



**Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee**

Thursday, January 21, 2016

1:30 – 3:00 PM

Council Chambers, St. Louis Park City Hall

**Agenda**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>I. Welcome and Announcements</b><br><i>Hennepin County Commissioner Jan Callison</i>  | <b>1:30 to 1:40 PM</b>                  |
| <b>II. Approval of the November 2015 Meeting Minutes*</b><br><i>Hennepin County Commissioner Jan Callison</i>  | <b>1:40 to 1:45 PM</b><br>(Action)      |
| <b>III. Committee Updates</b><br><i>Technical Implementation Committee (TIC)</i><br><i>Business &amp; Community Advisory Committees (BAC/CAC)</i><br><i>Blake Station Subcommittee</i> | <b>1:45 to 2:00 PM</b><br>(Information) |
| <b>IV. Southwest Corridor Housing Strategy</b>   | <b>2:00 to 2:15 PM</b><br>(Discussion)  |
| <b>V. Resolution: Corridor Wide Housing Strategy*</b>  | <b>2:15 to 2:20 PM</b><br>(Action)      |
| <b>VI. Community Development Update</b>  | <b>2:20 to 2:45 PM</b><br>(Information) |
| <b>VII. Station Renaming Proposal</b>  | <b>2:45 to 3:00 PM</b><br>(Information) |
| <b>VII. Adjournment</b>  | <b>3:00 PM</b>                          |

\*enclosed

The next Southwest Community Works Steering Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, **March 17, 2016** at the St. Louis Park City Hall at 1:30 PM.



**SOUTHWEST LRT**  
community works

*Beyond the Rails*  
[swlrtccommunityworks.org](http://swlrtccommunityworks.org)

Southwest LRT Community Works  
Steering Committee

2016 Meeting Schedule

Meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 PM at the St. Louis Park City Hall, Council Chambers.

*January 21st*

*March 17th*

*May 19th*

*July 21st*

*September 15th*

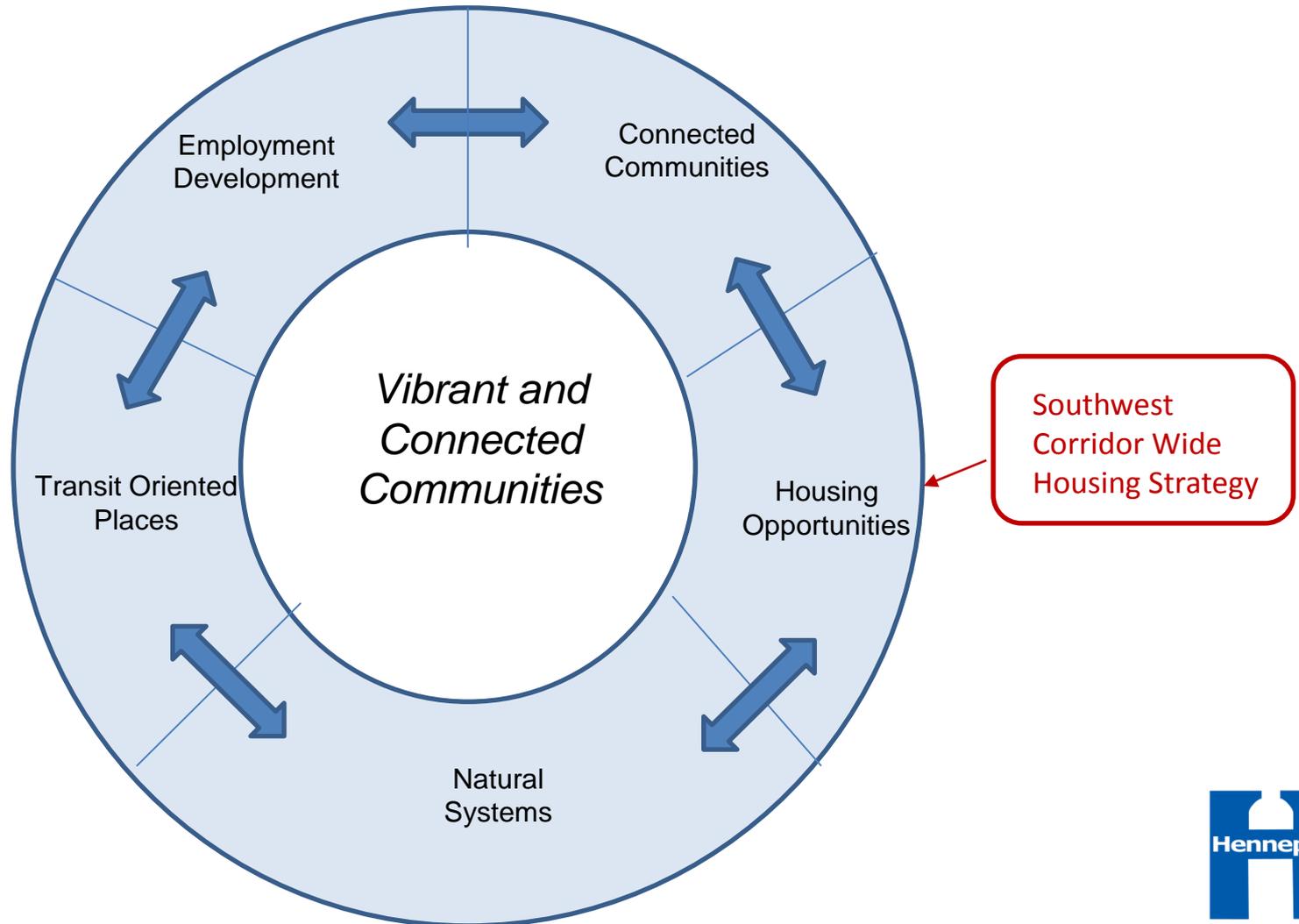
*November 17th*

**Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee  
Roster (January 2016)**

<b>Representing</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
Hennepin County	Jan Callison (Chair)	Member	jan.callison@hennepin.us
	Linda Higgins	Member	Linda.higgins@hennepin.us
Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority	Marion Greene	Member	Marion.greene@hennepin.us
	Peter McLaughlin	Alternate	Peter.mclaughlin@hennepin.us
Metropolitan Council	Jennifer Munt	Member	jennifer.munt@metc.state.mn.us
City of Minneapolis	Linea Palmisano	Member	Linea.palmisano@minneapolismn.gov
	Lisa Goodman	Alternate	Lisa.goodman@minneapolismn.gov
City of St. Louis Park	Anne Mavity	Member	anne@annemavity.org
	Sue Sanger	Alternate	suesanger@comcast.net
City of Edina	James Hovland	Member	jhovland@ci.edina.mn.us
	Mary Brindle	Alternate	mbrindle@comcast.net
City of Hopkins	Kristi Halverson	Member	khalverson@hopkinsmn.com
	Aaron Kuznia	Alternate	akuznia@hopkinsmn.com
City of Minnetonka	Tony Wagner	Member	twagner@eminnetonka.com
	Terry Schneider	Alternate	tschneider@eminnetonka.com
City of Eden Prairie	Kathy Nelson	Member	knelson@edenprairie.org
	Brad Aho	Alternate	baho@edenprairie.org
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District	Dick Miller	Member	dickrmiller@gmail.com
	Jeff Casale	Alternate	jasale@minnesotahomes.com
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Anita Tabb	Member	atabb@minneapolisparcs.org,
	Meg Forney	Alternate	megf@visi.com
SouthWest Transit	Nancy Tyra-Lukens	Member	ntyra-lukens@edenprairie.org
Urban Land Institute-Minnesota	Caren Dewar	Ex-officio	caren.dewar@uli.org
	Cathy Bennett	Alternate	Cathy.bennett@uli.org
Community Advisory Committee	Russ Adams	Ex-officio	russ@metrostability.org
Business Advisory Council	Will Roach	Ex-officio	Will.Roach@bakertilly.com

# Southwest Community Works Vision

*“connecting people to jobs, housing, shopping and fun”*





## Southwest Community Works Steering Committee

### Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 17, 2015

1:30 – 3:00 PM, St. Louis Park City Hall

### Meeting Attendees

#### Steering Committee Members and Alternates

Linda Higgins, Hennepin County member

Mary Bridle, City of Edina alternate

Marion Greene, HCRRA

Kristi Halverson, City of Hopkins member

James Hovland, City of Edina member

Anne Mavity, City of St. Louis Park member

Kathy Nelson, City of Eden Prairie member

Linea Palmisano, City of Minneapolis member

Kurt Rogness, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District *for Dick Miller*

