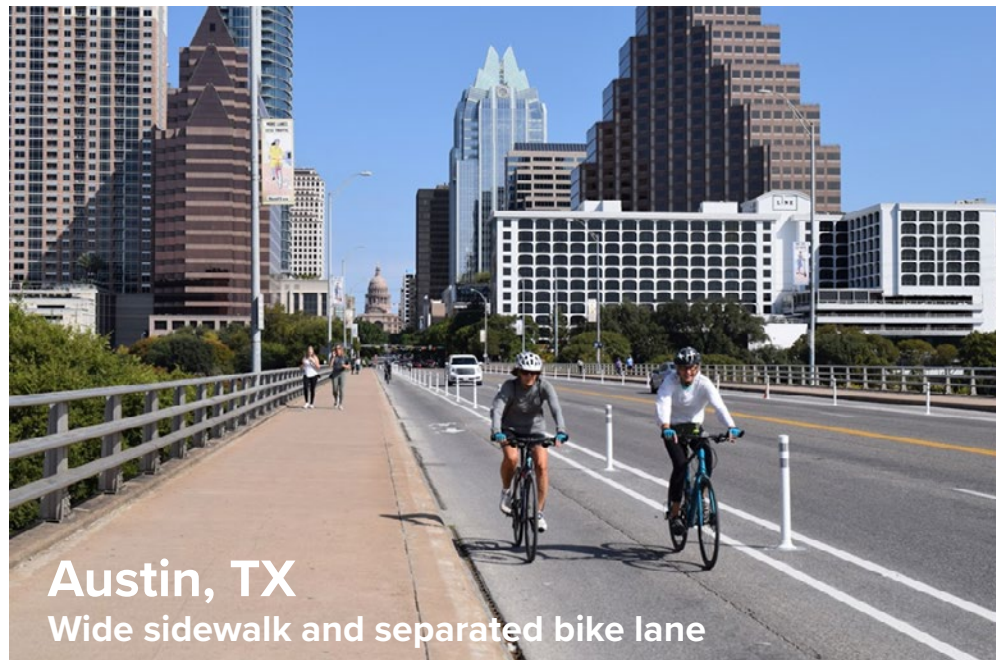
MID-BLOCK CROSSING IN THE SAME ATLANTA COMMUNITY

Design Standards - Bridges

PURPOSE: Prioritize pedestrians and cyclists to make it safer to cross I-494 than it is today.

The redesigned bridges over I-494 at Nicollet, Portland, and 12th should include dedicated facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, as depicted in the examples below.

- Buffers between vehicle lanes and sidewalks / bike lanes
- Wide sidewalks and bike lanes
- Trees, landscaping, and lights where feasible



Design Standards - Pedestrian Bridges

PURPOSE: To provide alternative routes across I-494 to expand the network and to shorten walking or biking distances, while providing pleasant public spaces.

- The design shown below is a conceptual representation.
- The Minnesota climate presents challenges for the successful planting of trees in shallow planters because of temperatures in the winter months.



Design Standards - Public Spaces

PURPOSE: To ensure greenspaces (built by private or public sectors) are designed thoughtfully, consider relationships to future redevelopment, and are pleasant, usable environments.

~1-ACRE PUBLIC SPACES

- **Safety:** use CPTED design principles (<https://www.cpted.net/>)
- **Flexible community-oriented spaces that can accommodate a variety of programming. Consider the following features:**
 - Space parks at walkable intervals from housing and to reduce parking needs. Where possible provide only ADA parking. Use permeable paving.
 - Entrance plaza at roadway with identification sign, orientation map, and information.
 - Bike parking for 10 to 15 bikes
 - Permeable paved areas that can house a small community market of 15 to 20, 10' x 10' tents.
 - Shaded seating areas for 15 to 20 people.
 - A community pavilion approximately 500 to 900 square feet
 - Approximately ½-acre of open turf area to accommodate ad hoc neighborhood recreation.
 - Community garden area with 12 to 20, 4 x 8' plots approximately 120' x 20' size.
- **Integrate stormwater treatment and storage facilities with public spaces to the greatest extent possible using:**
 - Shallow water storage depressions in open space turf areas.
 - Naturalized bioswale areas.
 - Structured underground storage (where space is limited).

