

THE SOUTH GATEWAY

Increasing the viability of Penn Station in Bryn Mawr



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Penn Station, Bryn Mawr's proposed light rail transit (LRT) stop on the yet-to-be-built Southwest LRT Corridor, is at risk of being excluded from the project as a result of high engineering costs and low daily originated ridership figures. This possibility is a concern to residents living in the station's vicinity, many of whom desire access to LRT service and are supportive of the Penn Station proposal. The purpose of this plan is to help Penn Station advocates isolate, and potentially mitigate, the most significant barriers to Penn Station viability. The plan accomplishes this goal by putting forward an economic development plan designed to expand Bryn Mawr's capacity to support LRT service and improve the overall vitality of the neighborhood.

This plan combines past small area planning, neighborhood feedback, and transit oriented development principles to create a South Gateway vision.

This vision seeks to address concerns about Penn Station feasibility by pursuing five regional development goals:

- *Expanded housing options in the station area*
- *Improved mobility within the neighborhood*
- *Increased regional connectivity*
- *A healthy natural environment*
- *A sense of neighborhood identity*



PART I: INTRODUCTION

The Southwest LRT Line & New Starts Evaluation Criteria

Discussion of light-rail transit (LRT) is intensifying in the Southwest Metropolitan Area. After years of study and public deliberation, Hennepin County, Hennepin County Rail Authority, and Met Council have approved a 14-mile route connecting downtown Minneapolis and Eden Prairie. This route, identified as the Southwest LRT Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), follows the Kenilworth-Opus-Golden Triangle alignment. (See Appendix 1 for a map of the Southwest LRT LPA.)

The selection of a route is a significant milestone in the development of an LRT line, but there is still much work to do and many decisions to make before the line assumes its final form. One such decision involves the number and location of stations. Conceptual engineering of the LPA envisions 18 stations in 6 different cities, but both the number and location of the stations are subject to change. Cost estimate adjustments, changes in project funding, regulatory challenges, or an altered political landscape could all prompt the addition, subtraction, or relocation of LRT stations.

This plan anticipates a scenario in which financial constraints force Southwest LRT line project managers to reduce overall cost by eliminating low-performing stations. The authors of this plan consider low-performing stations to be those making the smallest contribution to the project's New Starts Summary Rating, which is a tool used by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to evaluate the merits of competing

proposals for federal transit dollars. In general, a transit project receives a high Summary Rating if it leads to considerable overall savings in travel time, complements transit supportive land use policies, serves large numbers of low-income households, supports employment centers, and draws from multiple funding sources. A related consideration is cost effectiveness, which measures incremental cost per hour of user benefit. (Visit www.fta.dot.gov/planning/newstarts/planning_environment_2620.html for a detailed discussion of the FTA's New Starts evaluation and rating framework.)

Based on the evaluation criteria introduced above, this plan assumes that the most likely candidates for elimination are high cost, low ridership stations located in areas with limited potential for transit oriented development (TOD) and small transit dependent populations.

The Penn Station Proposal

Conceptual engineering of the LPA calls for five Minneapolis stations between Target Field and the city's border with St. Louis Park. The middle stop, referred to in LPA documents as Penn Station, is envisioned just south of the Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange in a rail/trail corridor known as Cedar Prairie. This site is nestled between three Minneapolis neighborhoods: Bryn Mawr to the north and west; Kenwood and Lowry Hill to the south and east. The Near-North Community, made up of Harrison and five other Minneapolis neighborhoods northwest of downtown, begins about 2/3 of a mile north of the site along Penn Avenue.



Figure 1: Neighborhoods in the Proximity of Penn Station

Source: Google Satellite

The construction of an LRT station at the Penn Station would benefit these neighborhoods in a number of important ways. Four prominent benefits are listed here:

1. **Strengthen the area's connection to downtown Minneapolis and employment centers in the Southwest Metro.** Frequent, dependable LRT service at Penn Station would enable local residents to commute to work without the expense of downtown parking or the

frustrations and delays associated with congested freeways. This service would also dramatically improve the access of SW Metro employers to a large pool of transit dependent workers in west-side and Near-North neighborhoods. At present, these employers and workers are cut off from each other by poor transit connections. Penn Station could also make the west-side a more attractive office location, since it would allow employees and clients to travel easily between Bryn Mawr and downtown.

2. **Increase the area's appeal to seniors and young professionals looking for centrally located residential neighborhoods with easy access to services and jobs.** West-side neighborhoods are aging, and Near-North neighborhoods struggle with large numbers of vacant homes. LRT service at Penn Station would grant transit dependent seniors access to a wide array of amenities up and down the SW LRT Line. Such access would allow many current residents to remain in their neighborhoods for the foreseeable future. LRT service at Penn Station would also enhance the attractiveness of Near-North neighborhoods to homebuyers and renters who require access to the SW Metro for work.
3. **Improve mobility within Bryn Mawr and increase resident access to area trails and lakes.** Currently, I-394 constrains mobility within Bryn Mawr, and access to area trails and lakes is impeded by the bluff that runs along the neighborhood's southern border. The station's placement in the valley south of the interstate and between two bluffs -- (the second is Lowry Hill tapering to Kenwood) -- necessitating a station design that addresses both obstacles. Many

Bryn Mawr residents hope that by connecting the neighborhood with the LRT tracks, Penn Station will provide residents a safer, more convenient way of crossing I-394 and accessing the valley floor.

4. **Spur commercial growth and promote mixed use development in the station area.** Many of Bryn Mawr's commercially zoned parcels are vacant or underutilized. One such area is adjacent to the station site, a cluster of parcels referred to in the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Land Use Plan as the South Gateway. The establishment of LRT service at Penn Station could revitalize the South Gateway by increasing its accessibility and making it a more desirable location for mixed-use development.

Concerns about Penn Station's Viability

Despite its many potential benefits, Penn Station stacks up poorly in relation to other stations when evaluated on the basis of New Starts criteria. Penn Station may be the most expensive station on the line, and its ridership projections are some of the lowest. These problems arise primarily out of the station area's topology and low population density. The valley in which Penn Station is situated is not accessible by car, and there is currently no ADA compliant way to descend the bluffs within walking distance of the station location. Existing transportation infrastructure provides additional barriers to potential station users. I-394, a heavy freight line, and a bicycle commuter freeway all impede Penn Station's accessibility by foot.

The challenge of getting people to the valley floor from the north has prompted station planners to envision a 420-foot long, 25-foot high covered and heated bridge carrying people from a station entrance area off Penn Avenue to an elevator shaft/stairwell on the station platform. Cost estimates of the pedestrian bridge range from \$6-\$8 million dollars. To address the challenge of accessing the station from the south, station planners have proposed an ADA compliant trail winding its way down from the Kenwood neighborhood.

Such infrastructure enhancements would mitigate Penn Station's accessibility problems, but they would do so at significant cost. At present, low population density in the area means that the station is unlikely to generate very high ridership numbers, with or without improvements in station accessibility. The likely result is a station that contributes negatively to the project's cost effectiveness.

Plan Objective

This plan aims to improve the viability of Penn Station by boosting the station's cost effectiveness and increasing its contribution to the SW LRT project's Summary Rating. The most direct way to achieve this goal is to increase the station's ridership projections.

It must be noted that the plan does not attempt to address whether Penn Station could or should be built, nor does it explore alternative designs or locations. Technical, financial, and political concerns surrounding the notion of Penn Station, its conceptual design, and its proposed location are important aspects of its viability. However, these

concerns have been and will continue to be the subject of significant analysis and public discussion in other forums.

The intent here is to augment station planning efforts with a strategy to increase the area's broader capacity to support LRT. This strategy addresses station cost and ridership concerns by promoting community development, smart public investment, supportive zoning policy, and integrated transportation planning. Such an approach recognizes that Penn Station's viability is likely to improve if the station area becomes denser and easier to access.

Plan Structure

The plan is divided into three parts. It begins with a diagnosis of where things stand today (2011). This section includes background information on the surrounding neighborhoods, an in-depth analysis of the station area, a history of the planning and participatory process to date, a summary of stakeholder views, and a diagnosis of the station area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats/challenges. The diagnosis concludes with an articulation of the problem facing Bryn Mawr LRT advocates as they pursue context sensitive solutions to the issues introduced above.

The plan's second section presents a vision that addresses station viability concerns while reflecting the input and analysis reported in the diagnosis. Termed the South Gateway, this vision calls for residential development on the parcels immediately west of Penn Station's entrance area and a number of other neighborhood enhancements designed to

increase neighborhood mobility and regional connectivity. The final section – the action plan – details a way to get there.



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“Here I am at the age where, although my wife and I have a beautiful house, taxes are high; we heat and cool more than we need, but we love it here. We would like to be able to stay in the neighborhood, where people can stay active. Solve the problem for seniors.”

South Bryn Mawr resident Brian Willette

Background



If Penn Station were operational today, the overwhelming majority of Penn Station's ridership would come from west-side or Near-North neighborhoods. This plan considers west-side neighborhoods to be those bordering Cedar Lake Prairie – Bryn Mawr, Kenwood, and Lowry Hill. Residents from these neighborhoods would be able to

walk to Penn Station from the north, west, or southeast. Near-North residents would be largely prohibited from walking to the station due to large distances, but they would still be able to reach Penn Station via a bike, bus, or car ride down Penn Avenue.

As a Bryn Mawr small area plan, this plan excludes Kenwood and Lowry Hill from its scope of analysis. The authors of this plan recognize that Kenwood and Lowry Hill have significant impacts on Penn Station's ridership projections, but given limited time and resources, we limited our focus to opportunities for development and accessibility improvements in Bryn Mawr.

The decision to exclude Kenwood and Lowry Hill from consideration in a Bryn Mawr small area plan is consistent with the geographical and economic divide between the neighborhoods. At present, Cedar Lake Prairie bisects Bryn Mawr and Kenwood/Lowry Hill into two separate tradesheds, meaning development and travel patterns on one side of

Cedar Lake Prairie have minimal impact on development and travel patterns on the other. It also means that Bryn Mawr and Kenwood/Lowry Hill face distinct challenges and opportunities. This plan analyzes the challenges and opportunities facing Bryn Mawr as they relate to Penn Station viability. We recommend that a similar study be done for Kenwood and Lowry Hill.

Near-North neighborhoods also face distinct challenges and opportunities, but unlike Kenwood and Lowry Hill, Near-North neighborhoods are addressed in this plan. This decision reflects the role Bryn Mawr transportation amenities play in moving people from Near-North neighborhoods to Cedar Lake Prairie, and potentially, Penn Station. Future enhancements to these amenities could greatly expand Near-North mobility, which could increase Penn Station ridership projections and possibly address larger neighborhood concerns, such as home vacancy rates. We believe that Bryn Mawr development in the area around Penn Station represents an important opportunity to provide Near-North residents with the benefits of improved regional connectivity.

This section provides a regional context for development around Penn Station. It describes Bryn Mawr's location, demographics, civic character, land use, employment and commuting patterns. The section also provides a brief description of the Near-North Community. The purpose of the Near-North description is to highlight Penn Station's potential role in connecting SW employers to a large pool of prospective workers.

Bryn Mawr

Location

Bryn Mawr is a vibrant neighborhood west of downtown Minneapolis with convenient access to over 1,000 acres of parks and open space in every direction. To Bryn Mawr's west is the crown jewel of the city's park system, Theodore Wirth Park. To its north is Basset Creek Valley, which serves as a border between Bryn Mawr and the south end of the Near-North Community. Moving southeast Bassett Creek Valley blends into Bryn Mawr Meadows, a large urban park that acts as buffer between Bryn Mawr and the industrial activity around the I-94/I-394 interchange. To Bryn Mawr's south is Cedar Lake and Cedar Lake Prairie. A small section of Bryn Mawr extends southwest between the western shore of Cedar Lake and St. Louis Park.

Demographics

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Bryn Mawr is home to 2,651 people (1,266 households). These numbers are practically unchanged from 2000. At 2,039 people per sq. mile, Bryn Mawr's density is less than 1/3 that of the city as a whole, making Bryn Mawr one of the least dense neighborhoods in Minneapolis.

Bryn Mawr's 2010 age distribution was unavailable at the time of this writing, but given the stability of the neighborhood, 2000 census data is probably still reflective of the age distribution today. The neighborhood in 2000 was an aging community, with a median age of 41 (likely higher today). Bryn Mawr was home to roughly twice as many people 45 and older as it was to people under the age of 25.

Bryn Mawr is racially homogenous, with 92% of the neighborhood identifying as white. The majority of the residents are upper middle class in terms of household income. The housing occupancy of the neighborhood is high – over 96% in

2010, compared to 92%

for the city. Bryn Mawr is considered a mature residential community, with only a few houses sold each year. Low housing turnover rates indicate Bryn Mawr neighborhood's attractiveness to residents.

Civic Character

Bryn Mawr neighborhood has a history of active neighborhood associations serving and engaging the residents. The Bryn Mawr Improvement Association (BMIA) was established to facilitate the neighborhood's social purposes. In the 1970s, the BMIA evolved into the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association (BMNA), which addresses

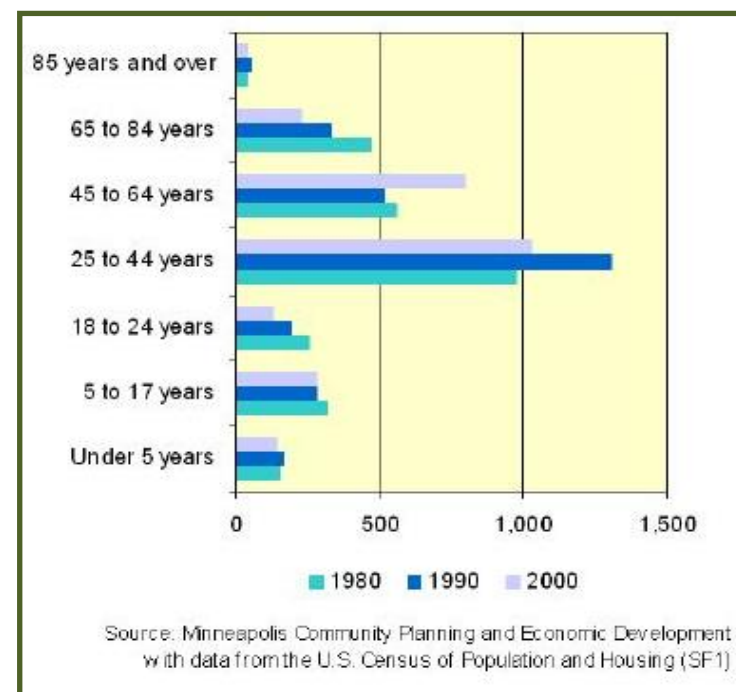


Figure 2: Bryn Mawr Age Distribution (2000)

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concerns raised by representatives of Bryn Mawr's seven geographic regions. Representatives' phone numbers, along with BMNA updates from board meetings, are published each month in the local newspaper, the *Bryn Mawr Bugle*.

The BMNA Board supports the Penn Station proposal. Some members of the committee and board have provided guidance to public officials throughout the LRT planning process. Many of these members have provided input for the plan presented below.

Land Use

Natural Amenities: Consistent with the neighborhood's motto – "Neighborhood within a Park" – parks, green space, and lakes are the neighborhood's most prominent land use, taking up 41% of total acreage. Many Bryn Mawr residents we spoke to consider these natural amenities to be the neighborhood's greatest asset, citing the beautiful surroundings, recreational opportunities, and the ambiance the parks afford. Based on this input, and the input provided by Bryn Mawr residents in other planning forums, we believe there is strong desire to incorporate Bryn Mawr's light footprint and strengthen the neighborhood's connection to its natural environment when framing new development.