Terry Schneider, City of Minnetonka alternate

Anita Tabb, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board member

Caren Dewar, ULI-MN member

Will Roach, BAC member

Russ Adams, CAC member

Other attendees: Katie Walker (Hennepin County), Kathryn Hansen (SPO), Meg McMonigal (St. Louis Park), Kerri Pearce Ruch (Hennepin County), Julie Wischnack (Minnetonka), Alysen Nesse (Eden Prairie), Michele Schnitker (St. Louis Park), Margo Geffen (Hennepin County), Barry Schade (Bryn Mawr neighborhood), Vita Ditter (Bryn Mawr neighborhood), Tara Beard (Met Council), Tim Thompson (Housing Justice Project), Allyson Lueneburg (Hennepin County), Howard Orenstein (Hennepin County), Connor Schafer (KLD Consulting), Kevin Locke (St. Louis Park), John Doan (Hennepin County), Libby Starling (Met Council), Dan Pfiefer (SPO), Cathy Bennett (ULI-MN)

- Welcome and Announcements:** Acting Chair Higgins called the meeting to order and began with announcements. Chair Higgins announced that Hennepin County will be accepting applications for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) funding in early 2016 and cities are encouraged to apply. Councilmember Nelson (Eden Prairie) announced that the Eden Prairie City Council has taken action to contribute land at City West station and Eden Road for the SW LRT project.
- Approval of August 2015 meeting minutes:** Chair Higgins requested action on the August 2015 minutes. Minutes were approved on a voice vote.



3. **Committee updates:** Katie Walker (Hennepin County staff) provided an update on the Technical Implementation Committee (TIC) activities, which included a presentation from the Trust for Public Land regarding greenspace along transit corridors. Russ Adams and Will Roach provided updates on the recent joint CAC/BAC meeting, which was held on October 27<sup>th</sup>. The joint BAC/CAC meeting focused on construction communications and outreach, discussing challenges in reaching a wide range of groups with construction impact information.
4. **Fair Housing Act & U.S. Supreme Court Fair Housing Decision:** Phil Steger (Dorsey & Whitney LLC) presented an overview of the U.S. Supreme Court decision on Fair Housing, which was handed down in June 2015. He noted that the Court upheld the disparate impact theory while also addressing intent to discriminate. The Court said that a policy must intentionally cause disparate impact, not simply be the result of another legitimate policy. Barriers must be “arbitrary, artificial and unnecessary” for a case to proceed. Members had a number of questions for Mr. Steger about impacts to cities for actions and non-actions. Questions included impacts on zoning that dictates lot sizes, policies relating to unit sizes, current local HUD complaints and the potential for additional lawsuits stemming from this decision as well as implications for the *Southwest Corridor Housing Strategy* and for not adopting specific policy tools, such as inclusionary zoning. Mr. Steger was clear to point out that he was not providing legal advice as he answered questions and strongly recommended that members need to secure their own legal advice on this issue. He did stress the importance of good public policy with clear goals and objectives to avoid lawsuits.
5. **Corridor Wide Housing Strategy:** Kerri Pearce Ruch (Hennepin County) and Michele Schnitker (St. Louis Park) provided an overview of the revised *Southwest Corridor Housing Strategy*. The draft before the Committee had been updated from the March 2015 version following stakeholder engagement and feedback received. The overview highlighted sections of the report that had been changed or added since the March 2015 draft as well as actions and a timeline for next steps. Members discussed the document and asked clarifying questions of staff. Due to a lack of sufficient time to conclude their review and discussion of this item the committee decided to delay action on this time until the January 2016 meeting.
6. **Resolution: Corridor Wide Housing Strategy:** Due to a lack of time for adequate discussion, a motion was made to lay this resolution over to the January 2016 meeting. The motion was made by Anne Mavity (St. Louis Park), seconded by Marion Greene (Hennepin County), and passed on a voice vote.
7. **Adjournment:** The Committee adjourned at 3:11 PM. The next Southwest Community Works Steering Committee meeting will be on January 21, 2016.



**Agenda Item V – Southwest Corridor Housing Strategy**

Steering Committee Action Requested:

**Background:**

In Mach 2015, the Steering Committee reviewed a draft of the *Southwest Corridor Housing Strategy*, accepted the draft document and directed that the Housing Workgroup solicit stakeholder feedback and return to the Steering Committee. Feedback has been gathered from a variety of stakeholders, including developers, funders, housing advocates, city councils and planning commissions, among others. Edits have been incorporated into a revised version of the strategy.

**Previous Action on Request:**

**Recommendation:**

**Attachments:**

- *Southwest Corridor Housing Strategy* – final draft

**Comments:**



HENNEPIN COUNTY

# SOUTHWEST LRT COMMUNITY WORKS



## Corridor Housing Strategy

A plan to support and encourage a full range of housing choices in METRO Green Line Extension station areas

[www.hennepin.us/southwestlrt](http://www.hennepin.us/southwestlrt)





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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## About the strategy

In May 2012, the Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee endorsed the creation of a housing strategy for the Southwest Corridor and directed the program's Housing Workgroup to carry out the development process. The purpose of this strategy is to help fulfill the Southwest Community Work's vision, goals and investment guiding principles to position corridor communities as places for all to live, providing a full range of housing choices, especially within a half-mile of the METRO Green Line Extension.

### Southwest LRT Community Works Vision

*Collaborate and partner so that Southwest Corridor becomes a premier destination that is accessible, livable and vibrant*

## About the Housing Workgroup

The Housing Workgroup for Southwest LRT Community Works comprises staff from all six corridor cities, Hennepin County, Family Housing Fund, Twin Cities LISC, Minnesota Housing, Metropolitan Council, the Southwest Corridor Project Office and ULI-Minnesota.

Workgroup members have collaborated on background research and funding to support development of a corridor-wide housing strategy for the Southwest Corridor (METRO Green Line Extension). It is acknowledged that there may be many ways for communities to meet local and regional housing goals and that each community, through its elected and appointed leaders, will have its own legitimate priorities, funding and policy choices and may seek different balances at different points in time.

We present this document to identify options for strategies and goals and to provide considered staff input on a coordinated approach. There is no single or particular vision of urban development, and corridor communities have leeway to adopt various policies necessary to achieve their valid interests. It is also recognized that multiple factors go into investment decisions and locations for constructing or renovating housing units.

## Southwest LRT Community Works Adopted Goals

### **Economic competitiveness and job growth**

*promote opportunities for business and employment growth*

### **Housing choices**

*position the Southwest LRT communities as a place for all to live*

### **Quality neighborhoods**

*create unique, vibrant, safe, beautiful, and walkable station areas*

### **Critical connections**

*improve affordable regional mobility for all users.*

## Housing Workgroup members

Tara Beard, Metropolitan Council

Cathy Bennett, ULI-Minnesota

Theresa Cunningham, City of Minneapolis

Margo Geffen, Hennepin County

Elise Durbin, City of Minnetonka

Kathryn Hansen, Southwest Project Office

Margaret Kaplan, Minnesota Housing

Molly Koivumaki, City of Eden Prairie

Tania Mahtani, City of Eden Prairie

Alysen Nesse, City of Eden Prairie

Gretchen Nicholls, Twin Cities LISC

Kerri Pearce Ruch, Hennepin County

Joyce Repya, City of Edina

Elizabeth Ryan, Family Housing Fund

Brian Schaffer, City of Minneapolis

Michele Schnitker, City of St. Louis Park

Libby Starling, Metropolitan Council

Stacy Unowsky, City of Hopkins

Katie Walker, Hennepin County

For additional information on Southwest LRT Community Works, its members, partners and initiatives, as well as contact information, please visit [www.swlrcommunityworks.org](http://www.swlrcommunityworks.org).

## BACKGROUND

### Southwest LRT Community Works Guiding Principle for investment — Housing

*Providing a full range  
of housing choices —  
positioning the  
Southwest LRT  
communities  
as a place for all to live*

Southwest LRT Community Works and its funding partners have been working together since 2012 to inventory existing housing options in the corridor, understand what the future housing demand may be and the likely demographics of people interested in living along the corridor. In addition, the work includes developing a deep understanding of the current and potential local, county, state and federal technical and financial resources to support a full range of housing choices. Informing this work was a series of stakeholder engagement activities in 2015 to gather feedback from groups including funders, developers, housing advocates, city councils and commissions, along with Southwest Corridor-specific studies listed in the box below.