PLAZA IN DULUTH, GA



Photo courtesy: CNU.org

< 1-ACRE PUBLIC SPACE IN ATLANTA, GA



Note: Richfield & Bloomington may have some similar standards in place.

Design Standards - Public Spaces

PURPOSE: To ensure trails and public spaces around them (built by private or public sectors) are designed thoughtfully and consider relationships to future redevelopment and existing places.

GATHERING SPACES ALONG MULTI-USE PATHS

- 12-foot wide multi-use paths
- 8-foot wide paths connecting adjacent areas to trails with distance markers. Using the Xcel utility easement as an example, paths could connect the neighborhoods to the west, south, and east to the trail in the easement.
- Entrance plaza at roadway with identification sign, orientation map, and information, bike parking, and 2-3 benches.
- Community gardens sized to support adjacent residential population needs.
- 1-acre open turf areas to support ad hoc neighborhood recreation.
- Shaded seating areas at the edge of the easement as allowed by utility easement requirements.
- 20-foot x 20-foot shade pavilions as allowed in the utility easement.
- Landscape treatment in unprogrammed areas: use a native prairie mix that attracts birds and pollinator insects.

SIGNAGE & CONNECTION PATH



ENTRANCE PLAZA



SEATING AREA



Note: Richfield & Bloomington may have some similar standards in place.



