1 INTRODUCTION

Table of Contents

I. Overview 1-3

- **A.** Study Impetus. 1-3
- **B.** Study Area 1-3

II. Transit-Oriented Development 1-3

- **A.** What Makes TODs Work 1-3
- **B.** Federal Transit Administration Objectives 1-6
- **C**. Joint Development Opportunities 1-7

1 INTRODUCTION

I. Overview

A. Study Impetus

The purpose of the 46th and Hiawatha Station Area Master Plan is to develop a plan for future development of the area using the extensive public input gathered.

This study is part of a series of long-range plans being completed for transit-oriented development (TOD, see below) around station sites along the Hiawatha Light Rail Transit (LRT) Corridor.

B. Study Area

The study area for this project is defined as the area within a ten-minute walking distance (half-mile radius) of the proposed light rail station at the northwest corner of 46th Street and Hiawatha Avenue. This area encompasses about 500 acres of land in parts of three well-defined neighborhoods: Nokomis East and Standish Ericcson to the west of Hiawatha Avenue and Longfellow to the east. In addition to the residential neighborhoods, parts of Minnehaha Park and Minnehaha Creek are included in the study area as well as commercial businesses along Hiawatha Avenue, 46th Street and Minnehaha Avenue. See Figure 1.1 for a map of the study area.

Light Rail Corridor

The 11.5 mile long light rail line will have 15 stops and will connect downtown Minneapolis to the airport and the Mall of America. Service is scheduled to begin in 2003. Projected ridership at the 46th and Hiawatha Station is 1900 riders per day in the first year (2004). This number is expected to increase to 2400 riders per day by 2020.

Redevelopment Area

The redevelopment area is contained within the study area but is much smaller. This area is comprised of the station site itself, and many of the commercial properties within the half-mile radius, east of Hiawatha. Proposed at Workshop 2, this area is significant in that it was that specific area that was "in play" in the planning process. This area was determined by the fact that residents requested preserving all residential homes.

II. Transit-Oriented Development[1]

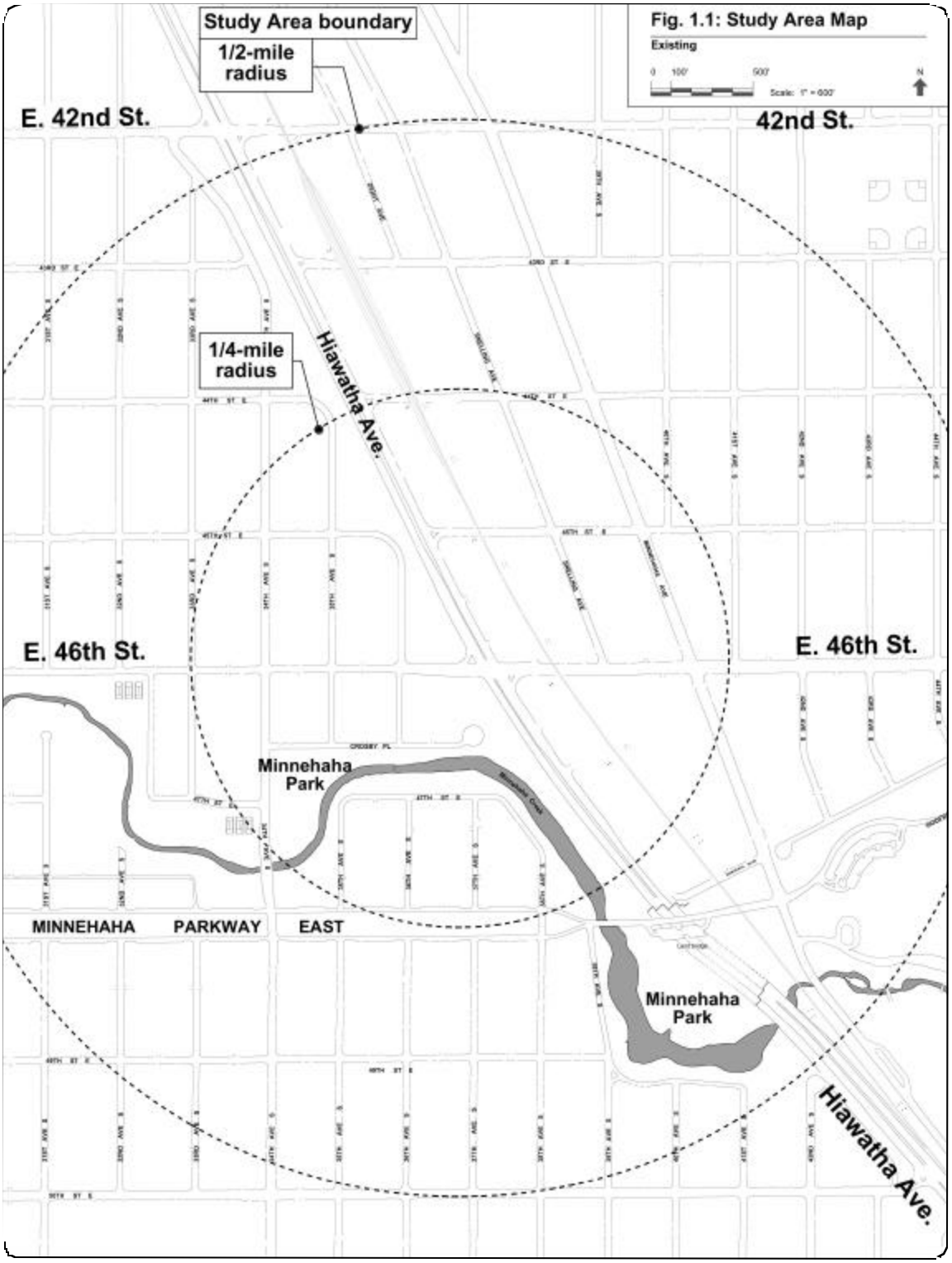
The characteristics of transit-oriented development (TOD) are not new. They are similar to those of urban neighborhoods developed in the late 19th century and early 20th century. The streetcar suburbs developed around 1900 are models of TOD because they provided easy and convenient access to the streetcar network. Residents can walk a few blocks to buy groceries, see a movie or have a meal. The housing stock of the neighborhood accommodates the needs of families, couples, those who are single, and the elderly.