Additionally, individual cities have undertaken housing studies, outlined tools and strategies in their comprehensive plans and set individual housing goals. These efforts, along with other resources and technical assistance, have been compiled and taken into consideration to inform a Southwest Corridor-wide Housing Strategy along the Green Line Extension. Southwest LRT Community Works envisions this corridor-wide strategy as a complement to other housing planning and policy work. It provides objectives, suggested housing targets and potential implementation strategies that are options to help Corridor stakeholders work towards a full range of housing choices in LRT station areas.

### Recent Southwest Corridor housing studies

#### **Southwest Corridor-wide Housing Inventory (2013)**

a chronicle of existing housing and demographics along the corridor

#### **Southwest LRT New Starts Affordable Housing Rating Evaluation Summary, MZ Strategies (2013)**

an outline of existing SW Corridor Cities plans and programs that support affordable and workforce housing that can be applied to the LRT Corridor

#### **Southwest Corridor Investment Framework (2013)**

Transitional Station Area Action Plans for each of the 17 station areas, including recommendations on likely sites for housing development

#### **Southwest Corridor Housing Gaps Analysis (2014)**

projects future housing demand, provides market analysis and outlines recommendations and tools to achieve a full range of housing choices.

#### **Southwest LRT New Starts Submittal (2014)**

updated information on costs, ridership and land use/ economic development both current and future, as part of the federal LRT funding process

## Why a coordinated housing strategy?

The Southwest LRT Corridor is well known as job-rich, with over 270,000 jobs expected by 2030. Housing will play a key role in maximizing economic development and supporting job growth along the Southwest Corridor, as well as in helping the LRT line to be successful. Workers who can live close to their jobs save money in transportation costs; a full range of housing choices within station areas will help support a balanced employment base; and lifecycle housing in communities and increased housing density around transit stations will support the LRT line with consistent or increased ridership.

However, studies along Southwest Corridor point to the majority of new housing being high-end /luxury development. This leads to a concern that without a coordinated strategy, development in station areas may not produce a full range of housing choices, either by cost or unit size and type. Recent studies by the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy of 42 neighborhoods and 12 metropolitan areas revealed that when transit is added, housing stock becomes more expensive. These and other studies indicate that existing and future housing located strategically near light rail transit experiences a rise in value and rents at a more rapid pace than the general market. This increase helps to spur economic development and at the same time has a tendency to reduce the opportunities for lower-to-moderate income people and transit-dependent individuals who may desire and benefit most by living in station areas. Rising housing costs generally hit low-income working households the hardest, which elevates the risk of involuntary displacement for people already living in those areas, who may no longer be able to afford to own or rent due to the increase in values.

## Why work together?

Creating a full range of housing choices is a difficult challenge, yet it will be one measure of the success of Southwest LRT (METRO Green Line Extension) and the communities it serves. Collaboration is key to adequately addressing the challenges, particularly in developing affordable housing.

A collaborative approach increases the corridor's ability to be competitive and adds leverage to secure public and philanthropic resources. It also sends a positive message to the development community that the corridor cities are "all-together" in supporting a mix of housing choices, and helps to create alignment to achieve regional housing goals.

***"Ensuring that there is a full range of housing choices with access to transit in our cities builds economic prosperity and competitiveness by attracting and retaining residents to support key employers."***

**— Family Housing Fund**

***"... we must act now to ensure that the housing built in these locations provides for a mix of incomes or a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity will be lost."***

**— Center for Transit Oriented Development**

## Successful collaboration and shared benefits

A Housing Strategy for the Southwest Corridor may enable corridor cities, Hennepin County and other public and private partners to do more — better — together than they can do alone. For instance, it may help them to:

### Create and sustain healthy communities

By providing a full range of housing choices all along the Southwest corridor, cities will be better able to create and sustain the livable, vibrant neighborhoods that contribute to overall city well-being. Housing that is affordable to a mix of incomes around all station areas increases choices for residents looking to live near work, family or educational opportunities. It also reduces transportation costs and creates equity in communities.

### Provide lifecycle housing for existing residents

Whether it's housing for young people just out of college, move-up housing for growing families or housing options for seniors looking to age in place, the right mix of housing can help cities retain residents and build strong, stable communities. A Corridor-wide Housing Strategy will help cities respond to the needs of their existing residents and accommodate community needs.

### Achieve individual city goals:

The Housing Strategy will assist cities in meeting their individually adopted housing goals and may allow them to increase their Housing Performance Score to qualify for resources from the Metropolitan Council including the Livable Communities Demonstration Account program (LCDA) and other sources.

### Leverage resources

Southwest Corridor cities and Hennepin County can use the housing strategy to leverage additional public and private resources, compete better for limited grant funds and philanthropic dollars and attract greater private development than any entity may be able to do in acting alone.

### Increase economic competitiveness

There is an economic case for providing the best opportunities for access to quality housing for those with modest incomes. If essential workers along the corridor cannot afford to live there anymore, it impacts not just individual cities but also the economic growth and competitiveness of the corridor and entire region.

## Offer consistency of approach

Quality developers have a limited capacity to pursue projects. Project costs increase when inconsistent visions, goals and processes result in developers spending substantial time pursuing needed capital and regulatory approvals. By contrast, developers may be drawn to a redevelopment-ready area that has a collaborative housing approach and consistency of vision. This reduces the complexities of development, helps to solve problems and manages development risks. A corridor-wide Housing Strategy can provide clarity and consistency to the local and national development community, allowing cities and the County to take full advantage of unique transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities and to be creative in development near transit that will grow the tax base now and into the future.

## Sustain and improve the Southwest LRT New Starts Score

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) considers policies, planning and programs that support development and retention of affordable housing along transit corridors. In its most recent New Starts ranking, the FTA spoke highly of the coordinated planning efforts and programs along Southwest Corridor, noting that “The region appears to have one of the most comprehensive sets of affordable housing initiatives in the country.” FTA ranked Southwest LRT “high” based on coordination and planning efforts around affordable housing, but ranked it only “medium-low” based on the formula for counting legally-binding affordable housing along the corridor. In order to make the LRT project as competitive as possible for federal funding, FTA will be looking for further action, such as adoption of a corridor-wide housing strategy, when it reviews Southwest LRT for the Full Funding Grant Agreement.

*... The region appears to have one of the most comprehensive sets of affordable housing initiatives in the country.*

**— Capital Investment Program Project Profiles, Federal Transition Administration, 2016**

## How was the strategy created?

The Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee has adopted goals and guiding principles for investment that ground the work of this Housing Strategy. They provide the overarching strategy goal, as well as the basis for recommended targets for constructing and preserving housing and implementation strategies.

This document aims to provide one measure of what a “full range of housing choices” means within a specific time period. It also lays out a menu of implementation strategies and action steps as well as identifies key partner roles. While no one entity is likely to take on all of the implementation strategies, cities along the corridor can work together to share resources and information and use the strategies that best meet their community’s needs.

## HOUSING GOAL AND AFFORDABILITY TARGETS

The Housing Gaps Analysis examined each station area and suggested development scenarios. These included potential numbers for new construction and also identified existing rental units in need of preservation. These scenarios form the baseline for unit targets along Southwest corridor by 2030, ten years after METRO Green Line Extension LRT service begins operations.

The Gaps Analysis suggests that if housing development is left solely to market forces, new development around station areas will be market-rate and luxury rental options — not the mix of housing types desired by corridor communities. Therefore, this housing strategy pays particular attention to tools and resources that support affordable housing development and preservation.

The Gaps Analysis also took a fiscally constrained approach to affordable housing recommendations in the corridor, which means that affordability targets may be lower than measures of affordability need. However, the implementation strategies include options to bring new resources to affordable housing development and preservation. Success with these strategies could allow additional units above the baseline targets to be created.

There is a need for a variety of options in terms of housing unit sizes, for-sale as well as rental opportunities and affordability levels. A key reason for this is the desire to retain community residents as their housing needs change and evolve over a lifetime. Larger housing sizes, especially three- and four-bedroom units, may be of particular need, as well as senior housing and entry-level home ownership opportunities. Additionally units for those earning 30% of area median income are particularly needed.

