



SOUTHWEST LRT

community works

connecting to jobs, housing, shopping, and fun

2011 ANNUAL REPORT

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SOUTHWESTTRANSITWAY.ORG

INTRODUCTION

SOUTHWEST LRT COMMUNITY WORKS: A COORDINATED APPROACH TO BUILDING A TRANSITWAY

The Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) Community Works partners came together in late 2010 to create a shared vision and implementation strategy to provide housing choices, stimulate business and job growth, enable Transit-Oriented Development, provide access to employment, and enhance the long term value of the communities in the Southwest LRT Corridor.

Southwest LRT Community Works Vision
The Southwest LRT Community Works Initiative collaborates with citizens, businesses, and government to align land use and transit planning so that the Southwest LRT Corridor is a premiere destination that is accessible, livable, and vibrant.

Community Works was created under the premise that a corridor-oriented approach to infrastructure investment would encourage development, leverage private resources, and improve quality of life for nearby communities and the region.

Since late 2010, the Cities of Eden Prairie, Edina, Hopkins, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, and St. Louis Park; Hennepin County, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, and the Metropolitan Council have come together to establish a unified corridor vision for quality housing and neighborhoods, improved mobility, and a robust economy.

CORRIDORS OF OPPORTUNITY: MAKING SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Across the Twin Cities, public, foundation, non-profit, and private leaders saw opportunities for a new model of transitway development known as Corridors of Opportunity. Southwest LRT Community Works is an integral part of this regional initiative, whose mission is to change the way transitway projects are developed and realize the greatest possible economic and environmental benefits for all.

Corridors of Opportunity Vision
Transitway corridors will guide the region's growth, vitality and competitiveness. Development along transitways will create distinctive places and strengthen local assets while increasing ridership and expanding access to jobs, affordable housing, and essential services for residents of all incomes and backgrounds.

PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES & LIVING CITIES: VISIONARY ALLIANCE

Southwest LRT Community Works received \$950,000 from the federal government to share this new system change model with the region and the nation. These resources were part of a \$5 million Sustainable Communities Grant awarded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD joined the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency to form the Partnership for Sustainable Communities to help neighborhoods nationwide improve access to affordable housing, increase transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment. The Twin Cities region also received \$16 million in grants, loans, and financial tools from the Living Cities Integration Initiative, a project of 22 of the world's largest foundations and financial institutions.