Housing: Bryn Mawr's second most prominent land use is housing, which is shown in the cream color in **Figure 3**. Housing takes up slightly more than 23% of Bryn Mawr's land area. At the writing of the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Land Use Plan in 2003, housing

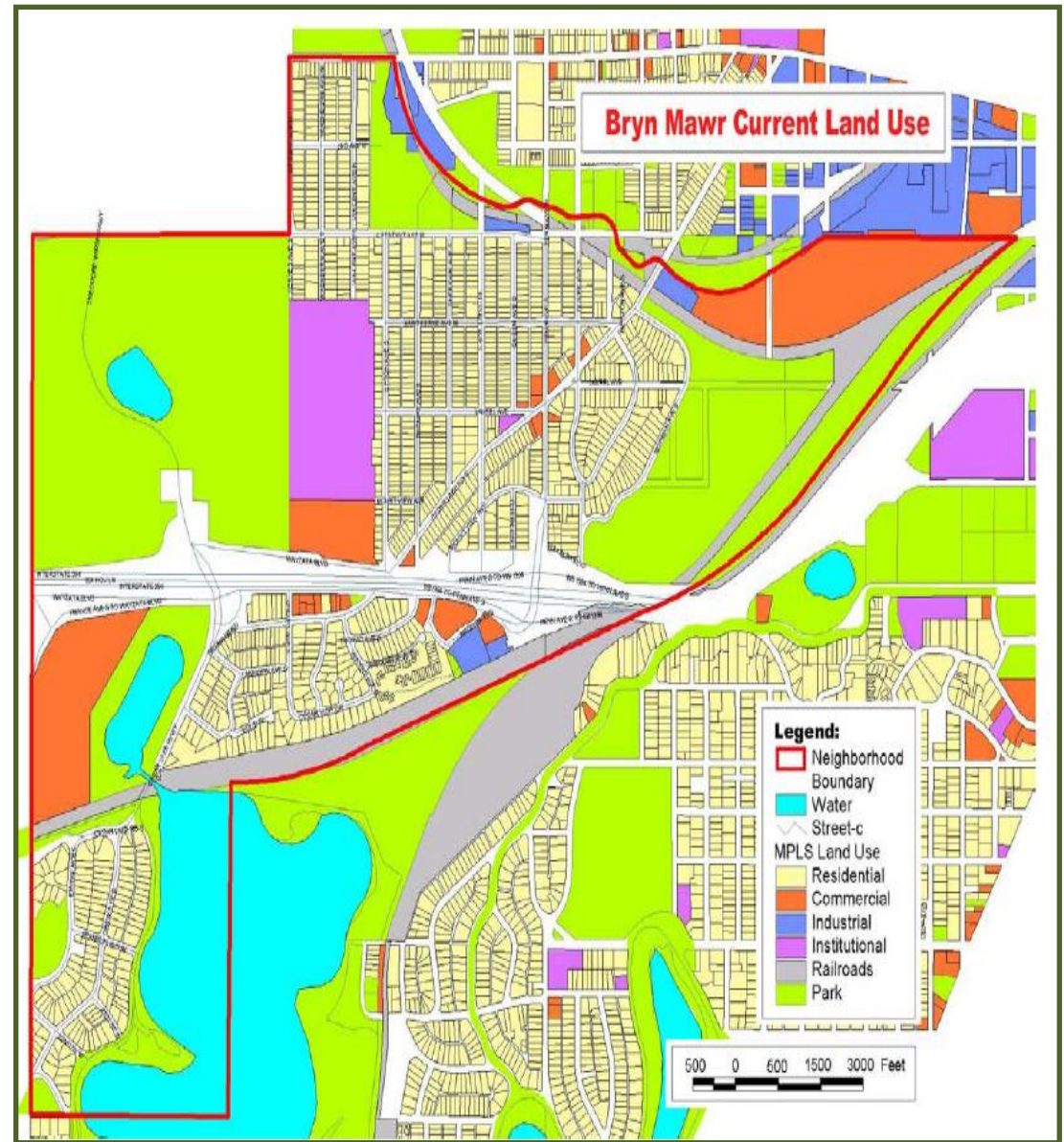


Figure 3: Bryn Mawr Current Land Use (2003)

Source: Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Land Use Plan by Met Council (2003).

density in Bryn Mawr was 6.64 dwelling units per acre (BMNA 2003, p.10). This number speaks to the neighborhood's overwhelmingly single-family detached character. Although Bryn Mawr's single-family homes are well maintained and in high demand, the dominance of a single form of housing limits the neighborhood's opportunity for growth and ability to meet the housing needs of current and potential residents. Bryn Mawr's lack of housing options was a likely driver of the neighborhood's slight population decline in the 1990s and 2000s.

Transportation Infrastructure: Bryn Mawr's third most prominent form of land use is transportation infrastructure, accounting for 19% of the neighborhood's land area. Much of this land consists of I-394's right-of-way, which in effect divides Bryn Mawr into two sections: North Bryn Mawr and South Bryn Mawr. The location of I-394 in the middle of the neighborhood has positive and negative consequences for Bryn Mawr residents. Households with automobiles can easily reach downtown Minneapolis and other places in the Twin Cities. On the other hand, by bisecting the neighborhood, I-394 creates nuisance and safety hazards near entrance ramps for those traveling through Bryn Mawr by foot or bike. Rail line right-of-way in Cedar Lake Prairie and east of Bryn Mawr Meadows is another major consumer of Bryn Mawr land area.

Bryn Mawr's three most significant local roads are Penn Avenue, Cedar Lake Road, and S. Wayzata Boulevard. Penn Avenue runs north/south, connecting Near-North neighborhoods and North Bryn Mawr with South Bryn Mawr. Cedar Lake Road runs northeast/southwest through North Bryn Mawr but does not cross I-394. S. Wayzata Boulevard is the

frontage road on I-394's south-side. It serves as South Bryn Mawr's east/west connection with the Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange.

The intersection of Penn Avenue and Cedar Lake Road is the location of downtown Bryn Mawr, a small commercial node serving local retail needs. Downtown Bryn Mawr is also the location of a bus stop serving commuters going to downtown Minneapolis. According to the 2000 Census, about 9% of Bryn Mawr residents use the bus to get to work. A north/south bus route along Penn Avenue in Bryn Mawr does not exist at this time.

There are three bridges that traverse I-394 in Bryn Mawr: the Penn Avenue bridge, the Cedar Lake Parkway bridge, and a pedestrian walkway. The Penn Avenue bridge is part of an interchange, while the Cedar Lake Parkway bridge is not. For this reason, the Penn Avenue bridge carries most of the vehicular traffic between North and South Bryn Mawr. The Cedar Lake Parkway bridge has a more multi-modal design intended to move autos, pedestrians and bicyclists between Theodore Wirth Park north of the interstate and the trails and lakes (Brownie and Cedar) to the south.

Cedar Lake Trail is a federally designated bicycle commuter freeway that connects St. Louis Park with downtown Minneapolis via Bryn Mawr and Cedar Lake Prairie. A southwest/northeast bike trail, Kenilworth, intersects with Cedar Lake Trail just west of the proposed location of Penn Station. At present, access to these trails is provided to



Bryn Mawr by a concrete helix off of I-394's eastbound entrance ramp. Many residents feel that this access is inadequate, however, citing the inconvenience and unpleasantness of its location. This sentiment is illustrated by the significant number of pedestrians and cyclists who choose to access Cedar Lake Trail by descending down "cow paths" cut into the Bryn Mawr bluff and illegally crossing active rail lines at grade.

Commercial/Industrial Uses: Commercial and industrial activity account for 12% of Bryn Mawr's land area. Bryn Mawr's industrial presence consists of a series of light manufacturing and storage facilities along Bassett Creek and a collection of vacant parcels in the South Gateway. A city impound lot off of 2nd Avenue North is Bryn Mawr's largest commercial presence, followed by the Target campus on neighborhood's western border and a Qwest campus north of I-394. The rest of the commercially purposed land in Bryn Mawr consists of downtown Bryn Mawr and a blend of office and retail stores on S. Wayzata Boulevard.

Employment Data and Commute Patterns

According to estimates put out by the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamic (LEHD) Program, Bryn Mawr's employed population equaled 1,470 in 2009¹. This number reflects a 4.8% decline from the number of Bryn Mawr residents employed in 2002. Since total population remained largely unchanged during this time period, the decline in employed population is likely a result of the economic recession and the neighborhood's aging composition.

¹ LEHD estimates are partially derived from unemployment insurance wage records. Jobs not covered by unemployment insurance are therefore excluded from LEHD estimates.

Excluding the self-employed (who are not counted in LEHD reporting), 96% of employed persons in Bryn Mawr worked outside the neighborhood in 2009. The most common destinations were downtown and the U of M campus, attracting 356 (24%) and 103 (7%) workers respectively. 52 Bryn Mawr residents worked in the SW metro within 1/2 mile of the LPA.

Despite the neighborhood's residential feel, Bryn Mawr is home to more jobs than workers. According to LEHD data, total employment in Bryn Mawr in 2009 was 2,255. The vast majority of these jobs are concentrated along the I-394 corridor. In addition to Target and Qwest, Bryn Mawr's I-394 corridor supports two law offices, a real estate office, a mortgage company, an insurance agency, a therapy center, a halfway house, two marketing firms, an accounting firm, and a LASIK eye clinic.

Individuals working in Bryn Mawr come from all over the Metro, some commuting more than 10 miles.

Near-North Community

Location

The Near-North Community consists of six neighborhoods northwest of downtown Minneapolis. These neighborhoods are Harrison, Sumner-Glenwood, Near-North, Hawthorne, Jordan and Willard-Hay. Together, Near-North neighborhoods form a working class urban district between the Mississippi River on the east and Theodore Wirth Park, Golden Valley and Robbinsdale on the west. Minneapolis's Camden Community exists further north. The combination of Near-North and Camden is often

referred to as “North Minneapolis”. Directly south of Near-North is Bassett Creek Valley and the rail lines and impound lot of northeast Bryn Mawr.

Demographics

Near-North was home to 31,192 people (11,672 households) in 2010, a 13.3% decrease from Near-North's population in 2000. This decline has left Near-North neighborhoods with a population density near the citywide average. In contrast to Bryn Mawr’s aging demographic profile, Near-North is dominated by families. At the time of 2000 census, 41.5% of Near-North’s population was under the age of 18. An additional 38%

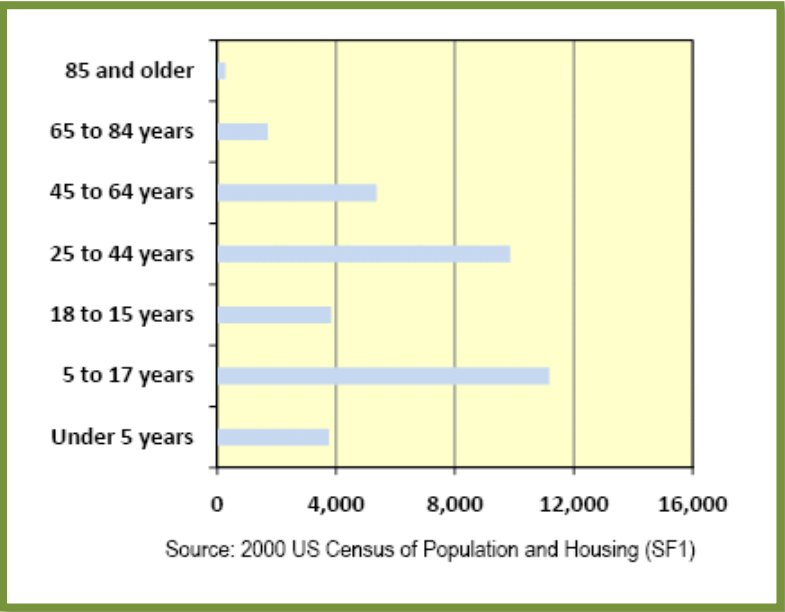


Figure 4: Near-North Age Distribution (2000) was

between the ages of 18 and 44. People 65 and older accounted for just 5.5% of Near-North residents. The age profile presented in **Figure 4** will have shifted somewhat with natural aging and the neighborhood’s population decline during the 2000s, but even with these changes, the overwhelming majority of Near-North’s population consists of children and working age adults.

Near-North is racially diverse. Slightly more than half of Near-North residents identify as black or African American, 17% identify as white, 15% identify as Asian, and 9% identify as Hispanic or Latino. Near-North is also economically depressed. Nearly 14% of Near-North housing units are vacant, and median income for all Near-North neighborhoods is \$28,124. According to the American Community Survey, the average unemployment rate for Near-North’s black population was 28% between 2005 and 2009. In contrast, the citywide unemployment rate (all races) was 6.0% during the same time period.

Employment Data and Commute Patterns

One of the challenges facing Near-North is a lack of access to jobs. LEHD reported 8,914 jobs in Near-North in 2009, but only 543 of these jobs were filled by Near-North residents. This means that 95% of the 11,022 employed persons living in Near-North neighborhoods traveled outside of the community to find work. These workers, and the roughly 2,000 – 3,000 additional Near-North residents looking for work at any given time, represent one of the largest and most valuable pools of labor along the SW LRT Corridor.

The Southwest LRT Corridor has been widely marketed as a “jobs corridor”. SW LRT proponents point out that the LPA connects the

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region's two largest job centers in downtown Minneapolis and the Southwest Quadrant. The assumption behind the job corridor concept is that it will facilitate commutes in both directions – typical commutes from southwest suburbs to downtown Minneapolis as well as reverse commutes from the city to the suburbs.

It is easy to envision suburban residents using the line to reach downtown. If and when the line is constructed, park-and-rides in Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, and Hopkins will provide convenient station access to SW Metro residents living many miles from the LRT line. Many of these residents will find a quick drive on local roads and a hassle-free ride on the LRT a very attractive alternative to the congestion and delay of Hwys 62/212/100/I-394 and I-494/I-35W.

It is harder to anticipate the SW LRT Line's ability to facilitate reverse commutes. With or without park-and-rides, SW LRT stations in Minneapolis are unlikely to attract many commuters living more than a few miles from the line (with the exception of the intermodal station at the line's northeast terminus). This is because city congestion makes local road commutes to a station less practical than it is in the suburbs. Whatever solutions planners devise to attract more riders to city stations, most reverse commute riders will emanate from neighborhoods nearby.

Figure 5 illustrates the density of working age adults in census tracts within 1 mile of the Southwest LRT LPA (all of Near-North is included although much of it is outside the 1-mile buffer). The map shows that the SW LRT Corridor supports low densities of workers west of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes. It also demonstrates that the Near-North

Community features some of the highest density along the line. This makes Near-North neighborhoods one of the most likely sources of reverse commuters.

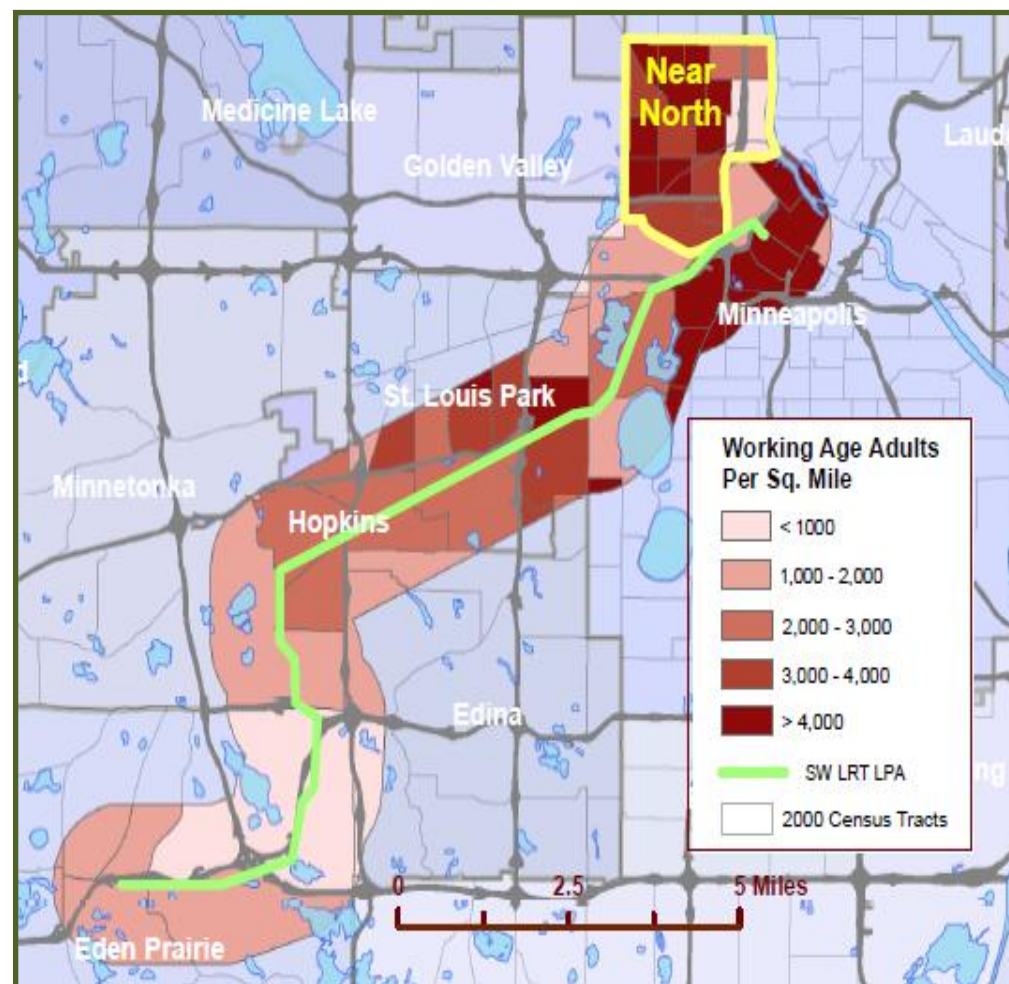


Figure 5: Worker Distribution along the Southwest LRT LPA

Map created by plan authors using Geographic Information System (GIS) software. Underlying data taken from American Community Survey data (5-year average 2005-2009)

Station Area Description

The regional context described above is one of the factors impacting potential development in the area of Penn Station. Another important factor is the physical and regulatory characteristics of the station area itself. This plan defines the station area as the South Gateway. Limiting the station area to the South Gateway is admittedly a subjective determination – we could have used a broader definition that included other parts of Bryn Mawr. We focused our analysis on the South Gateway because it offers the greatest return on investment in terms of station ridership and improved neighborhood mobility.