These baseline targets may be modified over time to respond to market conditions and new housing policy direction, including 2018 comprehensive planning. While cities are not expected to plan for all of their affordable housing need to be located in areas within a half-mile METRO Green Line Extension stations, this LRT transit investment provides unique opportunities to increase the likelihood that all income levels have access to TOD housing.

**Southwest LRT Community Works Housing Goal:**  
*Position the Southwest LRT communities as a place for all to live.*

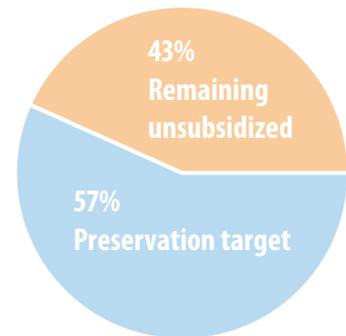
**Southwest LRT Community Works guiding principle for investment:** *Provide a full range of housing choices.*

**New Construction:** Add 11,200 new units within ½ mile of the Corridor, including 3,520 units affordable low to moderate income households (up to 100% AMI), with 2,265 of those units affordable to those at 80% AMI or below by 2030. This target also includes 1,314 new home ownership units, with 950 of those affordable to entry-level and mid-market owners.

**Preservation:** Preserve 3,800 unsubsidized affordable (<60% AMI) rental units by 2030, out of 6,700 unsubsidized affordable units within ½ mile of the Corridor.

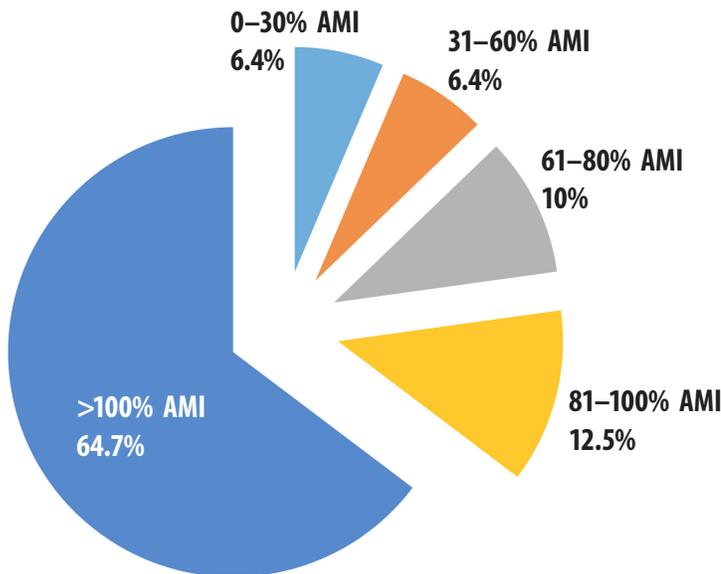
**Corridor Preservation Target**

Unsubsidized affordable rental = 6700 units

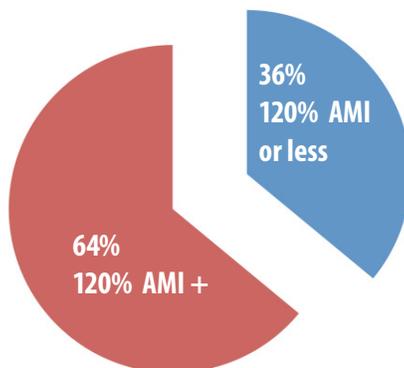


**Affordability targets for new construction:**

**Rental**



**Homeownership**



**Defining affordable:**

- *Area Median Income (AMI) is a calculation that funders and policymakers use to gauge affordability.*
- *Affordable housing is typically defined as housing that is affordable to low- or moderate- income families.*
- *Affordable housing costs should, in general, comprise no more than 30% of household income.*

## Allocating housing along the Southwest Corridor

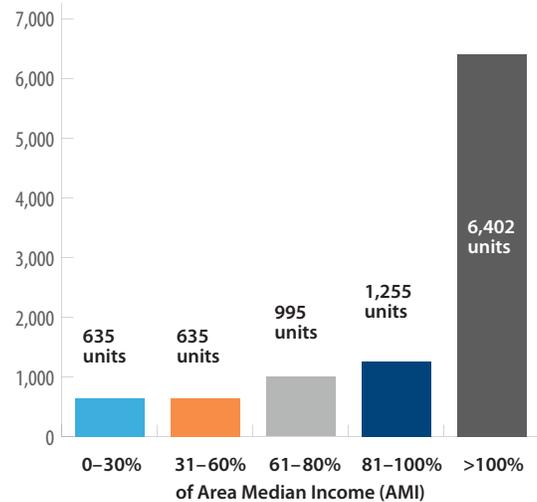
### About allocation of need:

The Metropolitan Council developed a process of forecasting the region's need for housing units affordable to low- and moderate-income households. Local governments use these "need" numbers to aid them in fulfilling their affordable housing planning responsibilities.

The affordable housing strategy targets for Southwest LRT Corridor represent about about 35% of Metropolitan Council's Need Allocation for the five Corridor cities.

### Southwest Corridor-wide Housing Strategy new development target rental housing: 2,265 units affordable at 80% AMI or below\*

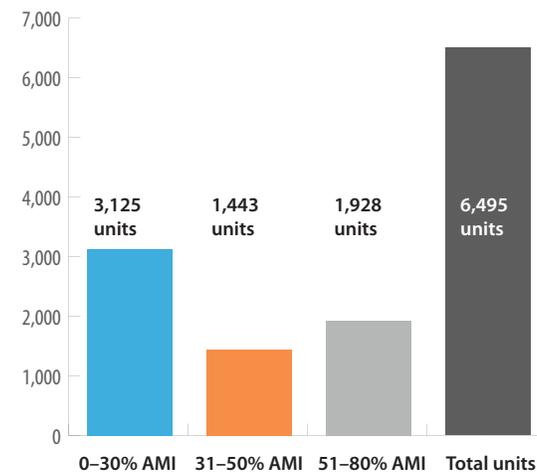
0 – 30% AMI: 635 units  
 31 – 60% AMI: 635 units  
 61 – 80% AMI: 995 units  
 81 – 100% AMI: 1,255 units  
 > 100% AMI: 6,402 units  
**Total units: 9,922**



### Metropolitan Council allocation of need for affordable housing within five of six corridor cities 2021–2030: 6,495\*

City-wide allocation of need for affordable housing in five of six corridor cities, per Metropolitan Council

0 – 30% AMI: 3,124 units  
 31 – 50% AMI: 1,443 units  
 51 – 80% AMI: 1,928 units



\*new development is allocated to the five corridor cities with METRO Green Line Extension LRT stations: Eden Prairie, Hopkins, Minneapolis, Minnetonka and St. Louis Park. Edina is a corridor city but does not have a LRT station within its boundaries.

**Note on Edina:** No Southwest LRT stations are located in the City of Edina. However, a small portion of Edina falls within 1/2 mile of the Blake and Downtown Hopkins stations. Portions of Edina also fall within 1 mile of the Shady Oak, City West and Golden Triangle stations. Affordable housing development in Edina can contribute to affordable housing availability in the larger Southwest LRT Corridor area.

