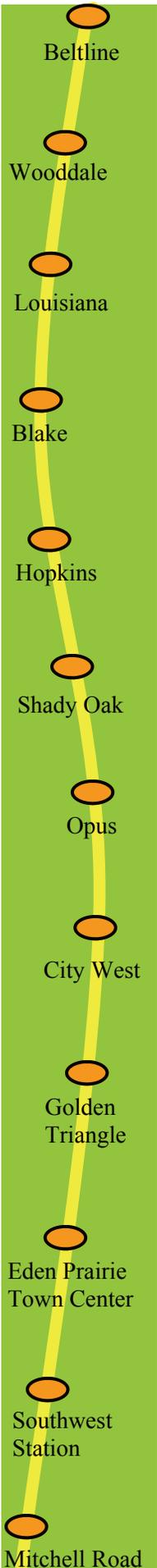




STATION AREA PLANNING



What is Station Area Planning?

In anticipation of the construction of passenger stations along the Southwest LRT line, the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRRA) has initiated station area planning activities in partnership with the cities of Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, and St. Louis Park. Planning will occur around the Minneapolis stations after a route into the Downtown area has been selected.

Station area planning will build upon the past planning work of each community to create a plan for station-compatible development and convenient access to LRT stations for riders. Community members, stakeholders, and city staff are working with the Hay Dobbs consulting team to develop strategies and recommendations for station area land-use and development plans within a half-mile radius, or about a ten minute walk, from each of the 12 stations.

Station area plans present a general vision for land use near stations that will guide future development and support increased LRT ridership. Station area plans often call for a variety of uses such as housing, office space, shops, and restaurants, and walking and biking connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and institutions. The following steps of the station area planning process are designed to create relevant, localized plans for each station:

- Create an existing condition report which identifies current traffic circulation patterns and land uses.
- Identify future development opportunities in the short-term (2008-2015 or pre-LRT) and long-term (2015-2030 or post-LRT).
- Assess the market conditions to determine the potential for transit-oriented development and station area redevelopment.
- Create an access and circulation plan that defines key pedestrian, bike, transit and auto access to the light rail station.

The Station Area Planning Process



- Develop concept plans that recommend how the station area could be used.
- Hold stakeholder and public meetings to obtain feedback from landowners, community members, and business owners.
- Finalize the preferred station area plan.
- Create transit-supportive district design guidelines which recommend patterns and forms of development for a mix of land use to achieve an active, transit-supportive, pedestrian environment.

For more information and upcoming meeting dates visit the Southwest Transitway website:

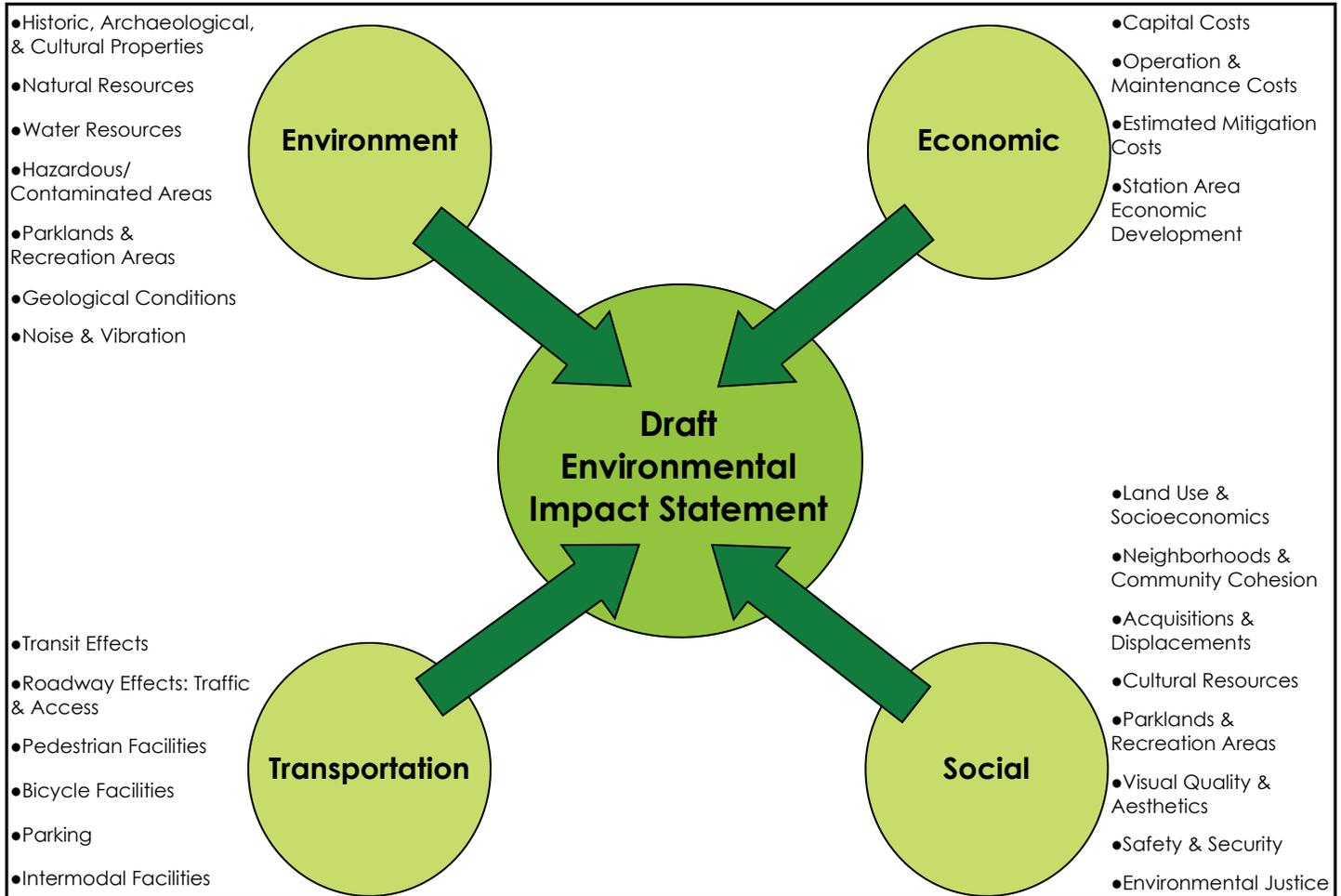
www.southwesttransitway.org

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What is a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)?

Concurrent with the Station Area Planning process, the HCRRRA has contracted HDR Engineering to assist in developing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southwest Transitway. The DEIS is an environmental study required for major transitway projects seeking federal funding. The purpose of the DEIS is to better understand the benefits and impacts of the proposed LRT line on the surrounding community and natural environment. The diagram below shows the four major components of the DEIS and some of the specific items that will receive attention in the DEIS process.



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Rendering of a Station Area Concept Plan

How Do Station Area Planning and the DEIS Fit Together?

The DEIS process is a major step that every project must complete before an application for federal New Starts funding can be submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Because the FTA values economic development and station area improvements, as well as new transit ridership, station area planning strengthens the Southwest Transitway's application to the FTA, making the project more competitive for scarce federal dollars.