



Downtown Brooklyn Center Framework Plan

Brooklyn Center, MN
Draft Report as of July 6, 2021

Prepared for:
City of Brooklyn Center

Prepared by:
Cunningham Group Architecture, Inc.

Cunningham



Table of Contents

Introduction.....page 3

Purpose of the Plan

Community Values

Guiding Principles

Overall Vision

Context

Organization of the Site

Four Frameworks.....page 8

Land Use

Open Space

Stormwater

Access and Connection

The City recognizes that historically, development patterns have resulted in disparate impacts, particularly on communities of color. These disparities have resulted in harm; such as displacement and exclusion from the benefits of new investment. The city endeavors to reverse these disparities and enhance equitable outcomes by working towards a more responsible means of advancing development



1. Introduction

Introduction

Brooklyn Center is a City of the Future.

The population is rich with diversity from around the world. The large number of children and youth will be future leaders in the years to come.

Brooklyn Center also brings strengths from its past. Its location is accessible and connected. And people still value its stock of affordable housing with convenient access to jobs, shopping and services.

But the transition from past to future is not without challenges. For the city, it means transitioning spaces and places built for a previous era, that no longer meet current needs. For the people, it means addressing past and current practices that exclude some people from benefitting from progress and opportunity, particularly people of color, people with low-incomes, and renters. This includes addressing the potential for displacement and gentrification in the city.

The Opportunity Site project can't meet every need. But it can help. For the city, this means creating a new place that strives to meet the needs of residents and workers, adds value to the community, and becomes a source of community pride. For the people, this means creating an accountable process that addresses past problems and provides transparency, accountability, and benefit to existing residents of the community.



Purpose of this Plan

This document sets clear high level direction for the community vision for redevelopment and how the physical structure of the area must change in order to enable this change.

This Framework Plan has two sections :

1. Background and Vision for Redevelopment
2. Four Frameworks

This document is not a full Master Plan. Adoption and acceptance of this document sets the direction for a fully developed Master Plan and it allows City Staff and officials to have discussions with developers and property owners while a full Master Plan is in development.

Community Values Expressed in the Plan



Diversity and inclusivity



Affordability



Health and Wellness



Fiscal Responsibility



Flexibility



Community Pride



Environmental Sustainability



Local Benefit



Counteracting Displacement

Guiding Principles

Four guiding principles emerged from the community workshops that reinforce a sense of community pride in Brooklyn Center



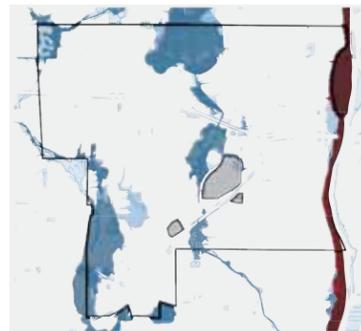
Overall Vision for a New Downtown Brooklyn Center

Downtown Brooklyn Center...

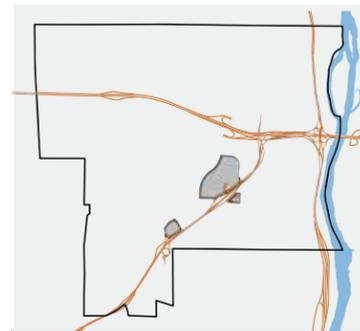
- Will be a place that represents **all of what Brooklyn Center is and can become**.
- People will choose to invest their time and energies in Downtown Brooklyn Center as much for **what it is as for what it is near**.
- It will contain a mix of uses that appeal to both **current and future** residents, entrepreneurs, and visitors of Brooklyn Center.
- It will have a significant amount of new medium and high density housing that helps diversify the City's housing stock - allowing residents **to stay** in Brooklyn Center and also **attracting new residents**.
- It will be a place that **nurtures** local businesses while also attracting new businesses that appeal locally and regionally.
- It will generate value to the City by leveraging its irreplaceable **assets - proximity to the park and civic buildings, centrality to the City and its people, and access to the region**.

The Opportunity Site and its Surroundings

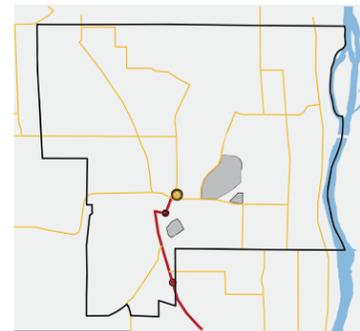
Brooklyn Center in the Region



Natural Systems
The Opportunity site is located a mile from the Mississippi River and adjacent to Shingle Creek. Both are part of regional recreational systems that are significant amenities.

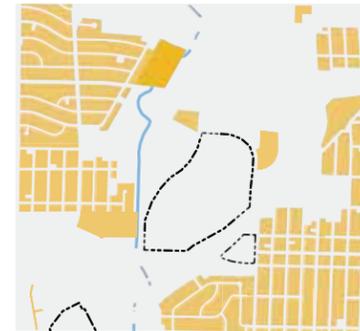


Highways
The Opportunity Site is located along major freeways and highways. It is easily accessible from throughout the region. This Plan recommends a combination of local and regional attractions that benefit from the Sites location and access.