ORGANIZING FOR EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

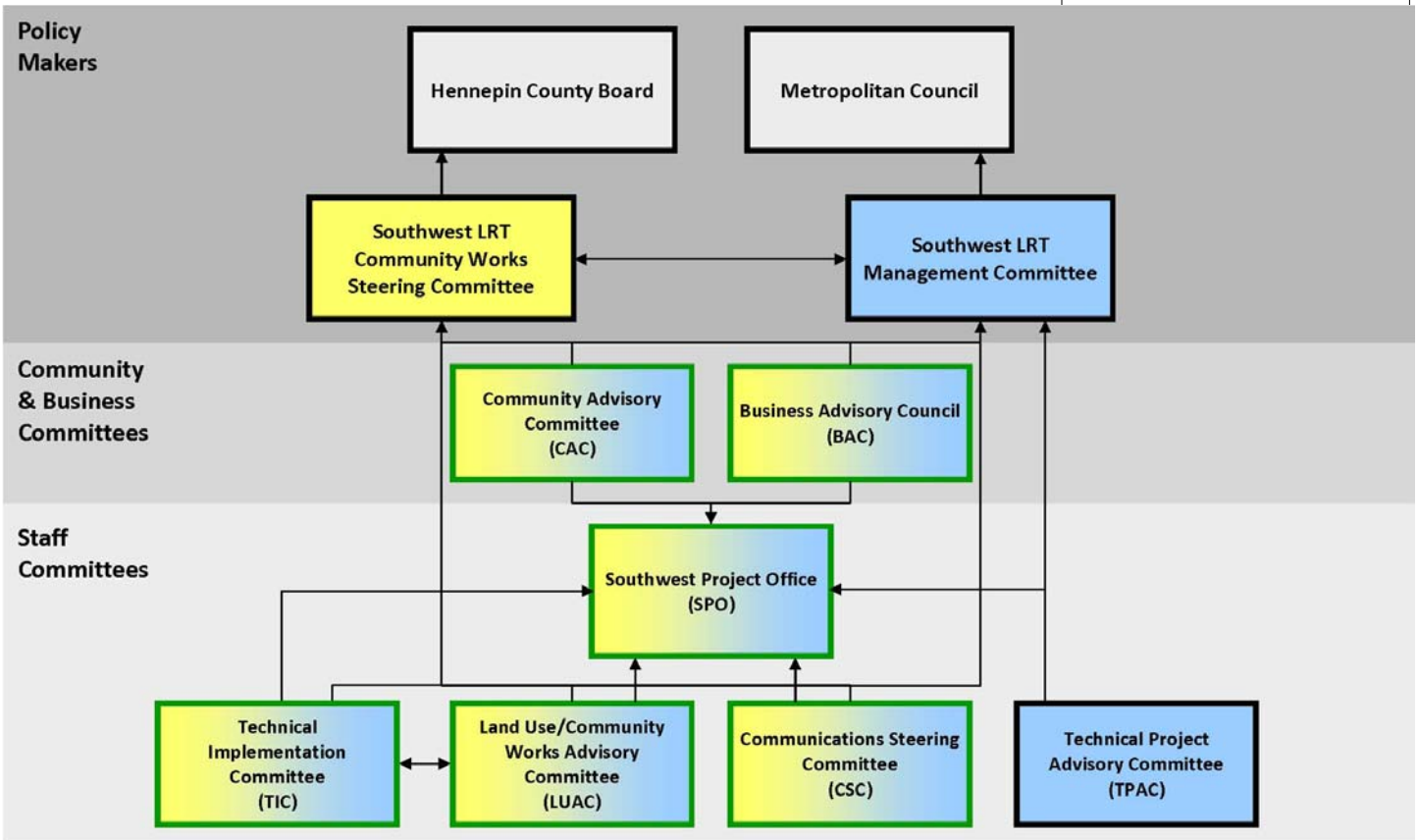
In the collaborative spirit of Corridors of Opportunity, Southwest LRT Community Works and Southwest LRT policy leaders have created an organizational structure that institutionalizes the integration of land use, economic development, and light rail engineering decisions, enabling policy leaders to consider their communities and the corridor as a whole. The organizational structure facilitates the sharing of information for better policy, planning, and engineering decisions, as well as consistent input from residents and businesses near the light rail line.

Southwest LRT Community Works and Southwest LRT project office staff work side-by-side on a daily basis to deliver an on time, on budget LRT project that increases regional transit ridership, creates great public spaces, and provides quality connections to employment, housing, and natural places.

**Southwest LRT
Community Works
Partners**

Hennepin County
Hennepin County Regional
Railroad Authority
Cities of Eden Prairie, Edina,
Hopkins, Minneapolis,
Minnetonka, & St. Louis Park
Metropolitan Council
Urban Land
Institute-Minnesota

SOUTHWEST LRT & COMMUNITY WORKS INTEGRATION



Legend

- Southwest LRT Community Works
- Southwest LRT Project
- Shared Committees

2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Southwest LRT Community Works Goals

Economic competitiveness and job growth

Promoting opportunities for business and employment growth

Housing choices

Positioning the Southwest LRT communities as a place for all to live

Quality neighborhoods

Creating unique, vibrant, safe, beautiful, and walkable station areas

Critical connections

Improving affordable regional mobility for all users

PLANNING AHEAD

Development opportunities and constraints coexist along the Southwest LRT corridor. Southwest LRT Community Works partners have delved into the fabric of the station areas and carefully cataloged the existing uses and character of each, researched demographics, employment, and transit use, and analyzed development potential and barriers. This research and analysis, along with an inventory of short and long-term infrastructure investments completed in 2011, and the results of the 2012 transitional station area plans will inform the Corridor Investment Framework. This Framework will strategically guide investments to achieve the goals of Southwest LRT Community Works.