**Edina citywide allocation of need: 878 units**

- 0 – 30% AMI: 365 units
- 31 – 50% AMI: 234 units
- 51 – 80% AMI: 279 units

**How much do people pay for “affordable” housing?**

**\$82,833**

Area median income (AMI) for a family of four in the Minneapolis/ St. Paul/Bloomington Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)

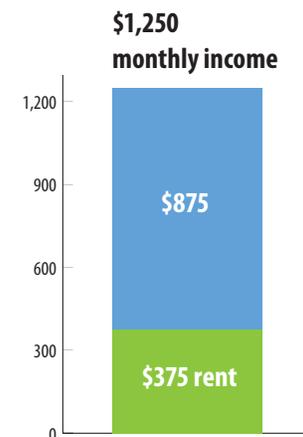
Based on area median income (AMI) for a four-person household\*

Monthly rent	AMI	Annual income
\$0 – \$621	0 – 30%	up to \$24,850
\$622 – \$1244	31% – 60%	\$24,851 – \$49,740
\$1,245 – \$1,598	61% – 80%	\$49,741 – \$63,900
\$1,599 – \$2,071	81% – 100%	\$63,901 – \$82,833

**\$50,580** Corridor household median income\*\*

**Southwest Corridor median income for workers**

Household income	Percent of corridor workers	Affordable monthly rent
\$1,250 and less	21%	\$375
\$1251 – \$3333	27%	\$376–\$1,111
\$3,334 and greater	52%	> \$1,112



\* United States Department of Housing and Urban Development 2014

\*\* Southwest Corridor-wide Housing Inventory, 2013

**Affordable rents, based on sample occupations and their average salaries**

- \$776 **assembly worker**
- \$595 **home health aide**
- \$772 **nursing assistant**
- \$755 **teacher assistant**
- \$844 **school bus driver**
- \$571 **restaurant cook**
- \$640 **bank teller**

Source: Family Housing Fund, Southwest Housing Gaps Analysis, 2014

## Why set corridor affordability targets?

The diverse cities along the corridor are each taking steps to plan for land uses; they also have housing strategies and goals outlined in their comprehensive plans. In addition, all of the corridor cities work toward housing goals that were negotiated with the Metropolitan Council. So what are the benefits of setting affordability targets together? There are many, including the following:

### Respond to regional and federal funders

- **Federal Sustainable Communities Grant:** In 2011, Hennepin County was a sub-recipient of a federal Sustainable Communities Grant. Combined with Living Cities resources through Corridors of Opportunity, the Southwest Corridor was tasked with developing a set of measurable unit goals for housing along the corridor.
- **Corridors of Opportunity Transit Recipients need to address Fair and Affordable Housing:** In September 2011, the Corridors of Opportunity Policy Board adopted several recommendations for regional transit corridors to address Fair and Affordable Housing in their overall TOD strategies. The primary recommendation was for the adoption of measurable, corridor-wide goals and strategies to ensure sufficient housing, both new production and preservation, to serve a full range of incomes.

*The Sustainable Communities grant and Corridors of Opportunity program have both ended. However, their guidance and best practices are still applicable for work in the Southwest Corridor. There are also important funding opportunities in the future, both for the LRT project and for competitive development resources.*

### Competitiveness for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding of infrastructure

In 2013, the FTA released new guidance for scoring transit projects that include existing and future plans for affordable housing. The FTA seeks to “ensure that as service is improved over time, there is a mix of housing options for existing and future residents.” In anticipation of the METRO Green Line Extension’s FTA application for the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA), commitment and progress toward meeting affordable housing goals is essential, as this will be viewed competitively against other regions seeking the same limited funds.

### Alignment with Metropolitan Council Housing Policies

A coordinated strategy along the corridor that aligns with Metropolitan Council’s housing policies, including the Housing Policy Plan (2014), will help cities in planning, tracking progress and addressing regional housing needs. Metropolitan Council has allocated new affordable housing need numbers, and will be negotiating affordable and life-cycle housing goals with participating cities in the future. A corridor-wide strategy that aligns with regional housing policies will help cities improve their competitiveness when seeking council resources.

*The FTA seeks to “ensure that as service is improved over time, there is a mix of housing options for existing and future residents.”*

**— New and Small Starts Evaluation and Rating Process Final Policy Guidance, August 2013**

### **Align development policies and resources throughout the corridor**

Corridor-wide affordable housing targets, developed in collaboration and tied to existing city plans and Metropolitan Council allocation of need, will allow partners to focus efforts and public resources to identified gaps. Collaboration between partners will allow sharing of tools and information, while preserving each entity's unique identity and role in housing creation.

### **Track progress over time**

Similar to the work being done along the METRO Green Line's Central Corridor, an affordable housing target in the Southwest Corridor will allow cities, Hennepin County and funders to track progress over time to help determine whether the corridor is moving towards its policy goals. Having specific numeric targets allows measurement against a baseline and can also help identify where targets may need adjustment due to market trends or development activity.

### **Promote fair housing**

The Fair Housing Act of 1968 prohibits discrimination in housing and also requires recipients of federal funding to affirmatively further fair housing. A housing strategy can assist all Southwest Corridor communities in reducing barriers to and promoting fair housing and equal opportunity, while recognizing that each community will be balancing many policy options and may have multiple ways to meet its fair housing requirements.

# ACHIEVING THE GOAL

## Corridor-wide objectives

To promote the corridor-wide goal and housing unit targets, Southwest LRT Community Works supports four objectives. Each objective has related implementation strategies, which are offered as options among a range of tools, in support of the corridor-wide objectives. Through public/private partnerships, the implementation strategies detailed below may help achieve the objectives.

### Objective 1 Develop new housing opportunities

Create new housing that includes a mix of unit types with values and rents affordable to people with a full range of incomes. Focus on creating mixed income neighborhoods as well as opportunities for mixed income projects. Support opportunities in home ownership as well as rental units.

#### *Implementation strategies*

##### **Develop coordinated mixed-income (inclusionary housing) policies.**

- These policies would apply to new housing development within corridor cities, particularly in areas targeted for new transit oriented development.
- Seek support for policy adoption by corridor cities.

##### **Leverage private and philanthropic investments locally, regionally and nationally, along the corridor through a TOD Housing Fund.**

- Link development prospects to Regional Pre-development Funders Roundtable to assist developments in navigating complex financing challenges.
- Participate in the development of private/public TOD Housing fund.
- Work with private lenders to evaluate underwriting criteria for TOD projects

##### **Engage large corridor employers to strategically invest in the preservation and production of housing opportunities for low-to-moderate income employees.**

- Engage employer groups in the corridor on workforce housing needs.
- Encourage employers to participate in private/public TOD Housing fund or other strategies to increase mixed income housing.

**Develop and adopt a clear and consistent vision, goals and affordability targets for housing development within a half-mile of LRT stations.**

- Increase developers' knowledge of city and county expectations in advance, rather than negotiating on every project.

**Maintain and enhance policies around station areas to promote increased density and include a mix of uses consistent with federal and regional transportation policies.**

- Provide flexibility to allow less parking around transit areas.

**Implement infrastructure recommendations from the Southwest Corridor Investment Framework to provide connectivity in and around station areas and maximize development potential at station sites.**

**Utilize creative tools and resources to engage the public and policy leaders around key development opportunity sites.**

## **Objective 2**

### **Preserve existing housing opportunities**

Preserve and enhance existing subsidized and unsubsidized housing stock to reduce the involuntary displacement of residents with low to moderate incomes. Develop preservation criteria for unsubsidized housing stock. Maintain opportunities to use Housing Choice vouchers in corridor units.

#### ***Implementation strategies***

**Review existing affordability agreements for subsidized properties.**

- Determine length of contracts and assess conversion risk.
- Develop policies to preserve legally binding affordable housing units along the Corridor.
- Engage owners early in maintaining affordability and extending agreements.
- Pay particular attention to preserving units affordable to the lowest-income households: 30% AMI and below, up to 60% AMI. Prioritize preservation at lowest income levels.
- Track use of Housing Choice vouchers along the corridor and actively work to preserve units accepting vouchers.

### **Maintain and improve the quality of existing aging rental and ownership housing stock.**

- Focus primarily on properties that are at values and rents affordable for low to moderate income people.
- Develop programs together with regional partners that provide for strategic acquisitions, low-interest loans and public-private partnerships.
- Work with owners to match lower income residents with unsubsidized affordable housing units and create a structure to maintain that affordability.

### **Objective 3 Expansion and Improvement of Technical, Financial and Regulatory tools**

Utilize existing resources and develop new resources to achieve corridor housing targets by seeking funding sources and technical expertise to support the development and preservation of a full range of housing choices. Modify regulatory tools to support housing development and preservation. Actively seek opportunities for land-banking, land trusts, and use of public land for affordable housing development. Examine legislative changes to language that inhibits higher-density home ownership opportunities.

#### ***Implementation strategies***

**Evaluate corridor cities' interest in exploring the costs/benefits, mechanics and legislative authority for joint-financing mechanisms such as corridor-wide tax increment financing (TIF), fiscal disparities sharing, and other forms of value capture.**

- Identify opportunity for large-scale TIF agreement rather than project-by-project TIF.
- Expand housing tax increment with a particular focus on TOD locations.
- Explore changes to fiscal disparities policy that would allow net payer cities to receive credit that could be used towards housing development.
- Explore creative financing tools for mixed income projects (e.g. 4% tax credits, mezzanine loans) in collaboration with Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs).