Transit
Metro Transit recently opened the C and D Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Lines - both which terminate at a charging and layover station adjacent to the Opportunity Site. This Plan recommends relocating the station in the Opportunity Site and making it part of a mobility hub that serves the area.

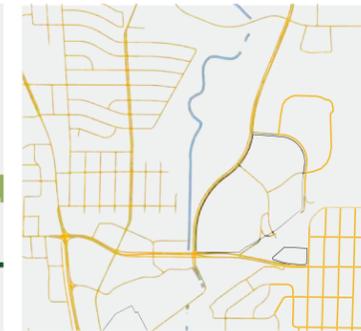
The Opportunity Site in Brooklyn Center



Neighborhoods
The area was developed in the 1960's when land uses were strictly separated. As a result, the site is separated from neighborhood by large parks and highways.

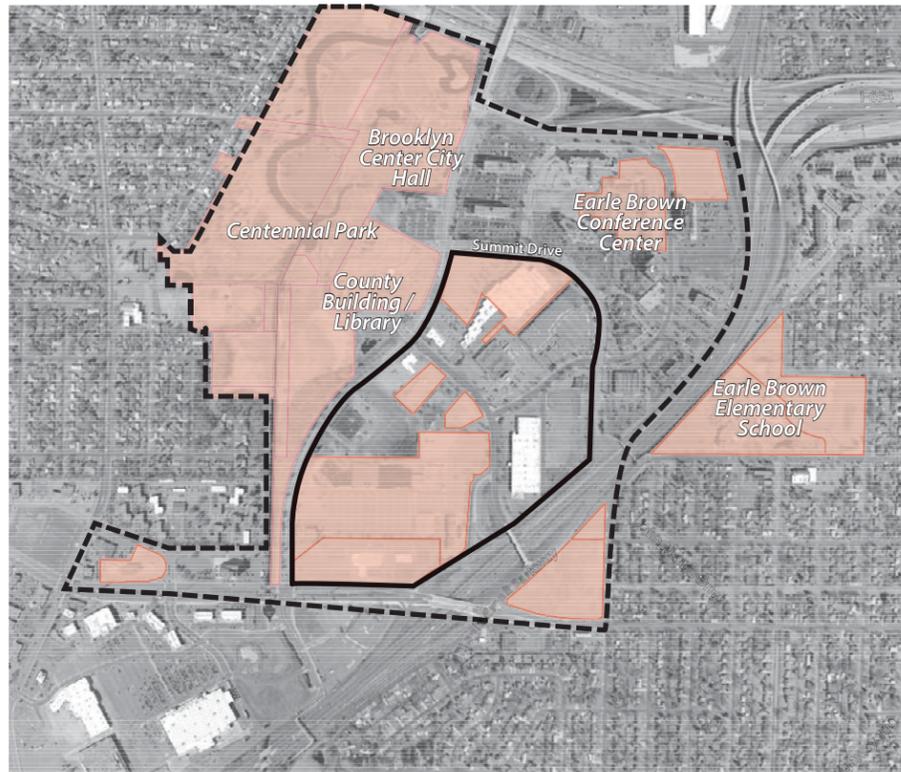


Trails
The Site is located at the junction of two regional trails which connect to the Mississippi River to the east, and large parks and lakes to the west north and south. The Plan recommends leveraging these assets and routing the trail through the Site.



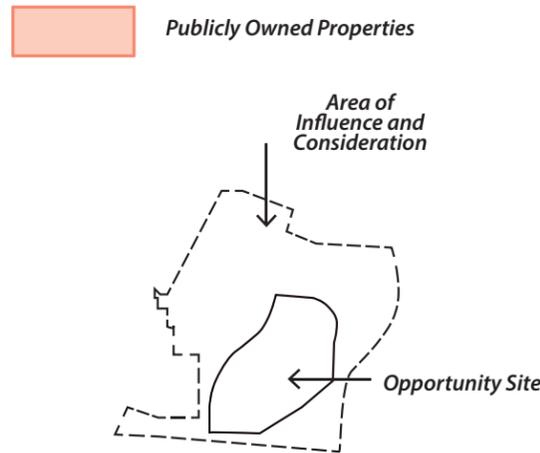
Local Roads
The Site has few local roads serving it and through it. Redevelopment of the Site will require considerable new infrastructure in order for it to be redeveloped.

Publicly Owned Properties in the Opportunity Site



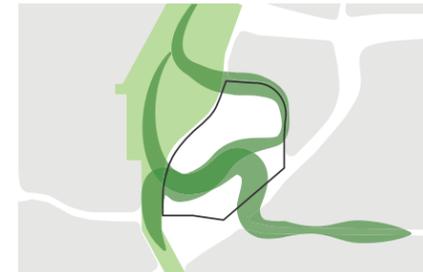
With approximately 40% of the Opportunity Site publicly owned, the City can leverage its influence on future redevelopment. By undertaking a public engagement the City can guide redevelopment in a manner that reflects the wishes, desires, and needs of the Community.