Municipal partners are individually taking action to further the goals of Community Works. The City of Minneapolis adopted new zoning in the Royalston station area to enable growth in the area and established a Downtown Neighborhood District to promote the development of higher density neighborhoods and a variety of goods and services surrounding the Downtown office core. The City of St. Louis Park established a Business Park land use designation, which encourages a mix of office and light industrial uses with higher development densities and jobs per acre. A companion zoning district is also being developed. The City of Hopkins adopted a mixed-use zoning ordinance to accommodate a variety of uses in light rail station areas, and the City of Minnetonka established an overlay district to protect station areas from major development until planning can guide them. Further planning and policy changes and actions are anticipated in 2012.

REACHING OUT

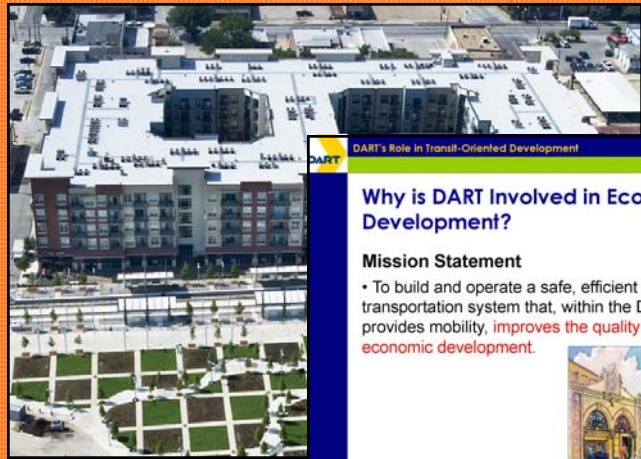
The diversity of people, businesses, and institutions along the corridor have inspired a variety of ways of connecting people to the project. The Southwest LRT Community Works project strives to engage with communities in the most effective manner; communication and collaboration with residents and businesses continues to evolve.

In 2011, Southwest LRT Community Works began to reach out to major corporations and employers in the Southwest LRT Corridor to determine a way for corporate stakeholders to participate in the project, and to encourage these large companies and employers to factor in the Southwest LRT project when considering their long-term investments.

Southwest LRT Community Works staff also worked closely with the Corridors of Opportunity Community Engagement Team to identify major institutions in each city and outline the demographics in the corridors. This work helped the Community Engagement Team select two community organizations – Intercongregation Community Association and New American Academy – that will engage immigrant residents and workers in Hopkins and Eden Prairie, connecting people to the light rail project in effective new ways.

LEARNING TOGETHER

As Southwest LRT Community Works partners work together, we benefit from regular and inclusive meetings where planners, engineers, and economic developers brainstorm on projects, exchange ideas, and share issues. Southwest LRT Community Works staff are increasingly familiar with their partners' expertise and resources. With the help of Urban Land Institute-Minnesota, Southwest LRT Community Works partners are connected to peer projects, applicable research, and diverse perspectives from across the country that provide knowledge and insight on linking transit, land use, and economic development.



DART's Role in Transit-Oriented Development

Why is DART Involved in Economic Development?

Mission Statement

- To build and operate a safe, efficient and effective transportation system that, within the DART Service Area, provides mobility, improves the quality of life, and stimulates economic development.



In September, representatives from Dallas Area Rapid Transit visited the Twin Cities for a workshop on station area development and value capture methods.



Eleven Southwest LRT Community Works members attended the 2011 Rail-volution conference in Washington, DC, impressing colleagues with our united planning efforts, including Federal Transit Administration Executive Director Matthew Welbes (pictured above with delegation members).



Opus Station Area: Phase 1 of the United Health Group office campus in Minnetonka is a 10-story, 350,000 square foot building completed in 2007. Phase 2 is currently under construction and will be another 10-story, 354,000 square foot building.

