

5.3 Discussion of key elements

Street Network and Transit Connections (Figure 5.4)

Franklin Avenue: The Master Plan reduces the width of Franklin Avenue providing two, instead of four, through-lanes and pushes Franklin Avenue to the south allowing commercial redevelopment along the northern edge of Franklin adjacent to the station platform. (See Figure 5.3.) As Franklin Avenue has only two through-lanes both east of Minnehaha and west of Bloomington, the narrowing through the short section of Franklin will not negatively impact overall traffic operations in this area. Development along the north side of Franklin will bridge the vertical separation between the street level and the station platform, potentially allowing for internal vertical circulation between the two levels, and will enhance the pedestrian environment along Franklin Avenue.

Cedar/Minnehaha/Franklin intersection: The Master Plan simplifies the street network at this intersection, reducing the street-crossing width for pedestrians and allowing for increased development opportunity. Alternative A (see Figures 5.1 and 5.3) creates a “traffic square” moving traffic in a counter-clockwise direction around the square. This concept is similar to a traffic circle in that it eliminates conflicting left turns, facilitating traffic movement within the network of streets. The “traffic square” creates an opportunity for a small development and green space within the square as discussed below.

Alternative B (see Figure 5.1) simplifies this intersection by truncating Minnehaha Avenue at Franklin Avenue. Truck traffic moving north from the Seward South Industrial Area would be redirected west on 24th Street and north on Snelling Avenue to access Cedar Avenue and ramps to eastbound Interstate 94. Cedar Avenue would continue through the area on its current alignment, with a “Y” intersection at 20th Avenue. Reconfiguration of this intersection will simplify vehicular movements and reduce the number of street crossings for pedestrians, creating a less confusing and safer environment.

A third alternative considered during the planning process included minor geometric improvements to the intersection and consolidation of the islands within the intersections, providing an improved pedestrian refuge and possibly an opportunity for landscaping.

A traffic operations study of these and other alternatives is included in the Appendix. Further discussion of these alternatives with Minneapolis Public Works and Hennepin County will need to occur before an alternative can be recommended.

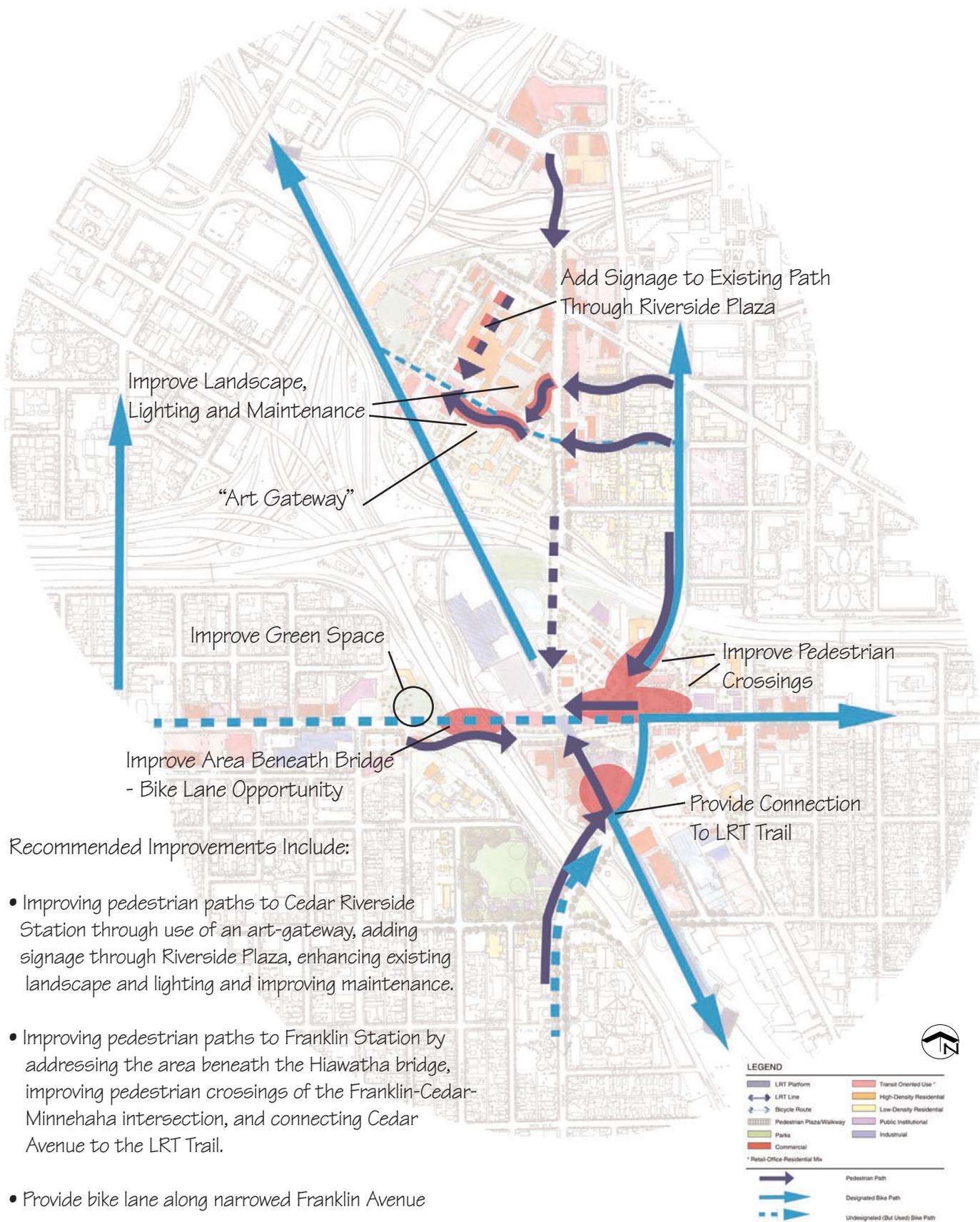
Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections (Figure 5.9)