As property owner and driver of the Master Plan, redevelopment of the Opportunity Site can deliver substantially more public benefits than if the redevelopment was exclusively privately driven.



The Opportunity Site is approximately 100 acres. Approximately 40% (shown in red) of it is publicly owned. While this study focuses on the Opportunity Site, it took into consideration a significantly larger area because of its close relationship to the Opportunity Site.

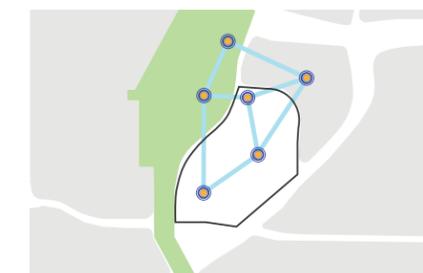
Concepts that Organize The Site



1 Trail and park connections to the expansive regional system



2 A spine to organize neighborhoods



3 Community Anchors to create a core to Brooklyn Center



4 Local connections to make access to Downtown easy



Four Frameworks

Four Frameworks

TODAY

Land Use

The Opportunity Site is a former retail district that is currently occupied with a collection of uses that don't reinforce each other in a meaningful way. Much of the land is vacant and underused



TOMORROW

Downtown Brooklyn Center will feature building and development patterns that are mixed, sustainable, and connective - creating nodes of mixed use activity and neighborhoods for people to live and enjoy at any stage of life.

Open Space

The Opportunity Site is adjacent to regional trails, as well as a large City Park - however there are no parks open spaces, or direct connections to regional trail within the Opportunity Site



Open Space

Downtown Brooklyn Center will feature system of open spaces, streets, trails and pedestrian areas that promotes healthy living, gathering, social gathering, and environmental responsibility.

Stormwater

The Opportunity Site is almost completely impervious with buildings and parking lots. Improvements are needed to ensure ongoing compliance with local, regional, and watershed requirements



Stormwater

A green and active stormwater system that provides health, and environmental benefits to all

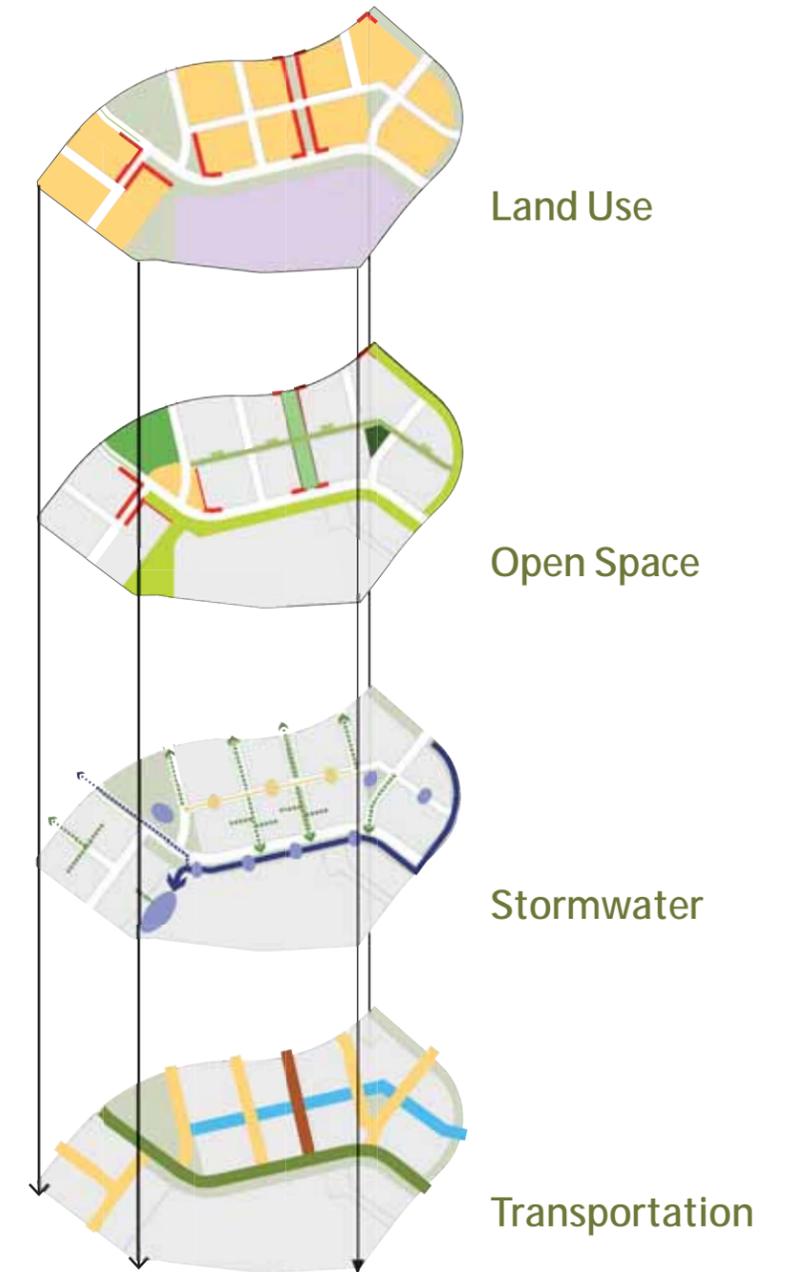
Transportation

The Opportunity Site is easy to get to due to its strong regional access, however it lacks an internal street system, pedestrian connections, and bike facilities to encourage redevelopment.