This section introduces the South Gateway by examining its location, topography, zoning/current land use, ownership, and transportation network.

Location

As illustrated by **Figure 6**, the South Gateway is located southwest of the Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange. S. Wayzata Boulevard constitutes the South Gateway's northern border. The South Gateway's southern border is formed by the lip of the bluff. Madeira Avenue connects with S. Wayzata Boulevard at two points on the road, forming a loop around two parcels that are bisected by Antoinette Avenue. Four additional parcels exist between Madeira Avenue and the bluff. The empty space directly south of the Penn Avenue bridge represents the potential location of the Penn Station entrance area.



Figure 6: The South Gateway

Source: Google Earth

Topography

The South Gateway's topography is highly varied. There is almost a fifty foot elevation differential between the South Gateway and Cedar Lake Prairie to the south. Within the South Gateway there is a slight west to east slope, so that parcels on the west end are at a higher grade than parcels on the east end. The slope is more pronounced on the South Gateway's western border. According to elevation readings on Google Earth, south Bryn Mawr residences on Cedar View Drive stand 30 to 40 feet above the South Gateway.

Ownership

Land ownership in the South Gateway is currently spread between four different groups. Lurie Besikof Lapidus & Company is an accounting firm that owns its own office building at 2501 S. Wayzata Boulevard (number 5 in Figure 7). Joffe Medi-Center, a medical provider that specializes in LASIK vision correction, owns all four parcels between Madeira Avenue and the bluff. Only one of these parcels – 2311 S. Wayzata Boulevard – supports an active use (number 1). This is where Joffe operates a one-story eye clinic. The other three Joffe parcels (numbers 2, 3, and 4) consist of a vacant warehouse and two open lots. Joffe has created a development plan to build a larger office building on these parcels, but this project has stalled with the downturn in the economy. The final parcel (number 6) is owned and occupied by Bolin Marketing & Advertising.



Figure 7: South Gateway Parcels:

Map taken from pg 4-10 of a market assesstment published as part of the Southwest Transitway Station Area Strategic Planning Study. Available at www.southwesttransitway.org

Zoning/Current Land Use

The city of Minneapolis administers zoning regulations that limit the type and height of buildings built on a particular parcel. The zoning in the South Gateway is reflective of past land usage in the area. Three of the parcels in the South Gateway are zoned OR2, two are zoned I1, and one is zoned R2B. The OR2 designation stands for “high density office residence district”. It is used to encourage mixed use development, though it does not allow for buildings taller than four stories to be built upon it.



Figure 8: Warehouse for sale in the vicinity of Madeira and South Wayzata Blvd. in south Bryn

does not allow for the processing of raw materials or the production of primary materials. The R2B parcel is zoned for a “two family residence district”. This parcel is adjacent to the townhome association southwest of the South Gateway, which is also zoned R2B.

The I1 zone indicates a “light industrial district”, which permits low impact industrial uses that have little adverse effect upon neighbors. I1

zoning generally

Transportation

Auto transportation in the South Gateway is focused on the Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange and the transition of Penn Avenue into S. Wayzata Boulevard. Most of the traffic is non-local, as South Bryn Mawr is lightly populated and there is little commercial activity in the area.

Community outreach performed as part of this and other station planning efforts has revealed concern about interchange traffic and its effect on safety. For some Bryn Mawr residents, these concerns translate into unease over the traffic impact of Penn Station and station area development.

Travel within the South Gateway is limited by unmitigated bluffs, I-394, an auto-dominated bridge, and a blind intersection at Penn Avenue/S. Wayzata Boulevard. These impediments have the effect of isolating the South Gateway from parks and trails in the valley below and north Bryn Mawr across the interstate. I-394 and Cedar Lake Prairie also break up the regional road network, which significantly restricts the South Gateway’s accessibility by car and discourages office and retail development.



Figure 9: Penn Ave. and I-394 approaching south Bryn Mawr

Previous Station Area Planning Efforts



Bryn Mawr residents have expressed their views on South Gateway development and its impact on neighborhood mobility in numerous forums over the last decade. The most significant expression of community input was the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Land Use Plan in 2003. Developed through a community-inclusive

process, the land use plan established a framework to preserve its character, conserve its natural beauty, sustainably meet the needs the needs and priorities of the community, and advance its tradition as an excellent place to live, work and play. This plan was adopted by the Minneapolis City Council in 2005. More recently, groups of individuals, under the auspices of the BMNA and the Cedar Lake Park Association have participated in a design charrette and a listening session with city and county officials as part of the SW LRT planning process. This section presents some of the key takeaways from these activities.

The Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Land Use Plan (2003)

The land use plan put forth the following goals for South Gateway development (Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Land Use Plan 2003, pg. 63):

- Improve the visual image of the neighborhood gateway and the image of the whole neighborhood

- Mitigate traffic and congestion at the interchange of Penn Avenue and I-394
- Create a more pedestrian friendly environment
- Mitigate the effect of freeway noise on a residential area
- Take better advantage of the view of downtown
- Take better advantage of the amenities of the park
- Provide better connection to the park, lakes and trail systems
- Better utilize the opportunities provided by the LRT station that may be built at that location

Based on the above goals, the land use plan recommended that future South Gateway development consist of vertical and horizontal mixes of residential and commercial uses. The land use plan recommended that residential uses be high-quality market rate, for-sale housing.

In terms of horizontal mixed use development, the land use plan recommended that commercial buildings be built on the northern part of the site as to shield residential areas from freeway noise. Residential uses were recommended for the southern part of the site so that residents could enjoy views of Cedar Lake Prairie. The land use plan also suggested that the South Gateway support vertical mixed-use buildings in which the ground floor is commercial, the middle floors offices, and the upper floors housing. The land use plan recommended that such vertical mixed-use buildings have a residential look.

The land use plan also recommended that the South Gateway be developed in a way that serves as an attractive gateway to the neighborhood. To achieve this goal, the land use plan recommended that

South Gateway development emphasize views of the surrounding area, mitigate traffic on the Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange, restrict building height, provide a community gathering place, and improve public access to the valley. Lastly, the land use plan suggested a series of mobility enhancements, including improvements to the Penn Avenue bridge and investments designed to facilitate vertical circulation between the neighborhood and Cedar Lake Prairie.

Community outreach late 2010 / early 2011

A series of workshops, meetings and interviews conducted as part of the Penn Station planning process revealed Bryn Mawr development priorities as they exist today. These priorities – presented below – augment the land use plan objectives listed on the previous page:

- *Planners and politicians must maintain the personality of our community*
- *We have concerns about safety for pedestrian and bicyclists' access to the trails and LRT stop*
- *Protect the views of downtown*
- *Narrowing the gap between North and South Bryn Mawr with wider sidewalks and 394 bridge amenities is important*
- *Find housing for first time homebuyers so they can find affordable housing in Bryn Mawr*
- *If the Twin Cities are growing, how can Bryn Mawr plan for an orderly increase in density?*
- *How can we avoid an increase in auto traffic and auto parking in the neighborhood?*

- *Emphasize cozy neighborhood feel*
- *Older residents who might like to continue living in the neighborhood after they no longer want the maintenance of a single family home have few options to do so*

Southwest LRT Design Charrette

The Cedar Lake Park Association & the BMNA hosted the Southwest LRT Design Charrette on November 14, 2010. Neighbors, residents, politicians, designers, representatives from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board came together to imagine the proposed stations at W. 21st Street and Penn Avenue in a day long brainstorming, design and prioritization session. Concerns and ideas from the community and the results of site tours were interwoven into plans by community planning professionals, landscape architects, and designers.

Plans emanating from the design charrette's brainstorming sessions were used to inform sketches illustrating the potential look and feel of Penn Station (re-titled Cedar Prairie as more descriptive of the actual location). A bridge with an elevator was proposed that used the water tower on Lowry Hill for the orientation. A top view design by another planner showed the area immediately surrounding the "kiss-and-ride" drop off zone supporting more intensive development (see **Figure 10** on the following page). Screen plantings of trees, shrubs and perennials are represented in the green areas of the drawing. This drawing, which was favorably received by design charrette participants, served as the impetus for the South Gateway concept of this plan.



Figure 10: Drawing of Penn Station bridge and entrance area
Presented at November 14 design charrette

Penn Station Listening Session

Another opportunity for the public to express their views on the Penn Station LRT stop was a November 2010 listening session hosted by SW LRT planners. A conceptual drawing of Penn Station presented at the listening session is shown to the right (**Figure 11**). Amanda Arnold, Principal Planner for the City of Minneapolis, and other city officials were on hand to answer questions.

The session revealed community concern over the conceptual design of the Penn Station bridge. In the minds of many listening session participants, the bridge shown in Figure 9 emits the look and feel of a freeway overpass. These participants generally expressed

disappointment that the bridge did not better imitate the architecture of the surrounding neighborhood and the park-like quality of Cedar Lake Prairie. The authors of this plan took the feedback provided to Penn Station planners regarding the bridge as an indication of neighborhood views on development in the South Gateway. These views suggest that Bryn Mawr residents value the neighborhood's current aesthetic and would like to see it reflected in new buildings and infrastructure.



Figure 11: Conceptual drawing of Penn Station bridge and platform
Presented at November listening session with SW LRT planners

South Bryn Mawr Survey

The authors of this plan conducted a survey of South Bryn Mawr residents living on the western edge of the South Gateway during the second half of March 2011. The purpose of the survey was to identify potential political barriers to South Gateway development and obtain preferences for development from the neighborhood’s perspective. Information acquired through the survey was used extensively in the formation of the vision presented below.

The targeted properties were not randomly selected. Participants included residents of the Cedar Lake Townhomes located southwest of the South Gateway on Cedar Lake Drive and residents of single-family homes on S. Wayzata Boulevard, Cedar Lake Road, Vincent Avenue, Thomas Avenue, and Antoinette Avenue. Plan authors went door-to-door asking to speak with those who answered (provided they were over 18). Twenty-four surveys were completed using this method.

The survey revealed that increased traffic in the immediate area is the top concern of South Bryn Mawr survey respondents. No other concern came close. Traffic management and bottlenecks on S. Wayzata Boulevard and Cedar Lake Road were mentioned. Concerns about parking and preserving the privacy and quiet residential character of the area were also common responses relating to traffic. Safety was a concern for about half of the respondents. One surprising finding, based on stakeholder interviews from other Bryn Mawr residents, was that view obstruction was the #1 concern of only 13% of those surveyed; 29%

selected view obstruction as their least important concern. (See Appendix 4 for full survey results).

In terms of potential benefits, south Bryn Mawr residents rated improved connections to parks, trails and the rest of the neighborhood as the top advantage they would want to see in a new development scenario. When asked about businesses they would like to see move into the immediate area, some respondents indicated that they wanted to make sure South Gateway development did not damage the existing businesses of downtown Bryn Mawr. Additional survey results are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Perceived Benefits of South Gateway Development	
<i>Perceived to be a benefit by most residents</i>	78 % Improved connections: parks, trails, neighborhoods
	(fewest low scores, clearly important in area planning)
	Area vitality increased: 30% rated it a #1 or #2
<i>Perceived to be a benefit by some residents</i>	Service amenities
	Improved aesthetics in area
	Increasing neighborhood diversity or housing options
<i>Not widely perceived to be a benefit</i>	Restaurants
<i>* Full survey: questions and results in Appendix</i>	

Table 2 provides summary findings from the survey. Highlights include strong support for the Penn Station stop (75% of the respondents want Penn Station to be built) and moderate opposition to high density housing (when given a choice of high, medium or low density residential development, 58% of respondents opted for lower-density housing in the South Gateway).

Table 2: Summary Findings of South Bryn Mawr Survey	
75%	Want a Penn Station Light Rail Stop
68%	Any new housing units should be open to anyone
58%	New local housing development should be lower heights & dense
58%	New housing units should be owned (not rental)
46%	Price new housing at market rate
42%	Housing should be a mix of affordable and market rate
33%	New housing units should be mix of rental/owned
17%	New local housing developments should be medium ht.
13%	New local housing should be 4-7 story w/space between
13%	Didn't like the choices offered for local housing/no response
13%	New housing units should be for 55 and older age group
8%	Don't Want a Penn Station Light Rail Stop
0%	New area housing units should be all rental

The Bryn Mawr survey also contained a visual preference survey consisting of fourteen photo images of different types and heights of housing. Analysis of survey responses showed that South Bryn Mawr residents have a preference for the three styles of housing presented below. (These images received the most favorable responses and the fewest least favorable responses in the visual preference portion of the survey). A light yellow flat-topped townhouse with a small balcony (**Figure 12**) received a favorable score from 63.2% of survey respondents. **Figure 12** also received the fewest unfavorable scores.



Figure 12:
#1 Residential image
selected from S. Bryn
Mawr’s Visual
Preference Survey

Figure 13:
52.6% gave this image
a very positive score





Figure 14:
47.4% gave this image
a good score, making it
another favored image

Lower profile (2-3 story) and smaller scale residential images received the highest rankings. These images also tended to show more intensive perennial, shrub and tree plantings, as opposed to wide expanses of lawn (as in **Figure 15**).



Figure 15: South Bryn Mawr residents did
not appear to favor wide expanses of lawn

The two images below received the fewest favorable responses and the greatest number of unfavorable responses in the survey. 68.4 % did not favor the image in **Figure 17**, giving it #4 or #5 ranking.



Figure 16:
Least appealing form of
housing, according to
survey respondents

Figure 17: 63.2% of
survey respondents
did not favor the
image at right.



Stakeholder analysis



This stakeholder analysis consists of a list of people, groups, organizations, and entities that will affect or will be affected by a development near Penn Station. The intent here is to describe the political and economic environment

in which South Gateway development proposals will be considered.

Public Sector

The public sector has a great deal of power and interest in the Southwest LRT Line. Governmental entities provide funding for mass transit projects. They also determine the route and locations of stations. Hennepin County has taken the lead in the initial planning of station specifications. They recently handed off planning to the Met Council, the regional planning authority for the Twin Cities Metro Area. The Met Council is tasked with the most of the engineering associated with the project. Metro Transit, which is a mass transit service provider created by the Met Council, is impacted because a stop at Penn Station could affect a change to existing transit lines that serve Bryn Mawr and the surrounding area.

Funding for the SW LRT Line comes from a variety of public sector sources. Sixty percent of total project funding comes from the Hennepin County Transit Improvement Board, twenty percent from the Hennepin

County Rail Authority, and another twenty percent from the State of Minnesota upon approval by the legislature. At the national level, the FTA plays a significant role as well. If FTA approval is given the federal government will pay for fifty percent of the total project cost, which would reduce the funding requirements for the state and county level organizations by half.

The City of Minneapolis is the primary public sector actor in economic and community development planning in the South Gateway. It has the ability to rezone parcels, add in transit and pedestrian overlays, and work with developers on partnerships for funding developments near the station. Additionally, the city might be asked to pay for additional station costs above basic accessibility infrastructure.

Private Sector

The private sector has a large role in South Gateway development. The public sector impacts development from a macro level, but the actual design and construction of the development will be carried out and paid for by private investors. Private sector land developers will decide the development's final composition of housing, retail space, and parking. They are required to make a development as profitable as possible, and as a result, they will respond to market forces rather than the public good. Joffe Medi-Center and the accounting firm of Lurie Besikof Lapidus & Company are the current land owners in the area. Any viable South Gateway development proposal must first make sense in terms of these businesses' bottom lines.

Bryn Mawr residents are another private sector actor with a large stake in South Gateway development. On one hand South Gateway development would bring Bryn Mawr residents access to new services and housing opportunities that are currently unavailable in the neighborhood. This could increase the economic viability of Bryn Mawr and reconnect the bifurcated sections on either side of I-394. Improved pedestrian and bike traffic made possible by infrastructure improvements would increase the commercial success of the area. On the other hand, Bryn Mawr residents living in closest proximity to the South Gateway would be those most impacted by intensive development, as their views could be obstructed and zoning changes could affect their home values. Increased foot and auto traffic in their area would also disproportionately affect them.