Pedestrian Paths from Ventura Village to Franklin station: Franklin Avenue provides the primary pedestrian path between the Ventura Village neighborhood and Franklin station. To provide greater continuity along this path, streetscape improvements recently installed to the west of Hiawatha Avenue should be continued east to Franklin station including pedestrian scaled street lighting and landscaping. The area beneath the Hiawatha overpass should be addressed with aesthetic wall treatments and lighting as illustrated in Figure 5.10. Mixed-use development along the north and south edges of Franklin, as discussed in the previous section, should be brought to the street edge and entrances and windows provided at the Franklin street level to provide more activity to the street. Maintenance of these sidewalks, particularly during winter months prior to redevelopment of the area, will be critical for preserving access to the station.

Pedestrian Paths from East Phillips to Franklin station: The desire of residents of East Phillips neighborhood to have a more direct access to Franklin station could be provided with a pedestrian bridge to the Cedar Box/Ambles site should an opportunity arise to redevelop the site and provide a public walkway to Franklin station. An alternative pedestrian connection could be provided with a stairway connecting Cedar Avenue to the pedestrian/bicycle path provided at the east side of the LRT line. Either of these connections should be enhanced with pedestrian scaled lighting, adequate sidewalk widths and attractive low-level plantings.

Pedestrian Paths from Seward to Franklin station: Franklin Avenue provides the primary access to Franklin station to the east. Emphasis should be placed on the north sidewalk where pedestrian crossing of the Cedar-Minnehaha intersection can be facilitated with a simplified intersection design as discussed above. This path should be continued on the north side of new development in the northwest quadrant of the intersection to maintain an at-grade connection to the station platform. Adequate sidewalk widths, pedestrian scaled lighting, and attractive plantings should be used to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Pedestrian Paths from Augsburg College campus to Franklin station: The primary connection between Augsburg College and Franklin station is 20th Avenue, also a primary bicycle route in the area. The redesign of the Franklin-Cedar-Minnehaha intersection should also plan for significant pedestrian crossings in this direction as well.