Transportation

Downtown Brooklyn Center will have a transportation system that encourages walking and biking, is well connected to the region and reduces the need to own a car by providing safe, affordable, convenient and accessible options.



Four Frameworks - Equity Lens

Land Use

Land uses and equity have a long and interwoven history in the US. For centuries, land use policies were used directly and indirectly to segregate certain people groups, often targeting BIPOC and other marginalized communities. .

To combat this long history of inequity, the Opportunity Site Infrastructure Framework promotes land use equity by:

- Prioritizing an intermingling of complementary uses throughout the Opportunity Site, within easily accessible distances, thus reducing access and transportation barriers for housing, goods & services, jobs, socialization, and physical activity.
- Directly responds to an expressed community need for living wage jobs, while presenting opportunity for local hire programs (within Business Mixed Use district).
- Supporting creation of a larger stock of housing choices across a multitude of scales and price points within Brooklyn Center – both affordable & market rate, filling housing needs the city currently has and promoting mixed income communities (housing)
- Intending to offer unique destinations for the community to gather that are reflective of the multifaceted ethnic diversity that makes the city great.
- Providing business spaces at affordable price points for business incubation and growth, while connecting emerging entrepreneurs with more customers.

Parks & Open Space

Parks and open spaces throughout the Opportunity Site will prioritize connecting all people with high-quality parks and public spaces that are designed in a manner that is reflective of the rich cultural diversity in Brooklyn Center and welcoming to all people. The Opportunity Site Infrastructure Framework promotes Park & Open Space equity by:

- Providing accessible, free, quality green and open spaces that offer active and passive recreation, as well as community gathering spaces, for all ages and abilities.
- Promoting health benefits for residents including opportunities for physical activity, stress reduction, and social connections.
- Offering amenities that are designed to reflect the cultural diversity of Brooklyn Center, communicating that all area welcome to use the park and open space network.
- Prioritizing environmental justice through restoration of natural spaces for communities that have historically shouldered the brunt of environmental degradation.
- Presenting the City a tool in which to further develop multi-jurisdictional partnerships around equity promotion in park and open space design and management.

Stormwater

BIPOC and low-income communities have historically faced disinvestment infrastructure, further resulting in environmental and health disparities. As both floods and droughts become an increasing reality, ensuring resilient infrastructure to proactively management stormwater must be a priority for the Opportunity Site. Towards this end the Opportunity Site Infrastructure Framework promotes Stormwater equity by:

- Instituting a district-wide stormwater system to reduce project lifecycle costs, thus reducing the fiscal burden on city residents.
- Proactively planning for and instituting a stormwater plan that promotes environmental sustainability and resiliency in the face of ever-changing climate changes, that disproportionately impact BIPOC and socioeconomically disadvantaged populations
- Instituting high-quality best management practices (BMPs) such as bioswales, green streets, and retention ponds, that mitigate negative stormwater impacts while providing additional aesthetic and livability benefits.
- Cleansing and purifying stormwater before it re-enters Shingle Creek and other natural sources, reducing pollutants.

Access & Mobility

Of the four frameworks, none may be as consequential to equity as access and mobility. Transportation availability has been used to isolate people groups and create barriers to access. Communities without access to a car should not be isolated from taking advantage of the Opportunity Site, nor should they not be afforded the choice to live near where they work, play, and recreate. The Opportunity Site Infrastructure Framework promotes access and mobility equity by:

- Utilizing a framing lens that asks “who is the most vulnerable,” and making transportation decisions accordingly.
- Prioritizing safe and connective mobility options, especially for those walking, rolling, biking, and taking transit.
- Ensuring safe, evidence-based design standards are utilized, and that infrastructure is easily navigable and welcoming to diverse cultures once built.
- Creating a plan that is anchored by multimodal transportation infrastructure, with complementary land uses, towards maximizing mobility options for residents, employees, and visitors.
- Seeking environmentally sustainable solutions to transportation systems and infrastructure to reduce where possible the emission and impact of greenhouse gases.

Land Use

Downtown Brooklyn Center will feature building and development patterns that are mixed, sustainable, and connective - creating nodes of mixed use activity and neighborhoods for people to live and enjoy at any stage of life.