## Objective 4

### Market the corridor

Create a marketing plan to attract developers and new residents and draw existing residents and employees to TOD neighborhoods and a TOD lifestyle.

#### **Implementation strategies**

**Provide marketing resources and expertise to promote the corridor and its housing vision to developers, employers, schools and future residents.**

**Develop metrics to track progress towards unit targets over time, using existing partners and resources.**

**Seek non- and for-profit developers with proven expertise in providing quality long-term affordable housing to the lowest income households.**

### Implementation strategies

Implementation strategies are offered as options among a range of tools in support of the corridor-wide objectives. Through stakeholder feedback, implementation strategies have been grouped into primary and secondary categories. Primary strategies have seen strong interest or agreement in terms of their usefulness in achieving the corridor-wide goal.

Additionally, strategies are identified as “*corridor-wide*” or “*city/county-specific*.” Corridor-wide strategies can be pursued collaboratively, while city/county-specific ones pertain to authorities held by cities or Hennepin County.

#### **Primary Strategies**

- Evaluate corridor cities’ interest in exploring the costs/benefits, mechanics and legislative authority for joint financing mechanisms such as corridor-wide tax increment financing (TIF), fiscal disparities sharing, and other forms of value capture. (*corridor-wide*)
- Maintain and improve the quality of existing aging rental and ownership housing stock. (*corridor-wide*)
- Leverage private and philanthropic investments locally, regionally and nationally, along the corridor through a TOD Housing Fund. (*corridor-wide*)
- Provide marketing resources and expertise to promote the corridor and its housing vision to developers, employers, schools and future residents. (*corridor-wide*)

- Develop metrics to track progress towards unit targets over time, using existing partners and resources. *(corridor-wide)*
- Develop and adopt a clear and consistent vision, goals and affordability targets for housing development within a half-mile of LRT stations. *(city/county specific)*
- Implement infrastructure recommendations from the Southwest Corridor Investment Framework to provide connectivity in and around station areas and maximize development potential at station sites. *(city/county specific)*
- Maintain and enhance policies around station areas to promote increased density and include a mix of uses consistent with federal and regional transportation policies. *(city/county specific)*

### Secondary Strategies

- Develop coordinated mixed-income (inclusionary housing) policy language *(corridor-wide)*
- Review existing affordability agreements (subsidized properties) *(corridor-wide)*
- Engage large corridor employers to strategically invest in the preservation and production of housing opportunities for employees with low to moderate incomes. *(corridor-wide)*
- Utilize creative tools and resources to engage the public and policy leaders around key development opportunity sites. *(city/county specific)*
- Seek non- and for-profit developers with proven expertise in providing quality long-term affordable housing to the lowest income households. *(city/county specific)*
- Explore creative financing tools for mixed income projects (e.g. 4% tax credits, mezzanine loans) in collaboration with Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs). *(city/county specific)*

## Partners in implementation

Creating a full range of housing choices in the Southwest Corridor can be enhanced through partnership and cooperation between the public sector and private partners, each with unique perspectives and implementation roles.

### Southwest LRT Community Works

The primary role of this partnership is as a convener of policymakers and technical staff, including housing staff. Southwest LRT Community Works can offer guidance and technical assistance to partners as well as track progress on the Corridor-wide Housing Strategy.

## Cities

Cities are on the front line in housing development and preservation and are key players in land use and zoning control necessary to achieve individual and corridor housing goals. It will be important to align the corridor-wide strategy with local housing planning and comprehensive plan efforts and to provide tools and resources to support a full range of housing options — all while recognizing different development markets and constraints on city resources to support housing, along with other TOD infrastructure needs.

### Hennepin County

The county is a funder of affordable housing, primarily through AHIF and TOD grants. It also provides staff support to Southwest LRT Community Works. This strategy can be one of the factors considered in how the County allocates these funds.

### Metropolitan Council/Southwest Project Office

The Metropolitan Council provides regional guidance on the Housing Policy Plan; works with cities on planning housing need through comprehensive plan implementation; negotiates housing goals; provides technical assistance on tools and policies; and provides funding to support affordable housing development through the Livable Communities program. The Southwest Project Office provides LRT project information to support developers/city infrastructure coordination requirements.

## Developers

For-profit and non-profit developers have a crucial role in investing in the development and preservation of housing units in the Southwest Corridor. Developers work with cities and other partners to meet affordability targets and create station-area developments consistent with the strategy. They also provide critical input regarding market conditions, challenges and opportunities as they relate to implementing strategies along the corridor.

## Employers

Corridor employers have a strong interest in recruiting and retaining top talent. Housing can be a key component in developing a stable workforce. Identifying ways to have continued dialogue with employers will be important to identify workforce housing needs.

## Funders

Private, public and philanthropic funders play a key role in providing critical resources to support investment in a mix of housing types along the corridor. It will be critical to continue dialogue on financing criteria that support a mix of housing types in station areas and ensure that resources are aligned for preservation and creation of affordable housing along the corridor. Examples include: private financial institutions, public financial institutions, foundations/intermediaries, syndicators, and entities involved in site acquisition.

## Advocates

Housing advocates have provided valuable feedback on the development of this Strategy and will continue to play an important role in identifying tools and resources for affordable housing development. The advocacy community can also help connect the Southwest Corridor Housing Strategy with larger housing policy agendas moving forward.

## Next steps

### Housing Workgroup

- Develop a work plan to move implementation strategies forward.
- Track progress on corridor-wide strategy implementation.
- Engage regularly with policymakers and stakeholders to ensure the housing strategy reflects current goals and market conditions.

### Seek city/county support for the four key Corridor-wide Objectives

- Encourage integration of strategy tools within zoning and development plan review.
- Encourage use of strategy goals as a factor in funding allocation decisions.
- Incorporate and align the Corridor Housing Strategy in the development of or updates to individual housing policies and comprehensive plans.

### Determine mix of unit types and affordability for the corridor

- Ask cities to identify station area mix of housing units, types and values.
- Pay particular attention to targets for larger unit sizes, senior housing and housing affordable to 30% AMI and below.
- Calculate amount of public/private subsidy necessary to fully achieve the housing targets.

### Seek city goals for preservation and new construction at various affordability levels for each station area, to apply to corridor targets

- Adopt corridor targets that are consistent with city goals.
- Align with comprehensive plans
- Embed station area targets in city housing plans, taking into account affordable housing targets as well as market-rate unit needs.



# Southwest Corridor Housing Strategy

Compiled by Southwest LRT Community Works' housing workgroup

## Southwest LRT Community Works partners

Hennepin County

Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority

Eden Prairie

Minnetonka

Hopkins

Edina

St. Louis Park

Minneapolis

Metropolitan Council

Urban Land Institute Minnesota

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

SouthWest Transit

## Hennepin County Southwest LRT Community Works

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Minneapolis, MN 55415

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Phone: 612-348-9260

*[www.southwestlrtccommunityworks.org](http://www.southwestlrtccommunityworks.org)*





Agenda Item VI – Southwest Corridor Wide Housing Strategy Resolution	
	<b>Steering Committee Action Requested:</b>  Action
<b>Background:</b>  This item requests Steering Committee action on the final draft of the Southwest Corridor Housing Strategy, to accept the document and send it to Steering Committee partners for action as appropriate.	
<b>Previous Action on Request:</b>	
<b>Recommendation:</b> Approval	
<b>Attachments:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resolution 2016-01</li> </ul>	
<b>Comments:</b>	



## SOUTHWEST LRT COMMUNITY WORK STEERING COMMITTEE

### RESOLUTION NO. 2016-01

#### **A RESOLUTION TO RECEIVE THE SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR-WIDE HOUSING STRATEGY AND FORWARD TO SOUTHWEST LRT COMMUNITY WORKS MEMBERS FOR ACTION(S) APPROPRIATE TO EACH MEMBER**

**WHEREAS**, the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners adopted Resolution No. 09-0596 in 2009 to establish the Southwest LRT Community Works program in consultation with the cities of Eden Prairie, Edina, Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park, and Minneapolis, and other Southwest LRT partners, and