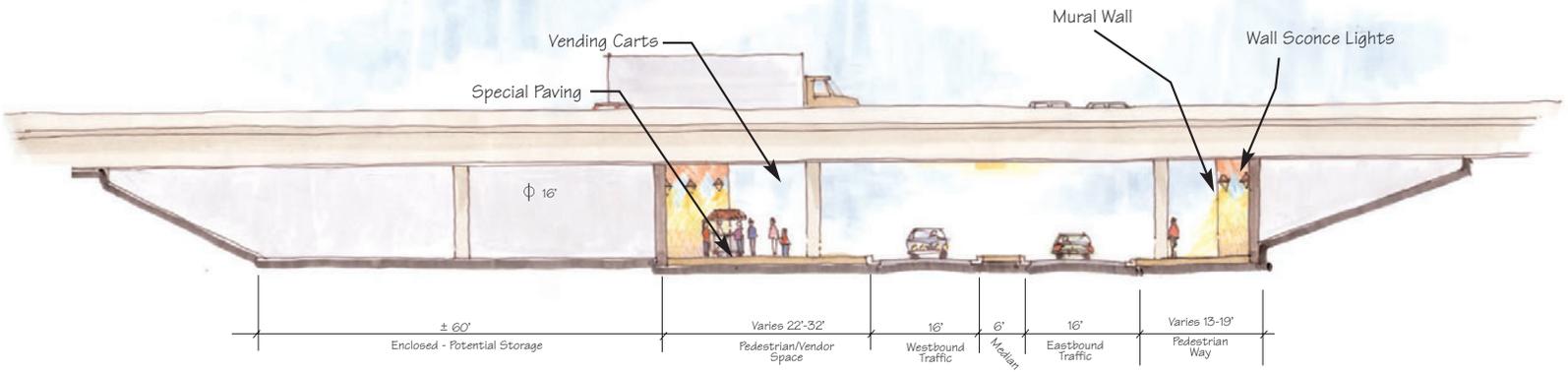
Recommended Improvements Include:

- Improving pedestrian paths to Cedar Riverside Station through use of an art-gateway, adding signage through Riverside Plaza, enhancing existing landscape and lighting and improving maintenance.
- Improving pedestrian paths to Franklin Station by addressing the area beneath the Hiawatha bridge, improving pedestrian crossings of the Franklin-Cedar-Minnehaha intersection, and connecting Cedar Avenue to the LRT Trail.
- Provide bike lane along narrowed Franklin Avenue

FIGURE 5.9 - PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE CONNECTIONS

FRANKLIN-CEDAR/RIVERSIDE TOD

STREET SECTION AT
FRANKLIN AVENUE UNDERPASS



Pedestrian Paths to the Cedar-Riverside station: Pedestrian movement to the Cedar-Riverside station will largely occur from the east on 6th Street and Riverside Avenue-15th Avenue due to the limited street network in the area. Sixth Street will provide the primary corridor to the station. Green space and open areas at the northwest corner of Cedar Avenue and 6th Street South and the south corner of 16th Avenue and 6th Street should be redesigned to provide better visibility between the station “front door” and Cedar Avenue. Lighted vertical elements (e.g. public art or signage) at Cedar and 6th Street and the station “front door” should be provided to assist wayfinding. The Master Plan also enhances safety and pedestrian enjoyment by suggesting additional commercial redevelopment at the ground level along 6th Street including infilling the ground floor of Riverside Plaza Building B with a commercial activity and additional commercial development at the corner of 16th Avenue South and 6th Street. Further, the Currie Park berm at the west end of 6th Street should be removed opening views to downtown, and a trail head/downtown gateway element added. Existing street trees along 6th Street should be preserved.

Redevelopment along 15th Avenue is also encouraged to remove blight and add activity to the street edge. Redevelopment of this area should also include adequate sidewalks, pedestrian scale lighting and attractive landscaping.

Pedestrian connections from the north could also be enhanced with the provision of signage to alert pedestrians to public paths through the Riverside Plaza complex and assist in wayfinding. Additional opportunities for pedestrian enhancements include improvements to the short pedestrian way that extends along the east side of Riverside Plaza from the 5th Street pedestrian way crossing to 6th Street and consideration of the creation of a pedestrian way from Cedar Avenue at 3rd Street South to Riverside Avenue along the former 16th Avenue alignment. (See Figure 5.9.)