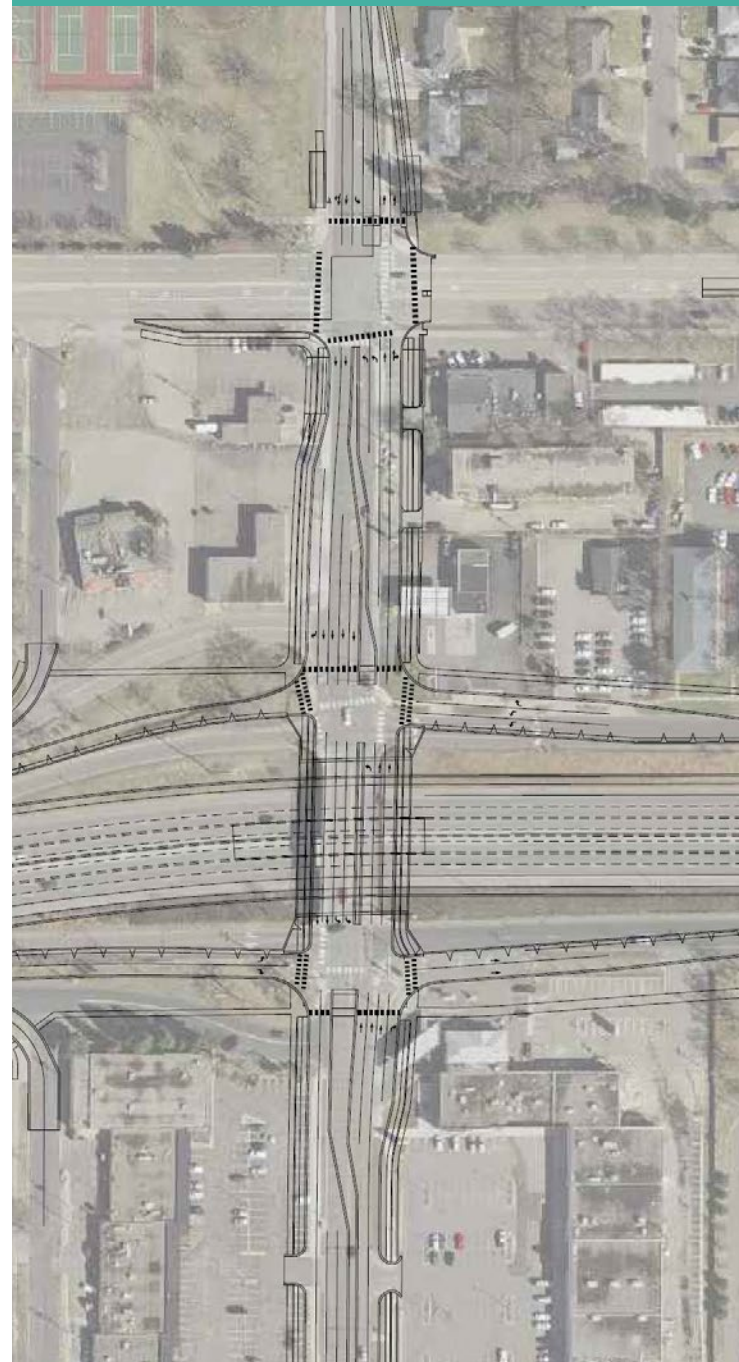
04: APPENDIX

**I-494 INTERCHANGE DOCUMENTATION
INSPIRATION: 5TH STREET BRIDGE IN ATLANTA**

Portland Avenue & I-494

TIGHT DIAMOND INTERCHANGE

MnDOT presented this concept to the City of Richfield on April 13, 2021



PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL ALTERNATIVE

The **Portland Avenue and I-494 interchange** is currently being studied by MnDOT as part of an overall project to change traffic flow and distribution along the I-494 corridor (see MnDOT's preferred alternative image to the left). When the Portland Gateway Legacy Project began, MnDOT had not identified a preferred interchange design. This provided an opportunity for the planning team to prepare an alternative conceptual design for the I-494 corridor in this area. This conceptual design was shared with the City of Richfield, City of Bloomington, and MnDOT in 2020 in time for MnDOT to fully consider it in their environmental process. The planning team recommends MnDOT consider further study and traffic modeling of the CNU Legacy interchange alternative to ensure that any adjustments made to the interstate do not cause irreversible damage to the surrounding communities and that the interchange can take advantage of the existing, well-connected street network in place to distribute traffic load. This concept and additional description are shown on page 48.

IMPROVED URBAN DESIGN

The public input during this process focused on the mobility safety and ease of access in the area, and many participants expressed major concerns about the interchange project. Many provided anecdotes about pedestrians walking to and from Wal-Mart for their groceries and daily needs shopping. Any changes to the Portland Avenue bridge need to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders of all abilities in a safer manner than today.

Currently, sidewalks are narrow and no barrier is provided between the sidewalks and the vehicle lanes. If the interchange expands, walking and biking conditions will become even more dangerous because the additional vehicle lanes increases the required crossing distance for pedestrians and cyclists. Currently, there is one on-ramp and one off-ramp to I-494, on the west side

PROPOSED CNU LEGACY PROJECT ALTERNATIVE: BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The planning team believes that the proposed alternative on page 47 would have the following community benefits:

- Less negative impacts to the community and existing small businesses on Portland Avenue.
- Better distribution of traffic (i.e., not every movement is at Portland, some trips can use 2nd, 4th, 5th, & Chicago) in general. Better access to businesses.
- Simpler interchange at Portland. Better operations at interchange. By giving motorists multiple routing options (i.e. 2nd, 4th, 5th, and Chicago), the interchange's intersections at Portland Avenue will have less traffic. The interchange will benefit by the assistance of a network of streets.
- Increased opportunity to make an attractive, multimodal bridge. With less traffic on Portland Avenue, the number of additional lanes may be reduced, the signal timing has more flexibility, which creates time and space that can be used for walking, cycling, and transit needs.
- Smaller intersection at 77th and Portland (recent 3-lane conversion to north).
- Less right-of-way needed.
- More pedestrian & bike-friendly in general.
- Closer to a human scale.
- I-494 weaving distances are compliant with MnDOT standards.
- Increased resilience (i.e., if an emergency shuts down the interchange at Portland, then other parts of the interchange can keep functioning). MnDOT is placing all of its eggs in one basket due to lack of connectivity. When crashes happen, the MnDOT's interchange is relatively susceptible to severe disruptions, compared with this study's alternative, which provides increased connectivity.
- Easier to stage construction.