2012 LOOK AHEAD

PLANNING AHEAD IN 2012



Renderings from the North Loop Small Area Plan and the Minneapolis Station Area Strategic Plan.

Preliminary Engineering on the Southwest LRT line will begin, as will Community Works' transitional station area planning, which will help to prioritize infrastructure and development projects to prepare the station areas for opening day. The transitional station area plans will build on the 2011 efforts to create quality neighborhoods and critical connections in the corridor, and present the possibility for short-, mid-, and long-term change in each station area. The transitional station area plans will benefit from close alignment with the Preliminary Engineering process, enabling design that works for light rail engineering as well as for the nearby station areas.

Southwest LRT Community Works will continue to make strides toward its goal of stimulating economic competitiveness and job growth, by coordinating workforce and economic development efforts to support business growth

and job creation. Additionally, work will begin on a strategy to identify options for preserving and constructing a full range of housing options along the corridor.

REACHING OUT IN 2012

The success of light rail design and station area infrastructure and development projects depend on regular input from a range of people, businesses, and institutions with differing needs and expectations. Building on a long history of community participation in the Southwest LRT project, staff and consultants will work with community members to ensure an

inclusive, collaborative and transparent engagement process that makes the most of our regional investment in light rail transit.



Hopkins Station Area: The Marketplace and Main project will bring 53 upscale apartments and 6,000 square feet of street level retail space to Main Street in Downtown Hopkins when it opens in August, 2012.

Southwest LRT Community Works is committed to reaching out to community members so interested people and organizations have opportunities to be involved in ways that work for them. That's why in 2012 Southwest LRT Community Works will be:

On the web – A new website format will make it easier to get the latest news, research the project, find a meeting, or contact us at southwesttransitway.org.

In your neighborhood – Community Works members and staff are available to attend neighborhood, civic groups, clubs, or any other organization's meetings to present information and talk with attendees. Staff is also available for site visits or tours to see issues firsthand and will hold meetings for input on plans and projects.

In our offices – When the Southwest LRT project offices open in Spring, 2012, neighbors and interested people will be able to drop by to see maps, models, or other visuals, pick up information, and talk to staff.

At business and community committee meetings – The Southwest LRT Community Advisory Committee (CAC) has been meeting since 2007 to identify community interests, develop recommendations, and provide a forum for sharing community concerns. In 2012, the Community Advisory Committee is expanding to include fresh perspectives from additional stakeholders. Youth, seniors, under-represented minority communities, transit riders, trail users, affordable housing advocates, active living supporters, and educational institution representatives will join a group of committed, knowledgeable members, who each represent a station near their home or work. With a combination of place-based and issue-based members, the expanded CAC will become an even more effective voice for the community.

A Business Advisory Council to be formed in 2012 will include a wide range of business representation, helping to disseminate project information and gather local input on how light rail engineering and station area land use and development changes can most effectively work for business.

At the legislature – Transit plays a central role in making our region and state an attractive, affordable place to live, work, play, and do business. Southwest LRT Community Works, together with the Edina, Eden Prairie, Twin West, and Minneapolis Regional Chambers of Commerce, the Counties Transit Improvement Board, and the Metropolitan Council, will continue to advocate for transit and its benefits to the state legislature to ensure that the Southwest LRT project receives the necessary state funding to proceed.



Wooddale Station Area: The Wooddale Pointe Senior Housing Project will bring 115 units of senior housing and 10,000 square feet of street level retail space to the neighborhood when it opens in Fall, 2012.