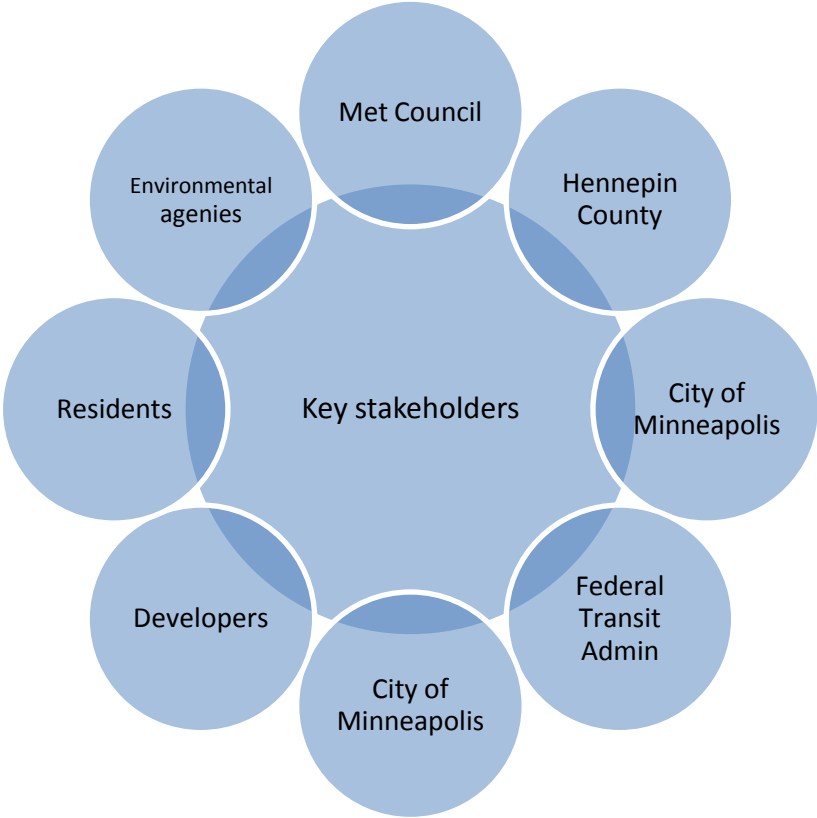


Figure 18: Key stakeholders in the South Gateway plan

SWOT analysis



A SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis was undertaken to assess just that: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to creating a development plan for the South Gateway. The process involved analyzing factors internal to the

proposal and also external factors shaped by regional and national trends. Important to note is that the purpose of the SWOT was not to analyze whether Penn Station was feasible, but whether or not development could happen in the area around it.

Strengths

Encouraging private sector development in the area around the Penn Station is helped by a number of factors internal to the neighborhood. Bryn Mawr is a highly desirable place to live, as reflected in the neighborhood's stable housing prices throughout the recession. Households in the neighborhood have higher annual income and lower unemployment rates than many other Minneapolis neighborhoods, which again reflects the comparatively comfortable economic situation of the residents. The neighborhood is a sensible location for families with children to live in. It boasts a low crime rate, has an engaged population, has close proximity to many activities and has both elementary and middle schools located within its borders.

The neighborhood provides access to abundant green space. Theodore Wirth Park, the Cedar Lake Prairie, and the Bryn Mawr Meadows highlight the neighborhood's access to outdoors activities. Public amenities at these parks are attractive features to any community and include extensive running and biking trails, cross country ski paths, baseball and softball fields, and golf courses. Because of the parks that surround Bryn Mawr, and its close proximity to downtown Minneapolis, the neighborhood has scenic views in nearly every direction. Most residents work outside of the neighborhood, but Bryn Mawr's centralized location in the Twin Cities reduces commute times to major employment zones throughout the metropolitan area. Easy access to the major highways of I-394 and I-94 makes getting to work in these locations easier than in many other areas of the Twin Cities.

An established, employed local population with relatively high levels of disposable income would provide an incentive for service based businesses to locate new development in the South Gateway. Additionally, residents of Bryn Mawr are generally supportive of how Penn Station and the accompanying development will affect their neighborhood, and they hope that proposals incorporate service based businesses that can be utilized by residents and transit riders.

Weaknesses

The South Gateway does have a number of characteristics that decrease its appeal to private sector land developers. Due to Penn Station's high engineering costs and low ridership projections there is a chance that it

could be eliminated from the project when the plans are finalized. The lack of certainty around this decision reduces private sector interest in the area.

Another impediment to South Gateway development is its location. The area available for development is small in size, so developers would have to be thoughtful in arranging the buildings. Additionally, substantial commercial development in the area would require the consolidation of land parcels under a single ownership. Currently the area is more focused on industrial use than commercial use, and buying out existing land owners could be a costly proposition. Even after a developer purchased the necessary parcels, they would still have to deal with the South Gateway's current zoning limitations. It is currently zoned for industrial and office, but local developers have described the South Gateway's development opportunities as not suitable for office buildings. Additionally, retail on the ground floor was specifically mentioned as not viable and just something that has to be added to the cost of putting up a building.

A further impediment to South Gateway development is the area's poor accessibility. As was mentioned in the background section, Cedar Lake Prairie and I-394 break up the regional road network, which restricts the South Gateway's tradeshed. In addition, space limitations reduce opportunities for parking, meaning that underground parking would likely be required for South Gateway residents, customers and workers. Such parking is expensive and private developers might try to offset the additional cost by increasing the price of housing.

Poor pedestrian access to the South Gateway may also prevent nearby residents from taking advantage of South Gateway retail. Primary access from North Bryn Mawr is across the Penn Avenue bridge, but this bridge is inhospitable to pedestrians and bikers due to the high amount of traffic entering and existing I-394. To ensure that commercial development near the station gets as much foot travel as possible, the South Gateway will need to be made more accessible to all modes of traffic.

There is also some question about whether the neighbors closest to the South Gateway will be supportive of development. The private sector will have to engage these residents to ensure that the development incorporates features desired by those who will be most impacted by the new buildings.

Opportunities

There are some factors that may prove beneficial when assessing the potential for economic development in the South Gateway. The surrounding neighborhood has a stable housing market, but there is a lack of affordable housing, rental apartments, and condominiums. This scenario presents an opportunity for private sector housing developers. If designed correctly, a multi-use facility would provide rental units and condominiums for young adults and empty nesters while also expanding available retail services to local residents.

The South Gateway's location, while a limitation in many respects, has the potential to facilitate reverse commutes to the suburbs. This

potential derives from Penn Station's northerly placement on the SW LRT Line and its close connection to Near-North neighborhoods via Penn Avenue. By making Penn Station more accessible to Near-North commuters, South Gateway development could dramatically increase Penn Station ridership and expand the regional significance of the SW Corridor.

South Gateway development could also provide the impetus for public sector infrastructure improvements needed to integrate the neighborhood and address the lingering accessibility issues caused by the construction of I-394, which damaged neighborhood cohesion. The Penn Avenue bridge has done little to rectify this situation because it is unfriendly to pedestrians and bikers. Public sector infrastructure improvements – needed to make large scale development feasible – could facilitate pedestrian traffic over I-394 and thus reconnect the neighborhood. Additional improvements to South Gateway infrastructure could address the vertical circulation challenges that isolate Bryn Mawr residents from the parks and trails in Cedar Lake Prairie.

Bryn Mawr's emphasis on parkland and the environment create further opportunities for South Gateway development. Opportunities to protect the neighborhood's natural resources include:

- Air quality improvement
- Energy-saving measures
- Expanding Cedar Prairie plant species above the valley
- Bluff stabilization and exotic species removal
- New technology for rain and surface water capture

Threats/Challenges

The biggest threat to South Gateway development is the protracted nationwide real estate slump that has slowed new construction throughout the country. Private developers have been cautious about starting new projects due to the restrictions on credit from banks and the glut of housing options already on the market. Even in high demand areas, housing development has been slow to recover from the recession.

Complicating matters is the fact that local government in Minnesota has seen tax revenues fall and local government aid cut significantly. This has caused municipal government to tighten their belts in order to meet budgetary demands. As a result, cities like Minneapolis have had to limit the amount of development assistance they offer. This is especially true in a financially comfortable neighborhood like Bryn Mawr. Tax increment and community development money is often used in low-income neighborhoods to help improve fragile economies in depressed areas.

South Gateway development also faces competition from a large scale development proposed for the area around the Van White Station (northeast of Penn Station along the LPA). Known as the Linden Yards project, this development envisions a significant amount of new office buildings, ground level retail, apartments, and condominiums. Larger potential profits in Linden Yards may draw private capital away from the South Gateway.

Despite general neighborhood support for South Gateway development, there is a portion of residents concerned that such development could spoil Bryn Mawr's peaceful atmosphere. These residents fear that development would increase traffic on S. Wayzata Boulevard, leading to greater congestion on the Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange. Additionally, safety concerns were expressed about Penn Station and South Gateway development possibly bringing in outsiders who are unfamiliar with Bryn Mawr's pace of life and quiet nature (Park, 2010).

Another threat to South Gateway development is the current land ownership. Neither Lurie Besikof Lapidus & Co. nor Joffe Medi-Center has voiced a particular desire to relocate their operations. The accounting firm has been located there for quite a long time, and Joffe has created redevelopment plans of their own focused on bringing a second office building into the neighborhood. Any attempt to redevelop the land in a transit-oriented manner will most likely require that the land be purchased, and Lurie Besikof Lapidus & Co. and Joffe may only be willing to re-think their plans for a premium.

Problem statement



The Penn Avenue light rail stop is at risk of being left off of the Southwest LRT Line because of low ridership projections.

Development in the South Gateway has been identified as a factor that could strengthen the case for Penn Station's inclusion in the final project. Such development, if done appropriately, would boost station ridership figures by increasing the area's population density and improving Penn Station's accessibility to commuters in Bryn Mawr and surrounding neighborhoods. The challenge facing Penn Station proponents is determining what type of development best fits the South Gateway's geographic, economic and political environment.

The following section presents a development vision designed to increase Bryn Mawr's capacity to support LRT, meet current and anticipated resident needs, and preserve neighborhood resources and character. This vision blends the neighborhood's need for growth with important values and priorities conveyed through community participation processes.

PART III: VISION

Sometime in the near future...



A cool summer breeze blows in the face of Bryn Mawr resident Marshall, as he bikes from the north across the newly upgraded Penn Avenue Bridge over I-394. He lives close to downtown Bryn Mawr and the bike-friendly upgrades have made accessing the light rail stop much easier. This morning, as every morning, he is going to board the east-bound train heading to his job at Target in Minneapolis. After crossing the bridge he stops quickly for a cup of coffee at the restaurant that overlooks beautiful Cedar Lake Prairie. The tranquility of the green space surrounding the light rail stop below helps to bring some peace to what has been a busy week. Feeling refreshed, he crosses the pedestrian bridge which acts as a link to trails, parks, and the light rail. He boards the train and settles into his seat while listening to his iPod and enjoying the view of Cedar Lake Prairie in full bloom. Monarch butterflies are hovering around the flowers.



From the west, Arthur jogs toward the South Gateway development on wide tree-lined sidewalks along Wayzata Boulevard. He likes to start his morning with a run before heading to his engineering job in Minneapolis, and has his choice of trails between Theodore Wirth and Cedar Lake Park. It is light out this morning, which Arthur prefers, but even on dark mornings and evening, Arthur always feels safe in the well-lit areas surrounding the South Gateway development.



Today he walks across the connecting bridge to access the valley south. From Cedar Prairie Plaza he jogs down the pedestrian bridge which will quickly bring him down to the trails in Cedar Prairie. Arthur used to have to jump over heavy rail lines to safely access the park, but with that no longer a concern, he begins his run toward Cedar Lake.



From the north Brian tries to catch up on some last minute sleep aboard the route 19-A bus that he boarded near his home in north Minneapolis. A morning commute via bus and light rail line to his job as a city administrator in St. Louis Park eases him into a busy day in municipal government, without the stress of negotiating traffic. As the bus drives toward the South Gateway development in Bryn Mawr, Brian shakes himself awake and digs out the well worn Metro Transit pass that will allow him to transfer to the west bound light rail line that will bring him to work. After exiting the bus at the kiss-and-ride drop off location Brian greets a friend waiting for him on a bench. They walk

through Cedar Prairie Plaza, enjoying the modern sculpture and waving grasses and colorful plantings in the patio pots. At the other end of the plaza they reach the glass pedestrian bridge and proceed toward the Penn Station platform.

Kay awakens in her 7th floor condominium just in time to see a Southwest Corridor train passing below. Her windows look toward downtown and offer spectacular evening views of the skyline and morning views of the sunrise. Kay usually takes the rail to her job in St. Paul, but she has the day off from work to prepare for a special visitor; Kay's son is flying into town for a weekend visit. He will be taking the light rail line from the airport to her home. They plan on catching up while having a light lunch and glass of wine at the restaurant on the first floor of her building. Later in the afternoon they will walk to downtown Bryn Mawr to meet her cousin at Cuppa Java before congregating at a friend's home for a festive birthday celebration.

The next morning, Adam grabs a bike from the Nice Ride stand in Cedar Prairie Plaza to get some exercise. He overhears some locals (who have congregated in the area to stroll and walk their dogs) admiring the menu for the small eatery adjacent to the public boardwalk. The Prairie Smoke Patio is a popular neighborhood gathering place, with an outdoor fireplace to expand the usage when fall arrives. The patio is known far-and-wide for its stunning 180° view of the city skyline and trails below – a view that was not easily available prior to this development.



Figure 19: View of downtown Minneapolis from south Bryn Mawr



Figure 20: Top view of the newly designed South Gateway (produced in Google Sketchup). This top view shows a new housing and retail development on the east end of S. Bryn Mawr at the intersection of I-394 and Penn Avenue in South Bryn Mawr, part of the South Gateway Vision.



Figure 21: Top View from North: Cedar Prairie Plaza & Cedar View condominium green roof and patio, entrance to boardwalk and restaurants, new I-394 west exit ramp and new pedestrian crossing island and striping.



Figure 22: Cedar Prairie Plaza: Multi-modal access and community gathering place

The South Gateway is

A Place to Live

The *South Gateway* is a high-concentration, mixed profile residential development. The nexus of outstanding views of downtown, convenient access to jobs, amenities and recreation, it consists of several “Stage of Life” housing options: updated two-story townhouses, innovative three-story modern cliff dwellings (inspired by the Cinque Terre of Italy) and the signature LEED-certified *Cedar Lake View* building containing privately owned condominiums. This last building is a mixed-use facility in the South Gateway’s southeast corner, along the bluff overlooking Cedar Prairie. Its location encourages residents and neighbors to grab coffee and breakfast at the coffee shop on the ground floor as they walk from the boardwalk to the Penn Station platform or the trails and park beyond. The Cedar Lake View condominium development is taller than the rest of the South Gateway to take advantage of the stunning views, but the core of the building is wrapped with a lower profile stepped down to the north. This design is intended to avoid drastic reductions in the views enjoyed by Cedar Lake Townhome residents on the South Gateway’s southwestern border. Cedar Lake View features a green roof and patio area for residents on top of the three story portion of the building (and a utilitarian green roof at the very top for additional energy savings). The plantings on the green roof and in the complex’s surrounding landscaping echo the plants of the prairie below. Parking is built underground for Cedar Lake View residents, while a small surface parking lot services the eatery on the building’s ground floor.



Figure 23: view of townhouses in South Gateway

The South Gateway is home to a diverse and interesting array of people. Seven different housing styles exist in the area. Two streets of townhouse developments (Madeira Avenue and a new street- Windflower Way) reflect architectural compatibility with South Bryn Mawr architectural styles while also possessing an updated sensibility. The overall South Gateway development is designed to increase housing options for all age groups. While the area has been primarily marketed to home owners, the South Gateway’s second phase is designed to create an option for apartment living at the corner of Madeira Avenue and S. Wayzata Boulevard. This new complex provides entry level housing options for young professionals and working families while also accommodating seniors who want to downsize but still stay in the neighborhood. This apartment building, branded Windflower Apartments, has ADA accessible apartments that possess innovative

sound-deadening glass and insulation manufactured from Twin Cities green housing industries.

A sustainable development

As a sustainable development project, the South Gateway protects Bryn Mawr's natural resources and preserves its park-centric character by utilizing Smart Growth designs in its built components. South Gateway streets, sidewalks and parking lots are poured with the latest permeable concrete, which aids in the re-charge of groundwater. Shade trees are planted in boulevards which utilize stormwater capture techniques, and rain garden plantings are used to reduce pollutants entering storm sewers. Buffer and screen plantings use urban-tolerant evergreens and native plantings to reduce noise and air pollution and increase connectivity to area parks. At the same time as these colorful plantings provide four-season interest, they also absorb street and parking lot runoff and filter the water as it returns to groundwater supplies. The South Gateway development also incorporates erosion control measures and eliminates invasive species from the cliff facing the valley.

A connection to jobs and parks

The South Gateway development attracts people who desire access to LRT service. Over a third of South Gateway residents ride the train daily, and many Near-North residents use South Gateway amenities on their way to job centers up and down the SW LRT Line. North Bryn Mawr residents take advantage of an enhanced Penn Avenue bridge to safely walk and bike across I-394 and S. Wayzata Boulevard. South Bryn Mawr

residents take advantage of an expanded network of sidewalks and public space to walk between their homes and Cedar Prairie Plaza, which is a bustling community gathering place. Ornamental planters on the plaza have a neighborhood-inspired design developed by local artisans. The effect, which is combined with a moderate amount of signage and benches, creates a pocket park, humanizing the space and increasing its appeal. All Bryn Mawr residents rejoice in the convenience of the Penn Station bridge and elevator shaft, which provides safe, comfortable passage from the Bryn Mawr bluff to the Cedar Lake Prairie below.