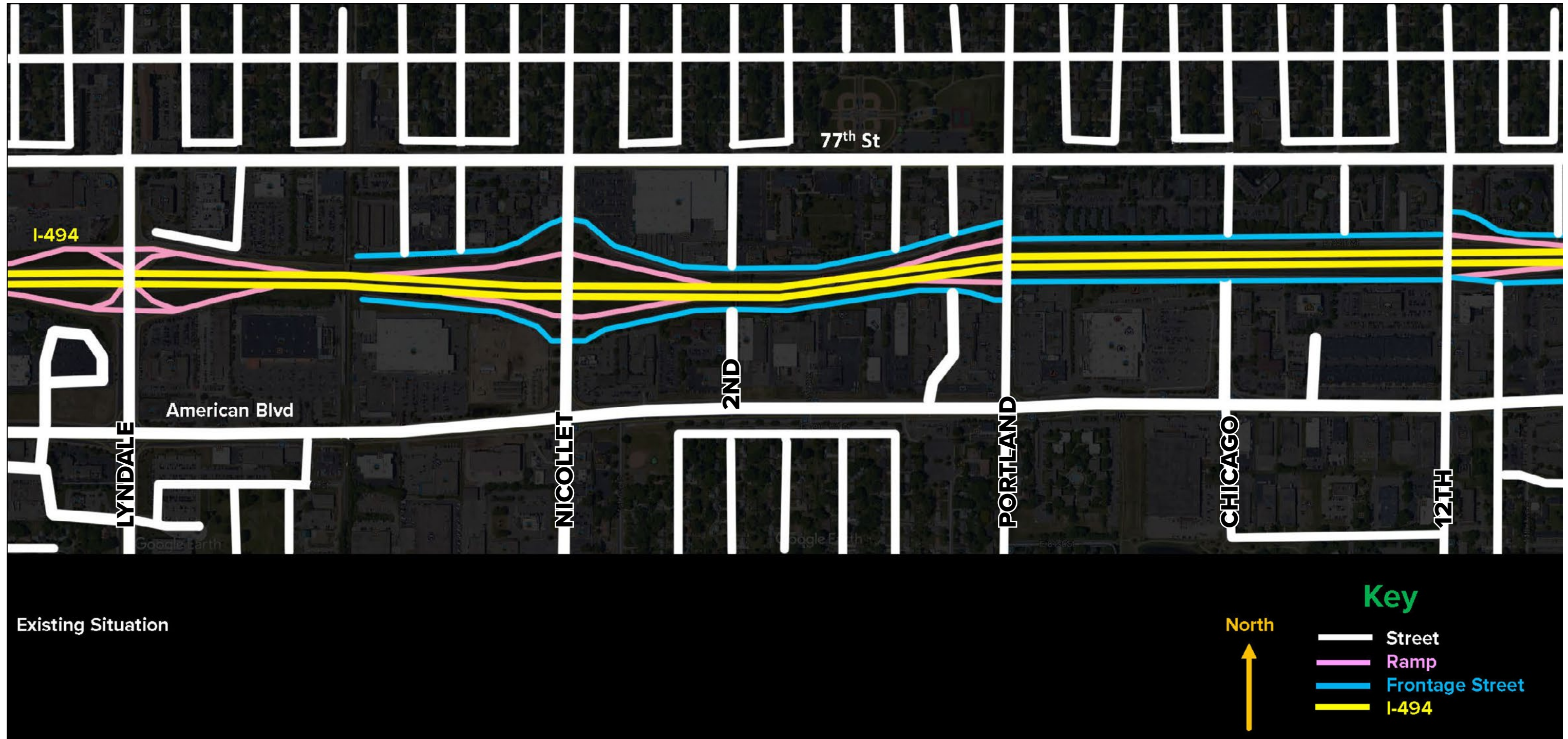
Portland Avenue & I-494

of Portland Avenue. The MnDOT concept adds two more ramps on the east side and additional motor vehicle lanes and turn lanes. With the closure of the 12th Avenue and the Nicollet interchanges, a significant amount of that traffic will need to use the expanded interchange on Portland Avenue, creating a severe traffic impact. Once on Portland Avenue, all of that interchange traffic has only two places to go: to the signalized intersection at 77th or to the signalized intersection at American Boulevard. As configured today, those intersections cannot handle that impact and, consequently, they will be significantly expanded, taking land from adjacent private properties and businesses. The combination of more traffic and more lanes will worsen the business environment and quality of life and will reduce walkability, inflicting several avoidable impacts on the local community. Access to the local businesses to and from Portland Avenue will be closed. Crossing distances and exposure for pedestrians and cyclists will worsen. Some mitigation is feasible with pedestrian signal timing, the careful design of intersections, and separations between travel lanes and pedestrian facilities, but the place will be dominated by a major highway interchange