A. What Makes TODs Work

Across the country, transit systems have stimulated significant new development projects around some stations, while little new development activity has occurred around others. The big picture lesson of the national experience suggests that the ability of

[1] *This section is a product of the Parsons Transportation Group.*

Figure 1.1: Study Area Map



transit stations to stimulate land use development and redevelopment is dependent upon a series of factors listed below:

1. **Market Opportunity**

In seeking to generate transit-oriented development, real estate market and economic support plays the most important role. Where market support is weak, transit stations, by themselves, will not generate new development. Where market support is strong, however, transit-oriented development has proven viable.

2. **Strong Real Estate Markets**

Successful station area development requires strong regional real estate markets with an active demand for residential and commercial projects. In regions where transit investment have had the greatest impact upon land use development, the investments occurred prior or during periods of rapid population growth. Examples can be seen in northern California and the Denver area.

3. **Ridership**

Actual and anticipated ridership levels are a litmus test for TOD markets. A sufficient and sustainable level of transit patronage is necessary to support a light rail system, and also support certain development types at station areas.

4. **High-Quality Transit Service**

The convenience, speed and extensiveness of the transit system enhance the accessibility advantages associated with station area properties and increase the likelihood of development in these locations.

5. **Availability of Attractive, Developable Land**

Very little transit-oriented development has occurred around stations sites that are already largely developed, where surrounding land uses are unattractive/unsafe, where surrounding land uses are primarily auto-oriented, or where station connections to surrounding neighborhoods are poorly designed. Larger parcels are also more economically viable for developers. Numerous, small parcels held by a variety of owners can create a barrier-to-station area development.

6. **Street Patterns and Access**

Local streets serving a station need to be of sufficient dimension to accommodate expected levels of automobile and bus transit traffic. Along with appropriate street geometries are sidewalks, streetscapes and other infrastructure that encourage walking and enable passengers to conveniently and safely access a station platform.

7. **Parking Management**

Limiting the amount of parking in downtown areas and around station areas encourages transit ridership and more compact development around stations. Stations surrounded by park-n-ride facilities limit opportunities for station-area development.

8. **Political Champion**

Strong individual leadership is often a common element in successful TOD projects.

9. Appropriate Zoning Around Stations

Local zoning ordinances need to be consistent with the types of development desired for each station area.

10. Critical Mass

Transit-oriented development projects incorporate mixes of uses in mutually supportive relationships. A critical mass of development, however, is necessary in order for the various components to offer significant support for one another.

11. Supportive Neighborhoods and Communities

Few successful station area development projects have occurred where surrounding neighborhoods opposed higher density or non-residential developments.

12. Strong, Proactive Institutions

Regional and local institutions with the leadership to proactively pursue transit-oriented developments enhance the likelihood of development.

13. Development incentives

Municipalities can provide density bonuses, upzoning, transfer of development rights, fast-track approvals, etc. to stimulate development.

14. Site Design Guidelines

Station area master plans and design guidelines help ensure the type of development appropriate for transit station areas.

15. Redevelopment Agencies

Utilizing the powers of redevelopment agencies to assemble land, to institute tax increment financing districts, to finance infrastructure investments, or secure innovative financing provisions.

B. Federal Transit Administration Objectives

The objectives that the Federal Transit Administration has put forth regarding Transit Oriented Development are as follows:

a) Focus future growth into compact centers to reduce land consumption and the loss of open space.

b) Make walking bicycling and using transit more feasible by organizing development around transit and providing good pedestrian connections.

c) Create a local street network that allows direct connections to local destinations without diverting extra traffic onto the arterial and highway system.

d) Provide a mix of housing types, densities and costs to serve a variety of households.

e) Locate housing retail, jobs, parks and civic uses in close proximity.

f) Create a sense of place and community identity.

C. Joint Development Opportunities

Joint development opportunities offer another means of realizing transit-oriented development and achieving the design concepts for the transit station plans. Joint development refers to the leverage of public ownership of land, buildings, or facilities by inviting private investment in mixed-use buildings, community services, child care, commercial buildings, hotels, recreational and civic facilities, etc. Joint development opportunities in the 46th and Hiawatha area could involve the acquisition and replacement of parking sites, surplus land related to right-of-way acquisition, or publicly-owned land adjacent to transit stops.