Bicycle connections: The Master Plan supports the proposed City of Minneapolis Bikeways Master Plan which includes signed bike routes on 18th Avenue South, Franklin Avenue and 24th Street east of Hiawatha and striped bike lanes on Minnehaha Avenue, Bloomington Avenue, Riverside Avenue, 26th Street South, and 24th Street west of Minnehaha. The narrowing of Franklin Avenue between Cedar and Bloomington also provides the opportunity for either an on-street bike lane or shared bike/pedestrian trail through this segment of the roadway. These planned routes significantly expand the current bikeway network provided by

existing facilities on 20th Avenue, 6th Street and the 24th Street bike and pedestrian bridge as well as the programmed LRT trail. While bicycle facilities on Franklin Avenue west of Hiawatha and Cedar Avenue would be desirable, traffic volumes and restricted street widths do not provide an opportunity for such facilities. The redesign of the Cedar-Minnehaha-Franklin intersection should also take into consideration bicycle traffic on existing and proposed routes.



Recommended Improvements Include:

- Narrowing of Franklin Avenue to increase Area for development near station.
- Reorganizing of the Cedar-Minnehaha-Franklin Intersection into a “Traffic Square.”
- Creation of a drop off area at Cedar-Riverside Station
- Attractive bus shelters, improved transit signage, and easy to understand and comfortable paths between bus stops and station platforms.

FIGURE 5.4 - STREET NETWORK & TRANSIT CONNECTION

Bus stops and connections to the station areas: Routes 19 and 20 provide north-south bus service along Cedar and Minnehaha Avenues respectively from neighborhoods further to the south connecting to Seven Corners and into downtown Minneapolis. Routes 2 and 8 along Franklin Avenue provide service from the Ventura Village neighborhood, the University of Minnesota and Downtown to the west of the station to Riverside Avenue and into St. Paul on the east.

Connections from Routes 2 and 8 to Franklin station will be made directly beneath the station on Franklin Avenue. Connections to the platform are provided with ramps, stairs and handicap elevators. Redevelopment of property on the north side of Franklin immediately adjacent to the station would provide an opportunity for public internal circulation via escalators with a new development.

Connections from the Route 19 and 20 buses to Franklin station require riders to walk from Cedar Avenue and Minnehaha Avenue intersections with Franklin Avenue. Metro Transit should be encouraged to locate bus stops on the north side of Franklin Avenue where a continuous high amenity walkway could be provided to the station platform. Walkway amenities should include trees for weather protection as well as pedestrian scaled lighting and benches and waste receptacles at bus stops. Landscaping, attractive pavement materials, and public art can further enhance the pedestrian experience. This walkway should continue along the north side of any new development at the northwest quadrant of Franklin and Cedar to avoid the downward slope of Franklin and provide at-grade access to the station platform without use of ramps or stairs. The green space within the traffic square also provides an opportunity for a transit plaza, providing additional amenities for bus riders and celebrating transit at Franklin station.

Connections from the Route 19 and 20 buses to the Cedar-Riverside station will both occur from Cedar Avenue near the 6th Street intersection. Metro Transit should locate these bus stops as close to the 6th Street intersection as possible to maximize visibility to the Cedar-Riverside station. Visually distinctive bus shelters should be used in this area to assist in wayfinding to the station and celebrate the bus—LRT connection.

16th Avenue Drop-off: The termination of 16th Avenue near the Cedar-Riverside station should be widened to provide a turnaround drop-off area for LRT riders (see Figure 5.2). This facility could also be used by circulator buses sponsored by area institutions to encourage transit use. An attractive plaza area should be provided connecting the drop-off area to the station platform.

Transit-Supportive Land Uses and Redevelopment

See Figure 5.5 for site locations.