Outcomes

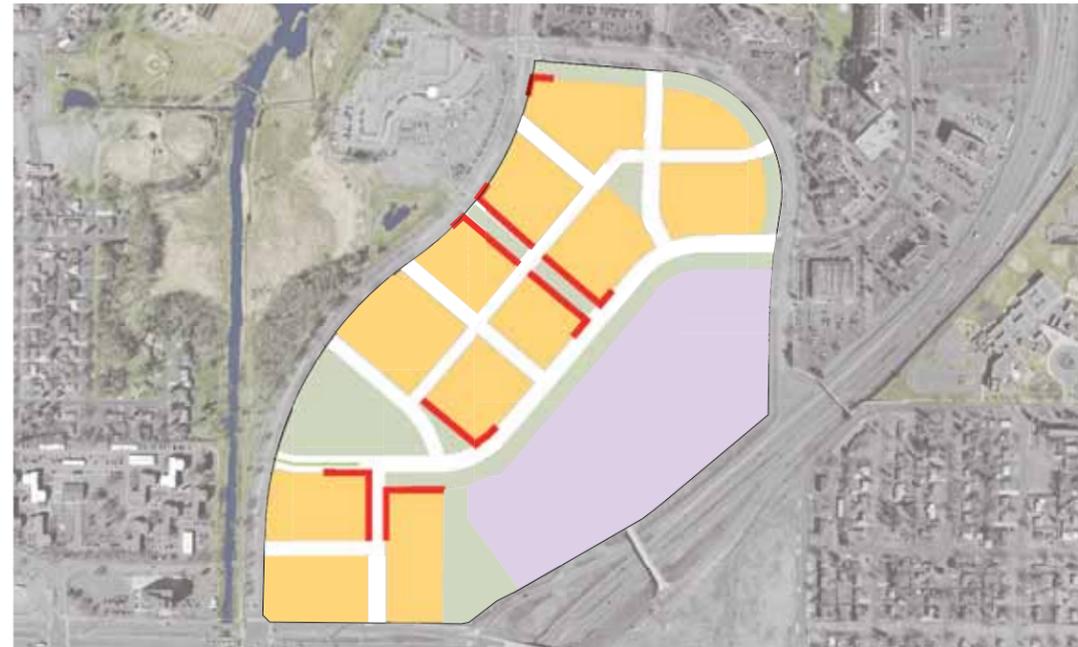
New market rate and affordable housing designed to be walkable, neighborly, and welcoming.

New neighborhoods with neighborhood parks and amenities at their core and a "garden street" linking them.

Commercial development that supports local living wage jobs.

An entrepreneurial market to incubate and accelerate local businesses.

Framework



- Transit Oriented Development
- Business Mixed Use
- Active Uses Such as Retail

descriptions on following pages

Land uses allow for developments supportive of or oriented around transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and that support local job creation and business growth. Land uses of this nature were informed by the 2040 Brooklyn Center Comprehensive Plan, and community input on the need for living-wage jobs, increasing the City's tax base, and providing opportunities to diversify Brooklyn Center's economy and housing. The final land use policy direction will be supported by an implementation plan, which will be imbedded within the final Opportunity Site Master Plan as well as with new zoning districts in an updated City zoning code.

Features

Buildings and Spaces for an Entrepreneurial Downtown



Brooklyn Center has an entrepreneurial population with a high percentage of first and second generation Americans, the community boasts small home grown businesses in retail, food, and professional services. The Framework Plan creates buildings and spaces for these activities to flourish. An **Entrepreneurial Market** will provide in house marketing, financial, and mentor support while also offering access to customers in a market hall. In addition, plazas will be designed with kiosks, food trucks, and other opportunities for pop up retail.

Housing for all Stages of Life

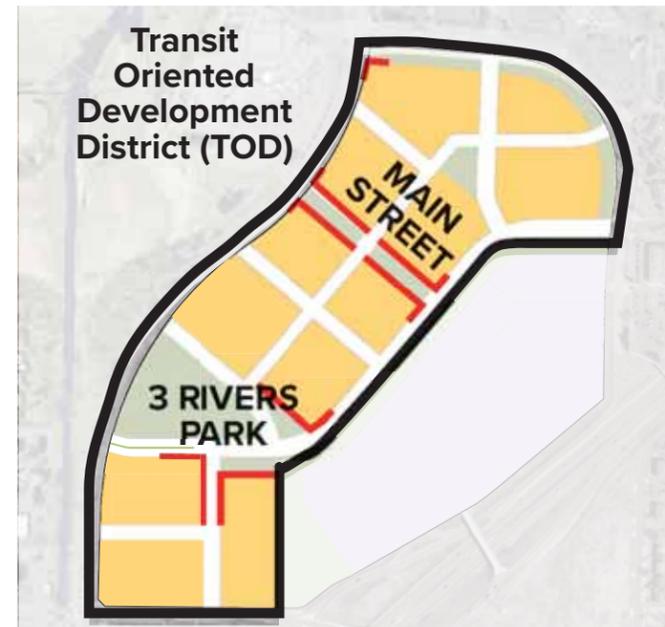


Brooklyn Center lacks the full range of housing options. As a result, some residents are forced to look for housing outside the City as they move through different phases of life. The Opportunity Site will include apartments and townhouses that are both Market rate and Affordable. Efforts will also be made to provide ownership housing across the income levels as well.