Figure 24: Top View of Cedar Prairie Plaza, multi-modal approach to Penn Station LRT and the retail portion of *Cedar Lake View* condominium housing complex

A neighborhood amenity

The South Gateway development provides neighborhood residents and transit riders with improved amenities. *Cedar Lake View* has dedicated retail space on its first floor. Feedback from residents affirmed the desire for additional retail options in the neighborhood. Given the South Gateway's limited tradeshed, however, only a modest amount of space is set aside for retail. Most of this space is taken up by Prairie Smoke Patio, which is located near the plaza. Having a place to relax with friends for dinner and drinks at night / coffee and bagels in the morning was one of the highest priorities for some neighborhood stakeholders. Prairie Smoke Patio also provides Cedar Lake Trail users a place to take a rest and get some refreshments.

The majority of the amenities in the South Gateway are designed to accentuate neighborhood values, rather than force unnatural development into available space. An example is a public boardwalk between *Cedar Lake View* and the lip of the Bryn Mawr bluff. This boardwalk, which is connected to the Prairie Smoke Patio, increases neighborhood connectivity and improves the aesthetic value of the overall development.

PART IV: ACTION PLAN

Articulate Regional Development Goals



The South Gateway vision faces a series of obstacles to implementation, including a depressed real estate market, zoning restrictions, neighborhood resident concerns about high density residential development, accessibility constraints, and limited public dollars available for public infrastructure investment. Overcoming these obstacles will not be easy. It will

require a private developer who believes in the vision and is willing to invest millions in Bryn Mawr housing. It will also require public officials and SW LRT project managers who are committed to infrastructure enhancements, land-use modifications, and station amenities. Lastly, and most importantly, it will require the support of Bryn Mawr residents. Without strong neighborhood support for the South Gateway vision, private developers and public officials are likely to look elsewhere for development opportunities.

To generate public support for greater density and infrastructure improvements, South Gateway proponents must integrate their station area aspirations with a strategy for achieving regional development goals. These goals should speak to the needs of Bryn Mawr and Near-North neighborhoods and provide tangible ways of explaining how Penn Station and South Gateway development benefit the surrounding region.

Based on the diagnosis presented in the first section, this plan recommends the following:

- Expanded west-side housing options
- Improved mobility within Bryn Mawr
- Increased regional connectivity
- Preserved natural resources
- Maintaining a sense of place

Framed in these terms, the South Gateway is a strategy for bringing young families into Bryn Mawr and allowing empty nesters to stay in the neighborhood as they downsize; supplying Bryn Mawr residents with safer, more convenient access to Cedar Lake Prairie; providing Bryn Mawr and Near-North residents with frequent, reliable transit connections to jobs centers downtown and in the Southwest Metro; and preserving Bryn Mawr's identity as a "neighborhood in a park". The fact that the South Gateway also addresses Penn Station ridership concerns is an important, but secondary, bonus.

The pages that follow chart a course toward the above mentioned regional development goals in the form of recommended action steps. Each action step can be pursued independently or in conjunction with others. The intent here is to show that the South Gateway is more than a residential development proposal or a means of increasing station viability – it is a multi-pronged plan for Bryn Mawr's future. Many of the action steps listed below involve lobbying public officials for regulatory changes and infrastructure investment.

Expand Bryn Mawr Housing Options



As has been previously noted, Bryn Mawr is a desirable place to live. Home values weathered the real estate market collapse with steady prices, and low turnover rates show that when an owner moves to the area they often stay for some time. According to the most recent Bryn Mawr Land Use Plan the existing housing stock in the neighborhood is made up of primarily

made up of single family homes built before 1960. These older homes have been well maintained, and give the neighborhood an established yet modern feel. However, the desirability of neighborhood reflected in the home prices also acts as a barrier for young adults, single people, retirees, and low income individuals to live in the neighborhood. The South Gateway development will remedy this by increasing housing stock variety in a transit friendly location. Apartments, townhouses, and condominiums will all be built in the land area near the station and they will be built to accommodate the needs for people at all stages of life and marketed at a variety of price points.

This section lays out three strategies designed to increase west-side housing options. The first strategy is to ensure that parcel rights are assembled in way that would allow a high density residential development to exist near the station. The second strategy is to adjust the current land zoning near the station to accommodate new reality of

transit oriented development. The third strategy is to create a legal or pro-active planning framework with future private sector developers; one that protects the interests of Bryn Mawr residents.

Assemble land parcels

County and regional governmental organizations will be the driving force behind the creation of the Southwest Corridor, but the city of Minneapolis will be responsible for working with land developers to make the South Gateway proposal a reality. Parcel ownership is currently spread between Joffe Medi-Center and the accounting firm of Lurie Besikof Lapidus & CO. as the primary land holders. The accounting firm has been in their building for a number of years with no plans to redevelop or sell the land. Joffe Medi-Center has a vision of putting in another building on the open parcel, and this development has been considered since before the real estate collapse. If it were to become developed independent of the surrounding area without consideration to its potential vis-à-vis the transit station, the entire South Gateway development could be halted. The city should take an active role in monitoring development proposals in that area to ensure that the most socially beneficial uses of the area near the station are realized.

Adjust land use zoning

One aspect of city government regulation that must be adjusted to allow for residential development near the Penn Avenue Station is zoning. The current zoning of the land parcels in development site do not allow for the modest development requirements of this proposal. The sections are zoned as either OR2 for office space, or I1 for light industrial usage.

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The land must be rezoned to a medium density residential district, R3 or R4, to allow for the multi building development plan to continue. The zoning changes would permit the taller 6-story buildings in the development to meet municipal regulations.

A second possibility along that same line of thinking is to institute a transit overlay district in the South Gateway. These special zoning districts have been used in areas throughout the country to encourage higher density, pedestrian friendly, transit oriented development. This type of overlay creates a wholesale alteration to the zoning and development planning of the designated area. It encourages Brownfield redevelopment plans like the South Gateway, and adjusts building height and residential density regulations to fit with a transit oriented model. It has an additional focus on improving the walkability of the district by creating a local identity that emphasizes alternatives to automobile dependency.

The Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan is the established municipal framework that outlines long term plans for the city. The overall approach of the city is a gradual transition from taller buildings in the downtown area to single family homes on the outskirts of the city proper. However, the city did outline growth strategies that encourage population density and mixed land uses near transit area stations. The South Gateway proposal fits within this model. Additionally, to codify the future use of these parcels of land for transit oriented development, the city should amend the comprehensive plan to include the small area plan.

Create a development agreement



Figure 25: Townhouse, apartments and condominium options in South Gateway

Another step that the city can take to ensure that specified requirements relating to the development are met by the private sector land developer is to create a development agreement. These agreements are a legal framework signed between the municipal government and the private developer that often outline environmental considerations,

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local and minority labor requirements, and other concerns of the local community. In this particular case the development agreement would reflect the need for developers to protect downtown views as much as possible, to ensure that there is underground parking available for the units to reduce street parking congestion, to commit resources for use on sustainable landscaping that reflects resource conservation. Additionally the development agreement should reflect the need for diversity in the housing stock, and legal language should be added so that affordable housing, entry level housing, and stage of life housing for aging adults all exist in the development along with the higher priced condo and townhouse units.



Improve Mobility in Bryn Mawr



The diagnosis section of this plan laid out the considerable mobility challenges existing in Bryn Mawr. The greatest challenges result from I-394 and the bluff running along the neighborhood's southern border. Bryn Mawr mobility is also limited by an incomplete sidewalk grid and poor pedestrian and bicycle amenities on

major neighborhood arteries. The Bryn Mawr Land Use Plan, the Southwest Transitway Station Area Strategic Planning Study (Station Area Study), and a series of conversations with Bryn Mawr residents have identified these mobility barriers as a top neighborhood concern. For many Bryn Mawr residents, the most exciting aspect of Penn Station and station-related development is that it holds the potential to better connect north and south Bryn Mawr and improve access to Cedar Lake Prairie. This section lays out four strategies for improving the mobility of Bryn Mawr residents. These strategies are:

- Streetscape Wayzata Boulevard
- Streetscape Penn Avenue
- Improve vehicular and pedestrian traffic management on Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange
- Provide Bryn Mawr residents with a safe, convenient way of reaching the valley floor

In addition to advancing an important regional development goal, these strategies also enhance station viability. No matter many residents move into the new units southwest of the Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange, most Penn Station users will come from outside the immediate station area – either from larger Bryn Mawr, down from Kenwood and Lowry Hill to the south and east, or along Penn Avenue from Near-North. The most effective way to increase the number of people using the station is to make the station area more accessible to the surrounding region.

Streetscape Wayzata Boulevard

The vast majority of Bryn Mawr and Near-North users will access the South Gateway via Wayzata Boulevard or Penn Avenue. These streets are presently auto-oriented thoroughfares. There is a wide gap in the sidewalk on the south side of Wayzata Boulevard (there is no sidewalk along Wayzata Boulevard's north side). This gap extends east from the south terminus of the Bryn Mawr pedestrian bridge to the South Gateway, which means that pedestrians who cross I-394 on the pedestrian bridge in order to access Penn Station must share Wayzata Boulevard's east bound lane with vehicular traffic. This problem is exacerbated by the high volume of non-local traffic on Wayzata Boulevard. Numerous residents living south of Wayzata Boulevard informed this plan's authors that the road is heavily used by commuters who wish to bypass congestion on I-394. This type of commuter tends to drive up average speeds, making Wayzata Boulevard an inhospitable place for pedestrians.

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This plan recommends addressing the above mentioned accessibility concerns in the following ways:

- **Correct existing break in Wayzata Boulevard sidewalk.** This recommendation mirrors the recommendation made in the Station Area Study.
- **Widen the Wayzata Boulevard sidewalk and buffer it with a tree-adorned boulevard (south-side only).** Such a boulevard already exists along Wayzata Boulevard between Cedar Lake Parkway and Xerxes Avenue. The absence of a boulevard on Wayzata Boulevard between Xerxes Avenue and Cedar Lake Road is justified by a small commercial strip that benefits from a close relationship to the street. This plan recommends that the boulevard resume east of the Wayzata Boulevard /Cedar Lake Parkway intersection and continue until it reaches the station entrance.

Streetscape Penn Avenue

Although a very different type of road compared to South Wayzata Boulevard, Penn Avenue poses some of the same challenges to pedestrians. Penn Avenue is heavily used by commuters traveling to-and-from the Penn Avenue/I-394 Interchange, and sidewalks are built right up to the curb. The auto-dominated feel of the street increases exponentially as pedestrians approach the Penn Avenue bridge from the north. Roughly 500ft before the interchange the street widens to make room for three south bound lanes, two north bound lanes, and a median. The sidewalks diverge and narrow to make room for turn lanes and then converge on the south-side of the entrance/exit ramps to cross the Penn Avenue bridge. Pedestrians on the bridge are caught between heavy

bridge traffic on one side and the noise, exhaust and wind traveling along I-394 on the other.

While Penn Avenue presents challenges to pedestrian mobility, it also offers opportunity. A 1/3 mile stretch of Penn Avenue connects the South Gateway and downtown Bryn Mawr. The short distance creates the potential for an intimate relationship between the two areas. The South Gateway could provide access to the trails and CedarPrairie, a connection to the LRT line, and a concentration of people who generate consumer demand. Downtown Bryn Mawr could offer a wide array of goods and services that cater to the needs of South Gateway residents. To facilitate this type of symbiotic relationship, this plan recommends a series of improvements designed to encourage pedestrian traffic up and down Penn Avenue.

This plan recommends addressing the above accessibility concerns in the following ways:

- **Buffer the sidewalk on the west-side of Penn Avenue between the Penn Avenue / I-394 Interchange and Mount View Avenue with a tree-adorned boulevard. Replace short bushes on the east-side of Penn Avenue with tall trees.** The most significant pedestrian enhancements to Penn Avenue can be made between the Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange and Mount View Avenue. The northeasterly drift of this segment creates enough green space on the west-side of Penn Avenue to set the sidewalk back and plant a wide boulevard. This boulevard could support tall growing trees that would, when mature, hang over the road and provide a lush canopy

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over the approach to the Penn Avenue bridge. These trees would be tall enough to not obscure the Bryn Mawr Hedge. Varieties with a more open canopy can be selected so that the health and vitality of the hedge is maintained.

This plan does not recommend a boulevard on the east-side of Penn Avenue between the interchange and Mount View Avenue. Setting the sidewalk back is complicated by a sharp change in elevation to the east, and building a boulevard out into the road would impair Penn Avenue's ability to safely accommodate bridge traffic. However, the pedestrian experience on the east-side of Penn Avenue could still be enhanced by planting trees on the slope. These trees would add to the canopy over Penn Avenue and provide a visual focal point for pedestrians as they walk down Penn Avenue from downtown Bryn Mawr.

- **Re-do the plantings on the existing Penn Avenue median.** The current median extends slightly more than half of the distance between the interchange and Mount View Avenue. On the median is a low flower bed containing daylilies (*Hemerocallis*) and short prairie grasses. The current plantings are attractive when they bloom in very early June, but this is followed by a long summer color gap until native grasses are prominent. This plan recommends reorganizing the current plants to contain groupings of native and non-invasive perennial plants in order to create more seasonal interest. Safety concerns necessitate that the flowers and grasses grow no higher than 3 feet, but obtaining some height, volume and color is important because it partially shields pedestrians from traffic on the opposite

side of the street. Incorporating more prominent prairie flowers into the Penn Avenue median also serves the function of visually tying Penn Avenue conceptually to the South Gateway and Cedar Lake Prairie.

- **Buffer sidewalks on both sides of Penn Avenue between Mount View Avenue and Cedar Lake Road with tree-adorned boulevards and themed street lamps.** The pedestrian environment on Penn Avenue is more pleasant north of Mount View Avenue. The sidewalks are wide, and the yards on either side of the streets are carefully landscaped and full of mature trees. Still, there is room for improvement. This plan recommends buffering the sidewalk on both sides with tree adorned boulevards and replacing the current street lights with a more aesthetically pleasing form of street lamp. These street lamps should be used consistently throughout the South Gateway, along Penn Avenue, and in downtown Bryn Mawr.

In the past, colorful perennial, rose and shrub plantings have been a great asset to downtown patrons and residents. But in spring 2011, these beds contain plantings that require dividing, editing or are in need of renewal/removal. Low wallstone planters need repair and re-stacking, invasive grasses and weeds have obtained a foothold in many of these plantings along retail and service establishments. These plantings require a higher level of maintenance than the Bryn Mawr community garden because of the reduced soil areas. The plantings downtown experience greater stresses because of wintering and de-icing salt damage. A more robust maintenance plan is needed to better preserve existing amenities

Improve vehicular and pedestrian traffic management on Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange

The Bryn Mawr Land Use Plan and the Station Area Study both indicate that traffic congestion on the Penn Avenue bridge is a major concern of Bryn Mawr residents. This contention is supported by a survey of two dozen Bryn Mawr households conducted between March 16 and March 31 2011. When asked to rate five potential concerns about South Gateway development in order of importance, 63% of Bryn Mawr households replied that traffic was either their highest or second highest worry. These results, in combination with anecdotal accounts of heavy South Wayzata Boulevard traffic and long queues on the entrance ramps, suggest that many Bryn Mawr residents perceive the Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange to be at or near capacity.

This plan looked at major congestion mitigation measures such as expanding the interchange's capacity or redirecting non-local traffic to other points of entry on the freeway system. Ultimately, we concluded that the Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange is appropriately sized and designed for its level of use, and we decided that redirecting traffic away from the Penn Avenue bridge would be overly disruptive to the region. This plan does recommend a modest set of traffic management enhancements and pedestrian amenities, but these are primarily directed at pedestrian mobility. More technically driven analysis is needed to determine if more can be done to address peak hour vehicular congestion.

This plan recommends addressing Penn Avenue/I-394 congestion concerns in the following ways:

- **Install stop signs at intersections along Wayzata Boulevard.** One way to potentially reduce Penn Avenue bridge traffic would be to install stop signs at the Xerxes Avenue, Cedar Lake Road, and both Madeira Avenue intersections along Wayzata boulevard. These stop signs would make Wayzata Boulevard less attractive to commuters wishing to avoid congestion on I-394.



- **Construct a carpool bypass of the meters on the eastbound and westbound entrance ramps.** A carpool bypass of the entrance ramp meters may encourage some commuters to begin carpooling, but primarily, this recommendation is designed to speed multi-occupant vehicles through the meter in order to shorten the queue of cars on the entrance ramps.

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- **Enhance the Penn Avenue bridge with pedestrian amenities.** A third way to assuage Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange congestion concerns is to make pedestrian traffic across the Penn Avenue bridge safer and more pleasant. This can be done by constructing a covered pedestrian walkway on the west-side of the bridge. The walkway would be the same width as the existing sidewalk. It would be bordered by a 2-foot high cement barrier on the interior and exterior sides. Translucent shields would rise 6 feet straight out of the cement barriers before converging to form a dome roof above the walkway. The cement barriers give pedestrians protection from the bridge traffic to their east. The shields protect pedestrians from the wind and freeway noise to their west.