**WHEREAS**, the Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee, composed of Southwest LRT Community Works partners from cities and other agencies along the Southwest corridor, was formed in 2010 to provide overall guidance and direction for the Southwest LRT Community Works Project, and

**WHEREAS**, Southwest LRT Community Works goals and guiding principles for investment call for positioning the Southwest communities as a place for all to live and providing a full range of housing choices, and

**WHEREAS**, the Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee endorsed the creation of a corridor-wide housing strategy in May 2012, consisting of a housing inventory, gap analysis and strategy document to support housing development along the Southwest LRT corridor, and

**WHEREAS**, there are numerous benefits that may come from working collaboratively, including increasing the corridor's ability to be competitive, adding leverage to secure public and philanthropic resources, sending a positive message to the development community about the desire for a mix of housing choices, and aligning to achieve regional goals, and

**WHEREAS**, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in its most recent New Starts Guidance, now considers policies, planning and programs that support development and retention of affordable housing along transit corridors as part of its project evaluation criteria for funding, and

**WHEREAS**, the Southwest Corridor-wide Housing Strategy contains objectives and that can inform housing planning, including comprehensive plan updates, in Southwest LRT Corridor communities as well as suggested implementation strategies that may assist in creation of a full range of housing choices around Southwest LRT stations, increasing LRT ridership and supporting economic development and healthy communities,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee accepts the Southwest Corridor-wide Housing Strategy as a document to guide ongoing collaborative housing work, in achieving Southwest LRT Community Works goals, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee hereby refers the Southwest Corridor-wide Housing Strategy to member cities and partner organizations for individual action(s) as deemed appropriate.



**Agenda Item VII – Southwest LRT Station Renaming**

**Steering Committee Action Requested:** Information

**Background:**

According to Metro Transit’s Transitway Guidelines, “The primary purpose of a station name is to provide a geographic reference for customers to know where to access the transit system for boarding and alighting. However, stations also have the potential to become a focal point for a neighborhood, a business district, and/or an emerging transit-oriented development. Names reflecting these and other aspects of local geography can help create distinctive places and strengthen local assets. There may be an opportunity to generate revenue by selling the name of a station to a nearby enterprise. Regional guidelines are needed in order to provide consistency throughout the transitway system, to ensure that station names are not confusing or duplicative, and to ensure that customer service remains a priority when stations are named. Priority should be given to names that have a clearly and broadly understood geographic reference.

Transitway station names should be selected based on the criteria listed below. Station names will be selected by the Metropolitan Council with input from the lead agency and impacted communities.

- The name should reflect local geography (major cross-street or landmark).
- The name should be easy for the general public to recognize, particularly potential customers who are not familiar with the region and/or the corridor.
- The name should be distinct from the names of other stations to the extent feasible so that the name does not create confusion for potential customers or emergency responders.
- The name should be succinct and the use of two names for one station should be avoided.
- When station naming rights are sold, the name must continue to have a clear link to a nearby landmark or regionally recognizable destination. If a station name is sold, the sale should be for a period of at least 20 years and the price should be based on market exposure.

**Previous Action on Request:**

**Recommendation:**

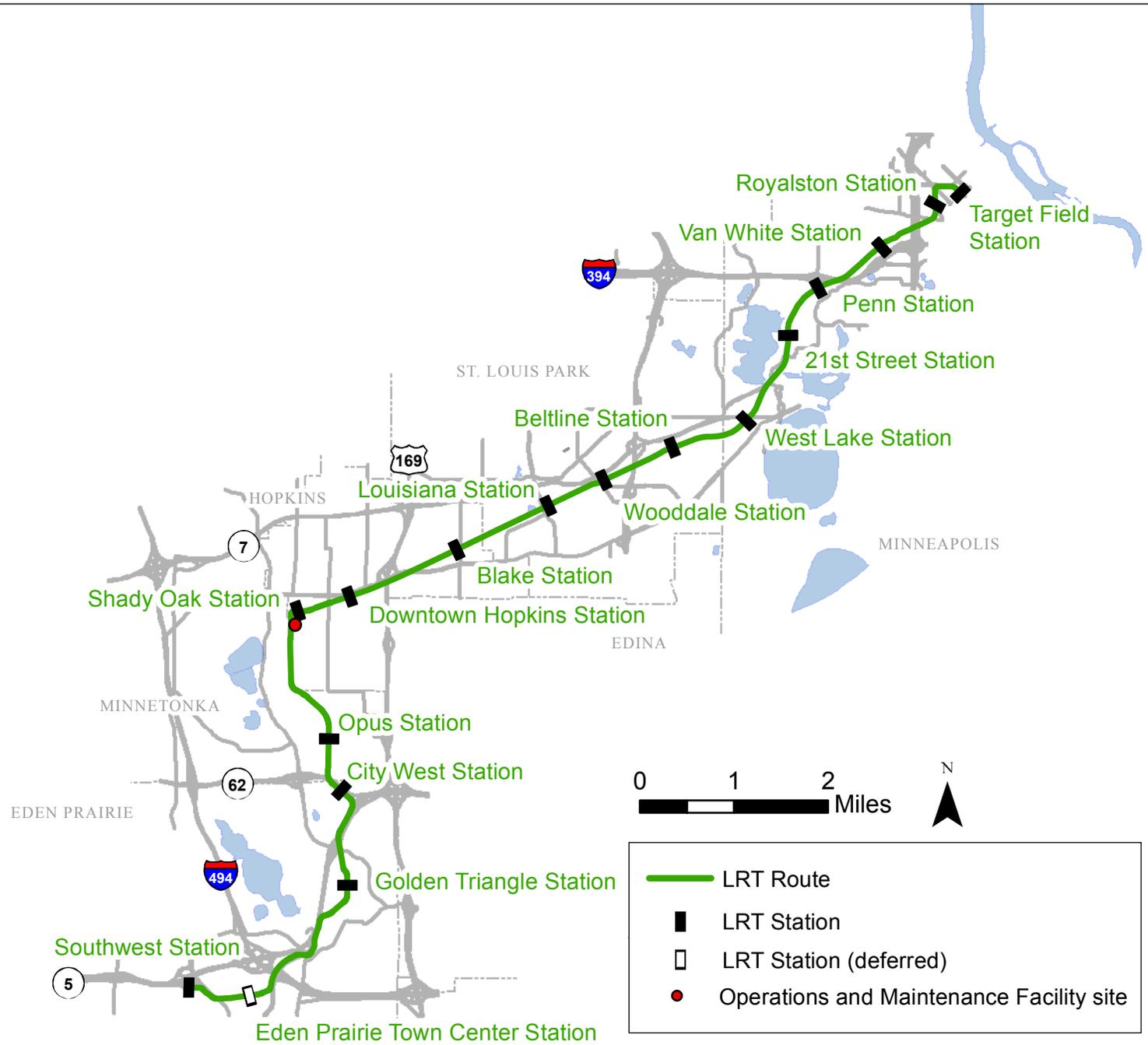
**Attachments:**

- Metro Transit Guidelines
- Southwest LRT Station Names
- Southwest LRT Map
- Blue (Hiawatha) and Green (Central) Lines Station Names



## Southwest LRT Station Names

<u>Station Name</u>	<u>Name Type</u>
Royalston	Road
Van White	Road
Penn	Road
21 <sup>st</sup> Street	Road
West Lake	Road
Beltline	Road
Wooddale	Road
Louisiana	Road
Blake	Road
Downtown Hopkins	Place
Shady Oak	Road
Opus	Place
City West	Place
Golden Triangle	Place
Eden Prairie Town Center*	Place
Southwest	Place
Mitchell	Road



**Blue (Hiawatha) Line Station Names**

Target Field	Place
Warehouse/Hennepin Ave.	Place/Street
Nicollet Mall	Place
Government Plaza	Place
Downtown East	Place

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Cedar-Riverside	Place
Franklin Ave.	Street
Lake St./Midtown	Street/Place
38 <sup>th</sup> St.	Street
46 <sup>th</sup> St.	Street
50 <sup>th</sup> St./Minnehaha Park	Street/Place
V A Medical Center	Place
Fort Snelling (Park/Ride)	Place
Terminal 1 – Lindberg	Place
Terminal 1 – Humphrey	Place
American Boulevard	Street
Bloomington Central	Place
28 <sup>th</sup> Ave (Park/Ride)	Street
Mall of America	Place

**Green (Central) Line Station Names**

Target Field	Place
Warehouse/Hennepin Ave.	Place/Street
Nicollet Mall	Place
Government Plaza	Place
Downtown East	Place

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West Bank	Place
East Bank	Place
Stadium Village	Place
Prospect Park	Place
Westgate	Place
Raymond Ave.	Street
Fairview Ave.	Street
Snelling Ave.	Street
Hamline Ave.	Street
Lexington Pkwy.	Street
Victoria St.	Street
Dale St.	Street
Western Ave.	Street
Capitol/Rice St.	Place/Street
Robert St.	Street
10 <sup>th</sup> St.	Street
Central	Place
Union Depot	Place



## 9. IDENTITY AND BRANDING GUIDELINES

These guidelines should be considered collectively when making identity and branding decisions for transitways.