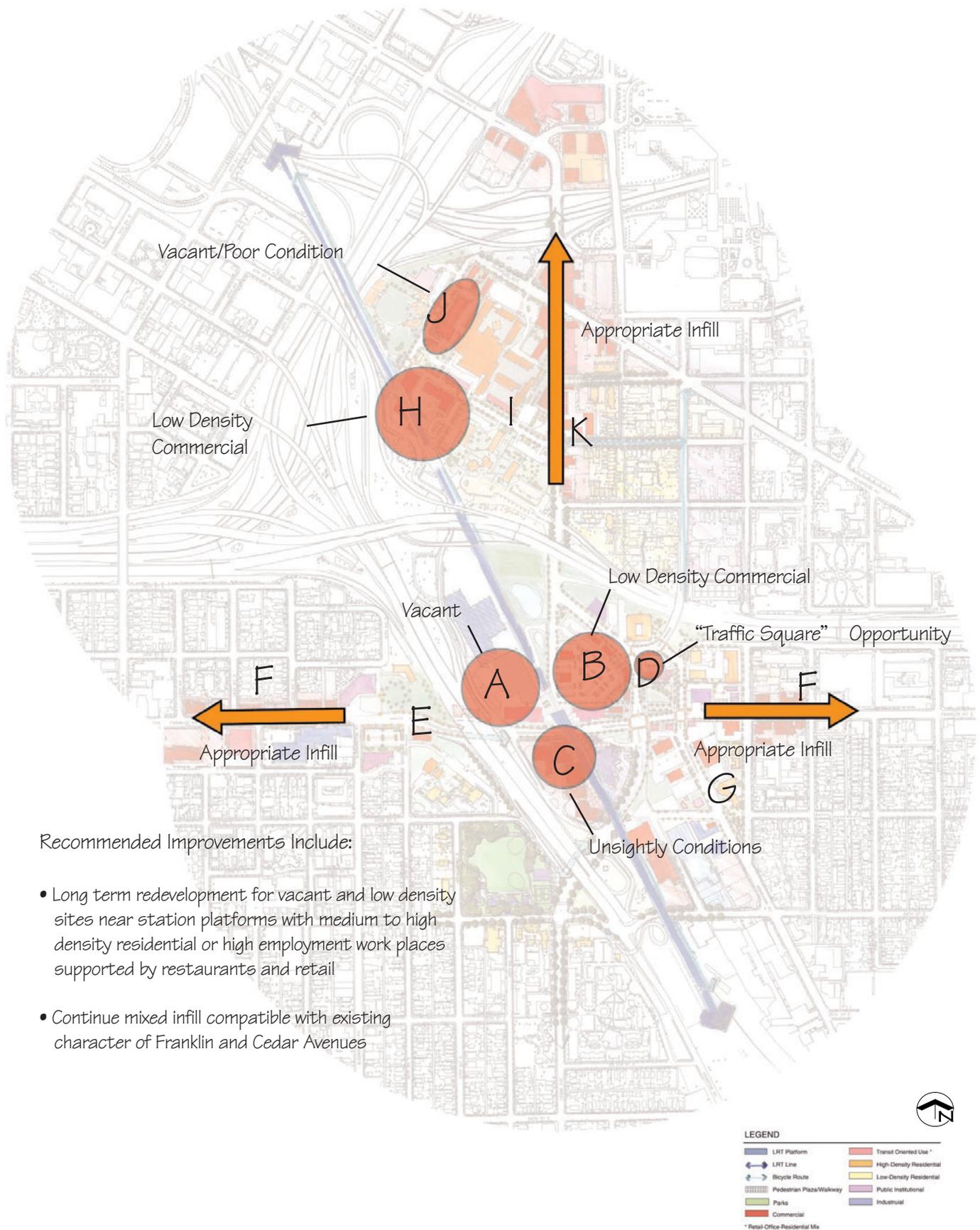
Franklin station, west (A): Development along the northern edge of Franklin (see Figure 5.6) will bridge the vertical separation between the street level and the station platform and allow for internal vertical circulation. Air rights above the southern portion of the LRT Yard and Shops are used for development of a parking structure to serve area development.

Franklin station, east (B): Figure 5.3 illustrates redevelopment of the industrial buildings east of the station platform, retaining the existing entertainment uses. The street edges of the reconfigured intersection are reinforced by additional commercial development. A public walkway should be provided just to the north of new development at the edge of Franklin Avenue to provide an at-grade path from Cedar Avenue to the station platform. A park or green space is suggested either within the traffic square (Alternative A) or at the northeast corner of Cedar and Franklin (Alternative B), providing a community amenity and focus for redevelopment in the area.

Cedar Box/Ambles Block (C): Limited access and a freeway environment hinder redevelopment of these parcels. Initially, efforts should be made to improve the appearance of outdoor storage at these facilities and identify opportunities for a public path through this area from the East Phillips neighborhood to the station platform. If economic conditions prove redevelopment of these parcels feasible, any new development should address the Franklin Avenue street edge similar to development on the north side of Franklin and allow for an East Phillips path to the station.