The material composition and visual appearance of the covered walkway should be consistent with the covered bridge connecting Penn Station entrance area with Penn Station platform. Similarly, a flower bed should be constructed on the bridge median that mirrors the flower beds existing north and south of the interchange. These visual cues encourage pedestrians to view the bridge as an extension of pedestrian amenities in the surrounding areas.

- **Provide pedestrians with safe crossing over Penn Avenue north of the interchange and over Wayzata Boulevard south of the interchange.** As mentioned in the discussion of the previous strategy, a better pedestrian connection between the South Gateway and downtown Bryn Mawr would represent a significant improvement in Bryn Mawr mobility. Perhaps the biggest impediment to this connection is the threat to pedestrian safety posed by vehicular

traffic getting on and off the freeway. This plan makes two recommendations for how to move people safely from one side of the interchange to the other.

The first recommendation is that southbound pedestrian traffic be funneled onto the west-side of Penn Avenue prior to the interchange. This could be accomplished with a painted and signed pedestrian crosswalk opposite the Bryn Mawr Hedge. At this point there is no flower bed on the median, so pedestrians would be able to use the median for refuge if necessary. The sidewalk on the east-side of Penn Avenue should terminate at the crosswalk.

The second recommendation is that Mn/DOT push the eastbound exit ramp's "c" shaped right-hand turn lane further west so that there is space for a large raised pedestrian refuge area between the right-hand turn lane and the exit ramp's straight/left-hand turn lane. A painted and lighted pedestrian crosswalk would be located at the western edge of the pedestrian refuge. When activated by a pedestrian, the lighted crosswalk would stop traffic headed in both directions on Wayzata Boulevard, allowing the pedestrian to cross safely from the pedestrian refuge to the station entrance area.

Provide Bryn Mawr residents with a safe, convenient way of reaching the valley floor

The most significant barrier to Bryn Mawr mobility is the change in elevation between the Bryn Mawr bluff and the Cedar Prairie valley.

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There are currently two options for accessing Cedar Prairie and the trails from the north: A pedestrian helix that exists on the eastbound I-394 entrance ramp; and a series of "cow-paths" cut into the face of the bluff. Many able-bodied Bryn Mawr residents prefer to access the valley floor using the cow-paths rather than walk along the I-394 entrance ramp to the pedestrian helix. The cow-paths are more convenient because they allow pedestrians to go directly from the neighborhood to the valley floor. The pedestrian helix, in contrast, involves a minimum 500 ft detour to the east. The irregular paths are also more pleasant, since they are far removed from the noise and exhaust of the freeway.

Unfortunately, pedestrians using the cow-paths to descend onto the valley floor must cross freight rail lines illegally in order to get to the trails on the valley's south-side. The construction of the SW LRT line is likely to result in a fence that prohibits such crossings. Unless the construction of the SW LRT line is accompanied by a new means of taking users of parks and trails to the other side of the tracks, Bryn Mawr residents will be left with less direct access to Cedar Prairie and the trail system than they have today.

This plan recommends improving Bryn Mawr's connection to Cedar Lake Prairie in the following ways:

- **Advocate for the inclusion of the pedestrian bridge in Penn Station's preliminary design.** Conceptual engineering of Penn Station has a 420-foot, covered pedestrian bridge connecting the station entrance area south of the Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange with the station platform in the valley, but there is no guarantee that this bridge will

continue to be included in the station design as the SW LRT line moves into preliminary engineering. As mentioned in the diagnosis section, Penn Station pedestrian bridge is expensive and is therefore a potential target of project managers looking to cut costs.

Anticipating such a scenario, the Station Area Study explored a no-bridge alternative. Under the no-bridge alternative, Penn Station is moved up the rail line to the northeast. LRT users accessing the station from the north would descend into the valley on the pedestrian helix. Kenwood and Lowry Hill residents would use a small parking area west of the station between Kenwood Parkway and I-394.

Although cheaper to build, the no-bridge alternative would reduce Bryn Mawr and Near-North access to Penn Station. The inconvenience imposed by the location of the pedestrian helix would likely drive down station use and weaken the station's impact on Bryn Mawr development. The no-bridge alternative is also less safe in that it requires station users to walk longer distances at low-grades. The Penn Station pedestrian bridge has the advantage of taking station users directly to the station platform while maintaining visual contact with the station entrance area.

This plan recommends that Bryn Mawr residents actively participate in the station planning process to ensure that the pedestrian bridge or a similarly direct means of connecting Bryn Mawr and Cedar Prairie is included.

- **Urge station planners to exclude a park-and-ride from Penn Station's preliminary design.** Conceptual engineering of Penn Station

calls for a park-and-ride south of the Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange. There are multiple problems with the park-and-ride proposal. The biggest problem is that the city of Minneapolis opposes it. In the city's view, the land surrounding Penn Station is too valuable to be turned into a surface parking lot. The city would much rather see the station area developed for residential or office purposes.

Another problem with the park-and-ride proposal is that offers questionable regional benefit. The park-and-ride would probably increase station ridership, but it is unlikely to take cars off of I-394 or provide car dependent commuters with shorter commutes. Most park-and-ride users would be car dependent Bryn Mawr and Near North residents who are willing to trade the cost of LRT ride and a less direct route to downtown for free parking near downtown. Commuters who live in the western suburbs may be willing to get off I-394 at Penn Avenue and take the train the rest of the way, but there is little regional benefit in subsidizing the parking of commuters who travel most of their commutes in cars.

A third problem with the park-and-ride proposal is that would create an additional barrier between Bryn Mawr residents and the entrance to Cedar Lake Prairie. While this barrier is by no means insurmountable (parking lots are easily walked across), the authors of this plan feel that South Gateway development and Penn Avenue improvements should seek to bring the park feel of Cedar Lake Prairie up on the bluff, across the bridge, and up Penn Avenue to downtown Bryn Mawr. A Penn Station park-and-ride runs counter to that vision. A fourth problem with the park-and-ride is that it could

introduce more vehicular traffic to the interchange, adding to congestion and safety concerns.

- **Advocate for the inclusion of a streetscaped station entrance area in Penn Station's preliminary design.** This plan recommends that a streetscaped station entrance area (termed Cedar Lake Plaza in the previous section) replace the park-and-ride in Penn Station's preliminary design. The plaza should serve as a neighborhood gathering place at the nexus of Penn Station, the South Gateway development, and downtown Bryn Mawr (connected by Penn Avenue and the Penn Avenue bridge). The plaza should be welcoming to pedestrians arriving from the west along South Wayzata Boulevard or the north via the protected crosswalk. This can be accomplished by continuing the South Wayzata Boulevard sidewalk through the station area along a kiss-and-ride (described under the goal of increased regional connectivity) until it arrives at the entrance to the pedestrian bridge. The kiss-and-ride edge of the sidewalk should be buffered with a wide, grass-covered boulevard intermittently adorned with prairie plants. The bluff edge of the sidewalk should abut a green space filling the area between the pedestrian bridge and the eastern end of the South Gateway development. This area should support benches facing both southwest and northeast. Transit riders and park users could use the benches to enjoy the view of Cedar Lake Prairie in one direction and look for rides in the other.
- **Encourage pedestrian traffic through the South Gateway development.** South Gateway development should increase Bryn Mawr's access to Cedar Lake Prairie by extending a streetscaped

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sidewalk network the entire length of Madeira Avenue, Madeira Circle (proposed in the vision), and Antoinette Avenue. These pedestrian enhancements, in conjunction with the residential, park-like atmosphere existing between Baptisia Apartments and the South Gateway townhouses, would make Madeira Avenue a more pleasant and direct approach to Cedar Lake Plaza from the west than South Wayzata Boulevard. Pedestrians on Madeira Avenue would be shielded from frontage road traffic and freeway noise by the apartments. Pedestrian access through the South Gateway could be further improved by reconnecting Madeira and Thomas Avenue. This would allow people using the pedestrian bridge over I-394 to proceed directly to Cedar Lake Plaza via Madeira Avenue. Finally, there should be easy, public pedestrian access at both ends of the boardwalk stretching out over the bluff on the south-side of the Cedar Lake View Condos. This would allow South Bryn Mawr residents to take in views of Cedar Prairie as they walk to and from the Penn Station bridge.



Increase Regional Connectivity



The pedestrian enhancements detailed above involve significant public investment on the part of government agencies at the city, county, region, and state level. To justify the recommended expenditures, the authors of this plan believe additional actions are needed to expand regional

access to Penn Station and Cedar Prairie and trails. Although the following recommendations could conceivably benefit all of west and north Minneapolis, as well as the west and northwest suburbs, the intended beneficiaries are Near-North residents and Bryn Mawr residents living more than 1/2 mile away from Cedar Lake Plaza.

Expand Transit & Bike Connections to Near-North Neighborhoods

The most effective way to strengthen the connection between the South Gateway and Near-North neighborhoods is to improve the transit and bike connections down Penn Avenue. Metro Transit, the Twin Cities' primary transit provider, does not currently offer north/south transit service on Penn Avenue south of Olson Memorial Highway. Route 19 provides frequent service (every 10-15 minutes peak; 15 minutes off-peak) from the Brooklyn Center Transit Center to downtown Minneapolis via Brooklyn Boulevard/Osseo Road, Penn Avenue, Olson Memorial

Highway, and 7th Street North. The turn off of Penn Avenue onto Olson Memorial Highway is about 1 mile north of the South Gateway. As noted in the diagnosis section, Metro Transit does not currently offer direct transit service from the Near-North Community to the Southwest Metro. Bike commutes down Penn Avenue are possible, but heavy vehicular traffic and parking on both sides of the street make long bike rides on Penn Avenue dangerous and unpleasant.

This plan recommends addressing transit and bike accessibility concerns in the following ways:

- **Redirect Route 19 to serve the South Gateway instead of downtown.** After dropping/receiving passengers at the Penn Station entrance area, Route 19 would return to the Brooklyn Center Transit Center via Penn Avenue and Brooklyn Blvd. /Osseo Road. In exchange for a less direct route downtown (passengers wishing to go downtown could transfer to the SW LRT line at Penn Station), Route 19 passengers would gain LRT access to job centers in Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie. Alternatively, Route 19 passengers could access downtown by transferring to Route 14 at either West Broadway Avenue or Golden Valley Road. In the event Route 19 passengers object strongly to the loss of direct downtown access, Route 19 could be divided into Route 19A (the existing route) and Route 19B (the South Gateway alternative).
- **Construct a two-lane bikeway lane along the east-side of Penn Avenue.** Parking on the east-side of Penn Avenue would be discontinued to make room for the bikeway. This bikeway would run

from Penn Station to Lowry Avenue North, intersecting with existing east-west bikeways at Plymouth Avenue North, 26th Ave North, and Lowry. In addition to serving Penn Station, the Penn Avenue bikeway would also provide Bryn Mawr and Near North bikers with easy access to Cedar Lake Prairie and the lakes and trails beyond. Bikers would be protected at the Penn Avenue/I-394 interchange and other major intersections by traffic lights that included bike only signals.

- **Establish parking restrictions to limit park-and-hide practices by non-residents.** Numerous Bryn Mawr residents indicated through interviews and surveys that they are concerned about a lack of parking in Bryn Mawr. This concern emanates from a perceived shortage of off-street parking in downtown Bryn Mawr and anecdotal evidence suggesting non-residents park-and-hide in Bryn Mawr when catching buses on Cedar Lake Road. The arrival of LRT service at Penn Station could make this practice more common place. Additional pressure on parking spaces could be created by this plan's proposals for greater neighborhood density and the confiscation of parking spaces for other uses.

To alleviate neighborhood parking concerns and ensure that downtown Bryn Mawr business have spaces for their customers, this plan recommends that the Bryn Mawr explore neighborhood interest in Residential Parking Permits. Downtown Bryn Mawr businesses could investigate city 2- hour parking limits on Cedar Lake Road and the east-side of Penn Avenue in downtown Bryn Mawr.

Facilitate mode transfers at Cedar Lake Plaza (the Penn Station entrance area)

Cedar Lake Plaza's recommended pedestrian amenities are described above. The strategy described here is designed to facilitate Cedar Plaza use by people accessing Penn Station via car, bus, or bike.

- **Advocate for the inclusion of a kiss-and-ride in Penn Station's preliminary design.** This plan recommends that the proposed park-and-ride be replaced by a kiss-and-ride. This kiss-and-ride would consist of two half-ovals off of South Wayzata Boulevard between Madeira Avenue and the eastbound entrance ramp onto I-394. The smaller of the half-ovals would be set inside the larger one, separated by a raised pedestrian refuge. The ovals be would long and shallow to avoid taking up too much of the plaza. Cars would enter the inner oval at its east end, drop off or pick up passengers, and then exit the kiss-and-ride at the inner oval's west end. Buses would drop off/pick up passengers using the outer oval. A large, heated bus shelter would protect bus riders (and those waiting for rides in cars) from the cold in the winter.
- **Install bike lockers and a Cedar Lake Plaza Nice-Ride Station.** Bike lockers at Cedar Lake Plaza would allow Bryn Mawr and Near-North residents to bike to Penn Station, secure their bike, and then take the train to their destination. A Nice-Ride station would allow non-bike owners to take advantage of the trails in Cedar Lake Valley, and potentially, the proposed Penn Avenue bikeway. A Near-North resident could pick up a bike at the N. Plymouth Avenue/N. Oliver

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Avenue Nice-Ride Station, ride to Cedar Lake Plaza using the Penn Avenue bikeway, drop the bike off at the Nice-Ride Station and then board the train.



**Figure 26: Nice Ride Bike rental facility
will be located on Cedar Prairie Plaza**

Preserve Natural Resources

A fourth regional development goal is environmental preservation. The recommended design concepts in the South Gateway plan conserve natural resources and maintain Bryn Mawr's "Neighborhood within a Park" ambiance in order to attract new neighbors (Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Action Plan, 1998). This plan recommends a multi-faceted approach to mitigate development impacts on natural systems. It consists of the following strategies:

- Improve water quality
 - Ground water (paving materials)
 - Surface water runoff (raingardens, green roof, cisterns)
- Improve air quality
- Limit energy consumption
- Reduce traffic noise
- Expand Cedar Prairie and Wirth Park plant species

Improve water quality

Ground water

Groundwater is the source of most Twin Cities communities' water supply. One goal of this plan is to improve ground water re-charge by converting asphalt parking lots and impervious concrete roads and walks to permeable concrete. This product contains less sand than traditional concrete and can return stormwater to the subsoil rather than sheeting it into storm sewer runoff. Driveways, sidewalks, surface parking lots and

lower traffic residential streets in South Gateway should be poured using permeable concrete (with a base layer which is conducive to drainage). Engineering may indicate that the need for stormwater retention ponds in South Gateway could be eliminated with enough water infiltration (Construction Specifications Institute, 2005).

Surface Water

Retention of surface water through the use of new technology and expanding existing neighborhood programs is also recommended. Replacing large asphalt parking lots eliminates the need for asphalt sealant, which occurs in urban lakes as the aquatic contaminant Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH).



Figure 27: Mature raingarden with retro-fitted curb in Burnsville, MN

The use of raingardens, green roof technology, and cisterns for rainwater capture is recommended throughout the South Gateway. One example of raingardens is shown in **Figure 27**. Raingardens use perennial plants like native wildflowers to capture stormwater runoff, naturally filtering water and pollutants safely through the soil profile. The 2010 Bryn Mawr and Metro Blooms agreement to add 50 raingardens indicates that the

neighborhood is already engaged in stormwater mitigation measures. (BMNA Metro Blooms, 2010). Key runoff points in the South Gateway (Madeira Avenue near the edge of the valley and next to the *Cedar Lake View* condominiums) will be fitted or retro-fitted with raingardens using curb depressions or cutouts.



Figure 28: Cedar View condominium green roof, S. Bryn Mawr

Green roof technology is a stormwater management advancement that is gaining popularity in the Twin Cities; the Minneapolis Public Library and Target Stadium both have green roofs. As shown in **Figure 28**, the *Cedar Lake View* condominium complex adjacent to Cedar Prairie Plaza is fitted with two green roofs. The one above the 3-story portion of the building contains hardy and colorful prairie plantings with a patio for residents. The upper green roof would reduce building heat in the summer and act as a refuge for some species from the valley below.

Improve Air Quality

Trees have been shown to filter particulate matter and remove gaseous ozone, nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide through leaf surfaces—all while adding oxygen to the environment. Adopting development landscaping guidelines which require the inclusion of more trees and shrubs and reduce lawn expanses in public areas is recommended. This is one strategy for helping expand the number of urban centers meeting national and regional Clean Air standards. Negative air quality impacts along the I-394 corridor will not be solved solely with the addition of a few trees in one urban in-fill project. However, the inclusion of buffer plantings and boulevard trees along new and existing housing would make a positive contribution to air quality in Bryn Mawr. The additional benefit will be a leafier, more pleasant community.