Land Use (Continued)

Transit Oriented Development District (TOD)

TOD supports opportunities for transit-supportive and transit-oriented development, as well as land uses that support pedestrian and bicycle use. The TOD district requires intensities and patterns of development that support vibrant pedestrian activity, and discourages land uses and development patterns that could decrease walkability or interfere with future growth of transit-oriented development and transit ridership. The district promotes sustainable urban places that include places to live, work, shop, and recreate locally, reduce reliance on automobiles, and encourage the use of public transit. The district fosters job creation and economic growth in proximity to transit and provides residents with new housing and lifestyle choices with more nearby amenities and social interaction spaces. This will be the guidance for the majority of the Opportunity Site.



Main Street



Three Rivers Park

Land Use (Continued)

Business Mixed Use (MX-B1)

The MX-B1 designation guides land for a mix of business and light industrial uses with allowance for supporting retail/service uses. This designation encourages redevelopment or development of commercial, office, general business and light industrial uses in coordination with supporting retail/commercial uses to encourage a more dynamic and connected experience for workers. This land use does not plan for residential uses but may include limited live-work opportunities as established through supporting official controls. This guidance will apply to an employment district adjacent to the highway, providing proximity to the TOD core, while still managing freight traffic and impacts effectively.

- Rooftop community solar and micro grid**
- Pervious pavement to encourage infiltration**
- Businesses with public interface located at activity nodes that face the neighborhood**
- Clear and simple pedestrian connections to the neighborhood**
- Green edge for stormwater, trails, habitat public art and other shared amenities**
- Smaller scale employment uses in the neighborhood - maker spaces, live work units**



Benefits

- » Living wage jobs with low barrier to entry
- » Jobs that are matched to the skills of the neighborhood
- » Higher than average job density (minimum 25 jobs/acre)
- » Local hiring and local job development
- » Incubator / Accelerator / Collaboration space for small business and start ups
- » Net Positive tax base
- » Workforce development and training
- » Local and distinctive business mix that share resources
- » Businesses that complement existing industrial base
- » Employee base supports local retail and restaurants
- » Back room inventory and logistics for local retail
- » Potential event space for community gathering



Open Space

Downtown Brooklyn Center will feature system of open spaces, streets, trails and pedestrian areas that promotes healthy living, gathering, social gathering, and environmental responsibility.

Outcomes

An inclusive, accessible, welcoming and dynamic public realm that becomes a social and gathering center for the entire City.

An “inside out” City that attracts people to spend time outside together throughout all seasons of the year.

Recreational and leisure activities for all ages and abilities.

Connecting to and leveraging the potential of Centennial Park

A green and active stormwater system that provides health, recreational, and environmental benefits to all.

Framework



- Parklets
 - Neighborhood Parks
 - Plaza
 - Three Rivers Park
 - Greenway
 - Regional Recreational Attraction
- A Three Rivers “Bridging” Park
 - B Parklets and Garden Street
 - C BC Plaza
 - D Neighborhood Park
 - E Stormwater Greenway

Features

Three Rivers Urban Bridging Park



The Three Rivers Park District will establish their first “urban bridging” park in Brooklyn Center. In an effort to introduce inner ring communities such as Brooklyn Center to its vast park resources throughout Hennepin County, the District endeavors to build 3-4 acre parks in the underserved communities. These parks will serve as a “bridge” to the more natural parks in the county. The District will fund, build, manage, maintain, and program these parks specifically for Brooklyn Center residents.

An “Inside Out” City



The Framework Plan contains parks, plazas, and open spaces designed to encourage gathering, socializing, and cultural expression. The spaces will be welcoming, accessible, and inclusive. they will draw indoor activities to the outdoors. **The pulse of the City will be on display throughout the year in these spaces.** Special consideration will be given to designing spaces that are active throughout the year. The spaces and activities will change with the seasons.

Stormwater

A green and active stormwater system that provides health, recreational, and environmental benefits to all

Outcomes

Downtown will feature a stormwater system that manages rainwater throughout the District while also serving as a health, recreational, and aesthetic amenity for residents and visitors.

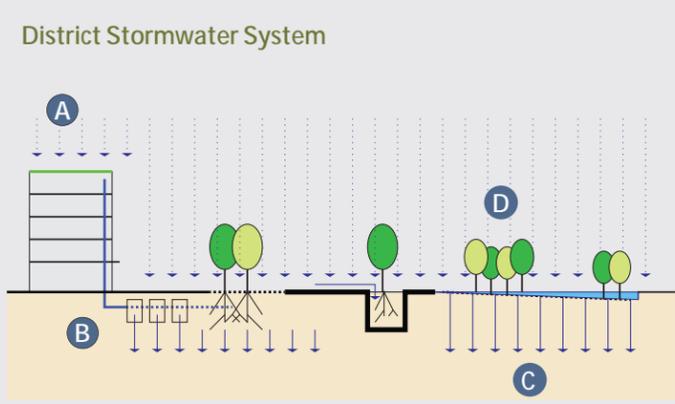
Framework



-  Urban Green Streets
 -  Greenway and treatment train
 -  Neighborhood Rain Gardens
 -  Larger detention areas
- A** Green Streets with Urban Stormwater
 - B** A Garden Street with Rain gardens and Parklets
 - C** Linear Stormwater parks and greenways along the edge of the large greenspace
 - D** Ponding areas