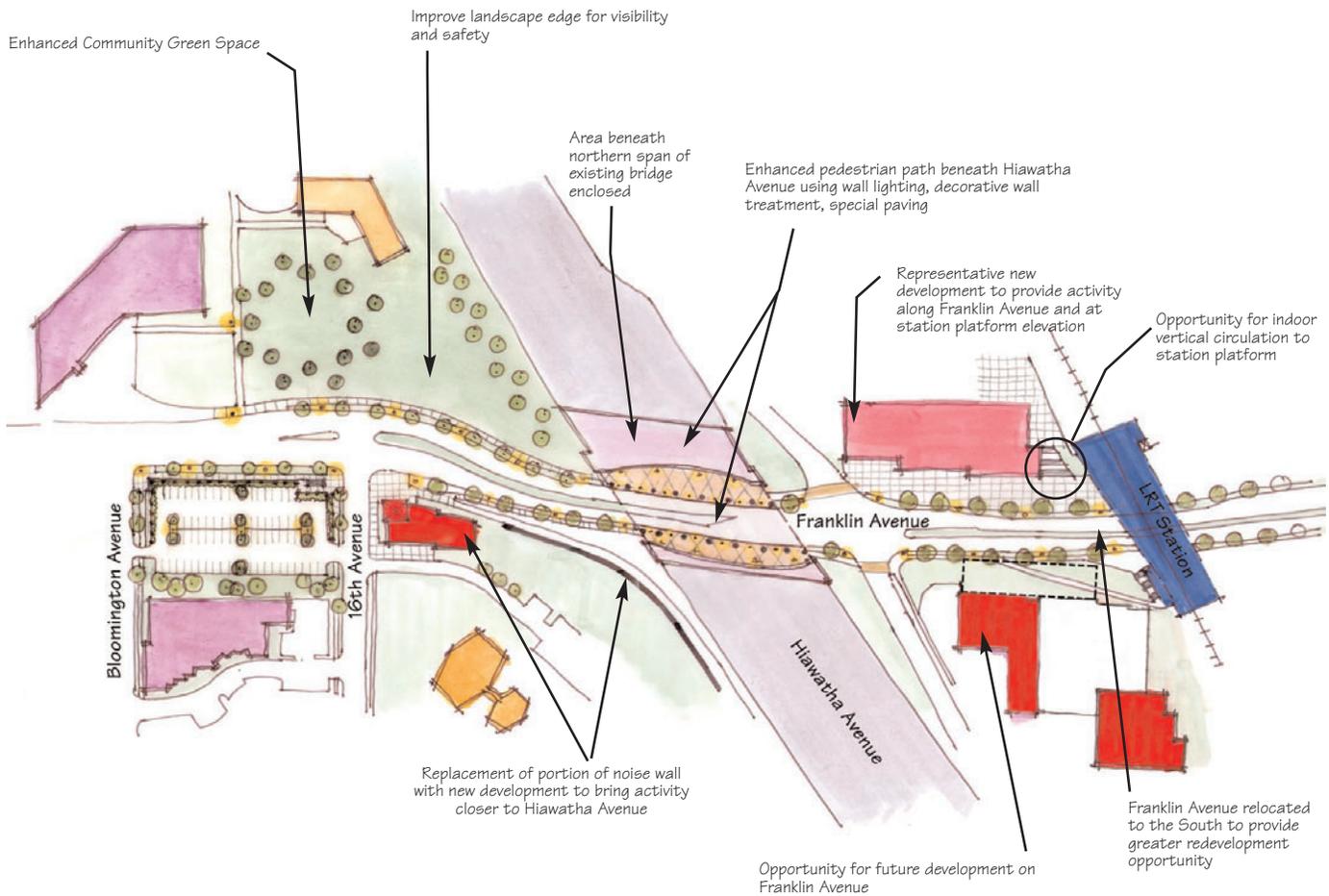
Traffic Square site (D): Should the traffic square concept be implemented at the Franklin-Cedar-Minnehaha intersection, the north end of the square could potentially accommodate a small development site. It is recommended that this site be used to encourage community gathering, either as a small restaurant, day care facility, library, or to promote pedestrian activity within the square.