Reduce energy consumption

Summer energy savings and heat island reduction can be realized in the South Gateway development by planting large shade trees and buffer plantings to filter summer rays (Solecki et al, 2005). Cooling large expanses of concrete and buildings can have a positive effect on urban nighttime high temperatures. In winter, evergreen plantings on the northwest side of the apartment complex and townhouses will contribute to reduced heating costs (shown in **Figure 29**). Other recommendations designed to increase energy savings include a reflective roof and solar panels on the Windflower Apartment complex and an expansion of Bryn Mawr's existing solar energy program. Solar

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panels should be explored as a possible source of energy for the lighted and heated bridge connecting Bryn Mawr with Penn Station.



Figure 29: energy saving evergreen plantings on north and west also buffer new development from existing townhouses

Reduce Traffic Noise

New buffer plantings included along the east I-394 exit ramp and S. Wayzata Boulevard are designed to create a more residential atmosphere by reducing visual impacts from auto traffic. Traffic noise reduction for dwellings adjacent to new residential development can be accomplished by expanding the barrier walls along I-394, as there is not enough area to layer masses of taller evergreen plantings or erect earthen berms. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, funding for interstate noise barrier retro-fits will need to be sought locally (Federal Highway Administration, Unknown).



Figure 30: the green buffer zone along the east I-394 existing ramp and south Wayzata Blvd

Expand plant species

Neighborhood meetings from 2008 to 2010 have shown that residents are concerned about the health of the existing urban forest canopy and are interested in improving the quantity and quality of trees. Ash trees account for a significant portion of shade trees in certain areas of Bryn Mawr—up to 100% in blocks on Russell Avenue S. (BMNA fall 2009 tree inventory). This species is under attack by a major insect pest—the emerald ash borer. Neighborhood trees on public and private property and in adjacent natural areas are at immediate risk of infestation because the pest is present in several Minneapolis locations. Trees are at risk of being destroyed after barely attaining maturity in the neighborhood since ash was a popular replacement species after the decimation of neighborhood elms during the late 1970's.

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The South Gateway plans to improve the existing Bryn Mawr tree canopy through the use of a wider variety of species and an increase in the quantity and health of these urban trees. The use of *Tree Gator* bags and sidewalk/curb designs that allow greater water retention will improve the typically shorter life span of a boulevard tree.

Tree and shrub specie limitations exist in certain areas of the South Gateway due to overhead power lines, road salt, narrow boulevards and soil compaction from heavy pedestrian and vehicular traffic—increasing the importance of expanding the planting palette. A list of recommended tree species is included in the appendix.

Species from Cedar Prairie and Wirth Park should be added to landscape designs. Birds and butterflies present in Cedar Prairie can be attracted to plantings on the fringe of their main habitat by the use of a predominantly native plant palette for landscaping which adds life and interest to a neighborhood.

Create a Sense of Place

Resident health and safety

Minneapolis police reports from the 4th precinct indicate that Bryn Mawr is one of city's safest neighborhoods (City of Minneapolis Bryn Mawr Policing Plan, 2010). Our survey results indicate that South Bryn Mawr is concerned about maintaining a safe environment. Residents' perceptions of danger may be addressed through:

- Path and area lighting for pedestrians
- Planting height restrictions in high traffic areas to preserve sightlines for walkers and bicyclists
- Traffic calming through plantings
- Signage

Safety, walkability, and accessibility are closely intertwined – people will walk more in a pleasant neighborhood where they are protected from traffic and crime. Walking and bicycling for health benefits combats the national obesity trend, making it more than just a casual priority for cities. It is also a stated goal from the 1998 Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Action Plan that “we enable our kids and our elders to take an evening walk...without fear”. Well-designed landscaping helps increase both perceived and actual safety in a neighborhood by attracting beneficial users and deterring potential criminals—creating more eyes on the street. Another safety measure, the addition of emergency call boxes, should be considered in the more remote portions of the neighborhood or near Penn Station itself.



**Figure 31: Bryn Mawr Turkeys
use local habitat for food and roosting**

Neighborhood entry plantings, coordinated signage and landscaped medians encourage automobiles to slow down and become aware that they are entering a residential area (see streetscaping section). The Federal Highway Administration recommends the incorporation of trees, shrubs, planters, and other landscaping to calm traffic (FHWA, 2002). Modest redesigns of long streets can visually convey the message “this is a neighborhood and pedestrian-oriented place”.

Landscaping

Expanding the intensity of landscaping—the use of trees and other seasonal interest plantings can offset an increase in housing intensity, making new development more attractive to potential residents.

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Converting some front yards from turf into seasonally-colorful plantings and installing wider sidewalks yields a more pleasant area to walk. Private landowner can be encouraged to intensify landscaping along walks in front yards through local gardening classes. One example of the intensified landscaped is shown in **Figure 32**.



Figure 32: High density housing with more intensive landscaping from Fairview Village, Oregon

The South Gateway plan also creates an opportunity for improving neighborhood connections across I-394 through plantings. Pedestrians, bicyclists and retailers can benefit from alternatives to trees when boulevards are absent or too narrow. Narrow beds can be planted with well-maintained urban-tolerant perennials and shrubs. Alternatively, plantings can be introduced in raised beds along narrow boulevards or in

business corridors where employee parking lots are not adequately screened from passersby.

Although Bryn Mawr is a walkable neighborhood, certain areas could benefit from wider sidewalks and plantings that reduce exposure to the elements. Project meetings about design goals for the vicinity of Penn Station mentioned

pedestrian connectivity (BMNA Design Charrette, 2010). The pedestrian experience in the location of Penn Avenue and S. Wayzata Boulevard can be improved when boulevard trees create shade and cool the air – making the walk more pleasant. Modest signage should be added to indicate where trailheads, parks and Cedar Prairie Plaza are accessed. Landscape planting with four season color can encourage people to linger and shop in the downtown and South Gateway retail areas.

Several parts of South Bryn Mawr do not have boulevards, sidewalks or shade trees. Trees need boulevards of at least 5-8 feet in width for medium-sized trees (30-50' tall) which are consistent with most areas of Bryn Mawr and should be used whenever possible in the South Gateway. Larger growing shade trees do best in large planting beds, open areas and buffer plantings or boulevards which are 8-13' wide. The suggestions contained in **Table 3** are aimed at optimizing the canopy of the urban forest throughout the neighborhood.



Figure 33: Fall grasses from May Jo Buz

Table 3: Plantings in different locations of the South Gateway

Categories	Description	Location	Tips
Large Boulevards	8'-13' wide	Optimum in buffer plantings and new development s	Large trees should be spaced 40 to 50' apart.
Medium Sized Boulevards	5 to 8' wide	Typical of Bryn Mawr residential areas	Ornamental tree should be spaced 15 to 25' apart
Small Boulevards	Areas less than 4'	Penn Ave. between downtown Bryn Mawr and 394	Turf is not a good choice in narrow blvds. Plant small trees, tree-form shrubs or perennials. Use larger plant massings of perennials at 3' ht. or lower to maintain traffic and pedestrian sightlines.
None	Boulevard not present	S. Wayzata Blvd between Cedar Lake Road and Penn Ave	Use oversized pots and planters or widen walk area to create blvd.

A gateway for South Bryn Mawr

The term gateway indicates that a transitional space is located in the vicinity. Gateway projects in other Minneapolis neighborhoods have

successfully used signage, public art, gathering places, trees, landscaping, and features unique to the individual neighborhood in order to promote neighborhood identity.

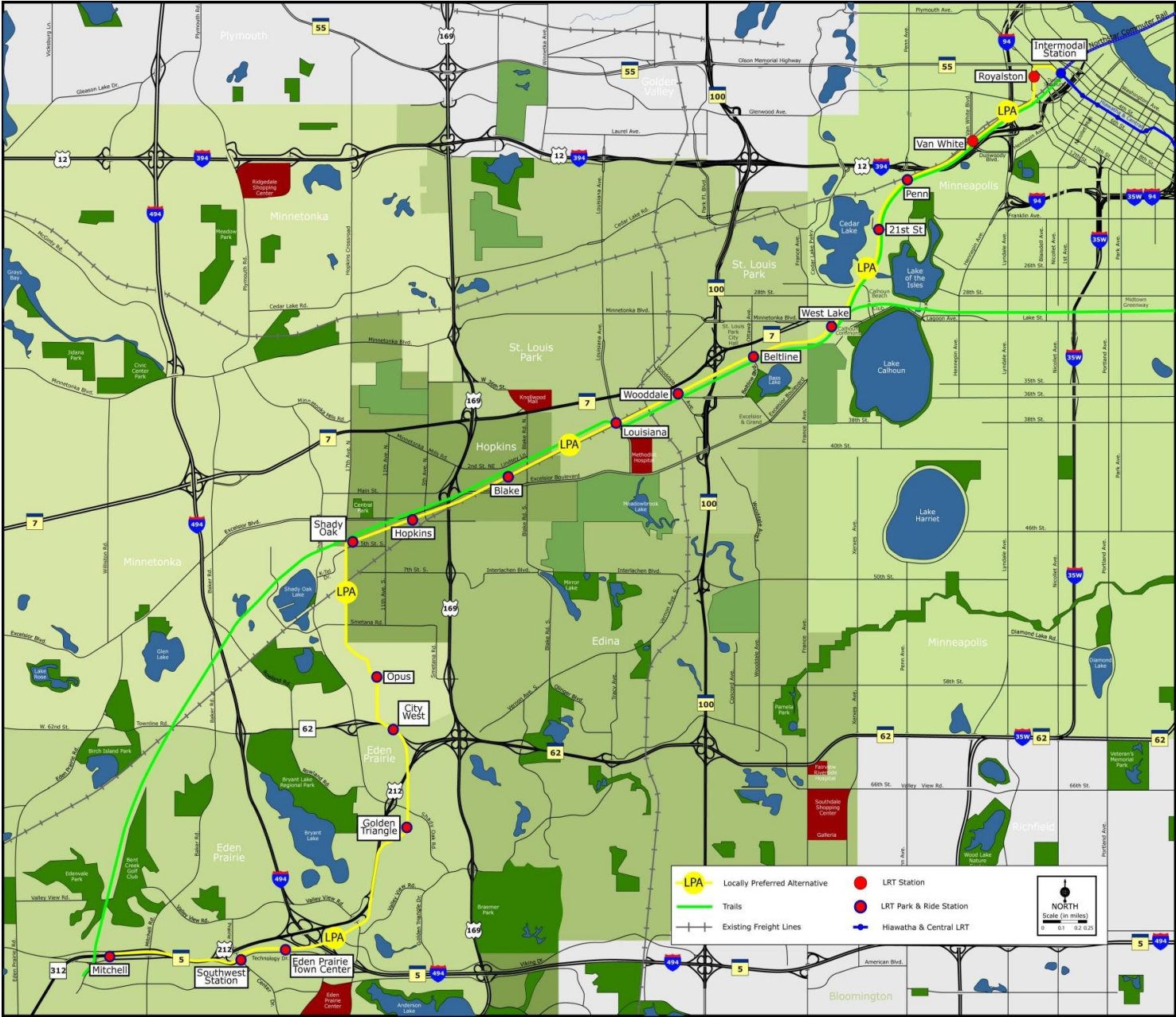
The Bryn Mawr Hedge is welcoming on the north side of the I- 394 bridge as you approach downtown. The ornamental sign at the community garden provides a distinct northwest transition along Cedar Lake Road, just east of Qwest, clueing motorists and bicyclists that they are entering a neighborhood.

South Bryn Mawr has no distinguishable eastern entrance point. There is currently an abrupt transition from the South Gateway’s industrial and commercial buildings to the distinctive residential neighborhood around the corner. This would change with the construction of the South Gateway’s Cedar Prairie Plaza.

As imagined in the vision presented above, Cedar Prairie Plaza would be busy with pedestrian, bicycle, bus and motor vehicle traffic. The plaza would be a place for gathering and meeting, dining, and trail access, featuring large scale ornamental containers with seasonal color, benches and native plant landscaping. Under the South Gateway plan, a signature piece of sculpture inspired by prairie plants would imbue Cedar Prairie Plaza with personality and energy as it becomes the nexus of South and North Bryn Mawr.

PART V: APPENDIX

Appendix 1:
Map of the
Southwest
Corridor LRT
Line (LPA)



Appendix 2: SW LRT Planning Process

In November 2009, HCRRA recommended route 3A as the locally preferred alternative, and this plan was forwarded to the Met Council and included in their regional Transportation Policy Plan for 2010 which allowed the SW Corridor to apply for federal funding.

Hennepin County handed off responsibility to the Metropolitan Council, which is responsible for preparation for the Preliminary Engineering stage. As part of this process the Met Council submitted a New Starts application to the Federal Transit Administration. A second step needed is to submit the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which is an environmental study to be completed in 2011 that documents all potential impacts of the LRT route. Sometime in mid-2011, after the New Starts application is complete and the DEIS analyzed, the Preliminary Engineering stage can officially begin.

Below is a rough timeline of events that tracks the most recent progress of the line, until its planned completion in 2017.

Aug. 31, 2010 – Submitted application to Federal Transit Administration for approval to enter preliminary engineering

Mid-2011 – Publish draft Environmental Impact Statement and begin Preliminary Engineering

Fall 2012 – Publish final Environmental Impact Statement

Spring 2013 – Begin Final Design

Winter 2014 – Secure Full Funding Grant Agreement, committing the federal government to pay 50 percent of the project's capital cost

2014-16 – Construction

2017 – Begin passenger service

Appendix 3: Funding Toolkit



The primary barrier to South Gateway development is funding. Private developers are hesitant to invest in the area given the uncertainty around Penn Station's future. At the same time, budgetary restrictions at the municipal level make it difficult for the City of Minneapolis to make capital improvements in Bryn Mawr's transportation, storm and waste water,

and other infrastructure. Alternative sources of capital will be needed to close the funding gap, and to help make the South Gateway development a reality.

This plan suggests the following alternative funding sources:

Metropolitan Council Livable Communities Grant

This grant is given through the Metropolitan Council and is used to fund development projects that seek to link housing, jobs and services that maximize the efficiency of existing infrastructure. The South Gateway development closely fits within this goal. It offers increased housing options and density in the area near Penn Avenue Station, and seeks to connect the desirable Bryn Mawr neighborhood with job centers along the Southwest Corridor. The grant could be used to help assemble land parcels for development or to provide funding for pedestrian focused infrastructure improvements around the site.

Metropolitan Council Inflow and Infiltration Wastewater Municipal Grant Program

This grant, also from the Met Council is designed to help fund capital infrastructure projects that focus on reducing the amount infill and infiltration to sewer systems. The scale of the South Gateway development is not particularly large, but it will increase the burden of the storm and waste water systems in the Bryn Mawr area. The environmental impact of stormwater on region watershed districts is heightened whenever impermeable surfaces replace natural surfaces. The proposed project fits within the state requirements about the cost, estimated usage length and construction time outlined by the Met Council.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Green Building Grant

A grant from the Pollution Control Agency can be used to help fund additional costs associated with using more environmentally friendly substances during the building of commercial, residential or institutional developments, and to provide funding assistance for the installation and usage of renewable energy sources. This source could be used to defray the cost of installing solar panels, used for heat and illumination, on the transportation lift that is part of the station stop. Solar panels have high upfront cost but would fit in with the environmental character of the neighborhood.

Minnesota Urban Land Institute Living Cities Program

The goal of the Living Cities grant program created by the Minnesota Urban Land Institute is to improve the lives of low income people through private sector opportunities. As part of the project plan, Metro Transit bus lines could be adjusted to bring low income individuals from north Minneapolis to Penn Station. Additionally, Living Cities grant money could be used to improve bike lanes from the Near-North neighborhoods down Penn Avenue. Funding could be used to help meet the funding gap of the Penn Avenue Station that could exclude Bryn Mawr from the final LRT project.

Mississippi Watershed Management Organization Action Grant

The Mississippi Watershed Management Organization Action Grantⁱ is designed to preserve water quality in the Mississippi by reducing the amount of polluted stormwater that enters storm drains. The Bryn Mawr neighborhood is located in the Organization's watershed district, and increased development in the South Gateway would call for environmental mitigation to reduce negative impact. The funding would be used to fund both the native landscaping that would be built into the design of the project, and also to maximize the amount of permeable surface area of the project that would decrease stormwater run-off.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax increment money can be used two ways, either to subsidize a portion of the costs of the development that would not be built if not for the government assistance, or to finance needed public infrastructure related to the new development. This has become an increasingly controversial tool in recent years and should be closely analyzed, but it does still serve a purpose in paying for socially beneficial but often expensive amenities. In this development the tax increment could be used to help pay for expensive underground parking, or to fund pedestrian friendly streetscaping, or provide funding for amenities like the public boardwalk and Cedar Prairie Plaza overlooking the valley. These are costly amenities desired to preserve the unique character of the neighborhood and to reduce the impact to those closest to the proposed site. An estimated amount of tax increment money generated from the development will be calculated. This calculation will be based upon the current tax value and the estimated tax value generated over thirty years from the new development.

Appendix 4: South Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Survey

Conducted on March 16, 2011 by K.M. Qualley and A. Huang

Conducted on March 20th-30th by B. McLafferty

24 respondents (23 in person, 1 mailed in survey)

1. Are you at least 18 years of age? ____ Yes ____ No

Compilation: All respondents were 18 or over.