Features

District Stormwater System



- A** Blue Green Roofs use rain water to irrigate plants on roofs and on site.
- B** Pavers and soil cells filter runoff and encourage root growth
- C** Soil cells with impermeable liners keep polluted water from infiltrating
- D** A diverse mix of salt tolerant and winter hardy plants reduce heat island effects and enhance human comfort

Shared Stacked Green infrastructure



Stormwater will be integrated with the design of the area so it has multiple functions. Instead of relying on expensive "hard" infrastructure to move rainwater to areas lakes and rivers, rainwater will be harnessed and used as a resource. For example, the linear greenway that filters water before it percolates into the soils will also serve as a regional bike trail.

In areas where stormwater is underground, it will be stored and used for irrigation, with the excess returning to the groundwater aquifer.

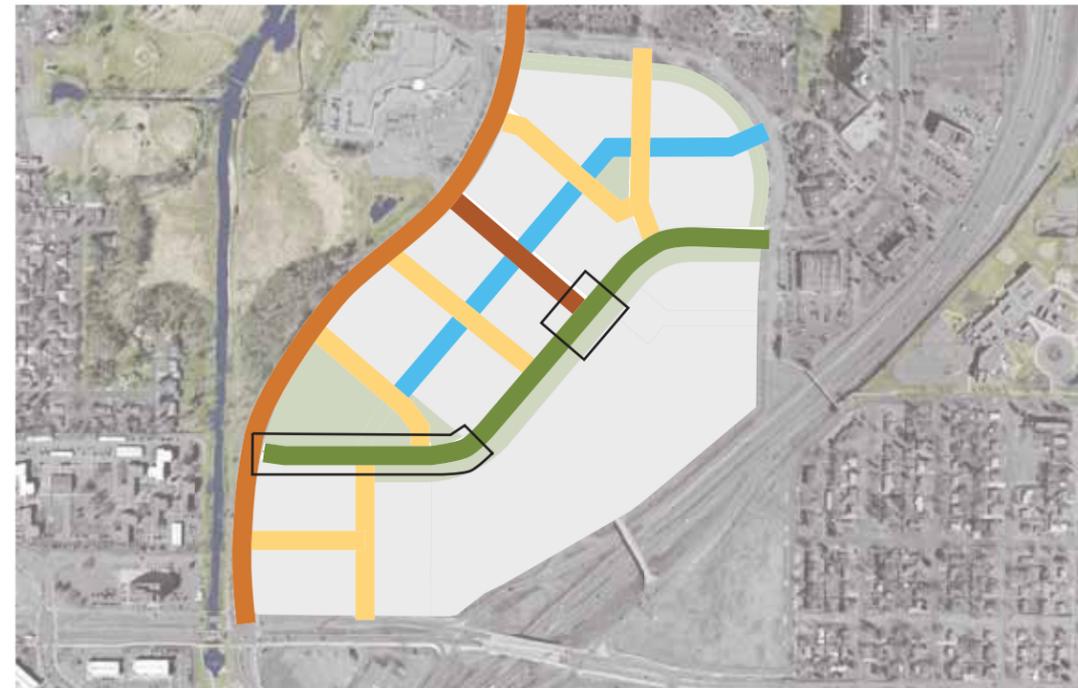
Access and Connectivity

Downtown Brooklyn Center will have a transportation system that encourages walking and biking, is well connected to the region and reduces the need to own a car by providing safe, affordable, convenient and accessible options.

Outcomes

- Prioritizing pedestrians to create a walkable community
- Creating a safe and connected bicycle network
- Ensuring vehicular access to Downtown from throughout the City and the region.
- Establishing a network of streets that enables people to get round easily without the use of a car if they chose.

Framework



- Shingle Creek Parkway
- Main Street
- Garden Street
- Parkway
- Neighborhood Street
- "Slow Zones"

descriptions on following pages

Features

Garden Street



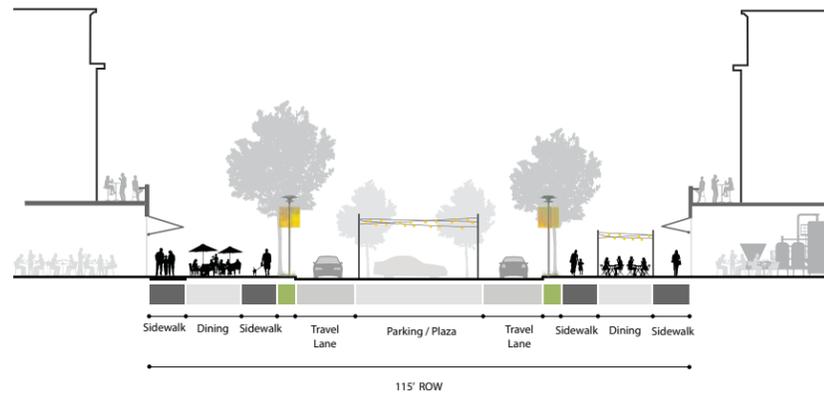
A "Garden Street" will be the primary pedestrian spine through the development. The Garden Street will be a narrow residential space lined with townhouses and small apartments. It will be a primarily pedestrian zone, though bicyclists and slow speed cars would be permitted, primarily to access residential parking areas. The Garden Street will contain small play spaces, gardens, and other residential amenities.