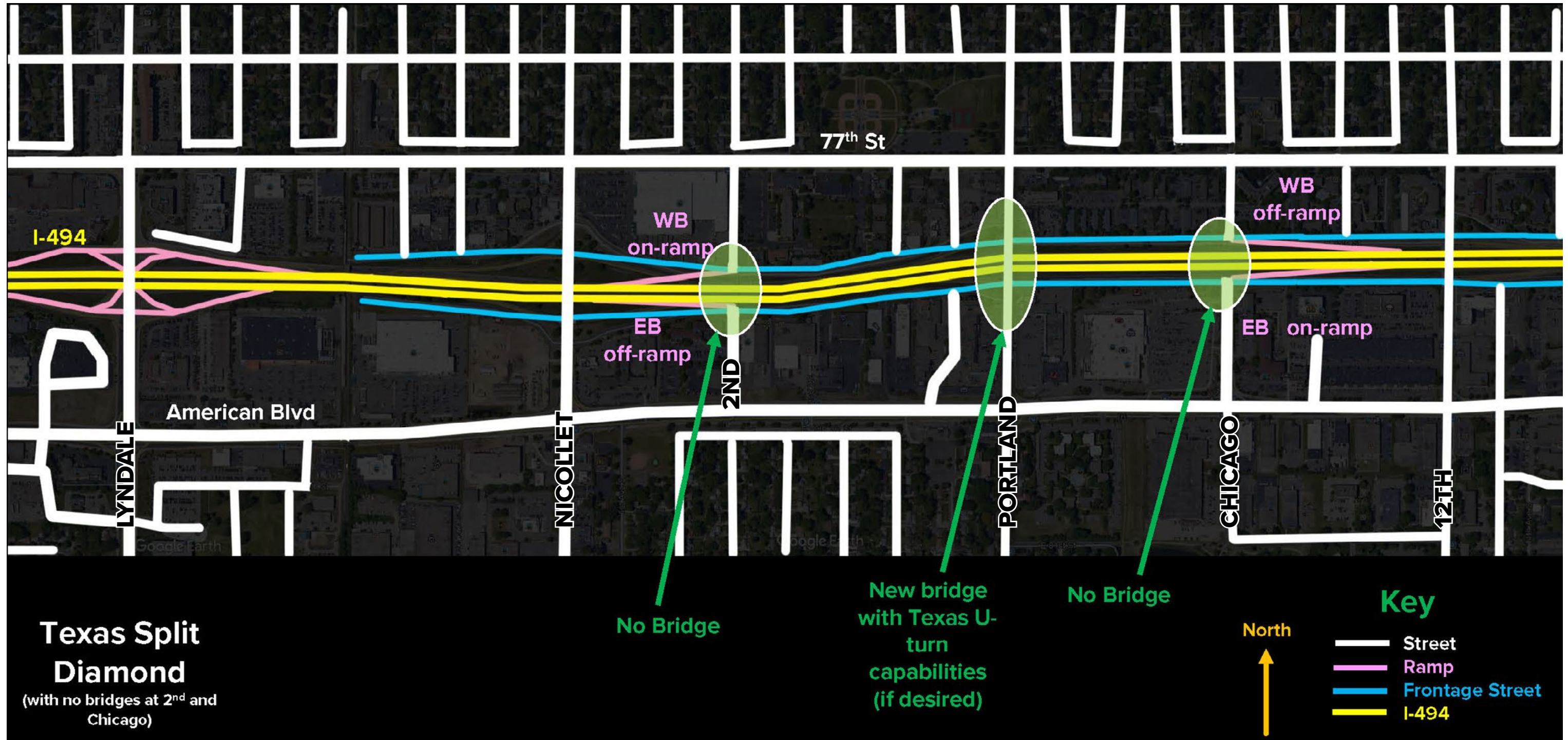
and motorists exiting at high speeds. MnDOT should consider the alternative suggested in this study because it spreads out the effects of the interchange to several streets and intersection, reduces the scale of the interchange, improves the business environment, and increases the potential for comfort of pedestrians and cyclists (see page 45 for a list of community benefits).

The MetroTransit D-Line project, which will have transit stations in this area and will be under construction by the end of 2021, which further emphasizes the need to consider the safety implications of this interchange of users of all ages and abilities along the streets and the need to consider the interchange ideas in this study.