2. How long have you resided in this neighborhood? No response: I

0-6 mon 6 mon-1year 1-2 years 2-5years 5-10years 10+ years
II 0 0 IIII 0 IIIII,IIII,IIII,I

Analysis: 70% have lived in neighborhood ten years or over (16/24).

3. How long do you plan to stay in this location? No response: I

0-6 mon 6mons-1year 1-2 years 2-5years 5-10years 10+ years
I 0 III IIII,IIII,IIII

Analysis: 65% plan to stay in their location for ten years or more (15/24).

4. Do you want the Penn Ave. Station Light Rail Stop to be included in the Southwest LRT Corridor? Why or why not?

No Preference or Don't know/Don't care: IIII

Comments on why? Indifferent. Already close to downtown, uncertain about benefits. Probably wouldn't use it.

Yes: ____IIII,IIII,IIII,III____

Comments on why? Want to use light rail (2 comments). Bryn Mawr needs the light rail service. Will do less driving. Am generally supportive. We use the current light rail and would use one closer to our residence- but not daily. Yes, use LRT a lot to go to the airport. (Will) save them from driving downtown & St. Paul & U of M. Access to downtown (3), safer than bus (1), Convenience (3). Strongly support, do not enjoy using car. (Can easily) wheel suit case to airport. Pedestrian access to airport (2). Convenient access to light rail system as the network expands to St. Paul, SW, etc. Wish I could use Van White stop.

No: ____II____

Comments on why? Too much traffic and noise, parking problems. TRAFFIC!

The next six questions will deal specifically with the area south of the South Wayzata Boulevard frontage road:

5. Assuming that the station is built and development around the station follows, what kind of development would be useful or appealing?

Mixed use (2)
Mix of office and retail (but more office than retail)
Offices and housing
Light commercial
Gathering Places
Pedestrian friendly
Retail (2, 1 said "Boutiques")
Restaurants (6, 1 said, "not a franchise")
Bookstore
Medical facility, mini clinic (2)

Social services
 Pharmacy
 Convenience stores (2)
 Accountant
 Small Hotel with small conference ctr.
 Grocery store (3, 1 said “large”, 1 said ‘Kowalskis)
 Don’t care
 Nothing too big, it is a quiet street
 Senior/Retirement Housing
 Senior Center & Living
 Residential
 Parking (3)
 Not a gas station with all night convenience store (2)
 Amenities
 Don’t compete with Downtown Bryn Mawr
 Townhouses
 Low level housing development
 Coffee shop (5, 1 said Starbucks)
 Dry cleaning (2)
 Post office
 Retail antiques
 Regular retail not appealing
 Other comments:
 Concerned about people parking in Cedar View townhome area.
 Buffer between housing and commercial, a physical barrier (but) not a fence. (Make) minimal additions in Bryn Mawr! It would ruin the home residential ambiance we chose. Not anticipating a need for development. Parkland, don’t want our townhomes destroyed.

Analysis: 75% (18/24) want the Penn Ave. Station Light Rail Stop to

be included in the Southwest LFT Corridor. Another 16.7% have no preference or don’t know/don’t care (4/24) about the Penn Station stop. Want and no preference total 91.7% of surveyed South Bryn Mawr residents. Don’t want Penn Ave. Station Light Rail responses totaled (2/24) or 8.3%.

6. If a developer acquired multiple parcels in the area near Penn and the South Wayzata Blvd. frontage road and proposed residential development, what type of housing would you like to see? Circle one under each category.

a. Building concentration (comment: traffic is a bigger concern)
 i. Lower heights, tighter configuration (i.e. 6 - 3 story buildings) with little open space, IIII,IIII,IIII

Comments: 20-25% lower is ok. Opposed here, west of Hwy 100 (would be) ok. 100-150 units max. 4 stories is the highest we want to go.

ii. Medium (i.e. 5 - 5 story buildings) height buildings with some open space, IIII

iii. Higher profile (i.e. 4 - 7 story buildings) with more open space between them, III

Comments: Opus had talked about 20 story or 12 story companions, not enough space between parcels and residents: too many people.

iv. No response: II

v. None of the above: I

Other comments from various individuals: Absolutely opposed (to medium and higher profile). The townhouses of South Bryn Mawr are ok. More of them are ok, single family homes and condos.

Analysis: 58.3% preferred lower heights with a tighter configuration with little open space (14/24). 4/24 (16.7%) preferred medium housing density. 12.5% wanted higher profile (4-7 story buildings) with more open space between them. Another 12.5% wanted none of the above choices or had no response to the question.

b. Ownership status in new buildings:

Rental:-

Owned:IIII,IIII,IIII

Comment: Owned but doesn't really matter. Owned but if senior, rental is ok!

Mix:IIII,II

No response:II

Analysis: 14/24, or 58.3% selected private ownership as the ownership status in any new buildings in the area. 33% or 8/24 thought that a mix of rental and owned residences would be the best. No response to the question totaled 2/24 or 8.3%. No one preferred all rental as ownership status in any new residential buildings constructed in South Bryn Mawr but one person commented that rental would be acceptable if the housing was for seniors.

c. Cost:

Affordable: I

Market Rate: IIIII,IIII,I

Mix: IIIII,IIII

No response: II

Analysis: 11/24 or 45.8% of respondents preferred market rate pricing for any new residential units constructed in their area but close behind at 41.7%, respondents chose a mix of affordable and market rate as the preferred pricing structure for new residential units. One person selected affordable housing as their top selection (4%) and two individuals did not provide a response to this question.

d. Age Group targeting:

55+ Housing? III

or Open to anyone? IIIII,IIII, IIIII,II

No response: IIII

Analysis: open to any age group was clearly preferred at 68% of respondents. 55 and older housing was the favorite of 3 out 24 in the surveys, or 12.5%. Four individuals (16.7%) did not provide a response to the question.

7. If development occurs in this area, please rate the following concerns in order of importance from 1-6. (1 being most important, 6, least important)

Traffic: 1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,2,2,2,2,2,3,3,3,4,5

Analysis: Traffic was the first or second choice of 62.5% respondents or 15/24. This is the major concern about development in the area for those south Bryn Mawr residents who participated in the survey.

Parking: 2,2,2,2,2,2,2,3,3,3,3,3,4,4,4,5,5,5

Analysis: Parking was not anyone's first choice of concerns if development occurs in the area. It was a 2nd or 3rd choice of 14/24 (58.3%).

View Obstruction: 1,1,1,3,3,3,3,4,4,4,4,4,5,5,5,5,5,5

Analysis: Only 12.5% (3/24) respondents selected view obstruction as their #1 response. No one selected it as their #2 concern. One person wrote in the comment view obstruction is #1, other concerns are not very important. 29.2% selected view obstruction as their least important concern (using a ranking of 5 or 6).

Noise: 1,1,2,2,3,3,3,3,3,3,4,4,4,5,5,5,5, (one "indifferent response).

Analysis: 16.7% thought that noise was the most important concern (4/24), by ranking it as a 1 or a 2 on the list of concerns. But, 16.7% also said it was their lowest concern on the list of development concerns or the write-in concern.

Safety: 1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,2,2,2,4,4,4,4,5,5,5,5 (one “indifferent response”).

Analysis: Safety was somewhat polarized (see above). At the same time it was clearly a major concern with half of respondents giving it a score of #1 or #2 in the priority of development concerns (12 of 24), 4 of 24 or 16.7% gave it their lowest scores (of a 5 or 6 ranking). There were no middle scores of #3.

Other concerns: __II__ (Please specify: maintaining a private home neighborhood ambiance, pedestrian amenities).

No Response to question: I

Note: one person gave all categories a “1”, but this response is not included above.

8. Please rate the following development benefits in order of importance from 1-7. (1 being most important, 7, least important)

Improved connections to park, trails and the neighborhood: 1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,2,3,4,4,4

77.8% or 14/18 stated that improved connections to the park, trails and neighborhood were a top priority/benefit from future development.

Housing options: 2,2,2,2,2,3,3,3,3,4,4,5,5,5,6,6,6,7

Analysis: No one selected having housing options as a #1 benefit they would like to realize. 5/18 chose it as #2 (27.8%) but 38.9% (7/18)

placed it in the bottom three choices of benefits to achieve from development in the area.

Service amenities: 1,1,1,2,2,2,2,2,3,3,3,4,5,6,6,6,6,7

Analysis: The development benefits of service amenities were polarized: 42.1% (8/19) gave the category a top #1 or #2 score and 31.6% (6/19) gave it the bottom or next to the bottom score.

Restaurants: 2,2,2,2,3,4,5,5,6,6,7,7,7,7,7

Analysis: No one gave restaurants a #1 score. 6/16 or 37.5 % gave this category a score in the bottom two categories (6 or 7 ranking). S. Bryn Mawr survey respondents don’t care too much about restaurants as a development amenity.

Increased neighborhood diversity: 1,1,3,3,3,3,3,4,4,5,5,5,6,6,6,6,7,7,7

Analysis: 36.8 % (7/19) gave this category a score in the bottom two categories (6 or 7 ranking). Only 10.5% ranked it #1 or 2 as a major development benefit.

Improved aesthetics: 1,2,2,3,3,3,4,4,4,5,5,5,6,6,6,7,7,7

Analysis: Improved aesthetics as a benefit of development-6/17 or 35.3% gave improved area aesthetics a low (6 or 7) ranking. 5/17 gave improved aesthetics as a #1 or #2 choice when ranking it (29.4%).

Increased vitality: 1,1,2,2,2,3,4,4,4,4,4,5,5,5,5,7,7

Analysis: 58.8% (10/17) gave increased vitality as a development benefit a middle of the road (#3-5) score. 29.4 % ranked increased vitality for the area as a #1 or #2 when considering benefits to development.

No response to question: II

Write-in (other) comments: Increased neighborhood diversity is 1 and improved aesthetics is 2, others not very important. No preference as to type of service amenities. Service amenities are 1, pretty happy with everything else. Happy with neighborhood as is. Park connections are adequate now. Restaurants not needed. Bryn Mawr stores adequate now. Already diverse-among home owners. How could multiple land development improve aesthetics? Correction to increased vitality: increase noise, congestion & traffic-that kind of vitality is available elsewhere.

Or if you do not believe there will be any benefits to you, check the line below.

Benefit? Can't see any benefits to development in the location of Penn and S. Wayzata Blvd.: III (3 responses).

9. As the population of Minneapolis increases, in-fill development of underutilized properties may occur in the city. On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), how would you rate your support for higher concentration residential development? _____.

5:IIII,I (5 at the stop location was a written comment)

4-5 (write in) I

4:IIII

Analysis: A high ranking in support of higher concentration for residential development for in-fill (between 4 and 5 inclusive was supported by 45.8% (11/24) of survey respondents).

3:IIII

Analysis: 4/24 or 16.7% (are middling (#3) in their support of higher concentration residential in-fill for Minneapolis.

2:III

1:IIII

0 (write in choice): I

Analysis: 8/24 or 33% do not support higher concentration residential development for Minneapolis in-fill.

No response: I

10. If you answered 3 or lower on the above question: What single factor could be incorporated that would make you supportive of more vertical development close to 394 and the Wayzata Blvd. frontage road?

#1 write in comment is regarding Traffic: traffic concern, traffic and parking, traffic management on Cedar Lake Rd., traffic, don't want 100 more people on Wayzata Blvd.

Screening: buffering Sheridan, keep area private.

Ownership: want residences owned, can't be low income.

Height: height is a concern, want low rise, low height, adequate parking, last thing you want is a bunch of apartments, limiting the number of people.

Density: Not so concerned about density and parking; bottleneck effect, not much space to increase density. If it can only be done with higher density "development"-forget the stop.

Other: Include a Bryn Mawr area light rail stop for the existing residents. Development would have to be nice. Underground parking (would be needed). Amenities, pride in living. 24 hour security access to trails.

Appendix 5: Shade Trees for Bryn Mawr from the University of Minnesota Extension

Shade Trees		Evergreens/Conifers
Alder, European black [<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>]	Hickory, shagbark [<i>Carya ovata</i>]	Cedar, white [<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>]
Apricot, Manchurian [<i>Prunus armeniaca</i> var. <i>Mandshurica</i>]	Hickory, bitternut [<i>Carya cordiformis</i>]	Cedar, red [<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>]
Birch, paper [<i>Betula papyrifera</i>]	Honeylocust, thornless [<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> var. <i>inermis</i>]	Fir, balsam [<i>Abies balsamea</i>]
Birch, river [<i>Betula nigra</i>]	Hop Tree [<i>Ptelea trifoliata</i>]	Fir, white [<i>Abies concolor</i>]
Buckeye, Ohio [<i>Aesculus glabra</i>]	Hophornbeam (Ironwood) [<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>]	Fir, fraser [<i>Abies fraseri</i>]
Burning Bush [<i>Euonymus alata</i>]	Hornbeam, American [<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>]	Douglas-Fir [<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> var. <i>glauca</i>]
Catalpa, northern [<i>Catalpa speciosa</i>]	Lilac, Japanese tree [<i>Syringa reticulata</i>]	Larch, American [<i>Larix laricina</i>]
Cherry, sour [<i>Prunus cerasus</i>]	Linden, littleleaf [<i>Tilia cordata</i>]	Larch, European [<i>Larix decidua</i>]
Cherry, Amur choke [<i>Prunus maackii</i>]	Linden, Crimean [<i>Tilia x euchlora</i>]	Larch, Japanese [<i>Larix kaempferi</i>]
Cherry, black [<i>Prunus serotina</i>]	Linden, American [<i>Tilia americana</i>]	Larch, Siberian [<i>Larix sibirica</i>]
Coffeetree, Kentucky [<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>]	Linden, Redmond [<i>Tilia hybrid</i>]	Pine, eastern white [<i>Pinus strobus</i>]
Coffeetree, 'Espresso' [<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i> 'Espresso']	Maackia, Amur [<i>Maackia amurensis</i>]	Pine, jack [<i>Pinus banksiana</i>]
Coffeetree, 'Stately Manor' [<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i> 'Stately Manor']	Magnolia, cucumbertree [<i>Magnolia acuminata</i>]	Pine, red (Norway) [<i>Pinus resinosa</i>]
Corktree, Amur [<i>Phellodendron amurense</i>]	Maple, Amur [<i>Acer ginnala</i>] ¹	Pine, ponderosa [<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>]
Corktree, Sakhalin [<i>Phellodendron sachalinensis</i>]	Maple, red [<i>Acer rubrum</i>] ¹	Pine, Scots [<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>]
Corktree, 'Macho' [<i>Phellodendron amurense</i> 'Macho']	Maple, freeman [<i>Acer saccharinum</i> x <i>A. rubrum</i>] ¹	Spruce, black [<i>Picea mariana</i>]
Corktree, Shademaster [<i>Phellodendron amurense</i> Shademaster]	Maple, Shantung [<i>Acer truncatum</i>] ¹	Spruce, Black Hills [<i>Picea glauca</i> var. <i>densata</i>]
Corktree, 'His Majesty' [<i>Phellodendron amurense</i> 'His Majesty']	Maple, tatarian [<i>Acer tataricum</i>] ¹	Spruce, Norway [<i>Picea abies</i>]
Crabapple [<i>Malus</i>]	Maple, sugar [<i>Acer saccharum</i>] ¹	Spruce, white [<i>Picea glauca</i>]
Dogwood, Pagoda [<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>]	Maple, 'Sienna Glen' [<i>Acer x freemanii</i> 'Sienna']	
Eastern Wahoo [<i>Euonymus atropurpureus</i>]	Mountain Ash, Korean [<i>Sorbus alnifolia</i>]	
Elm, 'Cathedral' [<i>Ulmus pumila</i> hybrid]	Oak, white [<i>Quercus alba</i>]	
Elm, 'Accolade' [<i>Ulmus japonica</i> hybrid]	Oak, bur [<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>]	
Elm, 'Patriot' [<i>Ulmus wilsoniana</i> hybrid]	Oak, bicolor [<i>Quercus bicolor</i>]	
Elm, 'New Horizon' [<i>Ulmus pumila</i> hybrid]	Oak, black [<i>Quercus velutina</i>]	
Elm, 'Princeton' [<i>Ulmus americana</i> 'Princeton']	Oak, red [<i>Quercus rubra</i>]	
Elm, 'Valley Forge' [<i>Ulmus americana</i> 'Valley Forge']	Oak, northern pin [<i>Quercus ellipsoidalis</i>]	
Elm, Jacan Japanese [<i>Ulmus japonica</i> selection]	Pear, Ussurian [<i>Pyrus ussuriensis</i>]	
Ginkgo [<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>]	Serviceberry, Allegheny [<i>Amelanchier laevis</i>]	
Hackberry [<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>]	Serviceberry, downy [<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>]	
Hawthorn, thornless cockspur [<i>Crataegus crusgalli</i> var. <i>inermis</i>]	Viburnum, nannyberry [<i>Viburnum lentago</i>]	
Hawthorn, downy [<i>Crataegus mollis</i>]		

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