Franklin, immediately west of Hiawatha (E): Replacement of the western portion of the Hiawatha noise wall at Franklin and 16th Avenue with a two-story mixed-use development (see Figure 5.6) would provide an opportunity to increase development in the area and remove a wall that is perceived by area residents to separate them from the station and adds to the long expanse of “unoccupied” space between Bloomington Avenue



Recommended Improvements Include:

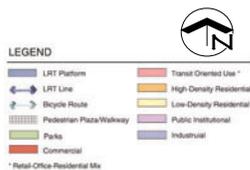
- Long term redevelopment for vacant and low density sites near station platforms with medium to high density residential or high employment work places supported by restaurants and retail
- Continue mixed infill compatible with existing character of Franklin and Cedar Avenues



**PLAN AT
FRANKLIN AVENUE UNDERPASS**

**Connections to Phillip
Neighborhood along Hiawatha
Avenue**

- Increase level of activity along Franklin Avenue between Bloomington Avenue and the Franklin Station
- Enhance pedestrian environment beneath the Hiawatha bridge
- Facilitate development immediately adjacent to platform and provide opportunity for indoor public vertical circulation



and Franklin station. The land is currently owned by Mn/DOT and would require acquisition by another party and modification of the Hiawatha Avenue Indirect Source Permit before development could proceed.

Franklin Avenue, west of Bloomington and east of Minnehaha (F): Neighborhood efforts have made great strides in rejuvenating these areas of Franklin both east and west of the station area. The mixed uses and densities found in both of these areas are quite supportive of transit, and continuing efforts to rehabilitate and rejuvenate these areas should be supported.

Seward residential area south of Franklin Avenue (G): Alternative B, which suggests removal of truck traffic from Minnehaha Avenue north of 24th Street, suggests the possibility of converting this stretch of Minnehaha Avenue to residential use, creating a stronger western edge to the Seward residential area.

Cedar-Riverside Station (H): The Master Plan indicates redevelopment of the eastern portion of station block to provide a visible front door and 24-hour activity to the station area (see Figure 5.7). Redevelopment should provide a visually distinctive entrance at the corner of 16th Avenue South and 6th Street South and internal or covered circulation to the station platform. This arrangement will bring the station “front door” closer to Cedar Avenue. If redevelopment of this block cannot occur immediately upon the station opening, efforts to create a distinctive visual sign or art piece at the corner should be explored. Efforts to enhance wayfinding from Cedar Avenue to the station and to address perceptions of safety issues in this block immediately at the opening of the LRT system are critical to the success of this station. The existing building at 15th Avenue and 6th Street (formerly Vinnie’s restaurant), and the brick Italian Renaissance Revival trapezoid building at 1516-18 7th Street South should be preserved. 1516-18 7th Street South and 1504 7th Street South, currently identified in the station area plan as “transit oriented uses” will not be acquired now or in the future, for development, by eminent domain.

6th Street (I) (Figure 5.8): Existing street trees between Cedar Avenue and 15th Avenue should be preserved. If it is possible to do so without harming the trees, efforts to widen the sidewalk in this area should be considered. Maintenance of sidewalks to station during the winter months and trash collection along this street are critical to access and should be a high priority. The Master Plan supports current efforts by Metro Transit’s Public Art Program to create a “sequential art gateway” along 6th Street to add interest to the pedestrian environment and improve wayfinding.



VIEW TO STATION



STREET SECTION AT
6TH STREET

FIGURE 5.8 - SIXTH STREET IMPROVEMENTS

FRANKLIN-CEDAR/RIVERSIDE TOD

15th Avenue South (J): Additional residential or commercial development along the eastern street edge could eliminate several blighted properties, take advantage of views to Currie Park and downtown and add pedestrian activity and interest to this portion of the study area.

Cedar Avenue (K): The Master Plan suggests infill commercial development between 5th Street South and I-94 to enhance the pedestrian environment along Cedar Avenue and provide continued activity to the Franklin station area. An opportunity site for additional structured parking to serve Cedar Avenue businesses is illustrated east of Cedar Avenue at the northern edge of Riverside Avenue.