### 9.1. INTEGRATED BRANDING AND IDENTITY SCHEME

**The branding and identity scheme that is developed for Light Rail Transit (LRT) and Highway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station-to-station services will be integrated and reflected on all system components including stations, vehicles, signage, and customer information.**

The integration of the branding scheme is important for customer clarity. It will reinforce the message that LRT and Highway BRT station-to-station services are **premium** modes that offer a similar level of transit service and transit facilities. Research indicates that transitway services should be branded everywhere they serve, even if other services exist at the same location. A balance needs to be struck between transitway services and other services, when present.

The branding and identity scheme includes the line name, system name, system colors, maps, and other components that may be developed to unite the LRT and Highway BRT station-to-station services.

While Arterial BRT may be branded separately from Highway BRT and LRT, it should be branded with equal importance and distinction. Many proposed Arterial BRT corridors are the strongest existing transit markets and will continue to have high potential for increased ridership and increased high-density development.

### 9.2. LINE NAMES

**LRT and Highway BRT line names will be colors and selected by the Metropolitan Council with input from the impacted communities through the corridor policy advisory committee. All line names need to be distinct from one another, fit within the regional transitway system, and allow for line through-routing. Commonly known, simple colors are preferred (red, blue, green, orange, etc.).**

**Commuter Rail lines should be given a unique name chosen by the lead agency in consultation with partnering agencies. Commuter Rail line names should not be colors, but Commuter Rail lines should be represented on transit system maps using a unique line type and color that visually reinforces Commuter Rail service as integrated with the rest of the transit system, specifically with LRT and Highway BRT.**

Community input in corridor naming decisions is an important component of the branding process. At the same time, naming decisions need to be weighed against regional context and system-wide integration. For LRT and Highway BRT station-to-station, community input on which color name will be used to identify a line should be sought, recognizing that the name may be limited by color names



already planned or in use. The Metropolitan Council will generally assign line names once a locally preferred alternative is adopted for a transitway.

Commuter Rail lines also represent significant regional investments and should be identified uniquely in the system. Their market is more localized (thus, less regional) than LRT and BRT and as a result, community involvement can play a more significant role in identifying a line name. National practice indicates that Commuter Rail names are usually tied to the communities they serve, specifically the outbound endpoints, or to a unique corridor name, like a geographic feature (valley, river, coast, etc.).

Arterial BRT lines should be identified as a premium service, but the details behind the service are not developed enough at this time to specify the role of branding in the regional transit system. The Arterial BRT corridors should not be branded with the color-coded line system because the service attributes are different from LRT and Highway BRT station-to-station services. However, a line-naming scheme specific to Arterial BRT could be developed and added to the Transitway Guidelines after the Arterial Transitway Corridors Study is complete and more is known about how the service will interact with local bus and other transitway services.

### 9.3. STATION AND SIGNAGE BRANDING

**The most important aspects of the branding and identity at transitway stations are the system brand, line identity, and station name. These aspects should be included at each station. Transitway/system brands take precedence over provider brand. Though less important, provider brands may be present because they are important for customer information and other transit services.**

**System brand elements for all LRT and Highway BRT services should be consistent and visible at all stations.**

Branding at stations can be complicated due to the number of messages that need to be communicated to the customer. Most importantly, signage at stations needs to communicate location and what transit services are provided at that station. Signs at each platform should indicate which direction the transit service is heading (inbound/outbound, eastbound/westbound). Information about the line(s) served by the station and the geographic location of the station needs to be prominent. In addition, information needs to be provided about connecting transit routes and any other transit services that are provided at that station.

Transitway stations should be distinct and appealing in their design, and their design should become a part of the overall branding of the transitway system. It is expected that there will be consistency in the architectural design of stations along an individual transitway corridor, but that each corridor may have its own architectural character. More information about station design is provided in Chapter 4: Station and Support Facility Design Guidelines.



## 9.4. VEHICLE BRANDING

**The most important aspects of branding on transitway vehicles are the system brand, line name/route identity, and where to find additional service information. These aspects should be included on each vehicle. System and transitway brands take precedence over provider brands on each vehicle. BRT vehicles should have a unique paint scheme, using the regional system colors, that distinguishes them from regular route and express buses in the region.**

LRT and Commuter Rail are branded, in part, by the vehicle that provides the transit service. Buses providing Highway BRT station-to-station or Arterial BRT service will likely also have some unique characteristics that will distinguish them from other buses in the transit system. However, the most important distinguishing element for buses will likely be the branding.

The most important information needed on transit vehicles are the type of service (system brand), the line or route (primarily through changeable message signs), and where users can go to get more information (customer information). The last component is important because transit vehicles move throughout the region and, essentially, act as marketing mechanisms for transit services. The unique design or look of transitway vehicles is intended to draw in potential new transit users who may not be familiar with where additional transit information is available.

## 9.5. STATION NAMING

**Transitway station names should be selected based on the criteria listed below. Station names will be selected by the Metropolitan Council with input from the lead agency and impacted communities.**

- **The name should reflect local geography (major cross-street or landmark).**
- **The name should be easy for the general public to recognize, particularly potential customers who are not familiar with the region and/or the corridor.**
- **The name should be distinct from the names of other stations to the extent feasible so that the name does not create confusion for potential customers or emergency responders.**
- **The name should be succinct and the use of two names for one station should be avoided.**
- **When station naming rights are sold, the name must continue to have a clear link to a nearby landmark or regionally recognizable destination. If a station name is sold, the sale should be for a period of at least 20 years and the price should be based on market exposure.**

The primary purpose of a station name is to provide a geographic reference for customers to know where to access the transit system for boarding and alighting. However, stations also have the potential to become a focal point for a neighborhood, a business district, and/or an emerging transit-oriented development. Names reflecting these and other aspects of local geography can help create distinctive places and strengthen local assets. There may be an opportunity to generate revenue by selling the name of a station to a nearby enterprise. Regional guidelines are needed in order to provide



consistency throughout the transitway system, to ensure that station names are not confusing or duplicative, and to ensure that customer service remains a priority when stations are named. Priority should be given to names that have a clearly and broadly understood geographic reference.

### 9.6. CUSTOMER INFORMATION

**Signage, maps, and schedules for transitway service should reinforce the unique and premium quality of the services. Signs, system maps, and schedules should be simple and easy to understand.**

All materials prepared to support LRT and BRT services should be coordinated with the system-branding framework (system logo, system colors, graphical elements, etc.). Information technology, such as real-time passenger information signs, should also be designed to support the transitway branding framework. If multiple providers are operating service along a transitway, all services should be incorporated into the transitway's marketing and customer information materials. Provider/operator logos should be incorporated into these materials but should not be a dominant feature.

### 9.7. ADVERTISING

**Station, shelter, and vehicle designs should not preclude the potential for advertising. Customer information requirements should always be given priority over advertising. BRT vehicles should only include advertising if it does not interfere with the vehicle brand, which is an integral element in distinguishing it from regular bus service.**

Advertising at stations, shelters, and vehicles are all potential sources of revenue. Thus, it is important that the opportunity for generating advertising revenues should not be precluded in the design of stations, shelters, or vehicles. However, wrapping of BRT vehicles should be avoided in early stages of implementation, as it would likely interfere with Guideline 9.4. Vehicle Branding. The same would apply to rail vehicles; however, they are less likely to be confused with other services in the region so more flexibility would be appropriate. Issues such as visibility, ease of maintenance, and appropriate content should also be considered when designing stations and shelters and making decisions on proposed advertising.