Portland Avenue & I-494 Today



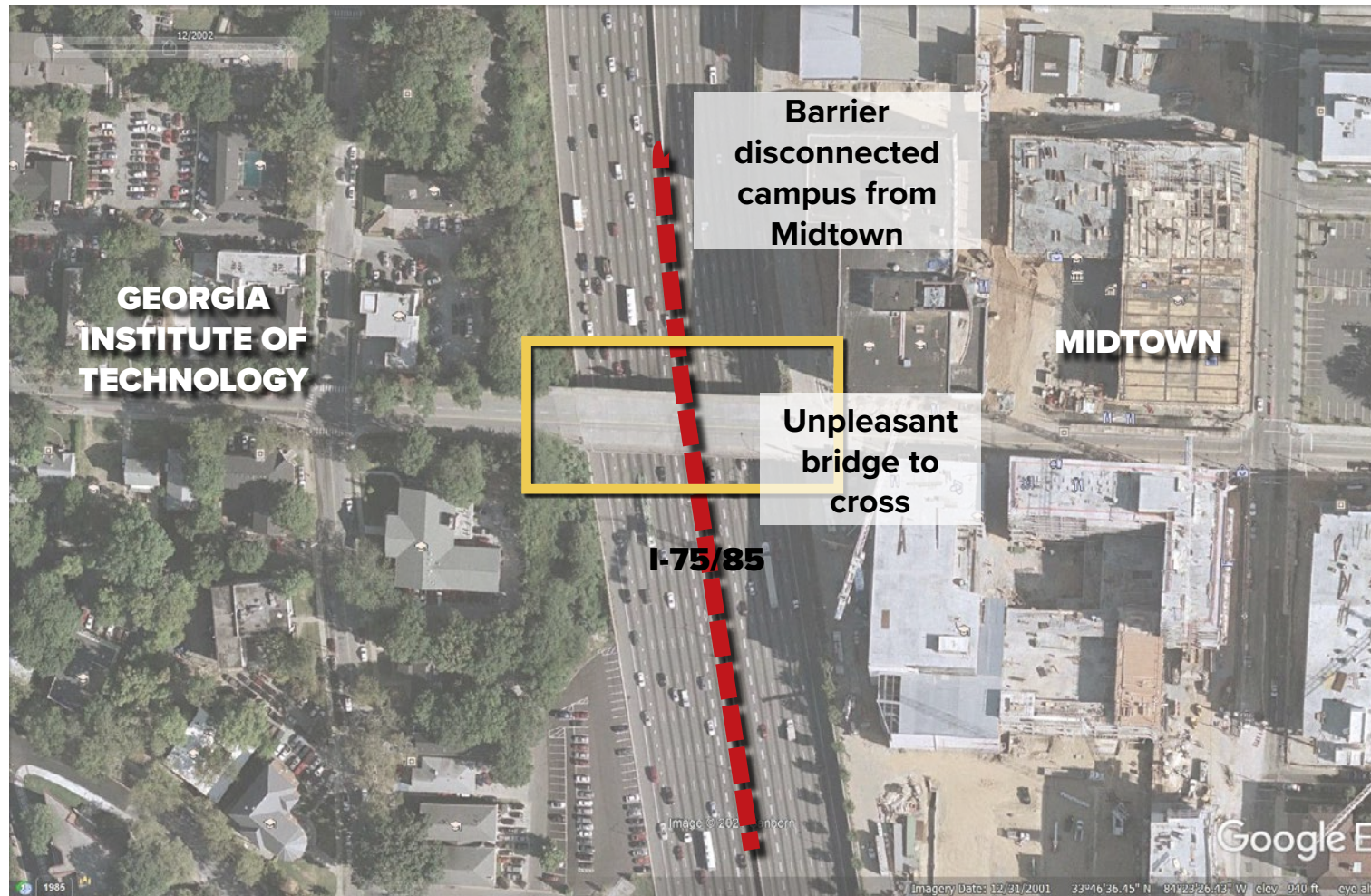
Portland Avenue & I-494 CNU Proposed Alternative



Texas Split Diamond
(with no bridges at 2nd and Chicago)

Inspiration: 5th Street Bridge - Atlanta, Georgia

BEFORE (2002)



AFTER (TODAY)