Slow Zones



Slow Zones are segments of streets that are specifically designated and designed for slower traffic than otherwise similar streets in the City. The Framework Plan will designate areas around the Three Rivers Park and at the terminus of John Martin Drive as Slow Zones. This will improve the quality of the adjacent spaces, create a safer environment for all users, and enable pedestrians to easily cross the street.

Access and Connectivity (continued)



Main Street

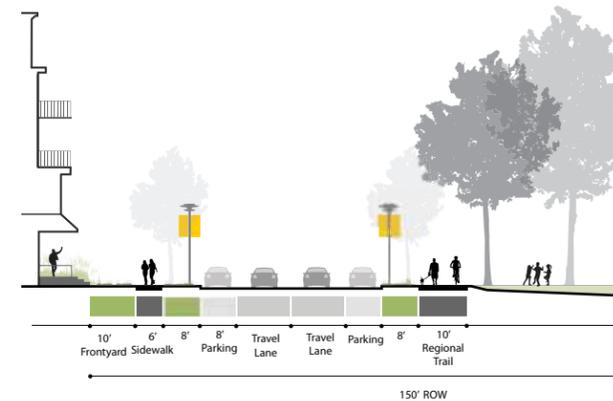
Main Street/John Martin Drive will be designed as a pedestrian oriented street where cars are considered guests. The sidewalks are extra wide, and the center median can be used for kiosks, food trucks, or short term parking. Amenities such as public art, bike racks, fixed and moveable seating, and ample shade trees will create an environment that is pleasant for businesses and residents and visitors

- Shingle Creek Parkway
- Main Street
- Garden Street
- Connector Parkway
- Neighborhood Street



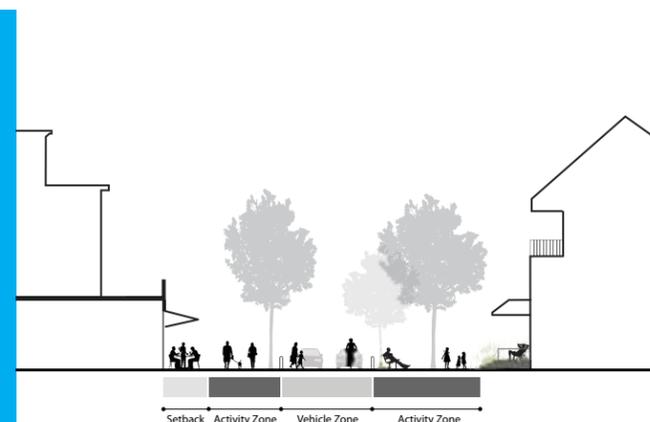
Shingle Creek Parkway

Shingle Creek Parkway is proposed to be narrowed to a three lane road. The northbound outside lane can be converted to a parking lane and the southbound outside lane can be converted to a two way on street commuter bike lane (allowing Shingle Creek Trail to be recreational and multi-use).



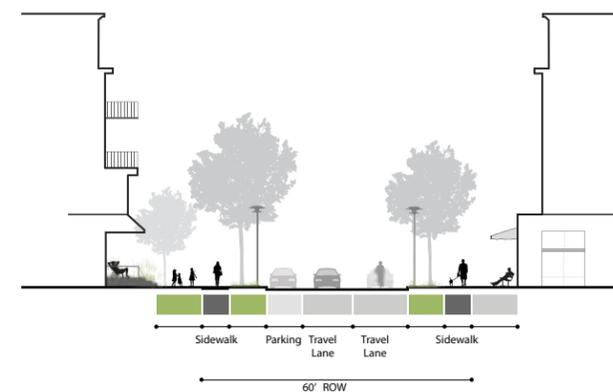
Parkway

The Connector Parkway will be the primary east/west road through the new development. It will be a primary address for both housing and employment. The Plan recommends a 70' greenway for stormwater retention and light recreation along its eastern edge.



Garden Street

The north south street in between Earl Brown Drive and Shingle Creek Parkway will be a "shared street" or "woonerf". It will be a slow speed, pedestrian priority street that is lined by townhouses and live work buildings. The laneway for vehicles will be serpentine to make room for greenspace, rain gardens, and parklets.



Typical Residential Street

Residential streets will be designed as slow and safe streets whose primary purpose is to be a comfortable and shared environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. The curb to curb area will be programmed with two way traffic, parking on one side and a shared bike lane. Beyond the curb, street trees will create a shaded 5' sidewalk. Buildings will be set close to the back of the sidewalk with patios, stoops, and porches to create a comfortable pedestrian environment. Typical Residential streets should have maximum of two curb cuts per block.