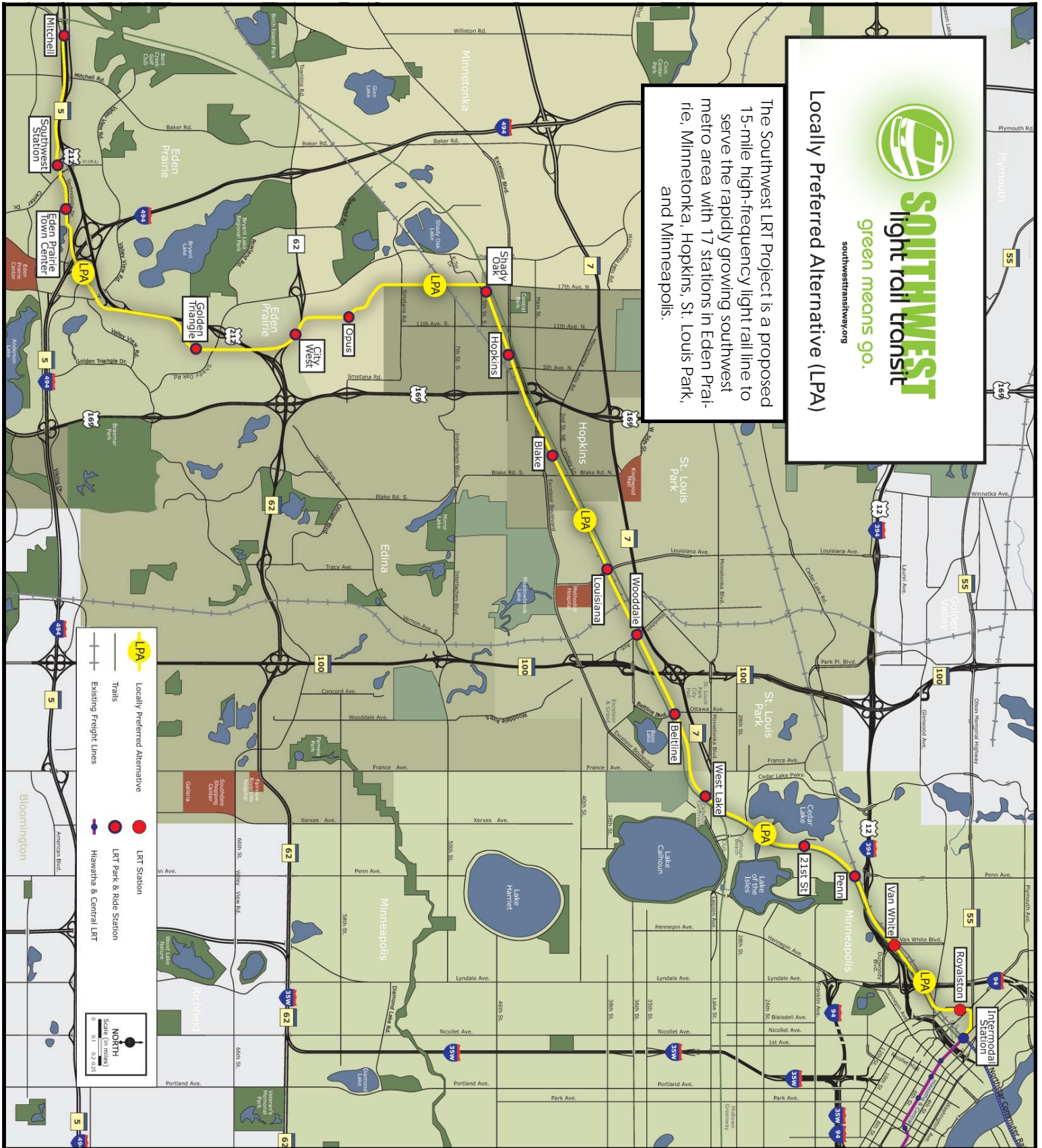


SOUTHWEST
light rail transit
green means go.

southwestrailway.org

Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)

The Southwest LRT Project is a proposed 15-mile high-frequency light rail line to serve the rapidly growing southwest metro area with 17 stations in Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park, and Minneapolis.



LPA Locally Preferred Alternative

Trails

Existing Freight Lines

LRT Station

LRT Park & Ride Station

Hawatha & Central LRT

Scale (in miles)

0 0.1 0.2 0.25

NORTH



St. Louis Park
MINNESOTA

Experience LIFE in the Park

